

What Makes a Program Best Practices?

For your information

The criteria by which a particular program was designated as a *Best Practices Program* was dependent upon the essential values driving the selection and retention of development programs. These criteria are listed here and detailed in the IMA presentation (1996).

1. Do we want this program to be a model for others?
2. Does it carry out a mission or key objective for the company? If it does, how well does the program perform against the objective?
3. Can we have ownership over the core process and can we build an internal competency for the process?
4. What are the relative costs to implement?
5. What measurement methods can we use to determine what we are getting relative to costs?
6. Can the program be cloned across the organization? If so, by what level of personnel?
7. Can it be tailored to meet specific needs of individual populations and specific program objectives?

The Four Phases of a Best Practices Mentoring Initiative

The 14 Key Elements of a Best Practices Program are easier to implement when divided into FOUR broad areas of activity, or Phases. These Phases make it easier to organize the necessary activities to bring a mentoring initiative into being, or revitalize one that is already in existence. These FOUR areas comprise the major components of the model. They are color coded for easier reference. Study the Flowchart on the next page to see how the elements fit together. A sample timeline is provided in the section designated as Key # 5 in the Best Practices Guidebook.

| 4 Key Phases | |
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| <p>Phase I Start-up Keys 1 - 6</p> | <p>This Phase forms the foundation for building the Initiative. This process is heavily front-end loaded from the perspective of time for personnel to meet, research, write proposals, gather materials, and brief the major stakeholders. Teams typically spend from 3 to 6 months in this phase alone. The results are well-worth the effort.</p> |
| <p>Phase II Implementation Keys 7 - 10</p> | <p>This phase begins the process of bringing the employees, your clients, into the program. Careful attention must be paid to communication, handouts, and other materials. Programs typically last for one year. This phase takes approximately 14 to 16 months to implement.</p> |
| <p>Phase III Monitoring and Evaluation Keys 11 - 12</p> | <p>This is a key and critical phase for any program, especially the first time through. Checkpoints take place at critical stages of partnership development: at the 3, 6 and 12 month points. Checkpoints measure outcomes for the mentoring partners and the program as a whole.</p> |
| <p>Phase IV Transition and Expansion Keys 13 - 14</p> | <p>Once the data has been gathered and analyzed, programs typically need retooling and redesign of some components. Starting up in new venues or parts of the organization means going back through the 4 Phases as described. Expansion is less complex because all of the materials and personnel are in place.</p> |

The Best Practices Mentoring Process Flowchart

