

EVIDENCE BASED DATA FOR MFDR INITIATIVES

Jimmy M. Marwa



Guideline N° 4

1. SYNOPSIS

"Concepts without percepts are empty; percepts without concepts are blind". Immanuel Kant, 18th century German philosopher

The Marrakech Roundtable (2004) defines Management for Development Results (MfDR) as: a management strategy focused on development performance and on sustainable improvements in country outcomes. It provides a coherent framework for development effectiveness in which performance information is used for improved decision-making, and it includes practical tools for strategic planning, risk management, progress monitoring, and outcome evaluation."

MfDR requires credible data and procedures for forecasting expected results, and robust statistics, performance monitoring systems and evaluation protocols for assessing actual performance and feeding it back into the planning and budgeting cycles.

Well, the Managing for Development Results (MfDR) approach has emerged as a centerpiece of global efforts to improve the effectiveness of public management and is widely seen as representing best practice in this field (OECD, 2008). It is increasingly applied in developing countries and parallels a movement in many OECD countries known as results-based management.

2. Data

Data are discrete facts that have no meaning or purpose in and of themselves. It is only when they are put into context that relationships and patterns emerge. Finding meaning in those patterns allows data to morph into information, which, through careful selection, filtering, and interpretation, then becomes useful knowledge. That knowledge, combined with experience, forms the basis of good, evidence-based decisions (Smith et al., 2007).

Data are of high quality "if they are fit for their intended uses in operations, decision making and planning. With regard to data quality it's often been argued that: "garbage in garbage out" – essentially meaning that you get what you put in. Thus, in evidence based management; data used must be of very high quality.

Business leaders have long recognized the value of big data and are eager to analyze it to obtain actionable insights and improve the business outcomes. Unfortunately, the proliferation of data sources and exponential growth in data volumes can make it difficult to maintain high-quality data. It has been argued that business data decays by 37% every year (Experian, 2014), so it is essential that an organization has a way of ensuring continuous supply of quality data by measuring the quality of data over time. IBM (2014) asserts that data quality is an essential characteristic that determines the reliability of data for making decisions. High-quality data is:-

Complete - all relevant data such as accounts, addresses and relationships for a given customer is linked,

Accurate - common data problems like misspellings, typos, and random abbreviations have been cleaned up,

AFCOP GUIDELINE NO. 4: EVIDENCE BASED DATA FOR MFDR INITIATIVES

- **Available** - required data is accessible on demand; users do not need to search manually for the information,
- **Timely** - up-to-date information is readily available to support decisions.

Others like Bobrowski, Marrer and Yankelevich (2002) are more expansive in details and list more attributes of data quality (besides the ones listed above), namely:-

- **Completeness** - every fact of the real world is represented. It is possible to consider two different aspects of completeness: first, certain values may not be present at the time; second, certain attributes cannot be stored,
- **Relevance** - every piece of information stored is important in order to get a representation of the real world,
- **Reliability** - the data stored is trustable, i.e., it can be taken as true information,
- **Consistency** - There is no contradiction between the data stored.
- **Correctness** - every set of data stored represents a real world situation.
- **Timeliness** - data is updated in time; update frequency is adequate.
- **Precision** - data is stored with the precision required to characterize it.
- **Unambiguous** - each piece of data has a unique meaning.
- **Accuracy** - each piece of data stored is related to a real world datum in a precise way.
- **Objectivity** - data is objective, i.e., it does not depend on the judgment, interpretation, or evaluation of people,
- **Conciseness** - the real world is represented with the minimum information required for the goal it is used for.
- **Usefulness** - the stored information is applicable for the organization.
- **Usability** - the stored information is usable by the organization

Data quality-related problems cost companies millions of dollars annually because of lost revenue opportunities, failure to meet regulatory compliance or failure to address customer issues in a timely manner. Poor data quality is often cited as a reason for failure of critical information-intensive projects. Pitney Bowes (2014) citing the Aberdeen Research Group contends that by implementing a data quality program, organizations can:-

