

Benchmarking for competitive advantage

One of the hottest concepts in business today, benchmarking is the process of systematically identifying, analysing and adapting industries' best practices to improve an organisation's performance. Everyone is talking about it but few are getting it right. This guide shows you how.

Practical, concise and easy to

read, *Benchmarking for competitive advantage* explains what good benchmarking is and demonstrates how to plan and execute a benchmarking study and develop an plan for implementing improvements based on the results.

Top benchmarking practitioner Robert Boxwell Jr walks you through the process, using graphics

to illustrate such crucial tasks as identifying the activities to benchmark, choosing your benchmarking team, defining key factors to measure, selecting target organisations, collecting and analysing data and much more.

Brimming with real-life examples of best and worst benchmarking practices, you'll discover how companies like AT&T, IBM and XEROX have benchmarked their way to superior performance — and learn how to avoid the common mistakes that have caused others to fail.

Whether you're a quality professional, technical or business manager or engineer, this nuts-and-bolts guide will arm you with everything you need to put benchmarking into immediate action and make dramatic improvements in your company's performance. ■

Book your place now!

If you can write in a concise, entertaining way, can cope with deadlines and like the idea of reviewing books, *inCite* would like to hear from you. We're building a list of reviewers to look at the diverse range of titles that arrive in the editorial mailbox.

The rewards

- A sense of satisfaction from having written an acutely observed commentary.
- The envy and admiration of your colleagues and friends.
- And although it's probably not at all important to you, you get to keep the books you review — unless you work at National Office!

The challenges

- Reviews must be pared to the bone — no longer than 300 words, unless you're specifically asked for a longer piece.
- You must submit the reviews within our deadlines, which normally will vary from two to four weeks.
- You can't pick and choose the books you review. We will always try to send you titles you will enjoy reviewing but barring exceptional circumstances, you'll have to take

the occasional rough with the mostly smooth.

- The managing editor reserves the right to edit, rewrite and delete or if necessary, to withhold the review, although this probably will never happen because you're such a talented reviewer.

Before you rush to the phone or power up your PC, there are a few items of information we need from you, apart from your name and the background to your modest but doubtless unassailable talent as a potential reviewer:

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Address to which we should send you review items.

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Any other topics in which you have an interest and expertise. We'd also like you to be an ALIA member.

That's all. If you would like to be brought to book in the nicest possible way, contact Jack Docherty, in writing only and by letter or fax at ALIA National Office, PO Box E441, Queen Victoria Terrace, Canberra, ACT 2600, facsimile (06) 282 2249. ■

Matter of ethics

The clash between the public right to know and public safety is just one of the fundamental conflicts raised by authors John Hurst and Sally White in *Ethics and the Australian news media*, claimed by the publisher to be the first definitive study of its kind.

Today's aggressive investigative newspaper reporting, pervasive television cameras, global village technologies and fierce commercial competition make the ethical questions of communication more urgent now than at any time since the advent of the Gutenberg press.

Hurst and White, both of whom have distinguished journalistic careers as reporters, editors and academics, explore the concept of ethical conduct, apply it to journalism then draw on a wealth of local examples where the news media's conduct was challenged.

They examine the attempts to codify the principles — from the policies of press councils to the journalists' own codes of ethics — and show where these are inadequate, muddled or honoured in the breach. They also put forward some provocative ideas for reform.

From Macmillan Education. RRP \$64.95 hardback, \$32.95 paperback. ■

Book briefs

Did you know...?

Australians were responsible for the world's first electric drill, car radio, furniture castors, inflatable aircraft escape slide and the bionic ear? More than 300 Australian 'world-first' innovations are the subject of *Tomorrow's world, the Australian initiative*. Illustrated with colour photos it has been selected by the NSW Board of Studies as recommended reading for teachers of years 11 and 12 design and technology curriculum. Distributor McGraw-Hill. RRP \$39.95. ■

Good toy guide

Widely recognised as Australia's most comprehensive listing of quality toys, the 1994-1995 edition of *The good toy guide* will be launched at the end of September. Published by Hampden Press it details toys and games evaluated and tested by the Australian and New Zealand Toy Library Associations. Toys are selected for their quality, play and educational value. Each toy is appraised by parents and professionals who have observed children playing with the toy. RRP \$8.95. ■