

Best Business Practices: Guidelines and Tools for Team Planning and Learning Faster Than Your Competitors

Alan G. Thomas

Larry Kennedy

Ralph L. LoVuolo

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As deftly organized as it is practical, this could well be one of the more pertinent, valuable resources available to small-business owners.

Best Business Practices is not a traditional business book; rather, it is a uniquely formatted management guidebook divided into two distinct but interrelated parts. Part 1, “The Concise Guide to Innovative Management,” revolves around “fifteen principles of innovative management,” each of which is highlighted and discussed in brief, high-impact chapters packed with informed and relevant advice. Incorporated into the chapters is a concept called “triple loop learning”; key elements for “creating a climate of learning” are marked throughout the chapters with a graphic symbol. These elements include such conditions as “Treat your key people as full partners with respect to the seeking of purpose and direction,” “Lead by example by being open and intellectually honest,” and “Encourage people at all levels to challenge the status quo.”

Part 2 of the book, “The Business Knowledge Navigator,” is really a collection of tools—in effect, surveys presented in sections that cover competitive analysis, company organization and management, marketing and sales, customer service, production and operations, financial and information management, and multilocation, retail businesses. Each of these seven sections includes instructional text, numerous examples, and guided questions to be answered. While the authors acknowledge the Navigator may appear to be similar to a management audit, they suggest that it is more of an “‘organizational learning mechanism’ that can be used to institutionalize a habitual learning and improvement process, through the proactive assessment of a company’s business practices and plans.”

By dividing the book into two parts, the authors, each of whom is a business expert in his own right, have created a fast-track learning scenario. The small-business owner is first immersed in sound management principles and then gains access to the specific tools needed to rapidly assess his or her organization’s capabilities.

Best Business Practices is as deftly organized as it is practical. It could well be one of the more pertinent, valuable resources available to small-business owners who want to do more in less time and still achieve outstanding results.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (Winter 2016)

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