iMA Praxis Research Summary

Understanding diverse communication and working styles for improved collaboration and delivery of projects and programmes.

March 2019
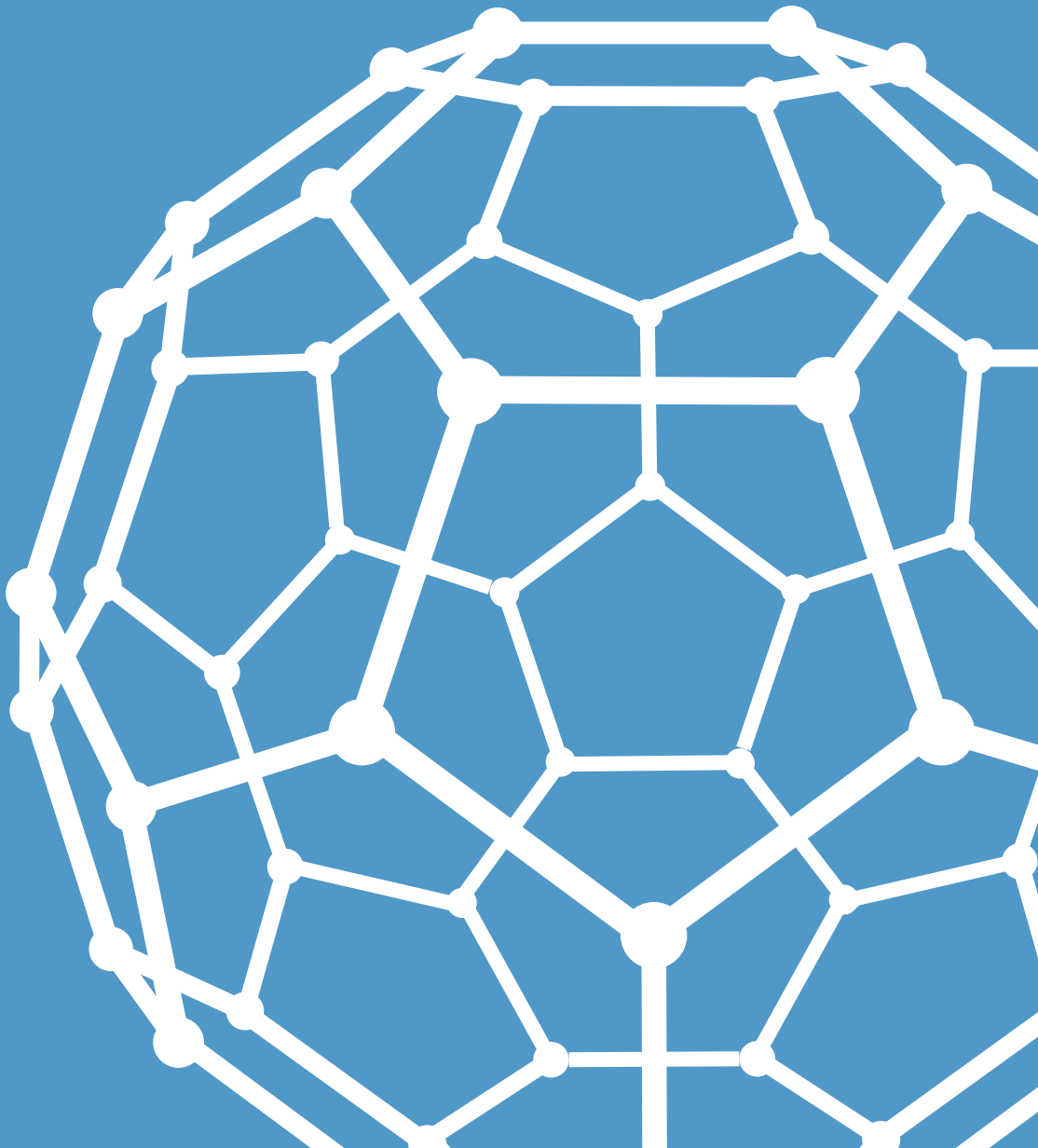
INTRODUCTION
Effective collaboration and teamworking are key to success in project, programme and portfolio management (P3M). However, teams are made up of individuals, each of whom have their own communication and working style. Having awareness of personal styles provides insights that can improve cohesion and performance.

Existing P3M frameworks typically take a 'one size fits all' approach. They provide good practice in knowledge and process but make no allowance for the differences in the way people perceive, understand and implement that practice.

ABOUT THE iMA PRAXIS RESERACH
This research project is a collaboration between Praxis Framework and Team Animation Ltd, designed to address this vital aspect of implementing P3M through teams of individuals with diverse communication and working styles.

