PM/KM

GLOBAL SURVEY ON PROJECT CAPABILITY

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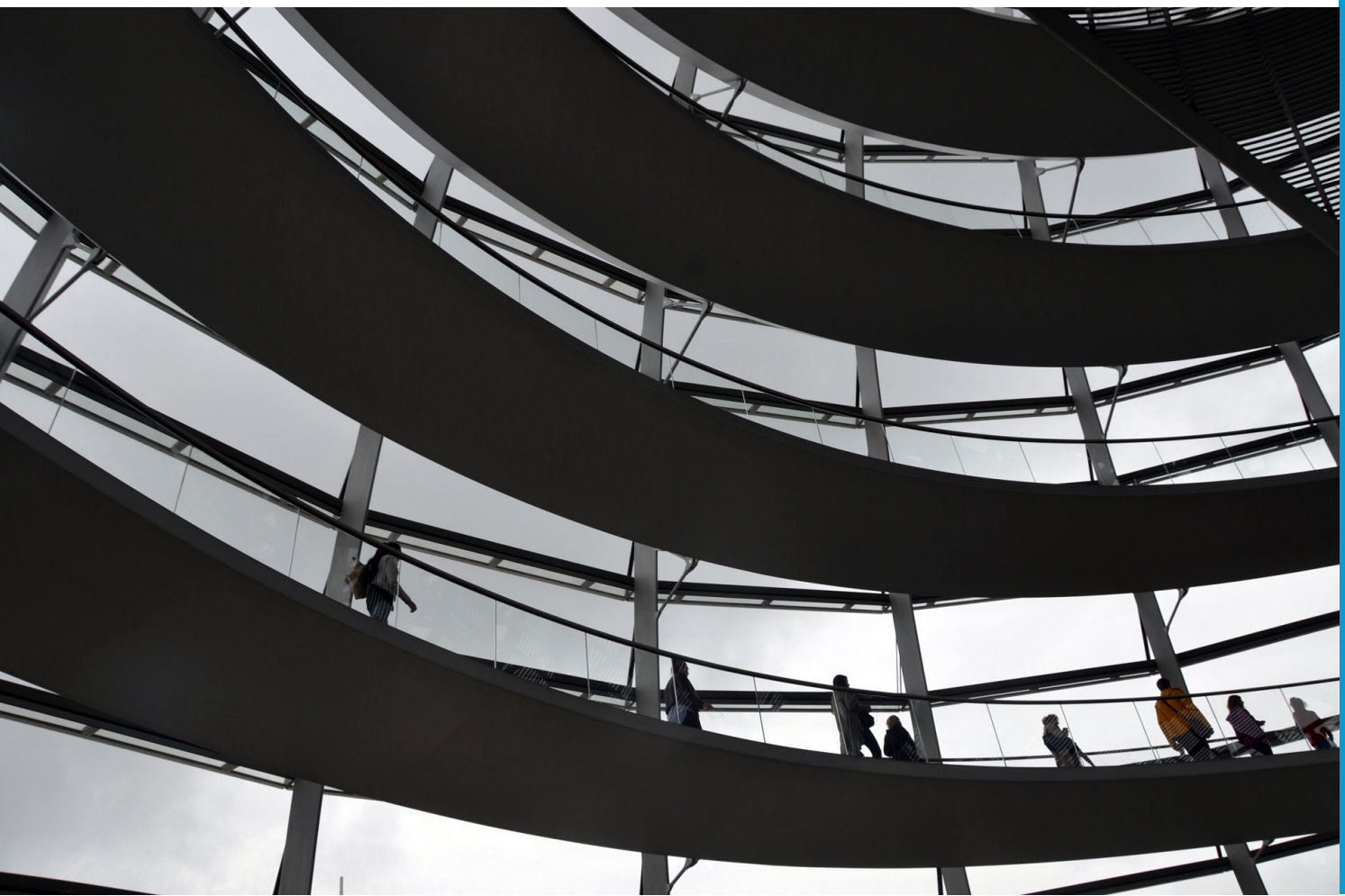

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INTRODUCTION

This report shares and reflects on the findings of a project management survey conducted around the world in 2018.

The survey was a 60 two-part questionnaire covering four major project capabilities:

1. Methodology and Framework – what guidance and tools are teams using, and how successfully are they applying them?
2. Skills and Training – skill levels, and how organisations are training and developing project staff
3. Collaboration and Knowledge Management – how well are project teams communicating and sharing information?
4. Delivery Tracking – how well are teams managing standard project and portfolio disciplines?

More broadly, I also looked to delve into:

- Where teams currently focus – what do they value? How do they think projects are performing?
- How do practices differ according to organisation factors like portfolio size, industry, and PMO involvement?
- How do practices differ by geography? (particularly interesting given the apparent dominance of US-centric practices like PMBOK and Agile in public discussions)

Thanks to the global reach of LinkedIn, I was able to reach project professionals in 67 countries, with 1,400+ responses and 800+ completed surveys.

This was an impressive figure given the length of the survey – as such, I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who participated, and I hope you find the results interesting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at ian@stalvies.net.

WHO TOOK PART?

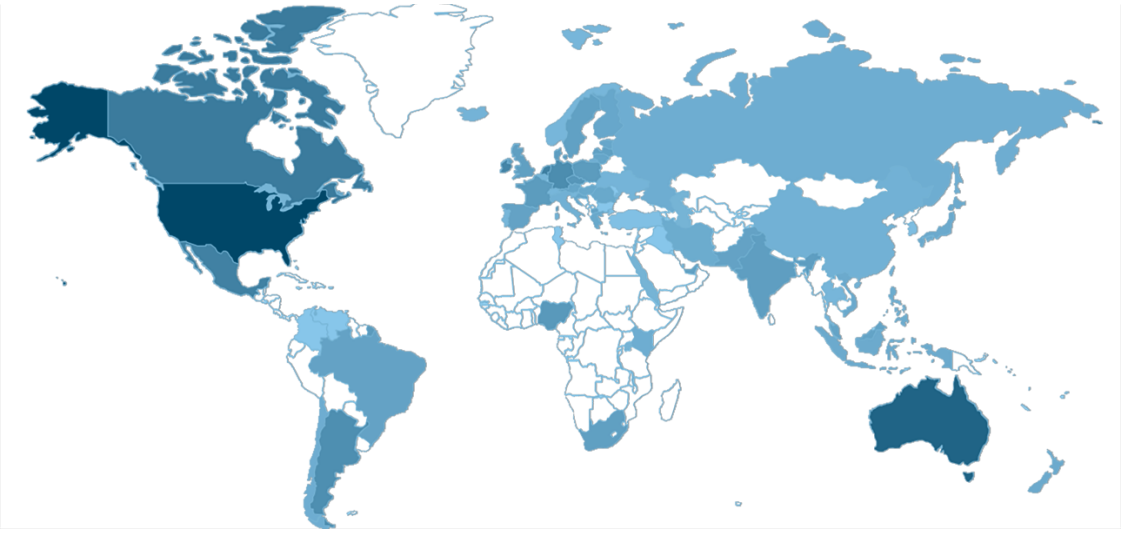
LOCATIONS

I intentionally aimed to cover as broad a range of locations as possible, to investigate and reflect the diverse opinions (if that's the reality!) around the globe.

Whilst I missed Antarctica, the other 6 continents had substantial representation. Note that where groupings were not obvious, I organised according to geography rather than making any assumption about cultural similarity (e.g. Mexico is within North America, Middle East and Africa are grouped together).

Continent	Respondents	Proportion
Asia	224	15.81%
Australia / New Zealand	88	6.21%
Europe	690	48.69%
North America	188	13.27%
South America	84	5.93%
Middle East & Africa	143	10.09%
TOTAL	1,417	100.00%

Heat Map – 67 countries



Top 10 Countries (Total Respondents)

Rank	Country	Respondents
1	USA	88
2	Australia	68
3	Canada	52
4	The Netherlands	49
5	Mexico	48
6	Ireland	45
7	Germany	40
8	Argentina	39
9	Czech Republic	33
10	Nigeria	32

ROLES

The survey was initially aimed at PMOs and Project Managers as traditionally central to project direction, but then expanded to team members, stakeholders and agile roles to get a broader view of performance.

Respondents were able to select multiple roles, reflecting the many "hats" team members are expected to wear – with the average respondent accountable for 2.12 roles.

Over 75% of respondents had some sort of co-ordination role, suggesting results are the viewpoint of people at the centre of the many activities of a project journey.

Role Participation

Rank	Role	Respondents	Proportion
1	Project Manager	803	56.67%
2	Scrum Master	276	19.48%
3	Business Analyst	266	18.77%
4	Program Manager	263	18.56%
5	Product Owner	253	17.85%
6	PMO Manager	222	15.67%
7	Consultant	209	14.75%
8	Project Team Member	191	13.48%

Rank	Role	Respondents	Proportion
9	Portfolio Manager	137	9.67%
10	PMO Team Member	121	8.54%
11	Operational role	79	5.58%
12	Project Executive	74	5.22%
13	Project Officer	65	4.59%
14	Business Executive (e.g. CEO, CTO, CIO)	30	2.12%
15	Business Stakeholder / Customer	26	1.83%

How many roles are people performing?

More than half of respondents had two roles or more, suggesting that they're stretched both in terms of workload and skills.

Role	Respondents	Proportion
1	646	45.05%
2	335	23.36%
3	207	14.44%
4	133	9.27%
5 or more	60	7.88%

INDUSTRIES

As with roles, respondents were able to select multiple categories here, reflecting crossover between different industry segments.

Rank	Role	Respondents	Proportion
1	Information Technology	661	46.65%
2	Banking and Financial Services	376	26.53%
3	Telecommunications	289	20.40%
4	Health Care and Social Support	154	10.87%
5	Insurance	152	10.73%
6	Government	149	10.52%
7	Retail and Personal Services	133	9.39%
8	Consumer Goods	129	9.10%
9	Utilities (e.g. Electricity, Gas, Water)	127	8.96%
10	Transportation Services	122	8.61%
11	Professional Services	114	8.05%
12	Education	97	6.85%
13	Construction and Real Estate	93	6.56%
14	Mining and Manufacturing	82	5.79%
15	Other	193	13.62%

COMPANY DEMOGRAPHICS

Company Size

Staff	Respondents	Proportion
Up to 100	443	36.40%
101-500	300	24.65%
501-2,500	187	15.37%
2,501-10,000	142	11.67%
Over 10,000	145	11.91%

Project Community Size

Project Staff	Respondents	Proportion
Up to 25	695	54.04%
26-100	347	26.98%
101-500	158	12.29%
Over 500	86	6.69%

PMO Size

PMO Staff	Respondents	Proportion
No PMO	28	2.15%
0 to 10	729	55.86%
11 to 25	246	18.85%
26 to 50	135	10.34%
51 to 100	62	4.75%
Over 100	105	8.05%

Number of Projects

Number of Projects	Respondents	Proportion
Under 10	265	18.48%
11-50	491	34.24%
51-100	218	15.20%
101-200	128	8.93%
Over 200	298	20.78%

SUCCESS OF PORTFOLIO

As seen throughout this report, the performance of every single factor across 50+ questions was assessed as worse than its perceived value in delivering project success.

