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WHAT ARE YOUR 'BEST PRACTICES'?

By Robert J. Tamasy

In today's business and professional world, we often hear companies talk about "best practices" that can distinguish them from their competitors. One definition of this term is "a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark...a 'best' practice can evolve to become better as improvements are discovered."

There is wisdom for any organization to assess its best practices, not only for how it compares with others, but also to determine how it can enhance what it is already doing. Perhaps you are involved some way in doing that where you work. But I wonder if it would be wise for each of us to evaluate our "best practices" as individuals as well.

Years ago I had been working for a non-profit for several years when a top executive I was meeting with asked how I envisioned my future with the organization. The question caught me by surprise, because I was not intending to "climb the corporate ladder." In my role as a writer and editor, I felt fulfilled, confident I was exactly where I was best suited for supporting the organization's goals and objectives.

At that time, my "best practice" was to understand what I was most qualified to do and what I found most meaningful and rewarding. To strive for a more prestigious role would have meant doing less of what I enjoyed and assuming more administrative responsibilities. While I recognized those as noble pursuits, I had a clear understanding that was not the course I wanted to take. As Oswald Chambers, one of my favorite writers, stated many years ago, "Good is the enemy of the best." A promotion would have been a good thing, but for me it would not have been the *best* thing.

I have found the Bible speaks directly to this idea of "best practices" for us as individuals. Here are several examples:

We come into this life with a special purpose. It is humbling to consider that even before we were born, God had a special plan in mind for our lives. What we do – and what we are good at doing – is not an accident. *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made"* (Psalm 139:13-14). *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Ephesians 2:10).

We function best when working in concert with others. In any organization, some people have more visible, prestigious roles, but every job is important for achieving the corporate mission. *"But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body"* (1 Corinthians 12:18-20).

We work most effectively when using our gifts and abilities to the fullest. When we are using the skills and capabilities that are uniquely and innately ours, we can perform our responsibilities with much enthusiasm and passion. In doing so, we will receive recognition for the quality of our work – and we will be able to do more of it.

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“Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men”
 (Proverbs 22:29).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the term “best practices,” what comes to your mind?

2. Do you agree with idea that “best practices” can be applied to individuals, as well as companies and organizations? Why or why not?

3. What is your reaction to Oswald Chambers’ statement, “Good is the enemy of the best”? How might that apply to your life, either professionally or personally?

4. How do you respond to the assertion that we each have a special, divinely ordained plan and purpose for our lives?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 12:11; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Colossians 3:17, 23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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