

by Marc Bowles , Performance Planner, Canadian Sport Centre Pacific

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In the previous Performance Point article, (August 2008) Kurt Innes discussed the value and importance of Performance Planning, and explained a framework and process that increases the sport and athletes opportunity of success. Examples of tools to develop and initiate this success through a clear planning pathway were presented. In this article we will further explore and expand on a Performance Benchmarking tool used by Performance Planners at CSC Pacific. Simply stated, it's a tool to help sports manage, organize and focus on set objectives, systematically creating an environment of success for the athletes. If sport organizations are to be successful in today's global and challenging times, development of clearly articulated objectives followed by the implementation of appropriate resources becomes a critical and necessary process to achieve best practice and the objectives for the sport.

So What is Performance Benchmarking?

"To measure according to specified standards in order to compare it with and improve one's own performance" (American Heritage Dictionary,1996). Performance Benchmarking involves the comparison of quantitative data to help identify how an athletes performance differs from others or previous performances. The process challenges sport to examine and understand their own sport criteria and in this search uncover "Best Practice" in competitors and organizations that the sport identifies. By the implementation of those practices within sport, performance may be improved through a systematic process of learning from others and yourself and perhaps changing what you do. Incorporating this systematic process that compares data and uses results to guide continuous improvement initiatives is a tool that can help achieve breakthrough results.

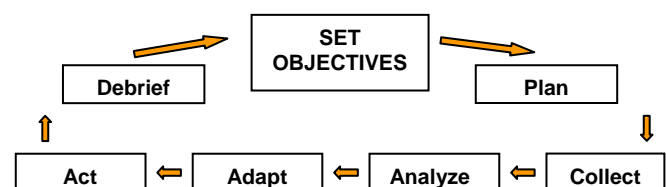
Questions That Need To Be Asked

Who, and What do I compare to? Where do I get the data? These questions are dependent upon what you want to accomplish and your objectives. For example, in a sport such as alpine skiing, benchmarking might include the number of top 10 finishes, the number of performances with 75 FIS pts or higher, or the number of performances within 3% of the national record.

The Benefits of Performance Benchmarking

1. Establishes a consistent and comprehensive plan for sport and personal accountability.
2. Provides considerable savings in resource allocation as implementation is directed toward objectives.
3. Encourages strong accountability, focus and discipline for all staff aligned with the athletes and program.
4. Encourages ongoing meaningful analysis.
5. Assists in identification of "Stretch" targets.
6. Assists in the mechanism for internal communication within the sport.
7. Creates a culture within the sport and the athletes to continually strive and move toward best practice
8. Provides focus and meaning as an organizational team.

Performance Benchmark Flow



1. Set Objectives

HPD (High Performance Director), team, individual coaches. Performance Planner

2. Plan

KPI's (Key Performance Indicators), i.e. best in class, results for age, class, regionally, provincially, nationally, pts required

3. Collect

accumulate data, observe best practice

4. Analyze

analyze data, identify actions to close or increase the gap against competitors develop specific improvement programs and congruent actions and behaviors

5. Adapt

If you would like to explore how the data collected is organized into the Performance Benchmarking tool please contact mponton@cscpacific.ca

Powering Sport Performance

The Canadian Sport Centre Pacific, in partnership with the network of Canadian Sport Centres and PacificSport Centres, delivers sport performance programs to help athletes and coaches win medals for Canada. Working in support of our national and provincial sport partners, the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific is creating a stronger system for the development of athletes, coaches, performance enhancement teams and sport performance facilities. www.cscpacific.ca