As such, the perceived performance of projects overall is surprisingly high, at 3.69:

- Only around 5% of environments having less-than-average performance
- Over 50% in of respondents feeling they work in an above-average environment
- Presumably, individual skills and effort are lifting teams above their environment

So the overall story is good, despite every factor needing improvement to meet expectations.

Project Performance	Number	%
Very Poor	16	1.12%
Below Average	66	4.60%
Average	471	32.85%
Above Average	589	41.07%
Super	227	15.83%
Average Score		**3.69 out of 5**

CONCENTRATION SPANS

As a fun aside, I ranked the countries and roles with respondents that managed to see the survey all the way through.

Completion Percentage by Country (minimum 20 respondents)

Interestingly, most countries at the top of this list were not those with English as an official language.

Rank	Country	Starts	Completions	%
1	Lithuania	23	18	78.26%
2	Indonesia	20	15	75.00%
3	Croatia	22	16	72.73%
4	Nigeria	32	23	71.88%
5	Czechia	33	23	69.70%
6	UAE	26	18	69.23%
7	Finland	22	15	68.18%
8	Denmark	28	19	67.86%
9	Australia	68	45	66.18%

Rank	Country	Starts	Completions	%
10	Canada	52	34	65.38%

Completion Percentage by role

Perhaps surprisingly, roles most likely to complete a survey about project management were those owning business outcomes and the portfolio or PMO.

Delivery roles scored most poorly, especially the "agile" roles of Product Owner (last place) and Scrum Master (3rd last). Project Executives (2nd last) rounded out the bottom three places.

Rank	Role	Starts	Completions	%
1	Business Stakeholder / Customer	26	20	76.92%
2	Portfolio Manager	137	91	66.42%
3	PMO Team Member	121	79	65.29%
4	PMO Manager	222	144	64.86%
5	Business Executive (e.g. CEO, CTO, CIO)	30	19	63.33%
6	Project Team Member	191	119	62.30%
7	Consultant	209	127	60.77%
8	Program Manager	263	159	60.46%
9	Operational role	79	47	59.49%
10	Project Manager	803	477	59.40%
11	Business Analyst	266	150	56.39%
12	Project Officer	65	36	55.38%
13	Scrum master	276	150	54.35%
14	Project Executive	74	40	54.05%
15	Product Owner	253	118	46.64%

EXPECTED DISTORTIONS, DISCLAIMERS

As a general note, it's worth noting specific factors about the survey and audience that may have influenced responses:

- The length of the survey may have made completion difficult, particularly for non-native English speakers or just those people who are very busy on projects!
- In some countries, expatriate project staff may have been most likely to respond (particularly if LinkedIn was not the dominant business networking tool)
- Companies with a very immature project delivery framework may have been unable to answer many questions, and hence failed to complete the survey

KEY ISSUES

As noted in the introduction, despite most respondents feeling their projects are successful with a score of 3.69 out of 5:

- Individual competencies are judged as performing at 3.47 out of 5, on average
- These competencies are valued on average at 4 out of 5 – thus a gap of -0.53, or around -20%
- No competency is being performed as much as it is valued (storing deliverables is the only one that came close, at -0.05)

From a project perspective, the first thought is that individuals and teams are using their personal skill set (practical and otherwise) to make up for a lack of performance in their environments.

Whilst projects are still successful, the perception of poor organisational performance suggests significant risk to an organisation's portfolio – if the high performing teams or people leave, the high performance goes with them.

Digging deeper, 3 out of the top 4 "worst" areas relate to organisational support:

- Project Governance and Review
- Training and Career Development
- News and Updates (specifically, team and community collaboration)

This suggests that organisations are getting tactical performance, but not investing in their staff and capability.

A summary of findings is presented below, which is expanded through the report.

Topic Area	Performance	Value	Differential
Section 1 - Methodology & Framework	**3.49**	**4.02**	**-0.54**
1A - Risk and Complexity Assessment	3.68	4.12	-0.44
1B - Delivery Methodology and Guidance	3.46	3.91	-0.45
1C - Delivery Tailoring	3.60	4.14	-0.54
1D - Governance & Review	3.28	3.95	-0.67
Section 2 - Skills and Training	**3.36**	**3.91**	**-0.56**
2A - Skill/Knowledge level of staff	3.68	4.20	-0.53
2B - Online Help	3.23	3.72	-0.49
2C - Training and Career Development	3.16	3.81	-0.66
Section 3 - Collaboration and Knowledge Management	**3.51**	**3.94**	**-0.43**
3A – Collaboration and Support	3.37	3.96	-0.59

Topic Area	Performance	Value	Differential
3B - Deliverable and Action Management	3.65	3.93	-0.28
Section 4 - Delivery Tracking	**3.49**	**4.05**	**-0.56**
4A - Project Tracking	3.58	4.19	-0.61
4B - Portfolio Tracking	3.40	3.91	-0.51

HOW ARE WE PERFORMING?

The clear "winners" in the project environment of 2019 are tasks that are predictable and visible. Most of these come from traditional PMLC disciplines: planning, tracking schedules, responding (or reacting) to issues and defects. None, however, scored as high as 4 out of 5.

Whilst assessment of Technology Risk and Complexity tops the list, suggesting detailed knowledge and experience in IT projects, this in fact highlights the absence of other risk areas surveyed:

- Execution Risk and Complexity – potential problems with the various moving components of delivering
- Operational Risk and Complexity - potential problems once project outcomes become "business as usual"
- Change Management Risk and Complexity – potential problems with the impact on staff and stakeholders

So it seems we're great at predicting what can go wrong with machines, but not people and their processes.

Best Performing Disciplines		
Rank	**Discipline**	**Average Score (out of 5)**
1	Technology Risk and Complexity Assessment	3.99
2	Skill Level of Staff	3.86
3	Deliverable Storage	3.79
4	Issue Management	3.78
5	Stakeholder Management	3.78
6	Delivery Planning	3.76
7	Defect Management	3.75
8	Schedule Management	3.74
9	Advanced Skills	3.69
10	Version Control	3.68

Both "basic" and "advanced" skills both made the Top 10, suggesting again that individual efforts are compensating for weaknesses of organisations as a whole.

Ironically, this perception of strong skill levels mirrors a perceived lack of investment in staff learning and development, which accounts for half the worst performing areas.

Worst Performing Disciplines		
Rank	**Discipline**	**Average Score (out of 5)**
1	Stopping Projects	2.97
2	Project Resource Management	3.08
3	Post Implementation Reviews	3.13
4	Lessons Learned	3.15
5	Industry Certification	3.15
6	Career Development	3.16
7	Portfolio Resource Management	3.16
8	Training Courses	3.16
9	Industry Learning	3.21
10	Multimedia & eLearning	3.21

The main failure in the learning space is Career Development, given it also appears at #4 on the "What do we need to improve" list. Presumably, project practitioners feel accountability for their own education and staying up to date, but expect organisations to give them opportunities to put that learning into practice.

From an organisational perspective, issues with learning overall are evident firstly in poor governance (Stopping Projects at #1, PIRs and Lessons Learned at #3 and #4) and secondly, resource management at both project (#2) and portfolio (#7) level.

In summary, practitioners are bringing strong individual skills to projects, but organisations are not returning the favour by investing in upskilling and better governance. This may also explain the reactive performance on projects – teams likewise prioritise tactical tasks, with little incentive to focus on long-term goals and strategic improvement.

WHAT DO WE VALUE?

As a counterpart to questions on performance, respondents were also asked how much they valued each competency, regardless of how well it was being performed – i.e. in a perfect world, how useful is it?

Most positively, many of the "most valued" competencies reappeared from the high performance table, particularly planning, organisation and skills. This suggests a good match between what's needed to be done well, and actually done well.

Many listings in this table are to do with teams – making sure people are matched to the right projects (#9), setting them up for success (#8), and ensuring they are able to collaborate and share knowledge (#7). All appear prominently in the "What do we need to improve" league table, suggesting that better team interactions are a key desire for project communities.

Most Valued Disciplines		
Rank	**Discipline**	**Average Score (out of 5)**
1	Project Scope Management	4.32
2	Skill Level of Staff	4.30
3	Schedule Management	4.29
4	Delivery Planning	4.24
5	Issue Management	4.24
6	Stakeholder Management	4.23
7	Team Knowledge Sharing	4.22
8	Project Team Setup	4.22
9	Project Team Matching	4.19
10	Technology Risk and Complexity Assessment	4.19

As with "most valued" competencies, many of the items that are least valued are also the lowest performers, particularly learning and development within organisations. This suggests that teams aren't bothered by the lack of support from their employers, although it would be interesting to assess whether more training investment would strengthen commitment (and also improve the perception of poor career support from organisations).

Least Valued Disciplines		
Rank	**Discipline**	**Average Score (out of 5)**
1	Multimedia & eLearning	3.60
2	Industry Certification	3.65
3	Portfolio Defect Management	3.75
4	Project Methodology Templates	3.75
5	Reference Material	3.76
6	Industry Learning	3.77
7	Stopping Projects	3.80

Least Valued Disciplines		
8	Training Material	3.81
9	Training Courses	3.81
10	Portfolio Resource Burn Management	3.83

WHERE DO WE NEED TO IMPROVE?

Comparing what's performing well with what's valued, we can determine what's least in need of attention (the smallest difference) and what most needs improvement (the largest difference).

First the good side: across our industry globally, it appears we are good at the basics:

- Producing deliverables, getting approval and keeping them updated
- Reacting to problems
- Basic steps and support

Having fundamental practices as a priority may be a key reason for the positive score for project success. As a counterpoint, it would be interesting to assess whether the "cautious" nature of these competencies – which could perhaps be perceived as bureaucratic and inflexible – has a positive or negative impact on more "agile" teams.

Smallest Differentials		
Rank	**Discipline**	**Differential (Performance – Perceived Value)**
1	Deliverable Storage	-0.05
2	Technology Risk and Complexity Assessment	-0.19
3	Portfolio Defect Management	-0.22
4	Project Methodology Templates	-0.29
5	Help and Support	-0.29
6	Version Control	-0.30
7	Issue Escalation	-0.33
8	Review and Sign-off	-0.34
9	Methodology Process Guidance	-0.35
10	Project Defect Management	-0.37

The areas most in need of improvement are diverse:

- Governance to stop projects when needed, review what happened, and apply the learning
- Sharing knowledge within both project teams, and across the community
- Managing the level of work (scope) and the people hours used on it (resource burn)
- Career development in organisations – which could no doubt be informed by all of the above!

