

LESSON PLAN

BEST PRACTICES

CORPORATE LEARNING COURSE

“TEAMBUILDING” BLOCK

SEMINAR 3.6

SCOPE:

What is a best practice? And, is it worth my time to seek them out? This seminar answers these basic questions.

This seminar has three goals: first, to help students define a best practice. The second goal is to build value in best practices for the students: to get students to want to find and use best practices. Finally, the third goal is to give the students some practical tools to use in finding and evaluating best practices for use within their units.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Explain the concept of, “best practices.”
2. Discuss how using best practices can be helpful to a CAP unit.
3. Discuss a methodology for using best practices at the unit.

DURATION: 50 minutes

SPECIAL NOTES:

During Main Point 3, many potential sources for finding best practices will be identified. We encourage you to have live internet capability for this segment. Develop a short scenario whereby the students will work with you to find and use the web resources to find a best practice.

The scenario doesn't have to be complicated; some ideas include: how to encourage cadet student pilots; how to encourage cadets to become senior members; finding new AE resources to better engage the cadets; or how to better track CAPF 108 mission expenses. In fact, you can develop a scenario for any of CAP's specialty areas... there's that much out there.

This scenario will require your preparation prior to the class. In developing the scenario, be sure to research best practice

sources to find material to share. Have a couple of good answers before you walk into the classroom. Depending on the length of the scenario, you may want to have two or three quick scenarios in your pocket.

If your classroom does not have live web site capability; provide the students a list of web site addresses for the items listed in Main Point 3. We have not provided this for you because web site addresses can change frequently. In asking you to prepare the list prior to the school, you can ensure that the addresses provided are current.

INTRODUCTION: (1 minute)

Please state your topic and introduce yourself.

ATTENTION: (2 minutes with MOTIVATION AND TRANSITION)

We've all heard the phrase "best practice." For some, it's a buzz word, for others, it's an important tool in doing their work.

MOTIVATION:

Civil Air Patrol believes that using best practices makes the members' job easier: because they often won't have to develop a "new" solution to a problem. Others have already gone through the process of finding the solution, testing the solution, and making it work.

TRANSITION TO OVERVIEW:

We intuitively know what a best practice is; we can easily take it from the phrase itself. We also intuitively know what to do with a best practice once we think we know where to get it. But, in CAP, we need to take a step beyond intuitive understanding and application; because we are a \$22 million, 900 vehicle, 550 airplane, and 55,000 member company. While the people in this room and the units they represent are a small fraction of this very large corporation; what we do has tremendous impact on CAP as a whole.

OVERVIEW:

In this hour, we are going to discuss the concept of best practices in depth. First, we are going to define what a best practice is. Next, we will explore the utility of best practices: in essence answer the question, "why should I take the time to use it?" Finally, we will look at some practical tools to find and evaluate best practices so you can more effectively incorporate them into your unit's operations.

MAIN POINT 1: Concept of BEST PRACTICES (7 minutes)

LECTURE ITEM:

QUESTION: What would be a good definition of “best practice?”

Anticipated Response:

Will vary, and likely mirror the definition(s) provided in the student handout.

LECTURE ITEM:

QUESTION:

Please tell me about a time when you sought out a best practice. The example can be from business, CAP, or family life.

Anticipated Responses:

Responses will vary, and the instructor will respond positively to examples presented.

(Instructor Note): If students do not respond to the question, ask them to respond to these examples:

1. “John, where did you go to get your brakes done?”
2. “Susan, my cell phone company is charging me too much, which company do you use?”

While these are simple examples, they illustrate the concept of seeking out a best practice... finding a better answer to question, a better product, or a better approach.

TRANSITION:

CAP has a lot of guidance which talks about what to do, how to do it, and why to do it. These are our regulations, manuals, pamphlets, policy letters, standard operating procedures, operations plans, and operating instructions. These documents have great utility; because they provide us with the tools for operating our business, keeping our members safe, and ensuring, for instance, that the van or airplane maintained in Montana will be cared for to the same level as a van or plane in Rhode Island. But these documents cannot address every issue, nor should they. They merely represent the foundation of what can and should be done.

MAIN POINT 2: The Utility of BEST PRACTICES (10 minutes)

LECTURE ITEM:

Best practices uses at its foundation our rules, regulations, and policies; and builds on them. Units tend to have similar challenges to overcome and opportunities on which to capitalize. With over 65

years of history, CAP units and members over the years have already addressed many of the challenged and developed ways to capitalize on opportunities.

QUESTION: What do you think are some of the challenges that all CAP units (in your wing, region, or country) share?

Anticipated Responses:

1. Recruiting and Retention
2. Fundraising
3. Finding space to meet
4. Getting a vehicle or a plane
5. Maintaining vehicles or planes
6. Training cadets
7. Finding time to train
8. Getting cadets to activities
9. etc.

