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The Application of Benchmarking Management on Safe Community

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Abstract

Safe Community is an effective way in reducing community death and injury incidence as a typical way of social management innovation. On the basis of research in Safe Community and benchmarking management, the author concluded that the benchmarking management is applicable to Safe Community construction, and discussed working process how benchmarking management would be integrated into construction and continuous improvement of Safe Community.

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1. Introduction

In 1989, World Health Organization (WHO) launched the first Accident and Injury Prevention Assembly to share the idea, practice and results on accident and injury prevention of "Community Injury Prevention Program" started by the Falk Ping Community of Sweden since 1975. More than 500 representatives from 50 countries unanimous the case, and eventually formed the "Safe Community" declaration, "everyone has the right of health and safety." This principle became the basic principle of WHO in promoting human health and global accident prevention and damage control plan [1].

In order to promote the idea of Safe Community and standardize the construction of safe communities, WHO set up the "WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion", "Affiliate Safe Community Support Centre", "Safe Community Certifying Centre" and other organizations to assist WHO advocacy, promote Safe Community plan, summarize practical experience in its own nation or region, excellent project and promote exchanges and other related work.

In June, 1991 in Sweden, WHO held the first international Safe Community Assembly. Twenty sessions of international Safe Community assembly have been held annually. In addition to common concern, the annual session of the international Safe Community assembly also provides a platform for experts and scholars from all over the world to introduce experience on Safe Community construction.

Construction of Safe Community has played a significant role in injury prevention. Take China as an example, according to the data of national Safe Community promotion center, from 2007 to 2009, in the 164 national Safe Community, the number of accidents and casualties are showing a significant downward trend in production safety accident, traffic accident, fire accident and violent crime incident. After comprehensive analysis, WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety

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Promotion concluded that: "the successful operation of Safe Community obviously can make the amount of injuries halved, and all global communities, regions, countries should carry out the plan."

Construction of Safe Community work brings not only an effective way in reducing the accidents and injury incidence rate, but also in the improvement of software and hardware facilities, safety management, safety education and training, update and other processes, greatly reduces the accident and the economic burden caused by the accident, effectively improves the residents' safety ability, safety awareness, and safety satisfaction. However, many of the grass-root staff are still not aware of Safe Community construction process. They are in an urgent need to learn excellent experience. Therefore, this paper introduces the benchmarking management which is known as one of the greatest three management methods in the nineteenth century of to solve this problem. Through the discussion of applicability, feasibility, and application of benchmarking management in the construction of Safe Community, the paper tries to provide reference resources for the vast number of Safe Community construction people.

2. The summary of benchmarking management

Benchmarking method was initiated by the American Xerox Co in 1979. It is one of the most important management ways for modern enterprises to obtain competitive advantage in western developed country. It has been referred as the three management methods in nineteenth century with the business process reengineering and the strategic alliance. Although the method was originated and developed in enterprises, "benchmarking management is also applicable to public administration in non-profit organization" [2], and construction and continuous improvement of Safe Community.

In the view of "full participation", benchmarking has a progressive adjustment characteristic. Benchmarking strategy carries out the fulfill needs in a long time and gradual process. Organizations should step by step improve the management from beginning to advanced stages; invest into the extensive exchange of personnel and training areas. In view of the "resources integration", through benchmarking, organizations should found the insufficient in them from the gap between them and organizations with the best practice. Through the integration of all available resources, organizations would be able to cultivate its expansion type thinking mode in the process of looking for differences, guide its management and technology in a spiral development, sometimes even can stimulate innovation. In view of "continuous improvement", benchmarking management requirements organizations to look for reference and benchmark to study from. After entering or overtaking the first-class organization, organizations are required to look again for a new baseline and benchmark, continuously strengthen its self development. Full participation, resource integration, continuous improvements are three core concepts in the construction of Safe Community.

2.1. The concept of benchmarking management

Benchmarking is the process of imitating innovation. The concept of benchmarking management can be summarized as: the process that constantly look for, cooperate, analyze, and judge with the first-class organization with the best practices, thereby enabling the organization to get improved continuously, enter or catch-up the first-class organizations. Its core is learning from the most excellent organizations in the field. The goal is through learning, rethinking and improving practice, to create the organization's best practice.

