
Strategic Benchmarking and Gap Analysis for Senior Leaders Training Course

11 – 15 January 2027
Amsterdam





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Programme Summary

Strategic benchmarking and gap analysis is a five-day training course for senior managers at strategic level, culminating in a benchmarking study plan and improvement roadmap for their own organisation. Many organisations compare themselves with others informally, using data that is not like-for-like and conclusions that never reach the improvement agenda. The approach follows a structured method from choosing what to benchmark through partner selection, data normalisation and gap analysis to adapting practices. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in strategic benchmarking and gap analysis.

The Business Case

Without reliable external reference points, targets are set by habit and performance gaps remain invisible until competitors or service users expose them. Structured benchmarking shows how far performance trails comparable organisations, why the gap exists and which practices close it, so that investment goes where the evidence points.

- **Cost and Productivity:** Improve as unit costs and cycle times are compared on a normalised basis and the largest gaps are addressed first.
- **Service and Quality Levels:** Rise as practices behind superior results are studied and adapted rather than copied.
- **Target Credibility:** Strengthens as performance targets are anchored in external evidence approved by the board.

Principles and Evidence Base

- **APQC Benchmarking Methodology:** Structures the plan, collect, analyse and adapt phases followed from Session 1 to Session 5.
- **APQC Benchmarking Code of Conduct:** Sets the rules on legality, confidentiality and reciprocity applied to partner exchanges in Session 2.
- **APQC Process Classification Framework PCF:** Provides a common process language for like-for-like comparison in Session 3.
- **Camp's 12-Stage Benchmarking Process:** Frames the move from findings to communicated goals and action plans in Sessions 4 and 5.



Intended Participants

- Leaders accountable for organisational performance, targets and improvement priorities.
- Heads of strategy, excellence or performance units who commission comparative studies.
- Senior quality managers responsible for process improvement programmes.
- Directors who report performance against peers to boards or ministries.

The programme serves government entities, energy and utilities, healthcare providers and financial services organisations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to select the type of benchmarking that fits a strategic question: internal, competitive, functional or generic.
2. Participants will be able to design a benchmarking study with scope, process definitions and performance measures.
3. Participants will be able to evaluate potential benchmarking partners and conduct exchanges under a recognised code of conduct.
4. Participants will be able to construct normalised comparisons that adjust for scale, mix and context.
5. Participants will be able to diagnose the causes of performance gaps and distinguish practices that can be adapted.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise improvement actions and targets in a roadmap linked to the gap analysis.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Foundations of Strategic Benchmarking and Gap Analysis

What should be benchmarked, and which type of comparison answers the strategic question?

- Performance, Process and Strategic Benchmarking
- Internal, Competitive, Functional and Generic Comparisons
- APQC Benchmarking Methodology Phases
- Selecting Critical Success Factors to Benchmark
- Benchmarking Readiness and Sponsorship

Day 2: Planning the Study and Choosing Partners

How is a benchmarking study scoped and who should the organisation compare against?

- Study Charter, Scope and Team Roles
- Partner Identification and Screening Criteria
- APQC Benchmarking Code of Conduct
- Benchmarking Networks, Databases and Site Visits
- Questionnaire and Interview Guide Design



Day 3: Measures, Data Collection and Normalisation

How are like-for-like data collected and made comparable?

- Process Definitions Using the APQC PCF
- KPI Definitions and Data Dictionaries
- Normalisation for Scale, Mix and Context
- Data Validation and Outlier Treatment
- Confidentiality and Data Sharing Agreements

Day 4: Gap Analysis and Learning From Leading Practice

How large is each gap, why does it exist and which practices could close it?

- Quantifying Current and Projected Gaps
- Root Cause Analysis of Performance Gaps
- Practice Profiling of Higher Performers
- Adapting Practices to Local Context
- Camp's Process From Findings to Functional Goals

Day 5: Applying Strategic Benchmarking

How are findings turned into targets, actions and a repeatable benchmarking cycle?

- Gap Review of a Participant Organisation
- Target Setting From Benchmark Evidence
- Improvement Action Plan and Ownership
- Peer Challenge of Benchmarking Plans
- Benchmarking Study Plan and Improvement Roadmap Presentation

Methodology

The programme combines case analysis with data workshops. Participants examine benchmarking studies from utilities, hospitals, public services and banks, work with sample datasets to normalise measures and quantify gaps, and apply each step to a benchmarking question from their own organisation, with peers reviewing scope, partners and conclusions.

- Suggested activity: Choosing the benchmarking type and partners for three strategic questions.
- Suggested activity: Normalising maintenance cost data from five plants of different sizes.
- Suggested activity: Profiling the practices behind a higher-performing call centre.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes a benchmarking study plan and improvement roadmap. It contains the strategic question, benchmarking type, process definitions and measures, partner shortlist, data collection plan, a provisional gap analysis and prioritised improvement actions with targets, ready to present to the executive team.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is strategic benchmarking and gap analysis suitable for leaders new to benchmarking?

Yes. It suits senior managers and heads of strategy, quality or performance units. It assumes management experience and basic familiarity with performance indicators, but no prior benchmarking study.

Which models underpin strategic benchmarking and gap analysis?

It draws on the APQC Benchmarking Methodology and Code of Conduct, the APQC Process Classification Framework and Camp's 12-stage benchmarking process.

How is the strategic benchmarking study plan and improvement roadmap used at work?

You take back a plan your executive team can approve to launch a study, with a provisional gap analysis and improvement actions to refine as data arrives.

How does strategic benchmarking and gap analysis differ from general KPI management programmes?

It focuses on external comparison, partner exchanges and learning from other organisations' practices, rather than designing internal scorecards and indicators.