Largest Differentials		
Rank	**Discipline**	**Differential (Performance – Perceived Value)**
1	Lessons Learned	-0.97
2	Project Resource Burn	-0.93
3	Stopping Projects	-0.83
4	Career Development	-0.82
5	Post Implementation Reviews	-0.81
6	Project Risk Management	-0.80
7	Team Knowledge Sharing	-0.73
8	Project Team Matching	-0.70
9	Community Knowledge Sharing	-0.70
10	Project Scope Management	-0.69

SUMMARY

The high-level findings above suggest solid performance on predictable, operations-based behaviours, but a significant gap when it comes to deeper thinking, anticipation and overall improvement.

Whilst understanding causation is difficult, it may be that greater balance is needed between the two extremes. If more time and focus is spent on the smaller issues, then there is less time to spend on the higher level thinking.

The following sections drill down into the results, seeing whether (and how) key variables impact the results, and how they vary.

KEY VARIABLES

GEOGRAPHY

Region	Average Performance		Average Value		Differential	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Global Average	3.47	-	4.00	-	-0.53	-
Australia / NZ	3.19	5	3.99	4	-0.80	5
Asia	3.55	2	3.99	3	-0.44	1
Europe	3.48	3	3.93	6	-0.45	3
Middle East / Africa	3.74	1	4.17	1	-0.44	2
North America	3.38	4	4.06	2	-0.68	4
South America	3.13	6	3.95	5	-0.82	6
Standard Deviation	*0.228*	-	*0.090*	-	*0.183*	-

Whilst project performance varied greatly across different regions, the perceived value of project management competencies was very similar, with less than half the variation.

Significantly, there appeared to be two very strong geographic clusters:

- Europe (-0.45), Asia (-0.44) and Middle East / Africa (-0.44) with near-identical differentials between performance and perceived value
- Australasia (-0.80), North America (-0.68) and South America (-0.45) having a similar correlation

Highlights (or lowlights) included:

- Australasia and the Americas showing even worse relative performance at team collaboration, than for other areas.
- South America scored especially poorly at formal knowledge management:
  - A differential of -1.20 for "Review and Sign-off", compared with an average of -0.35 across other regions
  - A differential of -0.80 for "Record and Manage Actions", compared with an average of -0.42 across other regions
- Skills and knowledge are generally consistent:
  - Basic Skill Levels have a differential of -0.44, with South America (-0.66) the main outlier
  - Advanced Skill Levels have a differential of -0.43
  - Project to Staff Matching scores much worse at -0.70, with great variation from Australasia (-1.11) to Asia (-0.56)
- Deliverable and Action Management again mapped into clear clusters:
  - Version Control: Australasia and the Americas -0.67, other regions averaging -0.22
  - Review and Sign-off: Australasia and the Americas -0.74, other regions averaging -0.25
  - Record and Manage Actions: Australasia and the Americas -0.63, other regions averaging -0.34

Cultural influences may be a factor in the above differences, although this would not be conclusive from these results given the diversity in each region (e.g. Europe, grouping together of the Middle East and Africa).

Another line of inquiry might be to investigate whether delivery styles have an impact on performance, for example "modern" practices like Scrum or DevOps that focus less on planning.

INDUSTRY

Region	Average Performance		Average Value		Differential	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Global Average	3.47	-	4.00	-	-0.53	-
Banking and Financial Services	3.55	12	4.04	12	-0.49	9
Construction and Real Estate	3.58	9	4.11	6	-0.52	11
Consumer Goods	3.56	11	4.08	10	-0.52	10
Education	3.73	1	4.11	7	-0.37	1
Government	3.52	14	4.10	9	-0.58	14
Health Care and Social Support	3.71	2	4.13	4	-0.42	3
Information Technology	3.61	7	4.05	11	-0.45	5
Insurance	3.57	10	4.14	3	-0.57	13
Mining and Manufacturing	3.69	4	4.17	2	-0.48	8
Professional Services	3.66	5	4.22	1	-0.56	12
Retail and Personal Services	3.59	8	3.99	13	-0.40	2
Telecommunications	3.69	3	4.11	5	-0.42	4
Transportation Services	3.52	13	3.99	14	-0.46	7
Utilities (e.g. Electricity, Gas, Water)	3.65	6	4.10	8	-0.45	6
Other	3.35	15	3.97	15	-0.62	15
Standard Deviation	*0.097*	-	*0.070*	-	*0.073*	-

There appeared to be no significant patterns that showed a sector with "better" or "worse" results, as shown by the variation in rankings above.

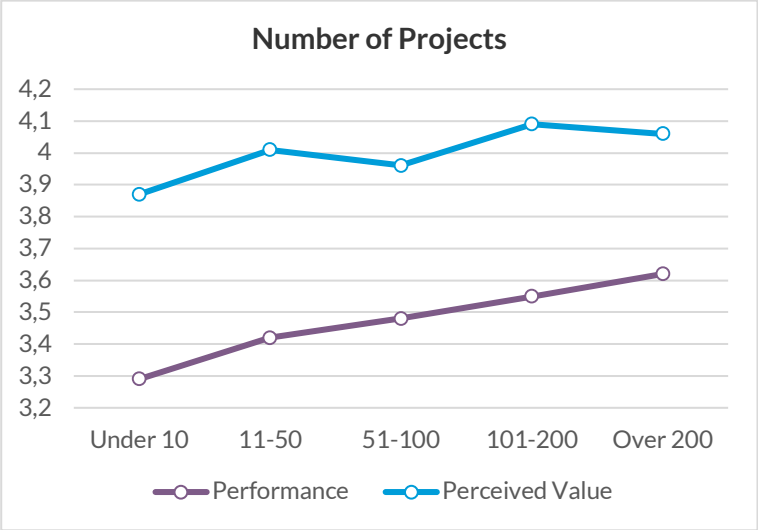
The only outlier was "Other", which was ranked 15th and last in all three categories. For Performance, its value of 3.35 was almost as far away from 14th place (Government, 3.52) as between all the other categories, up to Education with 3.73.

For entertainment, some of the survey questions can be checked against clichés for sectors:

- Is the Education sector better at training?
  - For the Skills and Training section, their score of -0.35 was 1st and 0.10 better than the next sector – so broadly, yes!
  - However they were a close 5th for providing Online Help, so there is still improvement to be made
- Is the Banking sector better at Financial Management?
  - In short, no – the sector placed 6th for project financial management, led by Retail and Education;
  - 11th for portfolio financial management, led by Transportation
  - Hence, at best the sector is in the middle of the pack.
- Is the Government sector better at project governance?
  - With a score of -0.75, they placed 14th, ahead of only the "Other" category.
  - Hence, no.

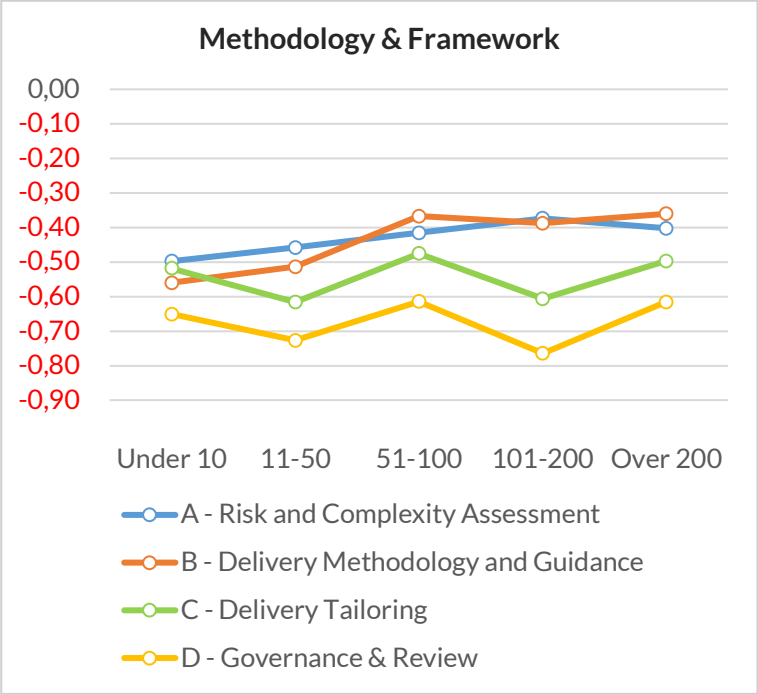
NUMBER OF PROJECTS

	Average Performance		Average Value		Differential	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Global Average	3.47	-	4.00	-	-0.53	-
Under 10	3.29	5	3.87	5	-0.58	4
11-50	3.42	4	4.01	4	-0.59	5
51-100	3.48	3	3.96	3	-0.48	2
101-200	3.55	2	4.09	1	-0.54	3
Over 200	3.62	1	4.06	2	-0.44	1
Standard Deviation	*0.128*	-	*0.087*	-	*0.065*	-



As the number of projects in an organisation increases, the performance of competencies, as well as their perceived value, increases.

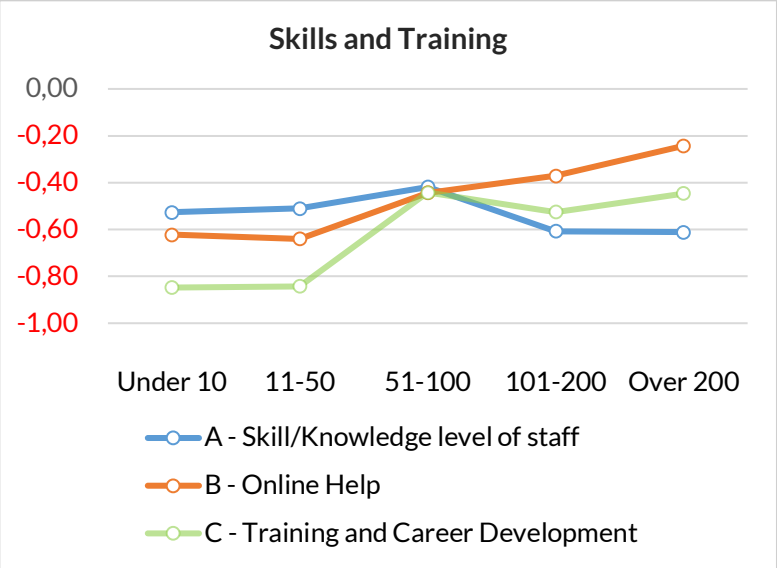
This means that the perceived potential for improvement does not close as rapidly as expected – better run projects seem to increase appreciation of project management capability, which in turn creates a desire for more (a very interesting finding in relation to PIRs and Lessons Learned being amongst the most needed improvements!)



