MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGERS

Real best practices and false good ideas: how to avoid shooting yourself in the foot

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Not all practices are equal: some sustainably improve performance, others silently degrade it. This article helps distinguish real best practices from counterproductive reflexes among business managers.

The Importance of Identifying Best Practices

In IT service companies and consulting firms, identifying and applying best practices is essential for improving the performance of Business Managers. Indeed, the foremost of all best practices is to have them!

These proven methods allow for better navigation in a complex commercial and managerial environment. Unlike a rule, which is fixed and rigid, a best practice is an adaptable framework that leaves room for flexibility. A rule imposes a behavior without considering the specifics of the context, whereas a best practice is based on experience and adjusts according to needs and situations.

Rules are often designed to provide a uniform response to various situations, but this does not always align with the reality of the Business Manager's role. Every client, every consultant, and every project may require a different approach. A best practice, on the contrary, allows for the flexibility to adapt methods according to the specifics of the context while being based on solid, proven foundations.

What are the characteristics of a best practice?

A best practice is distinguished by several key elements that ensure its long-term effectiveness. Here are some of its essential characteristics:

Based on experience: A best practice is the result of feedback from real situations. It has proven its effectiveness and is therefore reusable in similar contexts.

Modelable, reproducible, and scalable: For a practice to be qualified as "good," it must be able to be modeled and successfully repeated by other Business Managers or teams in similar contexts. This means it is not just effective for one person or team but can be deployed more broadly.

Measurable: It is important that the best practice can be assessed using measurable and thus objective criteria. This allows for tracking its impact and adjusting actions if necessary.

Evolving: A best practice is never set in stone. It must be able to evolve over time as tools, markets, and customer or consultant expectations change.

Example 1: A Best Commercial Practice

A client requested a Business Manager for a project requiring the support of a consultant. After several searches, no suitable profile was found within the given timeframe. In this case, a best practice is to regularly inform the client, even in the absence of an immediate solution. Silence could be interpreted as a lack of follow-up or interest, whereas transparency builds trust. Thus, even in the absence of immediate results, the client relationship is preserved, and the Business Manager knows when to stop searching.

Example 2: A Best Recruitment Practice

Before placing a candidate on a mission, a Business Manager must ensure that the candidate has not already been proposed by another company for the same mission. Informing the candidate of the actions taken and verifying the situation helps to avoid duplicates and protect the reputation of the company and the candidate. This preventive measure is a best practice that reinforces the credibility and rigor of the recruitment process.

False Best Practices

Some practices, although considered "good," may actually hide harmful effects in the long term. These false best practices give the illusion of positive short-term results, but their negative impacts, often invisible, can be devastating. Let’s consider two examples.

Example 1: The CV Pushing Approach

The "CV push" practice involves sending massive resumes of consultants to potential clients, even when they have not expressed an immediate need.

At first glance, this method may seem effective, as it can sometimes generate positive responses from clients interested in an unexpected profile. However, its negative effects often remain invisible in the short term. Many clients, annoyed by this unsolicited and impersonal approach, may end up blacklisting the sender or ignoring further solicitations.

This type of behavior damages the company's reputation in the long run, although it may not be immediately visible in performance metrics.

Example 2: KPIs, Between Good and Bad Practice

The use of KPIs is a good practice in itself. Having clear KPIs and achieving them helps to structure and monitor commercial efforts. However, focusing solely on KPIs without considering context and quality of actions is a bad practice. When management and leaders are disconnected from the field, it can lead to deviations: some Business Managers, to meet their numerical targets, may adopt behaviors that skew reality. For example:

- They conduct interviews with underqualified candidates solely to meet the weekly quota.
- They record standard client follow-ups as new prospecting meetings in the CRM, thus distorting the nature of their actions.
- They send irrelevant resumes to maintain pace, which can degrade client relationships.

These deviations show how a good practice – the use of KPIs – can become a false best practice when disconnected from the field. KPIs should guide activity and not become an end in themselves, risking the quality of interactions and long-term reputation.

The best practices are essential tools for structuring and optimizing the work of Business Managers. They are based on experience, modelable, measurable, and evolving. However, it is crucial to remain vigilant against false best practices, which may seem effective in the short term but cause invisible long-term negative effects. The key is always to maintain a balance between immediate results and the quality of work, while considering the reality on the ground.

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