- Deliver high-quality data for a range of enterprise initiatives including business intelligence, applications consolidation and retirement, and master data management
- Reduce time and cost to implement CRM, data warehouse, data governance, and other strategic IT initiatives and maximize the return on investments
- Construct consolidated customer and household views, enabling more effective cross-selling, up-selling, and customer retention
- Help improve customer service and identify a company's most profitable customers,
- Provide business intelligence on individuals and organizations for research, fraud detection, and planning,
- Reduce the time required for data cleansing—saving on average 5 million hours, for an average company with 6.2 million records (Aberdeen Group research)

3. Towards Data Quality Measurement

According to the Aberdeen Research Group, data management practices can improve the value of an organization's data asset and the ways it supports the achievement of business objectives

Pitney Bowes (2014) lists the following as critical steps in the measuring of data quality:-

- **Select Dimensions of Data Quality** – a dimension of data quality describes a context and a frame of reference for measurement along with suggested units of measurement. Commonly measured dimensions of data quality include completeness, consistency, timeliness, and uniqueness, although the range of possible dimensions is only limited by the ability to provide a method for measurement,
- **Define Data Quality Metrics** – these are specific tools/ specific reportable metrics that are created to gauge the specific data sets. These may be basic metrics composed of directly measured rules, or may be more complex metrics that are composed as weighted averages of collected scores,
- **Define Data Validity Rules** – the assessment process will expose potential anomalies, which are reviewed with the users to identify data quality measures and, ultimately, data quality metrics. Organizations must engineer data controls into the application development process so that data errors can be identified and addressed as they occur,
- **Set Acceptability Thresholds** – once the data quality dimensions and metrics have been validated, the users are consulted to express their acceptability thresholds. When a metric score is below the acceptability threshold, it means that the data does not meet business expectations. Integrating these thresholds with the methods for measurement completes the construction of the data quality metric,
- **Devise Data Quality Scorecard** – a data quality scorecard presents metric scores. Metrics scores can be captured within a repository over a long time period to enable trending and demonstrate continuous

improvement or (conversely) show that progress is not being made. The process of devising the scorecard include managing the metrics definitions, measurement processes, weightings, how the scores are captured and stored, as well as composing the tools and technologies for delivery and presentation

Similarly, Bobrowski, Marrer and Yankelevich (2002), list ten steps in measuring data quality, namely:-

- Choose the interesting dimensions - in fact, not all the dimensions are relevant in every situation,
- Choose or define the questions that characterize the dimensions- each dimension has several aspects that characterize it. Not every aspect is important in every situation,
- Choose or define the metrics and techniques to answer each question - depending on the system implementation, the resources, deadlines, etc., one technique or another should be selected to answer the same question,
- For each metric, define values or ranges representing good and bad quality data - this is a crucial point. Not in all the cases a clear notion of good quality and bad quality can be identified probably, at the beginning these notions will be based on intuition. A measurable notion of data quality has to be constructed by repeatedly measuring, storing, and comparing results and organization revenues,
- If subjective metrics have been chosen, define appropriate data collection format and data collection procedures - in fact, in the case of subjective metrics the questions to be answered are probably different for each system,

AFCOP GUIDELINE NO. 4: EVIDENCE BASED DATA FOR MFDR INITIATIVES

- **Apply the techniques to the correspondent objects** - data model, database instance, documentation, etc.,
- **For each metric, determine if data quality is acceptable or not, and take the appropriate corrective actions** - if the obtained values do not agree with the expected ones (see bullet 4), there are several possibilities. For example, if the value is “not so bad” we can decide to do nothing. If it is bad, but the cost of correcting it is higher than the expected benefits, do nothing. If the dimension affected is crucial, or you decide to correct the data anyway, you may decide to clean the data and to improve the data generation process
- Store the obtained results - at the beginning, when you start measuring the quality of the data, you may have no idea of the desirable standards of quality you want. However, you have to start your measurement procedures. So it is important to define acceptable ranges, when possible, and to start the “data quality history” in the organization, in all cases. You have to define the appropriate container to store the results, and to store the “state of the organization” too.
- **In order to extract useful conclusions, you need to know how data affects the organization** - you will need to measure, and to correct every time you see that something is wrong, and to check if everything is fine. It is possible that the acceptable ranges or the dimensions of interest change from time to time. So, it is important to review them