The good news in the Methods space is that as more projects are completed, project organisations appear to steadily better at assessing the delivery journey, and improving management guidance and tools.

The bad news is that practically, it appears that the extra project experience doesn't improve tailoring of activities, or governance to make sure things are on track.

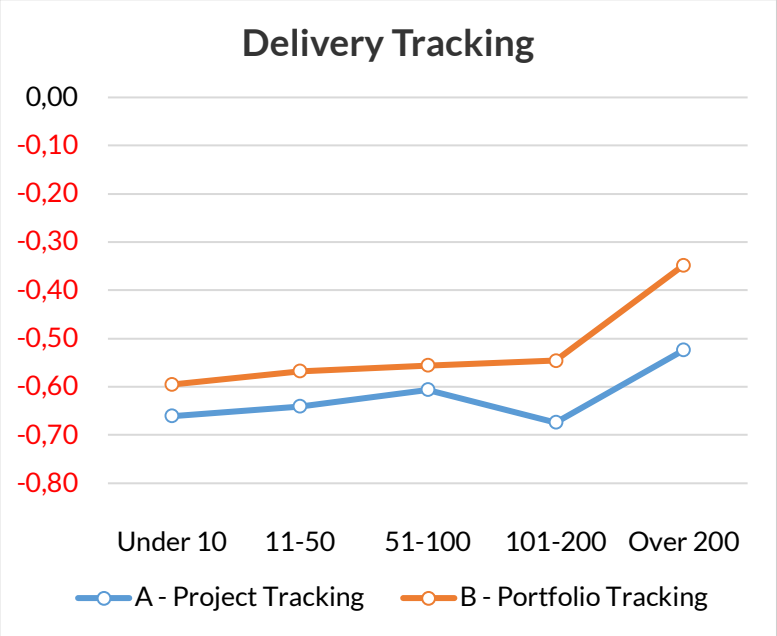
Paradoxically, it may be that the extra time spent improving planning and capability is missing one key part – creating time, space and accountability for anticipating and acting on the risks and issues that actually occur.



Whilst it might be expected that more project experience would lead to better skilled teams, the survey responses did not indicate this – in fact, skill sets got slightly worse as more projects were completed.

Perhaps this is reflective of organisation size: as they get bigger, there is a shrinking pool of people in the industry with a strong skill set, and instead projects have to "make do".

This is reflected in the other components here – whilst skills decrease, the organisation tries to compensate with better help, training and career development.

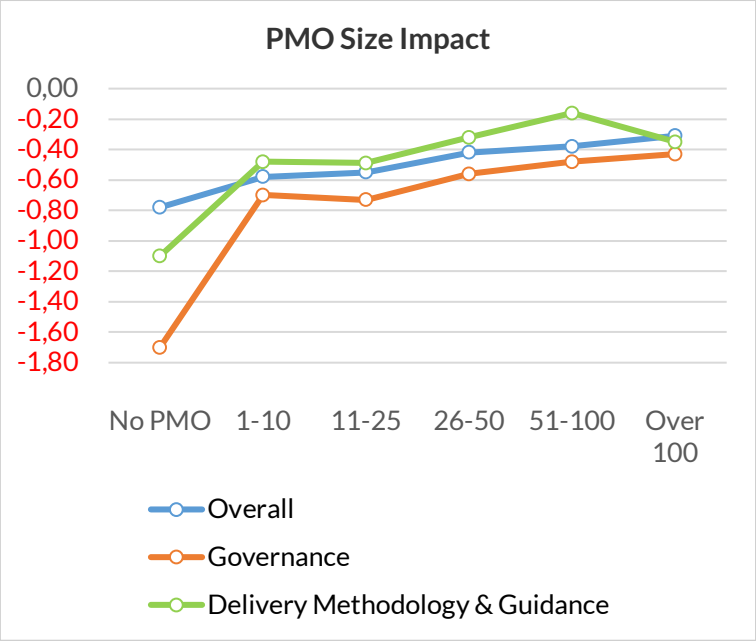


Completing more projects had little to no impact on tracking except for the very biggest portfolios. This aligns with similar findings above about projects not being governed effectively.

An obvious assumption is that it may be a failure of PMO capability, but as the next section shows, PMOs appear to be improving the organisation at an increasing rate as they get bigger.

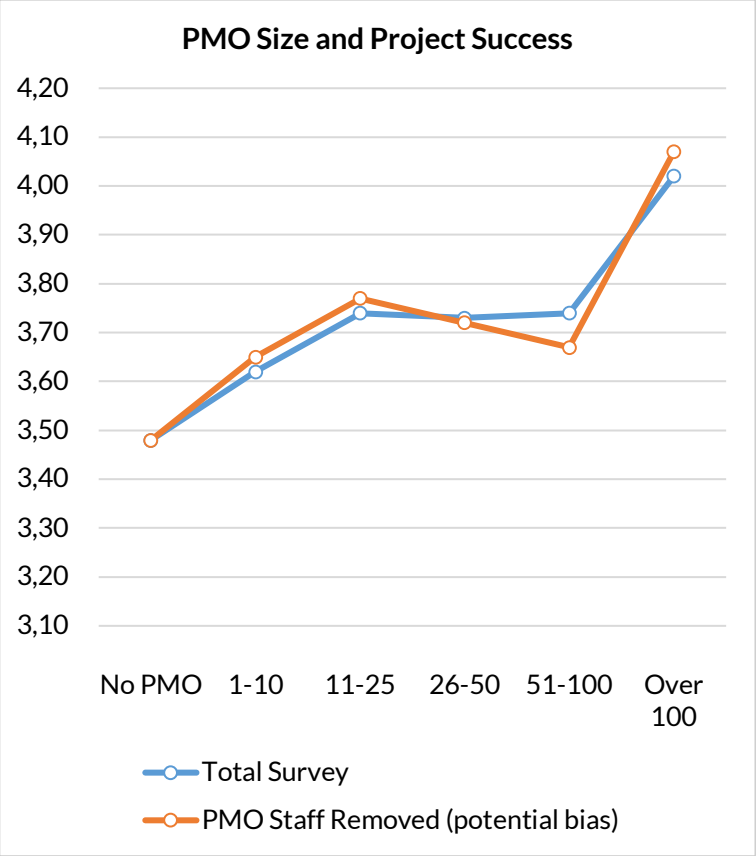
PMO SIZE

	Average Performance		Average Value		Differential	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Global Average	3.47	-	4.00	-	-0.53	-
No PMO	2.75	6	3.54	6	-0.78	6
1-10	3.39	5	3.97	5	-0.58	5
11-25	3.45	4	4.00	4	-0.55	4
26-50	3.62	3	4.04	2	-0.42	3
51-100	3.65	2	4.03	3	-0.38	2
Over 100	3.85	1	4.16	1	-0.31	1
Standard Deviation	*0.379*	-	*0.215*	-	*0.171*	-



Having a PMO at all produced a major improvement in organisations, and factors largely continued to improve as the size of the PMO increased.

Governance and Methods were competencies that showed significant improvement, which highlights a PMO capability as a very obvious way to improve project performance, given these were called out as major issues.

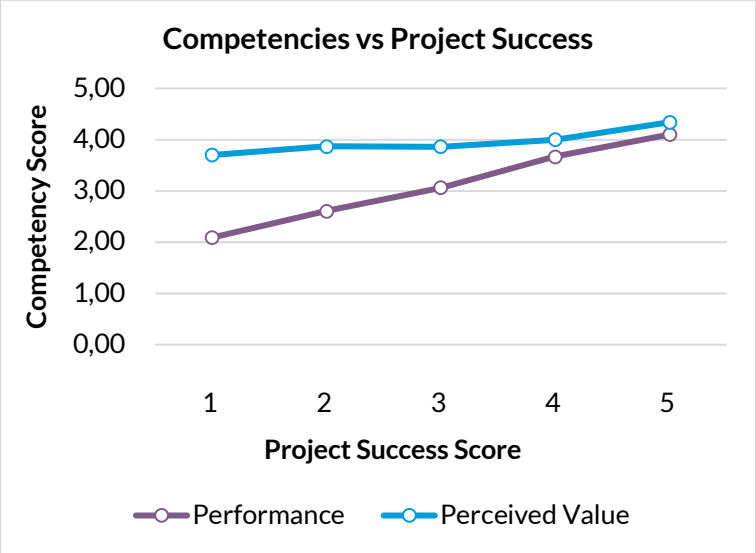


A more direct question to ask is whether a larger PMO leads to more successful projects, which after all is their reason for existence.

This was confirmed by respondents, with a large PMO scoring 4.07, compared with 3.48 for companies without one.

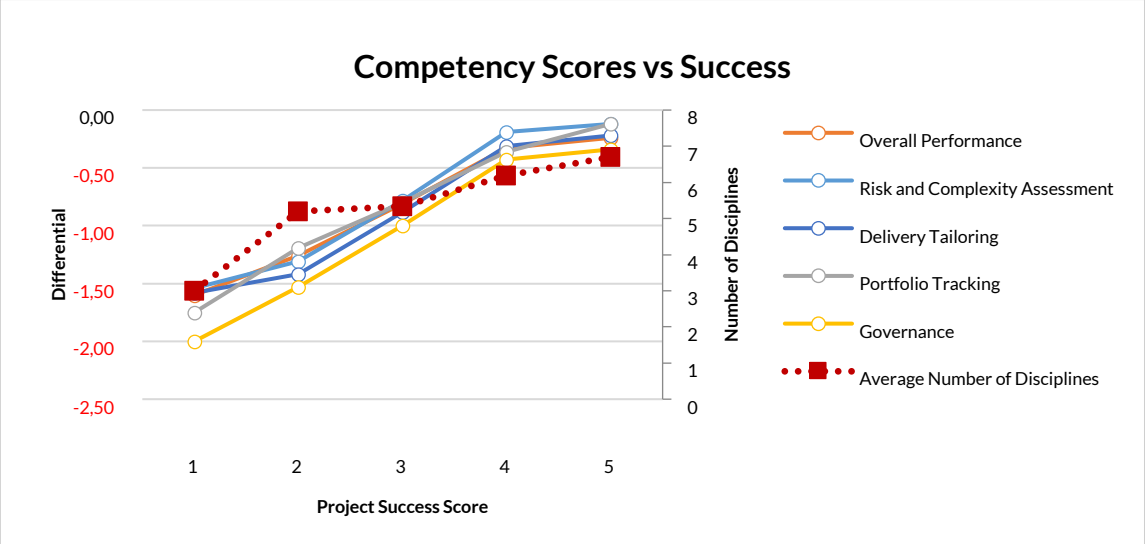
As a cross-check against bias, scores were checked with PMO staff being excluded, but this made no difference to the score – in fact they had a slightly more negative view of organisational success.