Our aim is to enhance your ability to implement and benefit from the Praxis Framework by understanding how to adapt it, not only to the context of your project or programme, but also the people you work with.

Another key objective is to enhance the Praxis Framework in a very practical way. Eventually, all key functions and processes in the Praxis Framework will be enhanced by explanations of how different people with different communication and engagement styles apply them in practice.

We believe that understanding your own style and that of others will make the job of working together as a team far more effective and will be applicable, not just to Praxis, but to all P3M frameworks.

ABOUT PRAXIS FRAMEWORK
Praxis Framework is a free, online framework for the management of projects, programmes and portfolios (P3M). What sets the Praxis Framework apart from other 'best practice' guides is that it sets out to not only to provide extensive knowledge in P3M, but also to provide tools that help individuals and organisations effectively apply that knowledge.

ABOUT TEAM ANIMATION
Team Animation energise project-based organisations through working with business and delivery leaders and their teams to improve capability and performance. They integrate cutting edge thinking from the leadership, change, project and strategy domains to support organisations deliver success to their customers.

Praxis Framework and Team Animation are working together to enable individuals and teams to better understand their preferred communication styles. Having developed prototype pages for this unique and innovative approach, a survey was conducted to assess its usefulness and effectiveness.

> *To improve delivery performance, we must appreciate that we are all different in the way we perceive, adopt and apply management processes. If understood and acted upon, this diversity presents an opportunity to improve individual, team and organisational performance.*

RESEARCH PROCESS
Having developed prototype pages for this unique and innovative approach, a survey was conducted to assess its usefulness and effectiveness.

The survey was completed in December 2018. There were 60 respondents and this summary report presents the key findings.

The survey was based on three hypotheses:

❑ The iMA Diagnostic is a good indicator of a person's engagement and communication style providing a quick and simple means of gaining insight and basis for discussion within teams.
❑ The way that individuals perceive and practice core project management practices is predictable and can provide valuable insights into improving communication and teamwork.
❑ The iMA Praxis pages are a good description of how people with different styles perceive, adopt and apply the functions and processes of P3M.

SUPPORTED BY:

Respondents were first asked to complete the free iMA™ instrument to establish their preferred communication and engagement style (described as High Red, High Blue, High Green or High Yellow) at www.ima-pm.co.uk. They were then asked if they agreed with the iMA result.