Benchmarking is the processes of the constant pursuit of excellence. Benchmarking takes the global vision for reference, which broke through the organization of functions limit, properties and limitations of industries. Benchmarking management focuses on practical experience, emphasizes the specific link, interface and process. At the same time, it is a direct and progressive management method with its thought that the organization's business, process, link can be dissected, decomposed and refined.

Benchmarking emphasizes on dynamic optimal reference. Through the study, the organization could rethink and design itself, draw lessons from the advanced models and concepts, localize transformation, and create a new optimal management mode. In essence, benchmarking is a practice-oriented, process-oriented method of management. Through benchmarking management, organization could keep up with the highest standard of products, services or processes and make the necessary improvements to meet these standards. Benchmarking management provides a clear understanding of tools for the organization to find the way to solve problems and narrowing their gap with those with the best practice.

2.2. The elements of benchmarking management

Benchmarking elements are the foundation of its definition, classification and procedure. Benchmarking management mainly has the following three elements:

First, benchmarking management launcher, which is the organization that the initiates and implements benchmarking management.

Second, benchmarking partners, also known as the benchmark object, are external and internal organizations which are learned by launchers and would like to exchange the information and data with launchers.

Third, benchmarking project, also known as the benchmarking management content, is the current insufficiency, the field in which launchers want to improve through benchmarking management.

Combined with the construction of Safe Community work, benchmarking management's three elements can be understood as follows, Safe communities in the building process or safe communities has been built (under continuously improvement) as benchmarking launchers; Safe Communities with excellent project recommended by the national Safe Community promotion center, and the local Safe Community support center as benchmarking partners; Safe Community building process, Safe Community certificate management continuously improvement as benchmarking project. The relationship is shown in Fig.1.

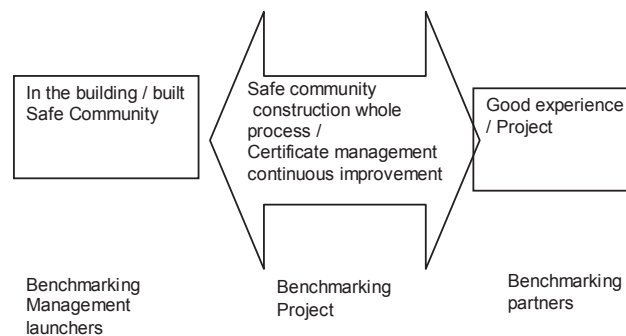


Fig.1. Three elements of Safe Community benchmarking

2.3. The role of benchmarking management

It is significance to bring the benchmarking management into the construction of Safe Community and continuous improvement work.

First, introducing the benchmarking partners into the construction of Safe Community provides a reference model for the vast number of Safe Community construction workers to learn from. At the same time, through the analysis of its advantage and inferior position in the process of community construction, communities can adjust their focus of Safe Community construction, set a more clear goal further find out reason and formation process of the gap, and put forward strategies and methods to improve Safe Community construction.

Second, introducing the benchmarking into the construction of Safe Community brings more comprehensive consideration for our national Safe Community construction effect and regional Safe Community construction and the developing direction of follow-up. In order to establish benchmarking partners, national Safe Community promotion center and regional Safe Community support centers will systematically summarize and evaluate the Safe Community (benchmarking Implementation) construction results, and through the horizontal and vertical comparison of the streets to find out the advantages and problems on the Safe Community construction in the presence to further promote regional Safe Community construction development.

Third, introducing the benchmarking into the continuous improvement work of Safe Community provides the perceptual knowledge for Safe Community that they still needs further development. Some streets show such problems as slack and self-satisfaction after obtaining Safe Community nomination. By introducing benchmarking, the streets can select other Safe Community with outstanding experience as benchmarking, find their own shortcomings, and determine the Safe Community construction in the process of long-term continuous improvement and development strategy, thus more effectively strengthen the Safe Community continuous improvement.