PROJECT SUCCESS



As projects become more successful, there is a direct correlation with project competencies becoming better and more valued by project teams.

This correlation is consistent for all main areas surveyed – suggesting that an integrated and thorough approach to improving project capability should greatly improve performance.



Far from being superseded by new practices, project success is tightly correlated with traditional disciplines being performed well.

Each broad area improved in lockstep with success, as did the number of average disciplines applied in each organisation:

- The **least** successful projects had an average of 3 disciplines in their delivery framework
- The **most** successful projects had an average of 6.7

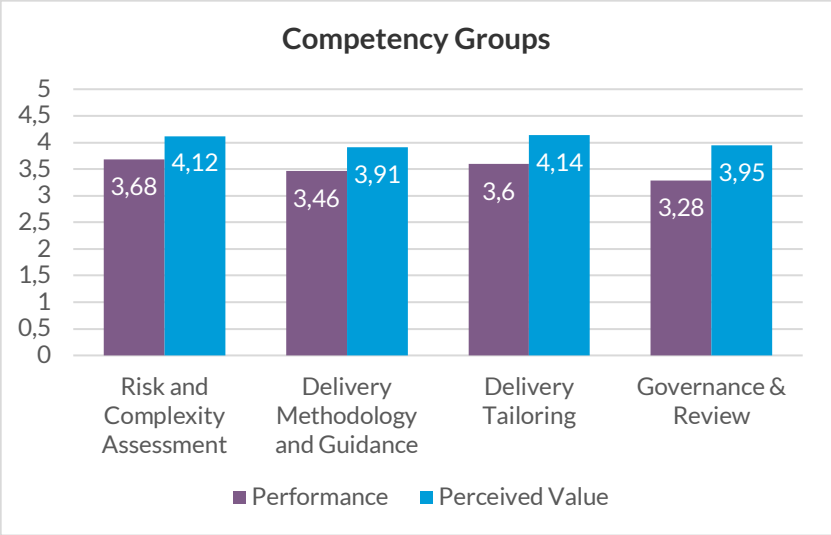
The broad conclusions are therefore clear:

- Focus on Governance, ideally with a formal PMO that can take an objective, arm's length approach from the projects
- Assess project risk and complexity as early as possible, and tailor delivery accordingly
- Apply as many Project Management competencies as possible – the diversity will lead to broader viewpoints, more diverse skills, and ultimately, greater project success.

PROJECT DISCIPLINES

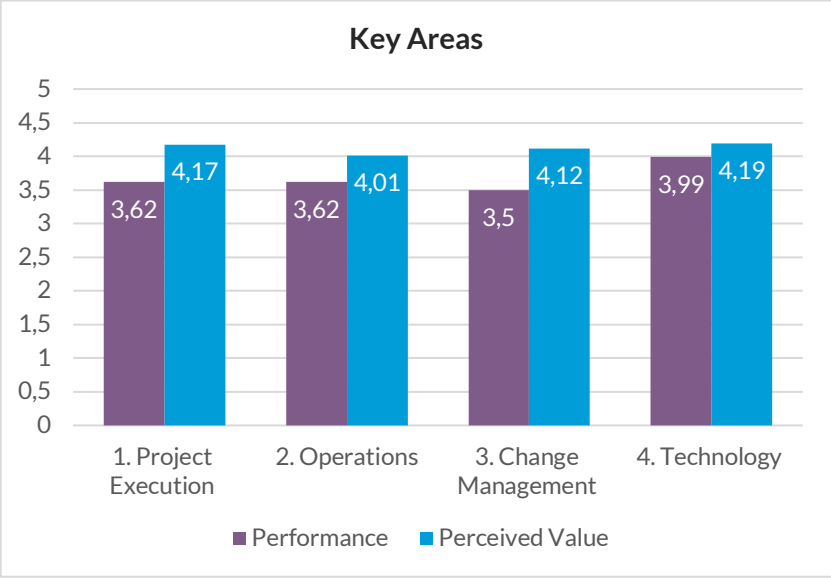
This section changes the viewpoint to focus on the competencies themselves: how are they performing compared with one another, and what relationship do they have with project success factors?

METHODOLOGY & FRAMEWORK



Competency groups are ordered sequentially from initial assessment through to governance.

Whilst all competencies have a negative differential, this gets worse as projects progress, most significantly in Delivery Tailoring (e.g. to manage project risk, complexity) and overall Governance.

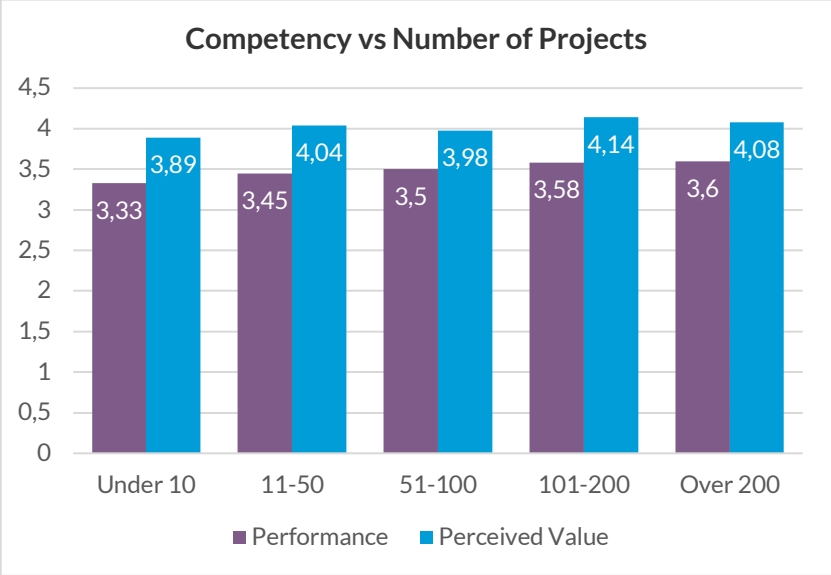


Risk and Complexity Assessment

Whilst assessing all areas of risk and assessment are valued equally – in other words, wanting to know as many potential impacts as possible – only Technology Assessment is being performed close to successfully.

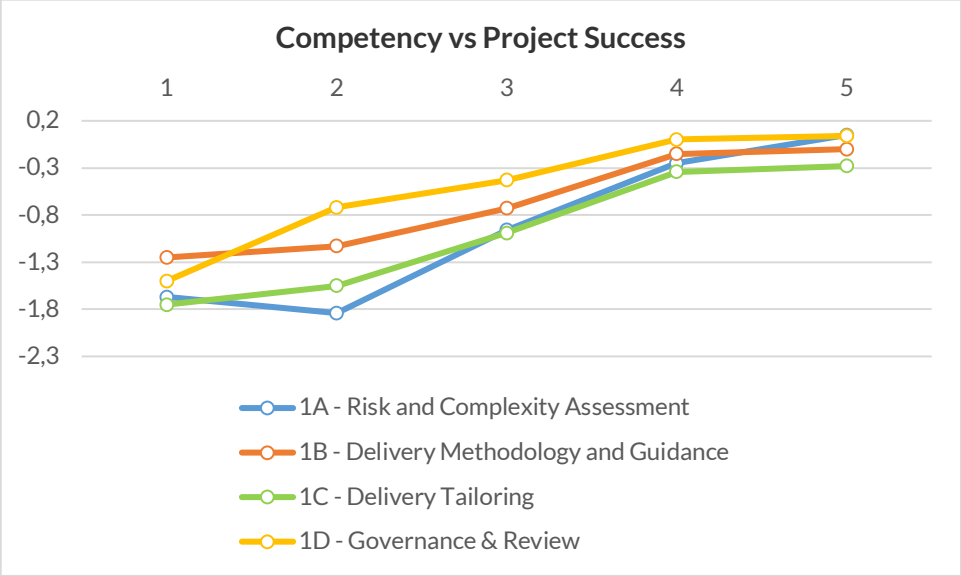
This could be expected due to the more static, material and hence "repeatable" expectations in this area – whereas those involving people (much more unpredictable) are more difficult, even with experience.

The poor performance of Post Implementation Reviews and Lessons Learned can also be considered as a factor here – as projects fail to reflect, they also fail to adapt in future behaviour and make more accurate predictions.

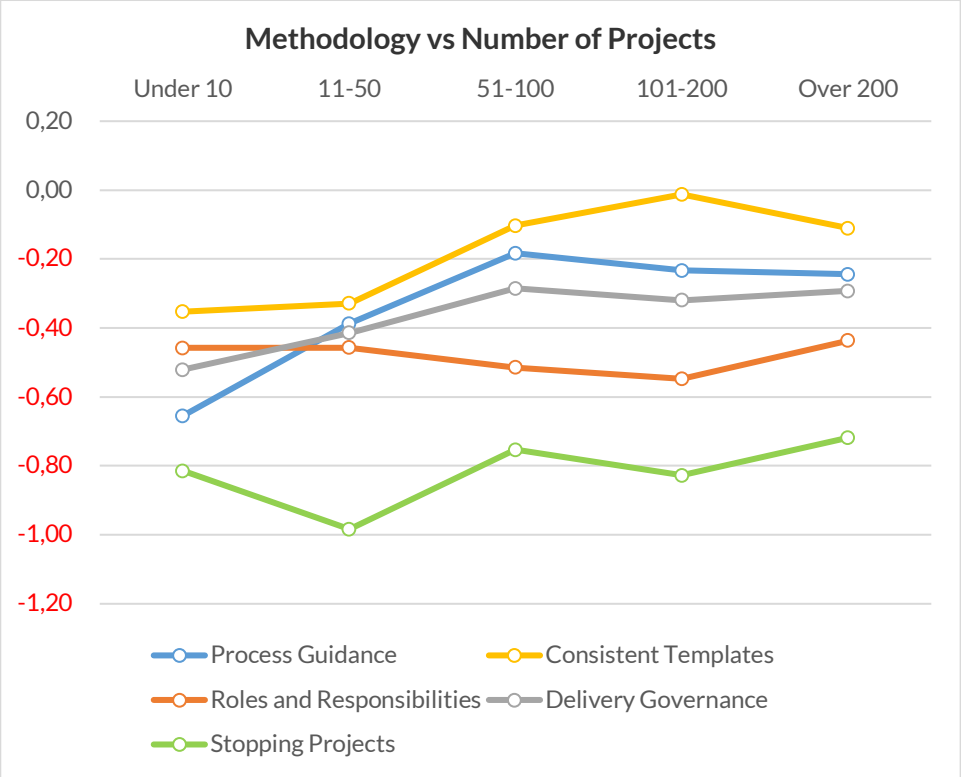


Surprisingly, the number of projects undertaken by an organisation seems to make little difference to capability, with neither performance or perceived value appreciably different between small and huge project portfolios.