Instructor Response: Responses will vary, and the instructor will respond positively to the examples presented.

QUESTION: What do you think are some of the opportunities on which all CAP units (wing, region or national) can capitalize?

Anticipated Responses:

1. New staff or squadron members.
2. The receipt of a new vehicle or van.
3. The development of new cadet officers and NCOs.
4. Upgraded computer capability.
5. A newly minted ground team or communicator team.
6. A pilot with new ES qualifications.
7. A pilot who can qualify to fly cadet orientation flights.
8. An influx of new/used uniform items.
9. etc.

Instructor Response: The instructor will respond positively to the responses presented.

(Instructor Note): It may be easier for students to identify challenges rather than opportunities. Be ready to assist the students in identifying opportunities based on your experiences within your wing.

LECTURE ITEM:

Best practices can help units overcome challenges and enhance opportunities. Our units really don't have to operate alone. Some of our units have more distance between them for instance, but they are only a phone call or e-mail away. The wing is only a phone call or e-mail away.

We don't have to solve our problems alone. We can find people who are doing things differently: sometimes their approaches may be better. Sometimes not. But access to other points of view, other solutions, and other ways to capitalize are easier to find and use than ever.

(Instructor Note): Ask the student to discuss these statements, and encourage them to give pro and con points of view. If a contrary point of view is presented, ask the class to critique the point, and help the student to see the positive nature of a best practice. ALWAYS ENSURE THAT THE STUDENTS SHOW RESPECT FOR THEIR FELLOW STUDENTS.

TRANSITION:

We see the utility in using best practices. But what resources are available to units and members to find and utilize best practices day to day? How practical is building a tool chest of best practices and sources?

MAIN POINT 3: BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A BEST PRACTICE NETWORK (25 minutes)

LECTURE ITEM:

Actually, finding sources for best practices is pretty easy, nearly intuitive. There are four keys in building and maintaining a best practice network:

1. Understanding the challenge/opportunity
2. Knowing how to research (where and how to look)
3. Having an open mind to ideas that weren't "invented here."
4. Having a methodology for evaluating best practices you want to use.

(Instructor Note): Briefly have the students discuss each of the four keys to building and maintaining a best practices network (see student handout for full detail).

LECTURE ITEM:

QUESTION: So, where are some good places to go to identify a best practice?

Anticipated Responses:

1. CAP's Web Site (ask them to be more specific)

2. CAP's Best Practices Web Page
3. IG Reports
4. CAP's Knowledge Base
5. CAP Volunteer Magazine
6. Region Web Sites
7. Wing Web Sites
8. Wing Newsletters
9. Wing/Region Conference
10. Other squadrons
11. Wing Staff
12. SAR, Pilot, and other professional journals
13. CAP Regulations, Pamphlets, etc.
14. etc.

Instructor Response: Put each of the answers students give you on a white board or chalkboard to display. Also encourage students to list all these answers and come up with a few of their own. It may seem like an unnecessary step (especially writing it down), but the idea is to show the students how many places they can go for answers.

(Instructor Note): Also discuss how units can submit best practices to their peers through CAP's best practices web page (rsmith@cap.gov), or through the wing or region. It's as important for students to know how they can contribute to the database of best practices.

SCENARIO:

(Instructor Note): Spend about 10 minutes running your students through the brief scenarios you have prepared. As you run the scenarios, try to let the students determine from the context of the problem where they should look.

Use the live Internet link to walk the students to the resources using their suggestions, but if they get stuck, help them focus their efforts. Also illustrate for the students that best practices for a given issue can exist in more than one place.

If a live Internet link is not available; as you give the scenario have in hand a photocopy of the Internet page(s) and address(s) available for handout. For instance, a photocopy of the Knowledge page where the answer can be found; or the CAP Best Practices page where the "Operations" best practices can be found.

TRANSITION:

Why reinvent the wheel if you don't have to? As you can see, there are many places from which you can get answers to questions, and find different ways to do things. Many of these practices have been tried and tested, and can work for you. Will you have to tailor some of the practices to fit the unique need of your units? Likely.

The benefit of best practices lies in that its use expands your experience base; it increases the realm of what's possible. For challenges or opportunities for which there are "best practices" available, it means more time for you to concentrate on the thorny issues for which there really is a unique answer.

CLOSURE:

The purpose of this segment was to enhance your appreciation of best practices; to help you understand how it can benefit CAP – your unit – and you. We gave you a methodology so you could discover for yourself how easy it is to see if there are best practices out there that can help you with your unit's opportunities and challenges.

We've given you some ideas of where to look for best practices, as well as shown you how you can submit your own. Now, it's up to you take advantage of this treasure trove of information. Doing so would be... a best practice.