

# Basic Field Guide to the Positive Deviance Approach

## Description

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Tufts University, September 2010. 17 pages [Available as pdf](#)

“This basic guide is to orient newcomers to the PD approach and provide the essential tools to get started. It includes a brief description of basic definitions, as well as the guiding principles, steps, and process characteristics. This guide also includes suggestions of when to use the PD approach, facilitation tips, and outlines possible challenges. These elements will help practitioners implement successful PD projects. Please use this guide as a resource to initiate the PD approach. Its brevity and simplicity are meant to invite curious and intrepid implementers who face complex problems requiring behavioral and social change. It is suitable for those who seek solutions that exist today in their community and enables the practitioner to leverage those solutions for the benefit of all members of the community. PD is best understood through action and is most effective through practice.”

**Rick Davies comment:** I would be interested to see if anyone has tried to combine MSC with Positive Deviance approaches. MSC can be seen as a scanning process whereas PD seems to involve more in-depth inquiry, and one can imagine that combining both could be especially fruitful.

**PS1:** Positive Deviants can be found within an existing data set by using predictive modeling to find attributes which are good predictors of the outcome(s) being absent, then examining the False Positives – which will be cases where the outcome occurred despite the contrary conditions.

**PS2:** Whenever you have a great new idea its always worth checking to see who else has already been there and one that :-) So, lo and behold, I have just found that others have already been exploring the overlap between prediction modeling (aka predictive analytics) and Positive Deviance. See: [Big Data with a Personal Touch: The Convergence of Predictive Analytics and Positive Deviance](#)

More generally, for more information about Positive Deviance as a method of inquiry see:

- [“The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World’s Toughest Problems” Hardcover – June 16, 2010. by Richard Pascale \(Author\), Jerry Sternin \(Author\), Monique Sternin \(Author\).](#)
- [Duncan Green’s review of this book](#), on February 08, 2016
- The [Positive Deviance Initiative website](#)

## Category

1. Uncategorized

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admin