Again, this confirms a significant shortfall in organisations reflecting on performance, and being able to apply those lessons in future.



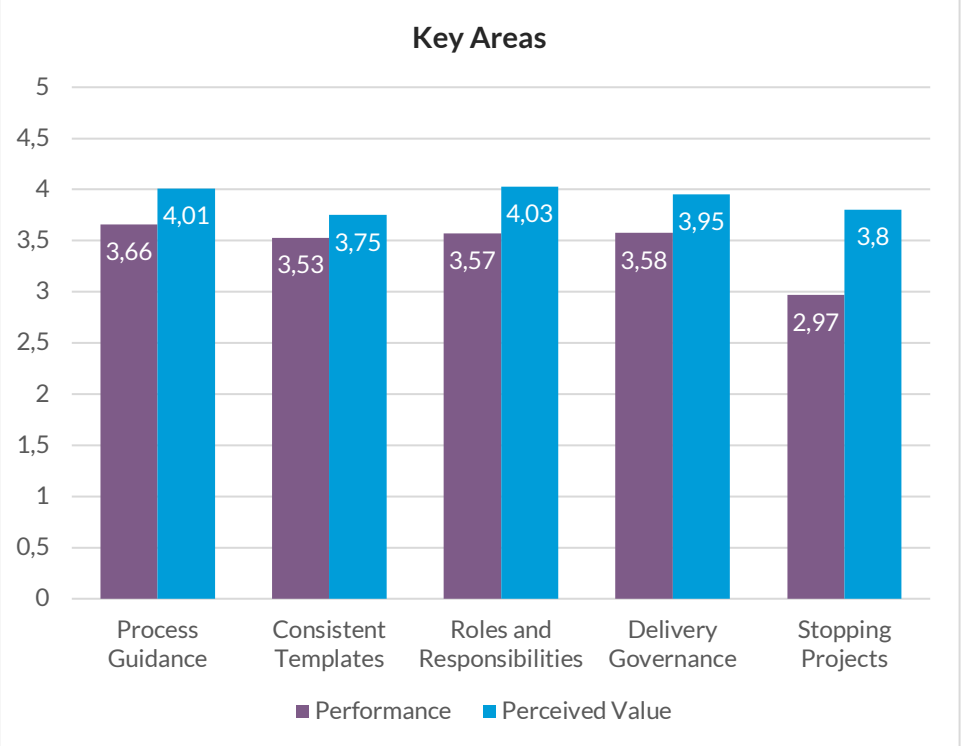
All methodology disciplines showed a direct and very strong correlation with project success.



Likewise, PMO size was strongly correlated with successful methodology disciplines, in particular where organisations had "mid-size" PMOs of over 25 people.

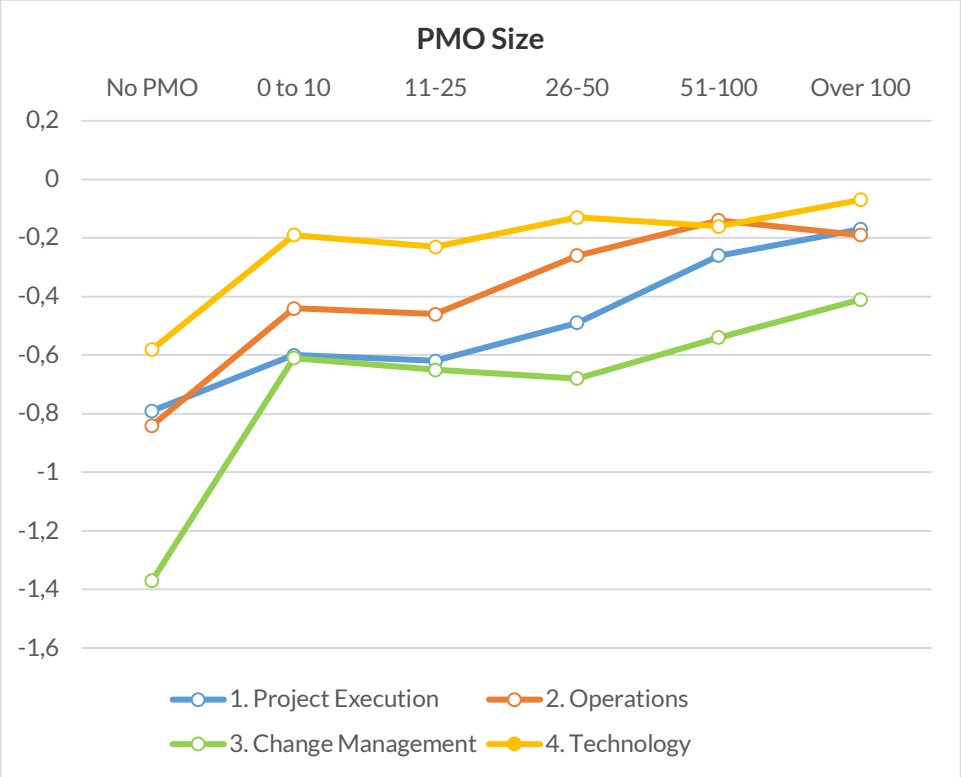
Improved performance was greater than that for increasing organisation size, suggesting that it was the PMO's actions specifically that led to improvement.

Delivery Methodology and Guidance



Whilst no competency is performed strongly relative to perceived value, "Stopping Projects" is by far the weakest area for organisations, with a differential of -0.83 between performance and perceived value.

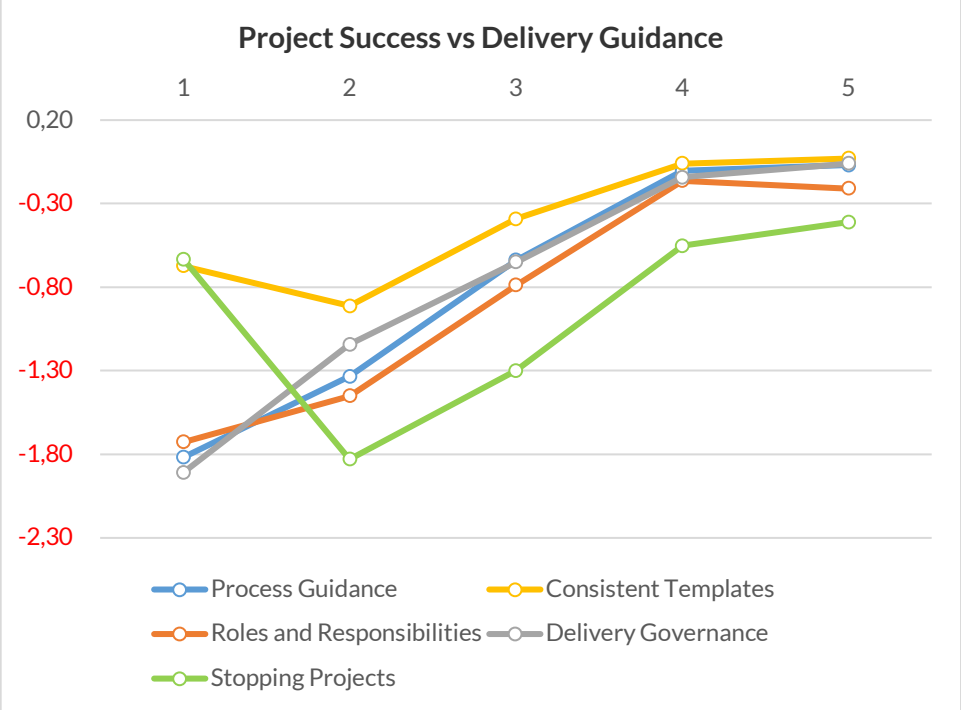
Asia (-0.46) and Africa / Middle East (-0.48) are least affected, but Europe (-0.88) and other areas (all worse than -1) are significantly worse, suggesting either an ignorance of poor performance, or a stubbornness to do something about it.



As organisations take on more projects, initially templates and guidance improve, presumably refined from experience of what works and what doesn't.

After 50 projects a year the improvement stops, possibly due to the difficulties of large organisations – and the poor collaboration and sharing covered later in this report.

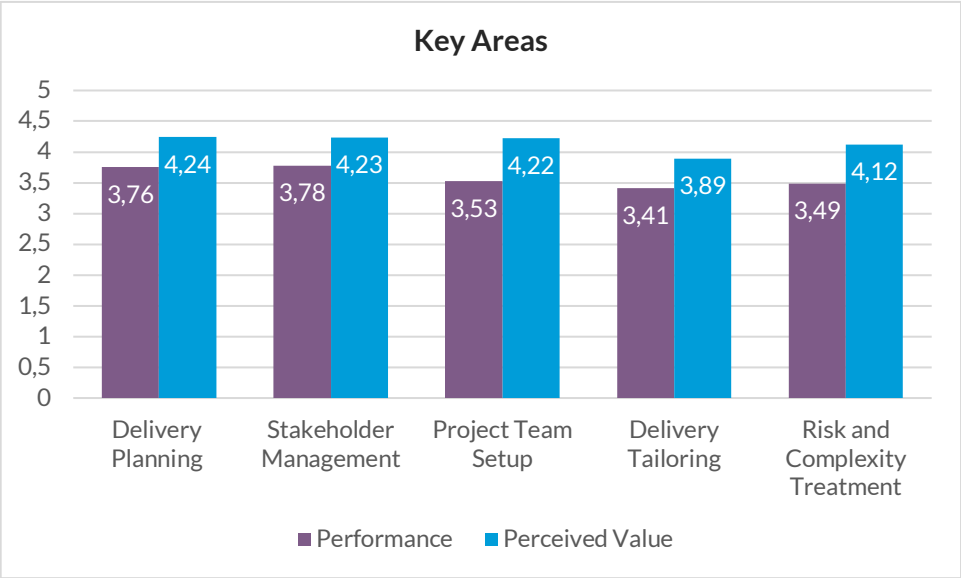
Governance makes minimal improvement with experience, and roles and responsibilities none at all.



