

# Introduction

In the literature and in business practice, the essence of “best practice” has been discussed for many years. The definitions of this phenomenon are not homogeneous, but most of them indicate that business activities which can be called “best practice” must be characterized by a high level of ethics, integrity, management quality and innovation. They should serve as a certain model, an inspiration for other organizations, which means that organizations applying “best practices” can become an object of benchmarking. However, it is important to be aware that there are no ideal, universal solutions for every industry that can be described as “best practices” – they should be adapted to each particular organization. Similarly, there are no perfect organizations in their entirety – therefore it is important to consider in which area a company can positively distinguish itself from others to the extent that it can be recognized as the one that demonstrates best business practices.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to present the essence of best practices in the related literature as well as to identify and analyze best practices applied by Polish and international organizations. These practices relate to various problems faced by contemporary organizations, but those selected for this handbook always concern selected aspects of marketing.

This handbook is a continuation of the textbook edited by PhD Grażyna Golik-Górecka under the title *Mariaż nauki z praktyką. Najlepsze praktyki zarządzania marketingowego w polskich i międzynarodowych przedsiębiorstwach. Studia przypadków*. It was published in 2020 by the Publishing House of the University of Łódź in Łódź as part of the “Academy of Management and Finance” series.

The handbook consists of three parts, differentiated by the authors of the studies included. The first part consists of studies by the staff of the Department of Marketing of the Faculty of Management of the University of Łódź, the second one – studies by business practitioners, and the third one – studies by students participating in “Marketing Management in Practice” course at the Faculty of Management of the University of Łódź within the ERASMUS program.

The first part opens with a study by PhD G. Golik-Górecka on the essence, analysis and evaluation of best business practices. Next, prof. W. Grzegorzczuk discussed the analysis of the functioning of Hurtownia Nochem Sp. z o.o. and its market-economic results. MS E. Gwiazdziński and MS A.-A. Wadlewski analyzed the design of loyalty programs in the era of digital solutions on the example of Costa Coffee. PhD W. Krawiec presents forms and methods of foreign expansion on the example of a Polish furniture manufacturer. MS A. Olejniczak analyzes viral

marketing in relation to the Coca-Cola brand. PhD A. Sibińska focused on designing business models, referring to a start-up implementing VR in education on the Czech market. This part closes with the study by PhD K. Szymańska, which deals with the management of multiple brands on the market of cultural services on the example of the Łódzki Dom Kultury.

The second part includes articles proposed by business practitioners. J. Dąbrowski analyzed the use of digital marketing communication tools in the financial sector in the face of new problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. W. Fabicka analyzed IKEA's multi-faceted activities in the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its impact on the perception of the company by its stakeholders. M. Michałus focused her study on networking and building relationships in business in relation to the example of the Business Partner Club. On the other hand, O. Skonieczka has presented various forms of discounts and rebates and the benefits of their use in business practice.

The third part of this handbook includes studies by students who are interested in the use of best practices in business. M.S. Mabena and G.T. Diaz Riaño addressed the issue of brand image management in relation to Starbucks.

This handbook may be intended for students and lecturers of economic faculties, but also all persons interested in the application of best practices in business. The handbook may also be useful when teaching students in English, especially within the ERASMUS program.

As the editor of this handbook, I would like to express my special thanks to PhD Grażyna Golik-Górecka for her involvement in creating the concept of the study, the organizational work done and the collection of valuable studies from individual authors. I would also like to thank prof. Wojciech Grzegorzczuk for his help in the preparation of the final version of the handbook and support in the process of its submission to the Publishing House and extremely valuable advice.

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