3. The application of benchmarking management method in the Safe Community construction

Safe Community, adhere to the people-oriented, strive to maximize reduce various accidents and injuries. In view of the majority of residents' daily contact with the safety is a broaden safety concept, therefore, the Safe Community safety promotion project is widely inclusive, relates to people's life, work and environment etc, covers the transport, workplaces, public places, schools, water, the elderly, children, home furnishing, sports and other fields. In addition, the construction of Safe Community requires necessary organization, with clear target and responsibility, practical prevention project, positive self assessment system, self examination, self-correction, self-improvement, and self-improvement mechanism.

The Safe Community is complicated system engineering. It is a world without end for civil engineering. Benchmarking management with advanced ideas and rich practical experience will inject new vitality for the construction of Safe Community work, so next this paper will demonstrate the application of the benchmarking method in construction of Safe Community and certificate management.

3.1. The application of benchmarking in the process of the Safe Community construction

Safe Community provides communication platform for the majority of community construction workers, which is the circulation process of constantly looking for and studying other Safe Communities' best practices, and on this basis with the community comparison, analysis, judgment to obtain the continuous improvement. The application of benchmarking in the process of the Safe Community construction mainly has the following five major steps.

The first step is to formulate detailed and thorough plan for benchmarking. Construction of Safe Community requirements the formation of Safe Community construction work organization, usually a cross-sectional organization, supported by a community administration representative and volunteer representatives jointly chaired. The cross-sectional organization should be responsible to initiate and manage the benchmarking process, make clear benchmarking management goal, namely specific objectives of the streets to optimize its Safe Community construction, through the streets Safe Community construction work measure, determine the benchmarking project which is not only limited in safety promotion project, but refers to generalized excellent practice, including the organization construction, system construction, community diagnosis, safety promotion project planning implementation and continuous improvement, performance evaluation and related work. After the benchmarking project has been identified, the street should contact the national Safe Community promotion center or local Safe Community support center in time to recommend the Benchmarking Project for benchmarking partners, and make full use of the exchange platform, such as Safe Community promotion center / International Safe Community Support Center (China Safe Community webpage), Safe Community annual conference, annual conference of Safe Community and so on. The streets should also understand the benchmarking partners and keep timely communication. Based on the work above, the construction of the street's Safe Community working mechanism should further develop evaluation method to measure the comparison.

The second step includes adequate internal data collection and analysis. One of the most important works for Safe Community is community diagnosis. Through existing channels of information communication, the streets should establish injury surveillance platform, conduct surveys of basic safety situation, identify risks, and carry out community injury investigation as a baseline investigation. In fact, the community diagnosis can also be understood as internal data collection and analysis. The diagnostic process also should pay attention to the collection and analysis of street internal benchmarking partners. Through internal interview and survey, the streets could collect first-hand information of internal benchmarking.

The third step is the external data collection and analysis. After the internal data collection and analysis, external data collection and analysis should be taken. This step mainly includes collecting published information of the benchmarking partners in the first step; through the investigation, field visits or other means to collect research data; finally, on the analysis of the data collected about best practices, its performance measurement are compared, and benchmarking report is put forward. Benchmarking report reveals the key processes of benchmarking harvest, as well as ideas and proposals on best practice adjustment, conversion and innovation, which is a important guarantee for the follow-up of benchmarking process.

The fourth step is the adjustment and implementation of benchmarking report. This step is the destination and the goal of several steps before. Based on the benchmarking report, the streets could confirm the proper corrective action plan, formulate detailed implementation plan, carry out internal implementation of best practice, and continue to implement the results monitored and evaluated, and make in-time adjustments to ultimately achieve optimum work goal of Safe Community construction.

The fifth step is continuous improvement. With the construction of Safe Community work, benchmarking is sustained in the management process, not a one-off act. Therefore, in order to facilitate continuous improvement of benchmarking, the streets should maintain benchmarking database well, develop and implement at continuous improvement program.

