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Industrial benchmarking for competitive advantage

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Abstract: This paper deals with several different aspects of the concept of benchmarking in order to give the audience a basic understanding of what benchmarking is, how it is done, and what it can give in terms of improvement results. The main issues covered are definitions of benchmarking and explanations of the different types of benchmarking that exist and what implications these have, both in terms of improvement potential, difficulties, and suitability. Furthermore, ethical and legal aspects linked to benchmarking and the benchmarking wheel, a benchmarking process model explaining the phases and steps of the benchmarking study. A relatively large portion of the paper will be devoted to explaining how to carry out a benchmarking study and various pitfalls that might be encountered. The remainder of the paper will discuss the improvement results that companies that have used benchmarking actually have achieved. These range from phenomenal successes to downright failures, and the paper will explore conclusions derived from research on the topic.

Keywords: Benchmarking, industrial competitiveness, TQM

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