

Newsletter



May/June, 2007

Upgraded Technology Platform

For several months, BPS programmers have been busy designing and implementing an entirely new technology platform. Built around the more powerful SQL Server 2005 database, the upgraded platform will feature greater speed, functionality and stability. Unique features such as output validation controls will also be incorporated into all applications to help ensure the accuracy of derived (computed) metrics. The installation of the new platform should be completed by the first week of July.

NJAMHA Award

BPS President Paul Lefkovitz had the distinct honor of receiving an award for “Leadership in Fostering Best Practices” from the New Jersey Association of Mental Health Agencies. The award was tendered at the organization’s annual conference on May 3. Debra Wentz, NJAMHA Chief Executive Officer, presented the plaque at the awards luncheon.

Benchmarking in Your Daily Life

Many people do not realize that benchmarking is encountered in many facets of daily life. For example, if you are a sports fan, you are literally bombarded by benchmarks. Rankings of players and teams, based on a plethora of performance variables, are very commonplace. New mothers routinely receive “growth charts” to compare the length and weight of their babies with that of others. In school settings, SAT, ACT and achievement tests are all benchmarked, providing percentile rankings of academic performance and aptitude. The instinct for comparisons is an innate human trait and that need is often satisfied through benchmarked data.

Benchmarking vs. Research

Benchmarking and formal empirical research are related, but very different activities. The question is often raised as to how they differ. Benchmarking is an active, ongoing process, while research generally has a defined end point, usually demarcated by the dissemination of a report. The sample sizes associated with research and benchmarking may also differ. Formalized research requires a large enough sample to allow for generalization. It is not uncommon for research sample sizes to number in the thousands or more. In contrast, benchmarking often draws upon very modest sample sizes, often less than 10. Moreover, classical benchmarking models simply involve a sample size of two—one organization comparing its practices with another regarded as a leader in the field. The rigor, and often the expense, associated with formal empirical research extend well beyond benchmarking because of what is possible and practical under “laboratory conditions”. Benchmarking is “real world research” carried out in applied settings where the controls are much more limited. Most importantly, however, formalized research attempts to provide answers, while benchmarking seeks to provide ideas and hypotheses to consider. Therefore, while these two disciplines share a number of commonalities, they also differ in many respects.

Contact Us!

We want to create an active and vibrant community of individuals and organizations interested in benchmarking, performance management, and outcomes. If you have thoughts, ideas, suggestions, tips, or questions, we’d like to hear from you. Please feel free to contact us at info@bpsys.org.