3.2. *The application of benchmarking in the process of the Safe Community certificate management*

Safe working is without end, and construction of Safe Community work will be the same. In different periods, this work have different working emphasis, and being nominated as Safe Community title merely is a recognition of the streets's Safe Community network membership. The streets should uphold the Safe Community concept, continuously improve their own safe issues. Same as the application of benchmarking in the process of the Safe Community construction, the application of benchmarking in the process of the Safe Community certificate management also have five main steps [3].

The first step is to survey benchmarking study. After the construction of Safe Community work experience, the streets will have a more thorough understanding with their situation and development needs. In the certificate management stage, the street should be consciously aware of benchmarking theme. Once the benchmarking topics and requirements are confirmed, needed resources (such as time, funds, personnel) should be put forward to assist the successful completion of benchmarking survey work.

The second step is to develop the construction of Safe Community organization into a benchmarking study team. Selection, training and management of benchmarking study team first and team members have defined roles and responsibilities. In addition, the team should ensure that every participant understand their tasks, and work out important milestones.

The third step is to select benchmarking partners. The success of the construction of Safe Community may become the benchmarking partners of other streets, but on their own, inevitably there are many needs to be improved, and therefore, streets should communicate with Safe Community network members in a wide range. Benchmarking partners may include the Safe Community staffs of the streets, the staffs of the national Safe Community center, the staffs of the regional Safe Community support center and others.

The fourth step is the collection and analysis of information. Construction of Safe Community work team must choose clear advice collection method, and the staffs that are responsible for gathering information must be very familiar with these methods. After the team connected to the benchmarking partner, the team should gather information, study benchmarking information analysis, and put forward proposals for action on the basis of the established norms.

The fifth step is to take action. The streets should put the benchmarking partners' excellent benchmarking project into the construction of Safe Community work, in order to learn from each other and make continuous improvement of Safe Community construction.

For street, introducing benchmarking management process in certificate management, namely continuous improvement process is described above. But for the national Safe Community promote centre and the local Safe Community support center, certificate management still has another meaning. In charge of annual Safe Community work report, they should pay attention to the analysis of benchmarking project this year, and arrange them according to its category for subsequent application of benchmarking.

4. **Application limitation**

As a method of management, benchmarking management can effectively enhance the competence of the organization, but the organization and implementation of benchmarking management practice has proved that relying solely on benchmarking may not be able to improve competitiveness into competitive advantage; in addition, in the absence of a full community diagnosis and localization as the premise, the blindness of introducing benchmarking management method may lead to a large amount of manpower, material resources, financial resources waste or even more serious consequences; third, poor communication may lead to malignant competition among Safe Community network members. As benchmarking can be solve the key problem in short-term, it can be viewed as an advantage identification, but it is not long-term competitive advantage. Once the network members communicate poorly, it will lead to competitive convergence or even lead to blind competition; fourth, there may be only imitation without innovation, resulting in Safe Community network members to follow the pattern of the best practice. One of the core works of Safe Community is community diagnosis, and the discovery and settlement of its unique problem is the soul of the work. If the streets only emphasize the form and ignore the essence in the implementation of benchmarking, it will fall into the circle of imitation, falling behind and imitation again..

Therefore, in order to ensure the Safe Community construction effective, communities should pay particular attention to the following three points in the construction of the Safe Community. Firstly, be clearly aware of Safe Community orientation first and then promote benchmarking as an auxiliary tool. Secondly, carry out community diagnosis and flexibly adjust the application of benchmarking. Thirdly, break through the region and even the limits of the industry, and choose the most appropriate benchmarking partners [4].

5. Conclusion

First, based on the analysis of Safe Community construction requirements and the benchmarking method, benchmarking management is applicable to the construction of Safe Community and continuous improvement. Introduction of benchmarking management theory will inject new vitality to Safe Community building efforts.

Second, the main process of applying benchmarking management in Safe Community construction is as follows: to develop a detailed and careful planning for the benchmarking management, conduct adequate internal and external data collection and analysis, adjust and implement benchmarking report content, and carry out continuous improvement.

Third, the main process of applying benchmarking management in Safe Community certificate management include benchmarking survey, transformation of Safe Community construction organization into a benchmarking launchers, selection of benchmarking partners, collection and analysis of information and taking action.

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