Irrespective of which framework, one picks on to measure data quality, what is clear from these two perspectives, what is clear is that, this ought to be a systematic process and must result in a

pool of useful data, which then can be analyzed and applied to inform decision making. It may therefore be argued that given the place of quality data in organizational decision making; organizations should strive to improve their data quality and a number of tools are at their disposal, namely:-

- Data profiling – assessing own's data to understand where data quality problems lie,
- Data standardization – creating rules about how data will be collected and maintained,
- Geocoding – correcting name and address data based on a country's and/or worldwide postal standards (as the case may be),
- Record matching – finding and merging duplicate records,
- Monitoring –tracking/ audit the data for quality and compliance, and on what schedule,
- Batch and Real time – programming software and building processes (real time) to maintain own data once it's been cleaned (preferably in batch – batch processing).

4. Evidence Based Data for MfDR Initiatives

Evidence has been defined (Kreitner, 2012) as the available body of facts or information indicating whether a concept, belief or proposition is true or valid. Thus, “evidence-based” refers to any concept or proposition that is derived from or informed by a particular set of objective evidence. For example, data on work performance over a period of time, may point out to skill sets that needs to be cultivated and sharpened in an organization to enhance its corporate performance. Similarly, data on lateness to reporting to work over a period of time and illness may well point to issue of

KNOWLEDGE SERIES

motivational challenges facing an organization that needs to be worked on to enhance staff motivation. So evidence based data may be construed to mean a bundle of data/information supporting a certain line of thought or proposition. Ordinarily, in day to day operations, organizations come across loads of evidence which, if systematically gathered and interrogated, would easily point to opportunities for improvement without having to incur extra/additional costs to collect fresh primary data with which to interrogate their performance.

Evidence can be gathered from multiple sources – it's the analysis of these data sets that clearly sets out the emerging pattern/results from which decisions can then be based. Most of the time, you have to obtain the data, clean that data, remove outliers, impute missing values, transform variables and on and on, even before any set/bundle of data is readily usable or can be applied as evidence to support a certain line of thought. So for data to be readily usable as evidence, it must be screened or go through a rigorous process of analysis – which is really a pipeline of operations where the output of one stage becomes the input of another towards refining and extracting the evidence being sought after.

Well, since decision making is only as good as the assumptions on which it is based. Continual search of such forms of knowledge or evidence (from the various data sets at the disposal of an organization) might therefore help overcome the common pitfalls of decision making and thereby improving decision making and organizational response to emerging challenges.

Therefore towards achieving data robustness, a key element of the evidence-based practice should be the emphasis on systematic reviews of available forms of evidence. There is usually a large body of knowledge that exists out there from which to draw from by synthesizing the findings from all relevant sources, without

having to reinvent the wheel (by collecting primary data on a theme of interest). Some of the standards developed to guide such systematic data reviews include:-

- Using protocols to guide the process,
- Focusing on answering a specific question(s),
- Seeking to identify as much of the relevant research as possible
- Appraising the quality of the research included in the review
- Synthesizing the research findings in the studies included,
- Aiming to be as objective as possible about research to remove bias
- Updating in order to remains relevant

Essentially, there needs to be some effort in collecting as much forms of evidence as possible (to create a pool of data), so that relevant shreds of evidence can be pursued, extracted and analyzed to inform decision-making, towards embedding a culture of evidence management.

OECD (2008) see MfDR as centering on gearing all human, financial, technological and natural resources – domestic and external – to achieve desired development results. It shifts the focus from inputs (“how much money will I get, how much money can I spend?”) to measurable results (“what can I achieve with the money?”) at all phases of the development process. So, MfDR focuses on providing sound information to improve decision-making. This entails tracking progress and managing business based on solid evidence and in a way that will maximize the achievement of results.

