

## Local Best Practices

A practice is a set and sequence of actions to achieve specific outputs or outcomes. The Local Best Practices (LBP) Tool (which is also known as the Best Practices Design & Analysis Tool) can be used to enable individuals and teams to analyse current practices and design best and better practices.

Using the tool you can:

- Design effective practices to achieve target outcomes and then compare them to current practices, thereby establishing benchmarks and identifying opportunities for better practices,
- Or, if no current practices exist, you can use this tool to design best practices and then manage the implementation of these practices.

Below are the steps to follow when using the Local Best Practices Tool to analyse a situation for opportunities for improvement.

1. Identify and assemble the participants (no more than 15) who are interested in the focus and want to improve profit. Set up a venue so that participants can be seated around the recording framework shown in Figure 1. Set up a whole electronic whiteboard, wall or computer-projected screen with the recording framework.
2. Develop a SMARTT focus, principles and assumptions based on the 'need' (use the SMARTT Focus Tool). Then develop target outcomes and outputs.
3. Ask: 'What are Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for achieving impact on the focus?' or 'What do you have to have to achieve the focus?' Generate a list of CSFs and space them down the column marked Critical Success Factors. Check over the list to ensure that they are all relevant to the focus. CSFs should be stated as outcomes.
4. For each CSF ask: 'To ensure the CSF is in place what is it necessary to do?' Key Practices (KPs) always start with an active verb eg develop, list, negotiate, send etc. List these in the Key Practices (KPs) column for the relevant CSF. In this step you need to distinguish whether you are talking about current practice, current best practice or an opportunity for improved practice. Clarify which you are talking about and note whether items are current, best or opportunities for better practice.
5. Ask: 'To assess the level of achievement of the CSF, what measure of performance will it be necessary to have?' Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be stated as outputs.
6. Record any additional thinking regarding issues, constraints or ideas that has been prompted by the discussion. Use the last column of the framework.
7. Now that you've thought through the practices needed to achieve the focus, ask people to consider opportunities for improving current practices. The clarifications that you made about each Key Practice as current practice, current best practice or an opportunity for improved practice will be useful now. As well as improvements, you may find some completely new practices to implement. List the opportunities on an electronic whiteboard, wall or computer-projected screen where people can easily see both the LBP and the growing list of opportunities.
8. After the meeting, get the framework and list of opportunities typed as soon as possible and send them to participants. If possible, gather people back for a follow-up meeting to finalise agreed 'best practices' and lists of opportunities. Alternatively, this step can be accomplished by email. Ask participants to provide further input on the thinking and practices, and come up with further opportunities for improvement. Document the enhanced set of best practices and opportunities.

A recording framework for use with the Local Best Practices Tool is shown on the next page, and an example of the framework partially completed for a restaurant is shown on the page following.

**Figure 1** A recording framework for use with the Local Best Practices Tool.

Need/Opportunity/Intent										
..... .....										
Focus										
..... .....										
Target Outcomes	Target Outputs									
1. 2. 3. etc	1. 2. 3. etc									
Principles										
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•	•	•								
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Critical Success Factors	Key Practices	Key Performance Indicators	Thinking							
1.	• • •	• • •	• • •							
2.	• • •	• • •	• • •							
3.	• • •	• • •	• • •							
4. etc.	• • •	• • •	• • •							

**Figure 2** Example of the Local Best Practices Tool using a restaurant example (only partially completed).

<b>Need/Opportunity</b>			
To achieve greater throughput given the customer base of this café district. The restaurant's pricing needs to remain competitive with the other cafes in the district.			
<b>Focus:</b>			
To improve profit by 20% in one year, by improving throughput, specifically by achieving a 10% improvement in the number of return customers to the restaurant within 3 months, by meeting or exceeding customer satisfaction standards.			
<b>Target Outcomes</b>		<b>Target Outputs</b>	
1. 10% increase in return customers	2. Customer satisfaction standards met or exceeded	3. Excellent word-of-mouth and less than 2% of diners complain	1. Documented customer satisfaction standards 2. Documented mechanisms for getting feedback from customers 3. Results of customer feedback and measures of return custom
<b>Principles</b>			
1. Customer service/customer satisfaction	2. Responsibility	3. Teamwork	4. Quality 5. Efficiency and effectiveness 6. Feedback 7. Continuous improvement 8. Competition 9. Recognition and reward
<b>Critical Success Factors</b>	<b>Key Practices</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Thinking</b>
1. High quality specifications for customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish criteria for customer satisfaction (O)</li> <li>Get customer feedback regarding relevance of proposed criteria and measurements (O)</li> <li>Improve the criteria and measurements based on the feedback from customers (O)</li> <li>Communicate specifications to all relevant people (O)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Above 90% of participants score the specifications as 'high quality'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check out websites for useful criteria</li> <li>May have to give gifts etc to people who provide feedback</li> </ul>
2. All staff equipped and motivated to meet or exceed the specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train all staff in understanding criteria, practices and processes needed to meet or exceed criteria (O)</li> <li>Establish recognition and reward mechanisms (O)</li> <li>Train staff in teamwork (C)</li> <li>Provide technical training as required (C)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff score above 90% for capacity, confidence and motivation to meet and exceed specifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some current staff may not have capacity</li> <li>May have to encourage good staff from other restaurants to work for us</li> </ul>