

Best Practice – Motivator or Millstone

Imagine being asked to participate in the high jump event for the first time and failing to clear a height of 1.00 metre, knowing that the world record is 2.45 metres. If you did not understand that the world record holder spent years practising his craft until he achieved the world record, and probably started his high jump career with a modest jump, you might well be disheartened about your potential for success.

Similarly, 'best practice' is an intimidating concept to many. Managers and employees have little or no difficulty coming to terms with the concept of 'good practice'. However, many are fearful of the concept of 'best practice', because it seems to suggest a level of perfection that few strive to achieve. The bar seems to be so high that clearing it is considered too difficult.

The modern-day athlete, however, is taught that to become the best you must start with the basics, as a novice. As the ancient Chinese aphorism says – "the longest journey starts with a single step."

To dispel the fear that best practice is unachievable it helps to understand that best practice is at the end of a continuum.



You can only achieve 'best practice' by moving along the continuum, improving as you go. And the good thing about viewing 'best practice' as a series of steps along a continuum, is that you can set as many goals along the way as you like.

Hierarchy

- Global best practice
- International best practice by sector
- Regional best practice
- National best practice
- Sub-national best practice
- Local best practice
- Peer group best practice

So you can be the best locally and continue to strive to be better!

You can be the best nationally and still strive to be better!

You can be the best of the best and still strive to be better, because someone else will be striving to take your spot.

Getting involved in best practice means getting involved in continuous improvement.