MfDR implies that goals are clear, measurable, limited in number and concrete, with time-

AFCOP GUIDELINE NO. 4: EVIDENCE BASED DATA FOR MFDR INITIATIVES

bound targets. At the same time, they must be expressed in human terms (i.e. as development outcomes). For this reason, MfDR is more than a methodology: it is a way of thinking and acting, built on a practical toolbox for improved public management. The “MfDR cycle” involves five core components or stages:-

- Setting goals and agreeing on targets and strategies;
- Allocating the available resources to activities that will contribute to the achievement of the desired results;
- Monitoring and evaluating whether the resources allocated are making the intended difference;
- Reporting on performance to the public;
- Feeding back information into decision-making.

Consequently, evidence in MfDR should be built through:-

- Observation – entities should form a habit of picking out peculiar results/happenings/activities from the pool, with which to interrogate performance,
- Careful description and measurement-entities should form a habit of capturing results for purposes of record keeping and periodically measuring these results to establish emerging trend,
- Determination of what goes with what – evidence is often obtained through close association of one set of data with another and/or observing phenomena over time to ascertain trends emerging,
- Determination of mechanism that leads to success under certain conditions and with which populations – there is need to have a sound understanding of what contributes to an organization's success and how such success is measured/identified; and

- Citing specific results that can be anticipated – there ought to be specific outcomes to look out for in all shreds of evidences, least one gets lost in sea of data available.

5. Turning Data into Meaningful Information

Since organizations often find themselves with "oceans of data/evidence", the question is what should be done to translate these oceans into meaningful information? In other words, how can one get value from such vast information? According to McKinsey & Company (2013), there are five keys options that can be employed by organizations in harnessing the information at its disposal for the good of the organization, namely:-

- Creating transparency – use data available to establish different stakeholders perspectives and ensure its relevant to all stakeholders,
- Enabling experimentation – conduct controlled experiments to ascertain data accuracy. Measure results to identify gaps for improvement,
- Segmenting audiences – different segments gives different perspectives and by interrogating these one builds a rich perspective so as to tailor programs, products, and services more effectively,
- Supporting operational decision-making – use real-time data to better manage operations and adjust activities according to market dictates,
- Supporting innovation – quest for continuous data quality/improvement so as to bolster existing offerings should provide insight so to create new and better offerings.

The basic idea behind evidence-based data analysis is that for each stage of the pipeline, one should be using the best method, justified

by appropriate statistical research that provides evidence favouring one method over another and allowing for the extraction of relevant information that supports the phenomenon under exploration. Where one cannot reasonably agree on the best method for a given stage in the pipeline, then there emerges a gap that needs to be filled based on the prevailing evidence. Thus, “evidence may be used to support a decision whenever the evidence is gathered or modified for the sole purpose of lending legitimacy to a decision that has already been made”.

6. Evidence-Based Decision Making

Organizations are routinely faced with complex, poorly structured decisions for which unambiguous evidence favouring a course of action is simply unavailable. According to Tingling and Brydon (2010) evidence is used to support a decision whenever the evidence is gathered or modified for the sole purpose of lending legitimacy to a decision that has already been made. The evidence-based inputs to the decision process either confirm or disconfirm the decision makers’ initial subjective beliefs and preferences. If the evidence is confirmatory, decision makers can move forward, confident that they have “the numbers” required to support their choice. However, a dilemma arises if the evidence disconfirms the initial subjective decision. The decision makers must either trust the evidence (in which case they have implicitly switched to the make mode described above) or side with their gut (Tingling and Brydon, 2010).

