



Business best practice and the power of business information

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Identifying what business best practice means is very much up to the individual business and is likely to be described as looking after matters of ethics and integrity, good customer relations, supporting the staff and maintaining good standards of service, accountability and fiscal compliance. Others might include management styles, productivity and good economic strategies.

And most would agree that best practice is leadership, goal setting, teamwork, maintaining a culture of compliance, supervision, discipline, support, training, accountability and responsibility? What if all of these were the focus of a new way of managing business information that provided everything that was needed to manage the business for success and peace of mind?

And the very last thing you might think is at the heart of best practice is what you do with your business information. If you have no order and control over what happens on your business computer network you have no control over your business and no control over best practice and you might as well forget about it.

Best practice is available through an intelligent network that uses Business Information Organization (BIO) to create the kind of framework that allows for everyone in the business to have access to what they need to achieve the outcomes the business needs. If you turn those best outcomes upside down, what is at the bottom of these is only ever going to best practice. Did you know that way that business information is not controlled, organized and used is the major determinant of best practice?

This is not about the way that your computers and peripherals communicate and it is not about any software. It is not about having the newest and the best equipment. It is not about hiring smart consultants and contractors to take over what should be the role of the business. It is about the power of content and the context of that content.



To explain this approach to best practice there is the example of a new office goods company. They had purchased a new warehouse and were planning to sell their goods online and in a large new showroom at the business end of town. They hired a new business management consultant with links to software companies who advised that they have two ways of managing their stock. Option 1 was to leave everything on pallets and use barcodes to locate the right pallet to get the stock to fill an order. Option 2 was to unload the pallets and store all of the same items together. Both options would be supported by software and equipment.

They chose Option 1 because they could unload the trucks faster and by having a pallet friendly storage system, get a more even distribution of bulk throughout the warehouse. It went well for a short while but they suddenly found that they had to hire more people to work in the warehouse running around to different stacks to fill a single order of multiple stock of the same item and when the computer that managed the warehouse was hit with a virus, everything stopped.

You would be highly unlikely to have chosen Option 1 but the point is that business information is like stock and you may be unwittingly using that scatter option for your business information. The more information is scattered and the more the content is hidden, the less it is available for the business. If that business information includes policy, training, resources and business knowledge the business can be in dire straits or just not doing what it should be doing.

So what if the most important stock of the business was its information content and what if it was no longer hidden and available to achieve the best practice you so desperately want to achieve? Look at your information now. How much do you know about the way it is managed? Where is your policy? How accessible is it and who created it? How often is it reviewed and updated and who does that review?

Look at your own information. Do you organize it at all or is everything bundled in my documents, my pictures, my albums? Is everything haphazard or loosely organized because you tell yourself you are the only person who needs to know what is there and where it is? If you create new folders do you think hard about how they are named and sited? Are there times when you can't find anything? Is there time when you waste time and money looking for it?



The bad news is that the way that you don't organize your information is exactly the same way that you everyone on your staff can't and won't organize the information they collect or create and store as they work. And the even worse news is that they are quite sure that they are the only ones who should know where it is and what it is. And even worse than that, they think it belongs to them and will delete it without asking anyone whether the business wants to keep it. So how does Option 2 which is about sorting and control sound when it comes to business information and protecting what belongs to the business in a place where it can be seen?

If you were able to make policy, training, resources and business knowledge (current and past) available where and when it is needed, you will have what you need for leadership, goal setting, teamwork, a culture of compliance, supervision, discipline, support, training, accountability and responsibility. You will have best practice leading to productivity and business success. Can you claim that this is available to you now?

Don't let the IT industry keep dictating Option 1 for your business information content. They have a one-size-fits-all solution to your business information needs and they won't be in your business to see how chaos slows it down and sometimes brings it to a grinding halt.

Option 2 is about the Intelligent Network and Business Information Organization (BIO) and it will cost you nothing to set it up. It is time to find out how it works and why it will work in your business. If you do nothing more than creating a network place for information based on what the business is and what it does you will be on a winner.

If, after reading this article you start asking questions about policy in your business you will start to move forward with velocity.

It is time to reject the 'my documents' solution and the promise of the virtual organizers in favor of 'real' order and control. It is time investigate the potential of the intelligent network and business information organization. It is time to explore best practice in information that got lost along the way and take back the control of your business.

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