LEVERAGING EXCELLENCE
A MODEL FOR DISSEMINATING BEST PRACTICES

Discover or Develop
- What core processes must be done well on any campus?
- What processes could be improved to better meet stakeholder expectations?
- What best practices already exist on campus?
- What major campus initiatives are developing best practices?
- What are others (peer institutions, industry) doing in this area?
- What are potential applications for these best practices?

Document & Validate
- What is the process flow?
- Where has it been tried?
- For what level(s) is the complexity of this process well-suited?
- How has it been adopted for specific applications?
- What are the expected outcomes?
- How is success measured?
- What are potential challenges?
- Does the process satisfy "best practice" criteria?
- Who is the contact for further information?

Plan & Commit
- Who needs to be involved, and what is their role?
- What resources are needed?
- Identify sponsors, process owners and local champions
- Identify and engage coaches
- Define a feedback mechanism

Obtain approval to implement, and secure resources

Develop Toolkit
- Benchmark other sources and "steal" tools
- Create tools and customizable templates to support the best practice
- Design training for coaches and users
- Create technology applications to support tools and training

Disseminate & Implement
- Adapt and implement the best practice
- Deliver central and local training
- Coach the implementation team
- Sunset old processes
- Communicate results (case studies, website, newsletters, email, seminars, etc.)

Manage & Improve
- Gather process data and user feedback
- Make additional improvements
- Demonstrate impact
- Update the toolkit
- Add the best practice to the best practices "library"
- Provide continual training and periodic communication
- Assign responsibility for on-going management

Continuous Assessment and Improvement

Best Practices Version 1.0, Created September, 2007
Office of Quality Improvement
608-262-0843  www.quality.wisc.edu
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Understanding Best Practices

Throughout our institutions of higher learning, there are outstanding examples of innovation and improvement. Due to our decentralized and independent culture, many of these innovations or improvements lie in pockets where they were first developed. Too few are actively leveraged for maximum impact. Instead, we reinvent.

With the growing demands on every aspect of higher education to continually increase efficiency and effectiveness, it is more important than ever that we intentionally search out, develop, share and implement best practices.

Definition

A “best practice” is a way of doing important work that is a model for others.

Characteristics of a “Best Practice”

- Consistently accomplishes desired results
- Optimizes the use of resources
- Eliminates unnecessary or redundant steps
- Sustainable over time
- Works well in multiple work units
- Dynamically meets changing needs and expectations
- Contributes to a respectful workplace climate

Importance of Best Practices

- To be good stewards of limited resources
- To reinforce a campus culture of continuous improvement
- To improve faculty and staff work life
- To disseminate innovations

We would like to thank Shinyi Wu of the Rand Corporation for allowing us to benchmark their processes for disseminating best practices in health care.

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