So quite simply, evidence-based decision making (EBDM) represents a process of conscientiously using the best available data and evidence when making managerial decisions. Evidence based decision making requires a systematic and rational approach to researching and analyzing available empirical and objective data to inform the policy making process. It ‘helps people make well informed decisions about policies,

programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation.’ (Davies, 2004: 3). Evidence based decisions can produce more effective policy decisions, and as a result, better outcomes for the community. When evidence is not used as a basis for decision making, or the evidence that is used is not an accurate reflection of the ‘real’ needs of the population, the proposals for change are likely to produce ineffective outcomes and may even lead to negative implications for those they are seeking to benefit.

It's been argued that "**Knowledge**" + "**Experience**" = "**Evidence-Based Decisions**"

Well, since evidence-based practice: is about what should drive practice—using empirical evidence and professional wisdom to make decisions. Building evidence-based practice in any MfDR requires that:-

- An organization justifies what they’re already doing well.
- Results from analysis of evidence based data drives performance and impact,
- Results/Findings are used to suggest solution to problem,
- Results underpin organizational practice.
- Results drive changes in

The advantages of using an evidence based approach to policy making has been discussed by many researchers (see for example Argyrous, 2009; Banks, 2009; Othman, 2005; Taylor, 2005), with some common arguments emerging to support its application throughout the policy making cycle. Using an evidence based approach to policy making can provide the following potential advantages:-

AFCOP GUIDELINE NO. 4: EVIDENCE BASED DATA FOR MFDR INITIATIVES

- Helps ensure that policies are responding to the real needs of the community, which in turn, can lead to better outcomes for the population in the long term,
- Highlight the urgency of an issue or problem which requires immediate attention. This is important in securing funding and resources for the policy to be developed, implemented and maintained,
- Enables information sharing amongst other members of the public sector, in regard to what policies have or haven't worked. This can enhance the decision making process,
- Reduces government expenditure which may otherwise be directed into ineffective policies or programs which could be costly and time consuming
- Produces an acceptable return on the financial investment that is allocated toward public programs by improving service delivery and outcomes for the Australian community
- Ensures that decisions are made in a way that is consistent with our democratic and political processes which are characterized by transparency and accountability.

It must be emphasized that if organizations are to improve their decision making process, the following principles will be worthy observing:-

1. Understand the nature of the decision problem and assess the potential contribution of formal evidence to the quality of the decision process. There are many different types of problems — ranging from new product development

to adoption of emerging technology standards — in which evidence based on historical data provides little insight. Decision makers should have the courage and the organizational support in such environments to make and justify a decision based on intuition, experience and consultation with others,

2. Weigh the risks, costs and benefits of evidence when advocating an evidence-based approach to decision making. The costs should include not only the time required to collect evidence but any negative signals created by evidence-based decision-making.,
3. Differentiate between internal and external audiences when engaging in decision-based evidence making. As noted above, there are situations in which evidence has significant ceremonial and signaling value. However, internal stakeholders (such as employees) typically have much better access to information than those outside of the organization. Consequently, internal audiences are seldom fooled by decision-based evidence making – therefore as much as practicable, such decisions should reflect the reality on the ground,
4. Ensure that the objective evidence painstakingly gathered by your analysts is reflected more often than not in the decisions of the organization. If you must feed manufactured evidence to internal audiences, do so only rarely and sparingly. Enron provides an example of an organization in which a disregard for evidence and analysis became endemic.

KNOWLEDGE SERIES

In sum, to engrain a culture of continuously using evidence to manage performance, organizations ought to:-

- Demand evidence
- Examine logic
- Encourage experimentation
- Reinforce continuous learning

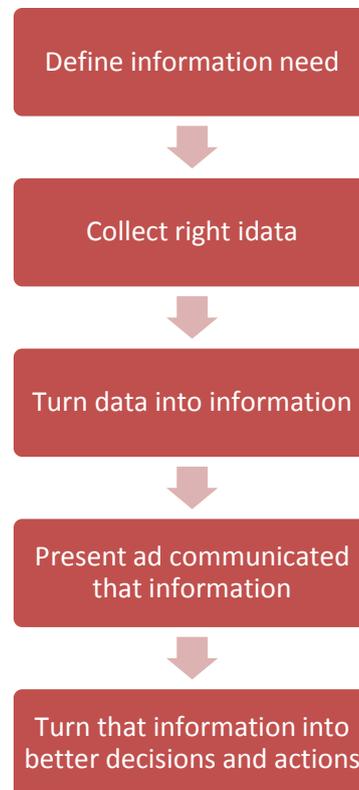
Similarly, it's been argued that evidence-based management works within certain best practice/confines, namely:-