91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their iMA colour style is a reasonable reflection of their communication and engagement style.
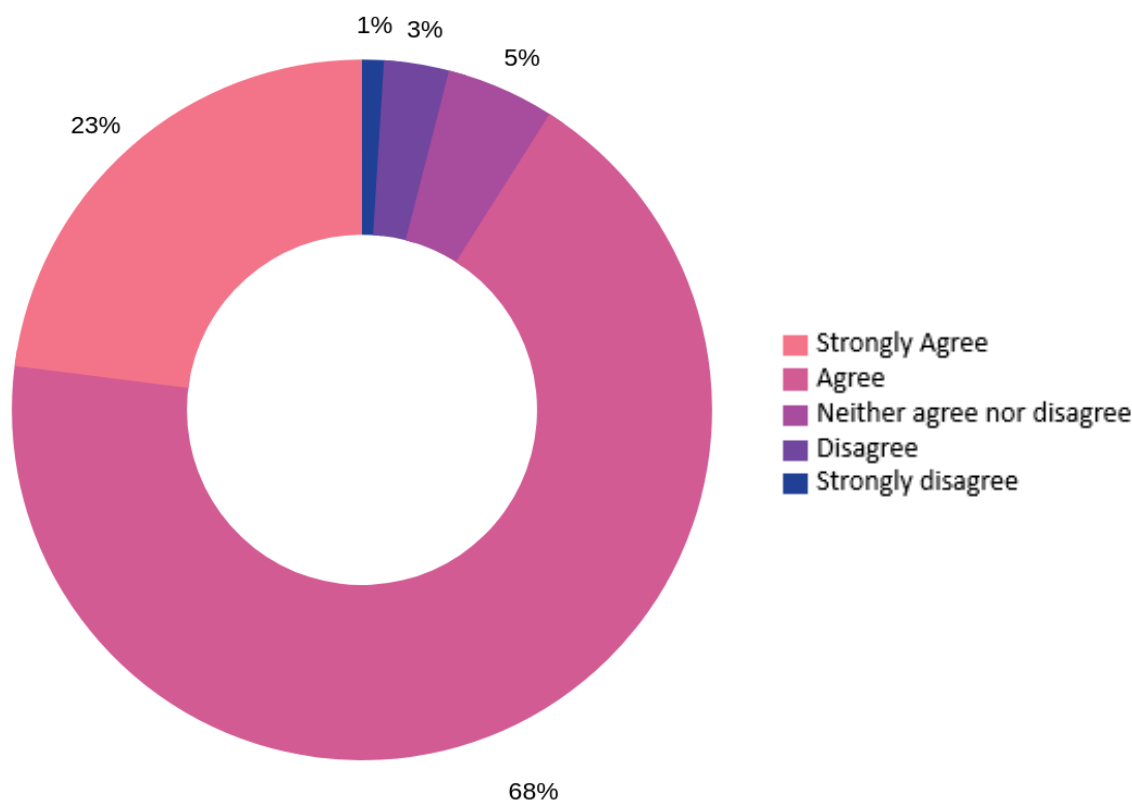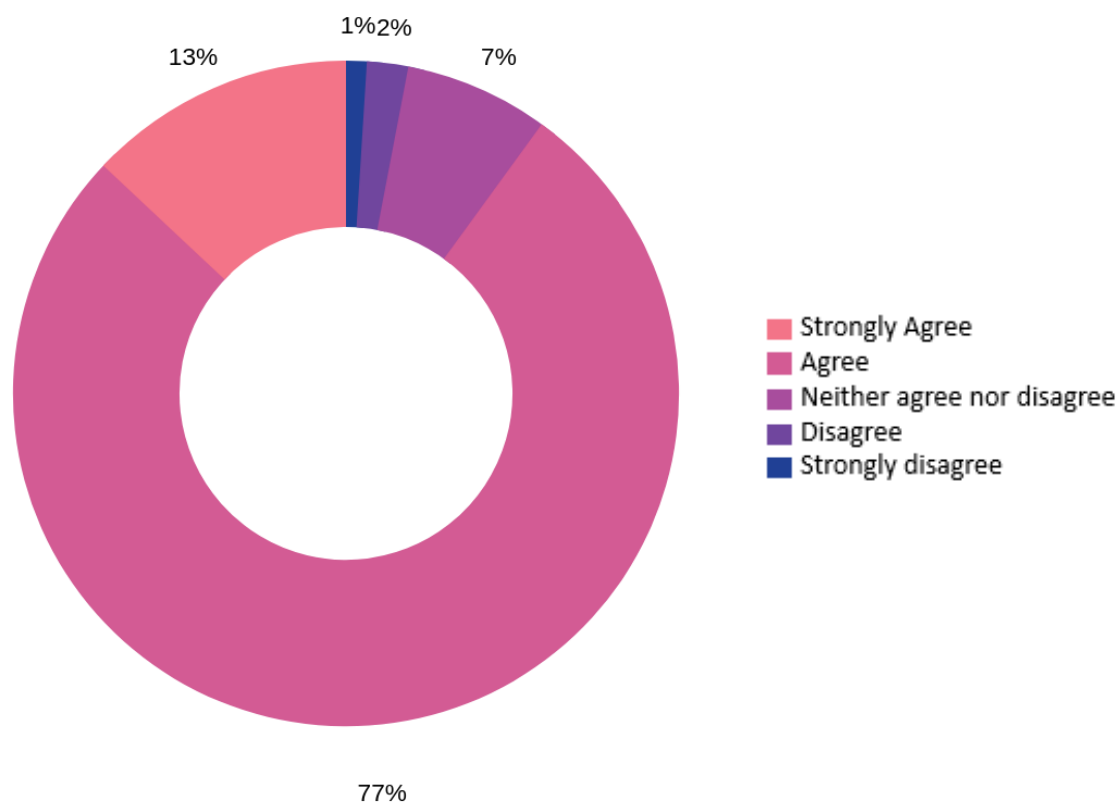

Typical comments included:

"I am exactly how it is described in the High Yellow character."

"Fairly accurately captures my style, but there are aspects of the other colours that I associate with as well."

Respondents were then asked to read through prototype iMA Praxis pages on risk management, benefits management and stakeholder management. The pages describe how these core project delivery functions are perceived and applied by people with different styles.

90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the description in the iMA Praxis Framework pages reflected the way they perceived and applied the three functions.

13%   1%2%   7%

■	Strongly Agree
■	Agree
■	Neither agree nor disagree
■	Disagree
■	Strongly disagree

77%

Typical comments included:

"In all pages I find a good reflection of how I work in general."

"I am all about involvement, empathy and feelings; qualitative over quantitative data and the description captures this."

Finally, respondents were asked if they believed that further developing the iMA Praxis prototype would be of value to the project, programme and portfolio management profession.

