

Free PMP® Exam Sample Question

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Question

A content writing firm established a productivity figure of 10 pages/hour. This figure was identified by a benchmarking firm specializing in the test engineering industry.

Every quarter the company's senior management conducts a management review of the productivity figures. The latest productivity figures show that projects using word processing software installed on the users' PC were able to beat the target with a productivity of 15 pages/hour, while web-based content writing projects are at 5 pages/hour.

Senior management is not satisfied with the performance of the web-based projects and requests an investigation with the help of the quality department. The goal is to understand why web-based content is missing the mark. After a detailed analysis the quality assurance department issues a report illustrating the reason why some projects are exceeding the goal while others are not.

Based on your understanding of benchmarking what are possible reasons for the above scenario?

- A.) The benchmarking figures utilized were derived from a different industry
- B.) The original benchmarking was done only for projects using locally-installed software and did not include web-based development
- C.) Project managers lack monitoring tools for project metrics in order to meet organizational goals
- D.) Benchmarking never works in a creative production environment

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Answer & Explanation

Correct Answer: A)

Benchmarking is an activity performed within the organization or across organizations to compare data from similar projects/parameters. The content writing firm should have taken data for the type of projects that it executes rather than picking up industry benchmarks on productivity for a testing firm. Therefore "The benchmarking figures utilized were derived from a different industry" is the best explanation of what is going on here.

The second best option to select would have been that "The original benchmarking was done only for projects using locally-installed software and did not include web-based development". However, there are two problems with this answer: The scenario does not give us any indication that the original benchmarking had indeed been performed like this and the fact that "The benchmarking figures utilized were derived from a different industry" is a more generic and therefore the better answer here.

The answer "Project managers lack monitoring tools for project metrics in order to meet organizational goals" can obviously not be correct because the scenario discusses that we know exactly what the actual results are, therefore the monitoring is in place.

Last but not least, "Benchmarking never works in a creative production environment" is not a good answer, because it contains the word never. Always be wary of absolutes in answers. Answers with "always", "never" and other absolutes are usually incorrect, because project management is never black and white.

Reference: PMBOK Guide Fifth Edition, page 239

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