- Stop treating old ideas as if they were brand new;
- Be suspicious of "breakthrough" ideas and studies;
- Celebrate and develop collective brilliance;
- Emphasize drawbacks as well as virtues;
- Use success (and failure) stories to illustrate sound practices but not in place of valid research methods; and
- Adopt a neutral stance towards ideologies and theories.

Creating a conducive organizational environment where these attributes thrive is paramount towards cultivating an evidence-based management culture in an organization. It is therefore incumbent upon user-organizations' management to cultivate these tenets/best practices, if they hope to deploy effectively, such an approach.

6 (b). Evidence-based Decision Making Model

'Why do statistics matter? In simple terms, they are the evidence on which policies are built. They help to identify needs, set goals and monitor progress. Without good statistics, the development process is blind: policy-makers cannot learn from their mistakes, and the public cannot hold them accountable' (World Bank, 2000: vii).



Evidence-based-decision-making is simply the use of data to help organizational leaders make operational decisions that are both 'actionable' and 'defendable' and can be applied using this practical five-step approach:-

AFCOP GUIDELINE NO. 4: EVIDENCE BASED DATA FOR MFDR INITIATIVES

- 1. Define the real information needs –**
This is about identifying a problem that requires action or indeed an opportunity for improvement. Brain storming, complaints or customer concerns and/or interrogating past performance and hurdles in operation to identify problem areas,
- 2. Collect the right data –** gather internal evidence or data about the problem and evaluate its relevancy and validity. Also gather external evidence about the problem from all stakeholders
- 3. Turn data into information –** analyze the data sets received/critically appraise the data sets and turn them into meaningful information. Several statistical approaches and non statistical methodologies exists that can be readily applied. Use the information to interrogate performance and/or identify opportunities for improvement,
- 4. Present and communicate findings –** discuss findings with all stakeholder groups to secure buy-in and support for implementation of intervention,
- 5. Turn that information into better decisions and actions –** use findings from the data analysis to make intelligent decisions and implement robust interventions that effectively fixes performance flaws/loopholes.

Elsewhere a 7 step methodology (Melnyk et al., 2010) has been suggested for adoption, although it mainly applies in the medical field more that in business and management, but the steps are universal and can derive robust results when deployed effectively in a business environment, namely:-

Step 1: Identify the Evidence

Systematic review both internal and external sources of information to settle on the evidence. The key question to ask is “which evidence are you looking out for and how do you settle on it once you identify the same?” Essentially, the starting point must be the problem/concern, whose evidence is then sought

Step 2: Select the Best Available Evidence

Since in reality an organization is confronted with “oceans of evidence”, often it may be a challenge to pick out the right set of evidence one is looking out for. Care should be exercised to ensure that what is settled as evidence has a plausible relationship to the problem being investigated – that association is key towards ensuring that the right piece of evidence is picked from the ocean of data available,

Step 3: Critically Appraise

Critically appraise available set of data with a view to generating useful information with which to apply in making the right decision. The choice of which data/evidence to settle for should be guided by some clear criteria as set out in the metric being applied,

Step 4: Objectively Report the Evidence

When reporting the evidence, be as objective as possible and ensure that you’re guided by the core outcomes. Share findings with stakeholder groups to secure buy-in & ownership,

Step 5: Synthesize Multiple Evidence Reports

Synthesize multiple sources of evidence so as to enrich self with different perspectives on the same issue/problem area before making informed conclusions. Multiple sources of evidence gives an organization an all round understanding of the same phenomenon/problem area and expands management thinking on the issue and where possible should be preferred than single sources of evidence.

