



Let's challenge the Status Quo – as in leading opinion:

Best Practices are “OUT”!

Here three reasons, why we should use other tools and methodologies to be more relevant in today's environment:

1. Best Practices look at what the situation was, what was done and what was the result. Just like how we learn to prepare a delicious meal with a recipe using certain ingredients. Sounds good and structured, right? Yes. If you have a very similar situation [or the same ingredients] to which the example is relatively easy to transfer. How many times have you heard "That worked there but we are totally different over here!". Or ... you cannot get the organic lemons or you want to use tofu instead of deer? Exactly, that's the challenge: the transfer of the knowledge.
2. When something is called "best," it suggests that there is one best way to structure, do, and manage something, and that other departments, companies, groups should emulate this practice. But often there are several sensible approaches and not one solution is good for all organizations. Our reality is moving too fast, our (corporate) cultures are too different and our business models vary too much for us to all be looking for the same "holy grail". 
3. Consultants have made a lot of money over the last 30 years by helping companies [in the short term] to become incrementally faster, better, more efficient. A successfully tested procedure, which has already worked in the competition, was touted and implemented. Today, however, companies are looking for longer-term, more agile approaches tailored to their specific needs.

So what does replace the use of "best practices"?

The speed of change around us makes the use of best practices almost dangerous because, as a retrospective approach, it focuses on the "what". In the complex fast pace of today, exploratory exploration helps to explore and understand deeper motivations, decision making, and more generally the "how" and "why."

"How were these decisions made? How were criteria chosen? How do you identify relevant data and information? How does the company want to position itself in the future? How is your own mission understood and communicated? How is that reflected in culture, processes and ways of working? How can the value-creation-network be used better "

Instead of leveraging “Best Practices”, open and effective questions that peel the "onion layer after layer" to look at the underlying drivers should be used. A well-known tool coming from the Total Quality Approach here is "the 5 why" method, which has been used for years in almost all areas of value creation (except in coaching, of course!).





Only through deeper questioning does one get past the obvious actions towards the more important underlying assumptions, unwritten laws and lived values. This can be used to build future actions, because the "how" knowledge - we call it "Tacit Knowledge" - is transferable to different situations in complex environments.

Conclusion:

It's no longer about recognizing patterns, which you then interpret through a best practice recipe, but about always cooking something delicious with the things you can find in the fridge and complement from the market! If you have learned through questions the deeper rules of cooking, the spices, the combination of food, then you can always apply learning in innovative ways.



Action:

In the next few weeks, try not just to understand the "what" [what happened; what was done ...], but also the "how" [how was the procedure planned? How were these decisions made ...]!

And if you want to discuss: always with pleasure. Brigitte@Lippmann-International.com