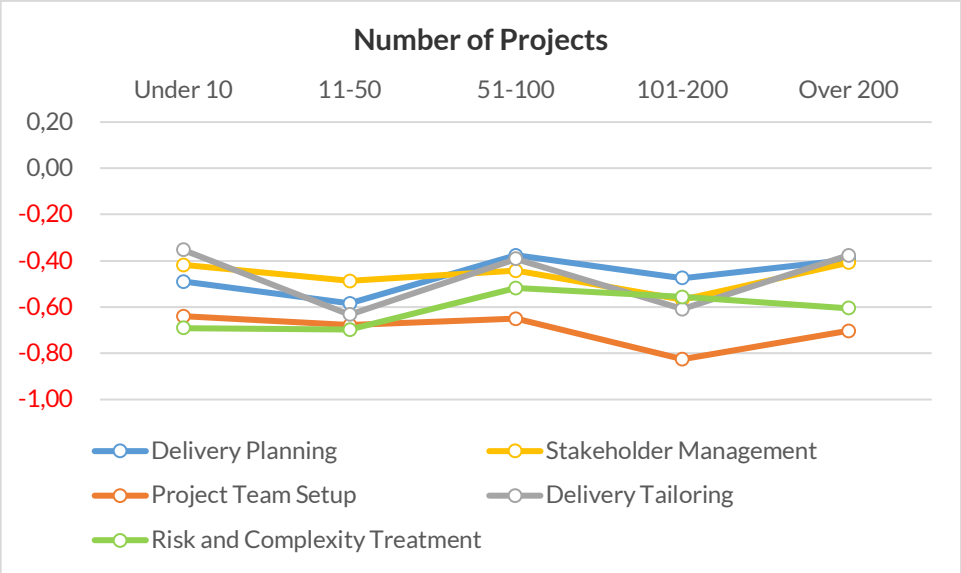
Once again, improvements in these competencies were correlated with massive improvements in project success

PMOs performed very well in these areas, showing a larger improvement relative to size than for the equivalent community and company scores, i.e. increasing PMO Size will improve competency scores more than adding project or any other staff.

Delivery Tailoring

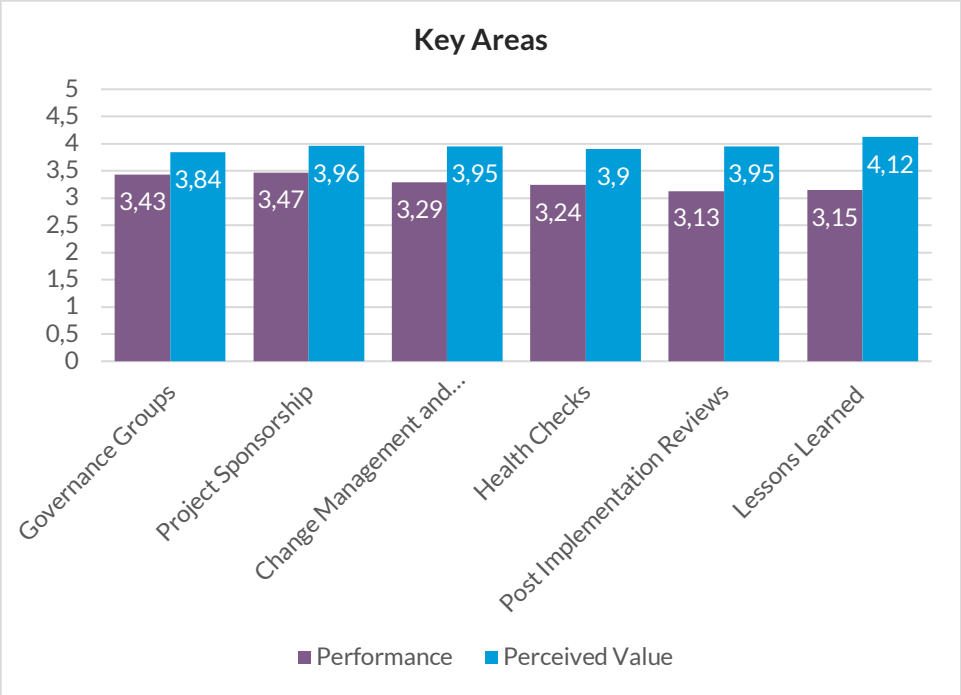


Preparation for projects is lacking in all areas. Planning and Stakeholder Management are best, but typically the team is not set up correctly – surely impacting many other areas – and delivery and risk factors not adequately addressed.



These issues appear to persist no matter how many projects are completed, with no area showing improvement as portfolio size increases.

Governance and Review

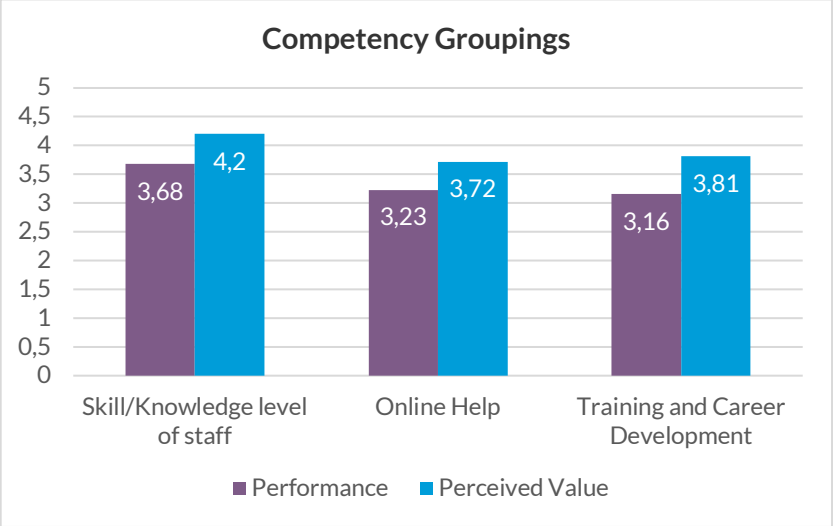


Project Governance is the worst performing area of the survey.

Executive oversight performs best out of the group, but people impacts, general governance and reflection score much lower.

This suggests a lack of structure and framework for teams to rely on, as well as improvement over time – instead, there is high reliance on individual skills and experience, increasing risk.

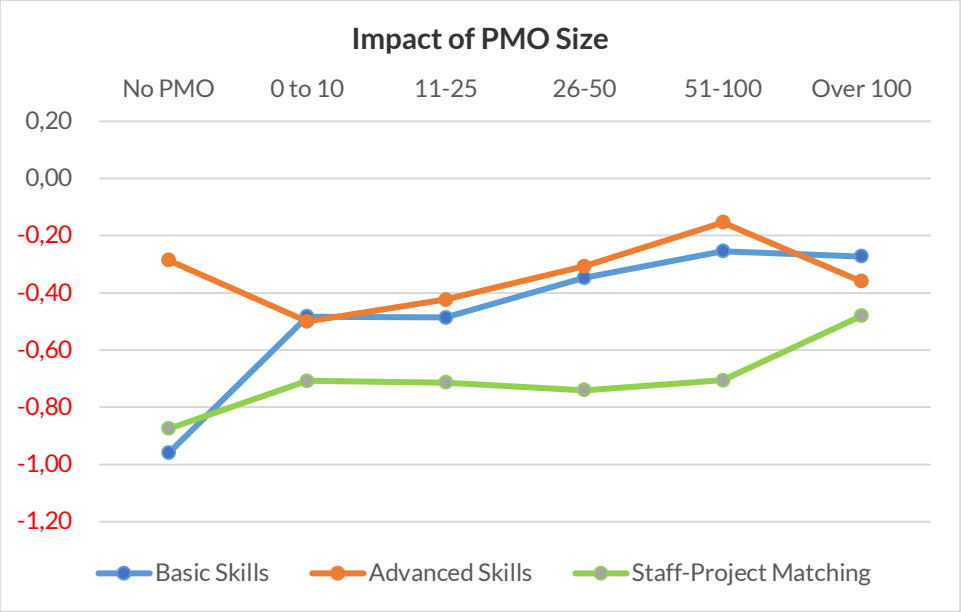
SKILLS & TRAINING



The most interesting relationship in this area is between skill levels and career development. Both the performance and perceived value of project skills are far superior, suggesting a reliance on training and development outside organisations.

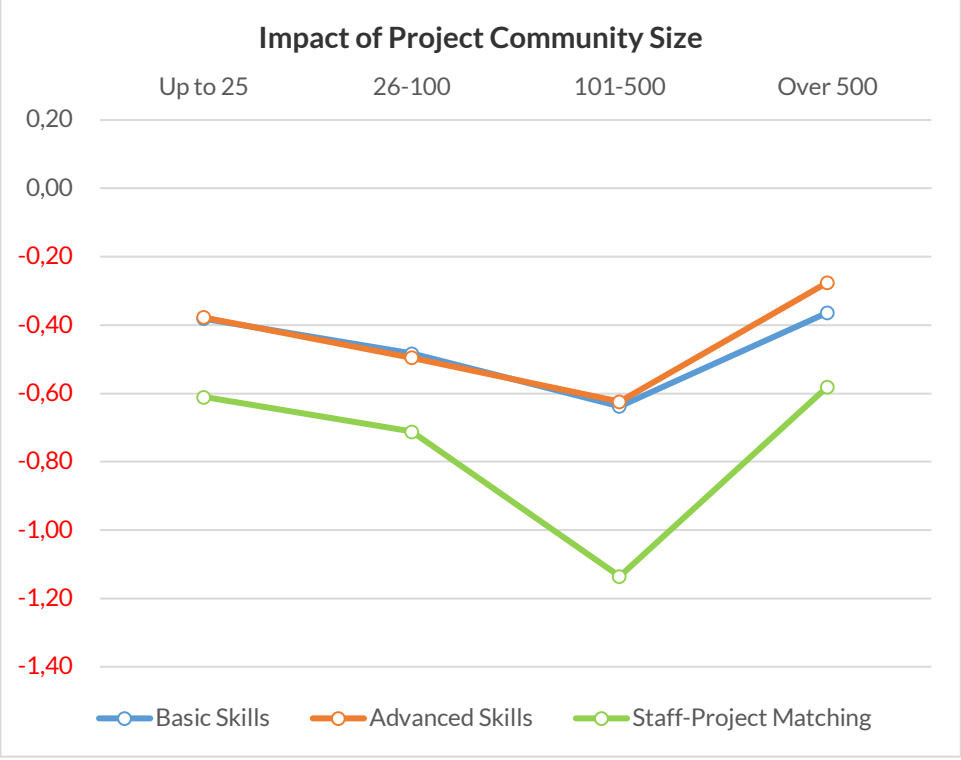
A recurring theme through this section was that improvement often only happened at the larger end of the organisation (project communities of 500 or more), suggesting that smaller companies could invest more, which in turn would likely feed back into overall learnings and team development.