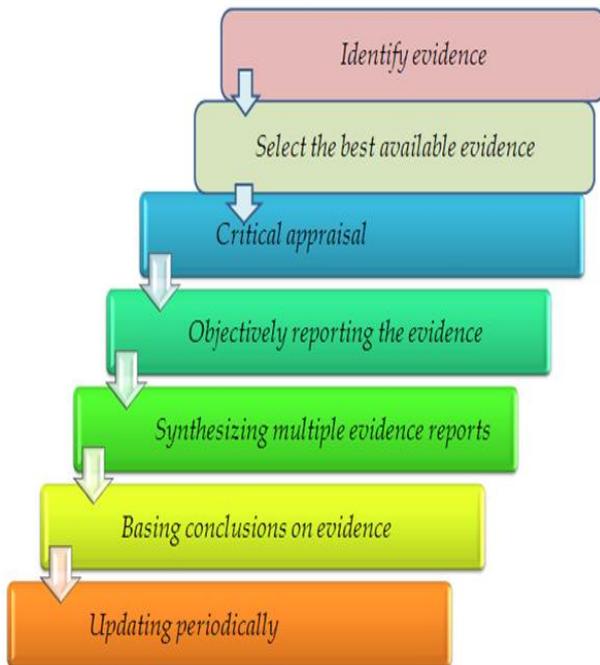
KNOWLEDGE SERIES

Step 6: Base Conclusions on the Evidence

Derive overall conclusions and recommendations from the evidence synthesis and not hunches – decisions in organizations should be data driven nothing short of it,

Step 7: Update Periodically

What was prominent evidence today may not be tomorrow owing to organizational dynamics and the external environment in which operations operates in. Consequently, there is need to update evidence on a continuous basis as the case may be.



Well the 7 steps are repetitive, particularly steps 3 and 5, but step 7 is innovative and reinforces the idea that periodic review of evidence is key towards getting best results in evidence-based decision making, since what was valid evidence yesterday, may not be tomorrow.

6(c). Principles of Implementing Evidence - Based Culture -

1. Treat your organization as an unfinished prototype - the thrust of

this principle involves creating a mindset that the organization is an unfinished prototype that may be broken and in need of repair, thus avoiding the hubris and arrogance of concluding that nothing needs to be changed in the organization.

2. No brag, just facts – use facts to and only facts to reinforce a culture that supports Evidence-based Decision Making (EBDM). Measure, monitor, and reward the effectiveness of your people and nothing more/less. Let evidence drive innovation and change within the organization.
3. See yourself and your organization as outsiders do - many managers are filled with optimism and inflated views of their talents and chances for success. This leads them to downplay risks and to commit an escalation of commitment bias. “Having a blunt friend, mentor, or counsellor,” Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) suggest, “can help you see and act on better evidence.”
4. Evidence-based management is not just for senior executives - research shows that the best organizations are those in which all employees, not just top managers, are committed to EBDM. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) encourage managers to “treat employees as if a big part of their job is to invent, find, test, and implement the best ideas.” This implies that employees must be given the training and resources needed to engage in EBDM.
5. Like everything else, you still need to sell it - “unfortunately, new and exciting ideas grab attention even when they are vastly inferior to old ideas,” say Pfeffer and Sutton (2006). “Vivid, juicy stories and case studies sell better than detailed, rigorous, and

AFCOP GUIDELINE NO. 4: EVIDENCE BASED DATA FOR MFDR INITIATIVES

admittedly dull data—no matter how wrong the stories or how right the data.” This means that you will need to similarly use vivid stories and case studies such as the DaVita example used earlier to sell the value of EBDM. You can also hire gurus to help sell the value of evidence-based practices.

6. If all else fails, slow the spread of bad practice - because employees may face pressures to do things that are known to be ineffective, it may be necessary to engage in what Pfeffer and Sutton call “evidence-based misbehaviour.” This can include ignoring requests and delaying action. Be cautious if you use this principle.
7. The best diagnostic question: what happens when people fail? - “failure hurts, it is embarrassing, and we would rather live without it,” say the Stanford professors. “Yet there is no learning without failure.... If you look at how the most effective systems in the world are managed, a hallmark is that when something goes wrong, people face the hard facts, learn what happened and why, and keep using those facts to make the system better.”