82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that further developing our understanding of iMA attributes and how they impact project, programme and portfolio management will be of value to the profession.
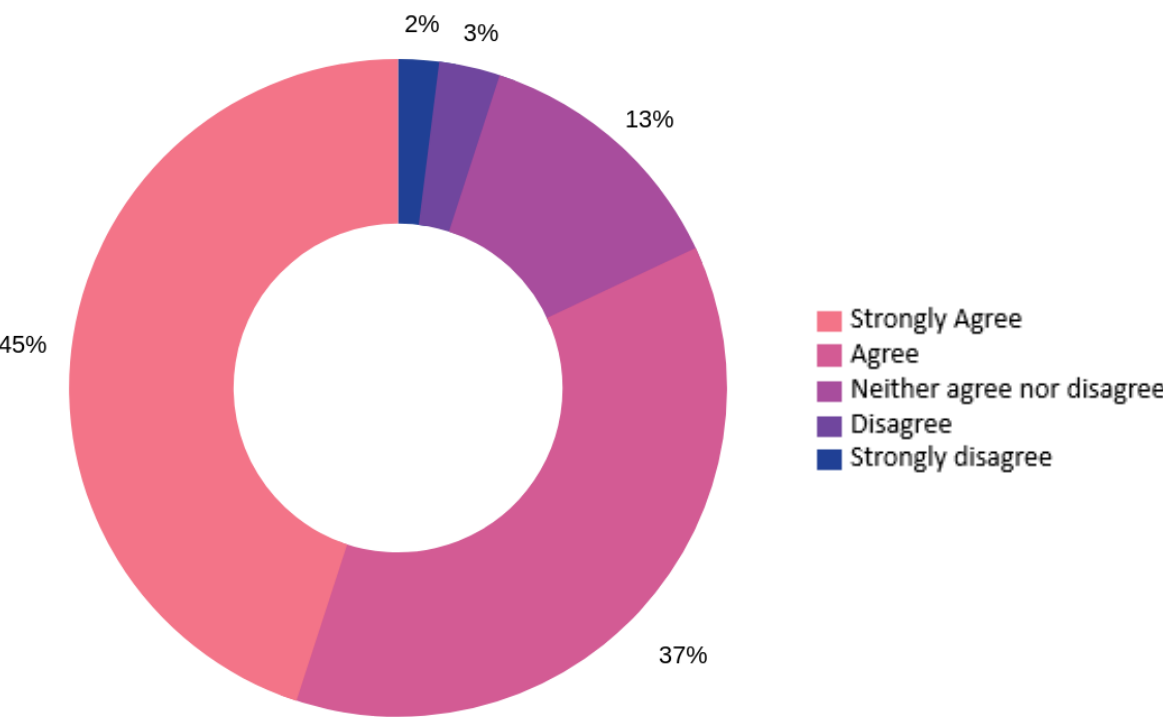
Typical comments included:

"Being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes is a fantastic way of avoiding misunderstandings and more importantly of avoiding conflict. If I can understand why someone is responding in a particular way to a given situation, I am far less likely to judge them and far more likely to want to work with them."

"It can help users improve on the approaches to project management or take advantage of the different styles depending on the situation."

CONCLUSION

The survey results demonstrated a clear and strong view that the three hypotheses are true and that further developing the thinking, and in turn the iMA Praxis section of the Praxis Framework website, will be of value to the profession.

FUTURE APPLICATION

Respondents were given the opportunity to respond to the open question "***Where do you believe this thinking can be best applied?***" Over 100 written responses were received with over 95% being positive and supportive. Suggestions included improving communication, better understanding of team members and stakeholders' styles and preferences ,and enhancing collaboration.

Typical comments included:

"In self-reflection, find weak spots, listen to others."

"…understand how individual strengths can be utilised to improve overall team performance, and how to identify and compensate areas of team weakness."

"… help us to focus on how our processes can be updated to ensure all personalities are satisfied with the requirements of the task."

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

The prototype pages will now be reviewed and similar pages will be developed for all relevant functions and processes within the Praxis Framework using the invaluable feedback from the survey as a key input.

If you would like to be kept up to date with developments or contribute further to this research, please request to join our dedicated LinkedIn Group.

In the future there is the potential of applying this to other P3M frameworks, standards and methodologies. Also, mapping the thinking to other commonly used diagnostics such as Myers-Briggs, DISC and Insights will be investigated.

CONTACT US

You can also contact us directly at adrian.dooley@btinternet.com (in particular around the Praxis Framework) or donnie@teamanimation.co.uk if you have any questions about iMA and how this research is being further tested and applied by individuals, teams and organisations across multiple sectors.

Donnie is also happy to send you additional information about iMA and how it can be used in particular team situations.

PRAXIS FRAMEWORK

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Find out more at **www.praxisframework.org**.

TEAM ANIMATION LTD

Team Animation energise project-based organizations through working with business and delivery leaders and their teams to improve capability and performance. They integrate cutting edge thinking from the leadership, change, project and strategy domains to support organisations in delivering success to their customers.

Find out more at **www.teamanimation.co.uk**.