7. Evidence Based Management (EBMgt)

Evidence-Based Management (EBMgt) enhances the overall quality of organizational decisions and practices through deliberative use of relevant and best available scientific evidence and combines conscientious, judicious use of best evidence with individual expertise; ethics; valid, reliable business and organizational facts; and consideration of *the impact* on stakeholders”.

8. Conclusion

When organizational leaders act on better logic and evidence, their organizations will trump the competition. These leaders can practice their craft more effectively if they are routinely guided by the best logic and evidence—and if they relentlessly seek new knowledge and insight, from both inside and outside their organizations, to keep updating their assumptions, knowledge, and skills in their quest to improve decision making in their organizations. By standardizing the way data quality is deployed and using the right kinds of tools leaders will guarantee that there is predictable information to guide their decision making, so as to add value in their respective organizations. The future is looking very bright for those organizations that will systematically create pools of data and routinely update such pools and sieve them to ensure data quality, from which relevant information can be extracted to guide decision making. There is need therefore to the need to interface "Operational Dashboards (providing feedback regarding the performance of the organization on the key performance indicators) with evidence-Based data (available from day to day operations within the organization) to improve decision-making and enhance competitiveness so that such organizations are able to meet and exceed their performance expectations and identify issues proactively.

9. References

Melnyk, B.M., Fineout-Overholt, E., Stillwell, S.B., and Williamson, K.M. (2010),

“The seven Steps of Evidence-Based Practice”.

Pitney Bowes (2014), Five Fundamentals of Data Quality Practices, Pitney Bowes - Business Insight, White paper: Data Analysis and Data Integration.

KNOWLEDGE SERIES

Managing for Development Results (MfDR) (2008), Information Sheet, September, Web page, www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/results

Cristine Smith, Beth Bingman, Lennox McLendon and John Comings (2007), "Evidence-based Practice: A Workshop for Training Adult Basic Education, TANF and One Stop Practitioners and Program Administrators", May

Hourigan, C. (2014), "From data entry to evidence-based decision making: How data & analysis can drive improvements in admissions policies, Manager, Strategic Information & Analysis", Office of Planning & Quality - Monash University,

Belasky, J. (2012), "5 Steps to Evidence-Based-Decision-Making" Thursday, Jul 19, 2012 @ 11:13 AM

Kreitner, R. (2012), Evidence-Based Decision Making: Organizational Behavior, 10th edition published by McGraw-Hill,

Peter Houstle, CEO, Mariner Management & Marketing, LLC, and Elizabeth Weaver Engel, M.A., CAE, CEO & Chief Strategist, Spark Consulting LLC
APRIL (2014), "Getting to the

"Good Stuff": Evidence-Based Decision Making for Associations"

Peter M. Tingling and Michael J. Brydon (2010), "Is Decision-Based Evidence Making Necessarily Bad?", MITSLOAN Management Review Magazine, Research Feature June 26,

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert I. Sutton (2006), "Evidence Based Management"– Harvard Business Review, One point Article, January.

McKensey & Company (2013), "Four Steps To Turn Big Data Into Action", Web page, www.mckinseyandcompany.com

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) "A guide for using statistics for evidence based policy", National Statistical Service

Sophie Sutcliffe and Julius Court (2005), "Evidence-Based Policymaking: What is it? How does it work? What relevance for developing countries?", Overseas Development Institute, November.

Monica Bobrowski, Martina Marre', and Daniel Yankelevich (2002), "Measuring Data Quality", Report Number 99-002



This knowledge series is intended to summarize good practices and key policy findings on managing for development results. The views expressed in the notes are those of the authors. Notes are widely disseminated and are available on the website of the Africa for Results initiative (AfriK4R), at: www.afrik4r.org/page/resources