Skill/Knowledge level of staff



Larger PMOs appear to have only a moderately positive impact on staff skills, again supporting the hypothesis that project skills are being developed outside of the organisation (in fact, even the impact may be due to other factors in a larger organisation, for example a higher salary)

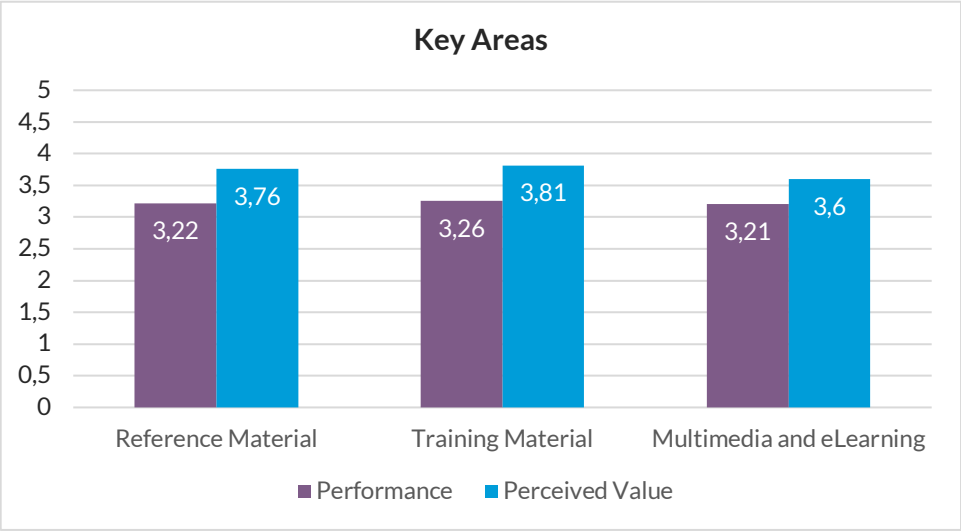
Staff matching to the right projects only improves with the very largest PMOs, suggesting that significant resources are required for this level of analysis and direction.



A similar pattern is reflected looking at the size of project communities within organisations – both skills and (especially) staff matching actually get worse in medium-sized environments, before reverting to the mean for larger organisations.

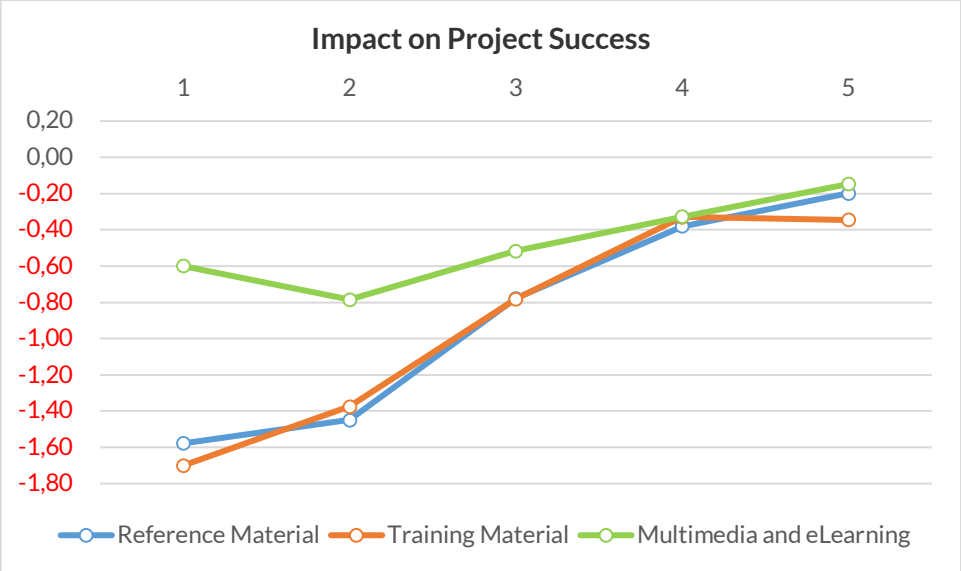
This impact is more pronounced than for the PMO equivalent, suggesting that PMOs are able better connect and integrate different project areas, hence reducing the negative impacts of dispersed departments and project teams.

Knowledge Libraries

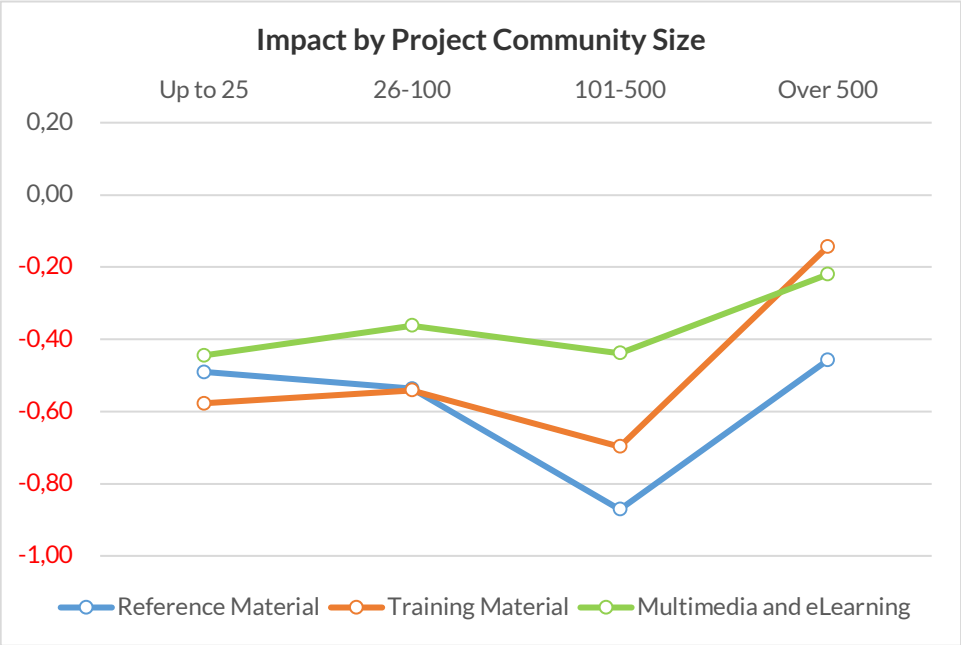


When there is no PMO or other support at hand, organisations can try to fill the gap with a solid framework of knowledge, accessible in a variety of ways.

Across respondents as a whole, these do not appear especially valued and likewise, are considered to be developed well at present.



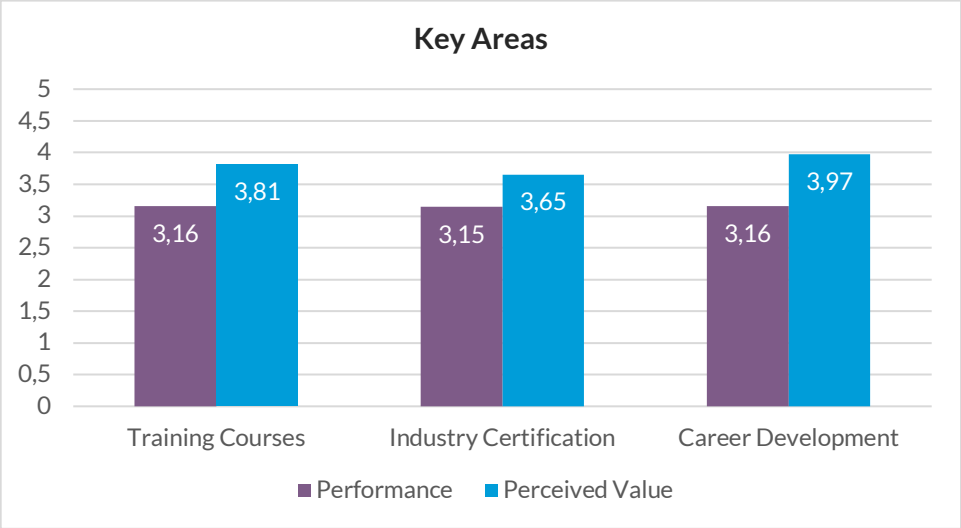
As with so many other areas, the most successful projects also had high scores (both performance and perceived value) for all of these competencies, showing especially strong correlation for static (non-multimedia) help.



As with staff skills, the best performers were the largest communities, suggesting that a "critical mass" of resources is needed for organisations to devote attention to a comprehensive library.

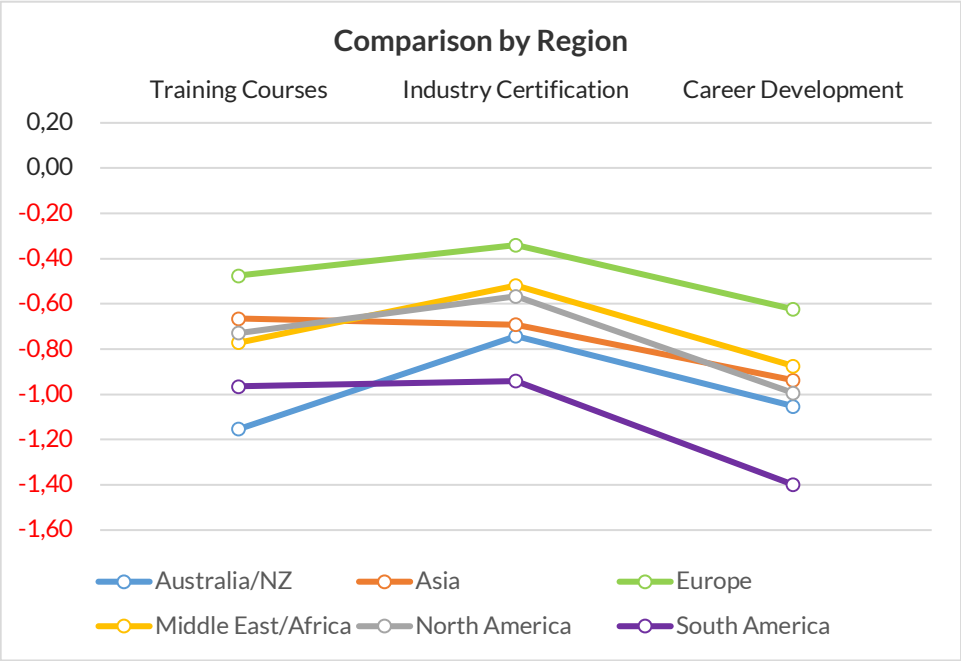
On this point, it would be instructive to follow-up and compare quality and quantity. It might be the case that smaller organisations could create a "lean" library of essentials that give them similar benefits, without significant cost in time or resources.

Training and Career Development



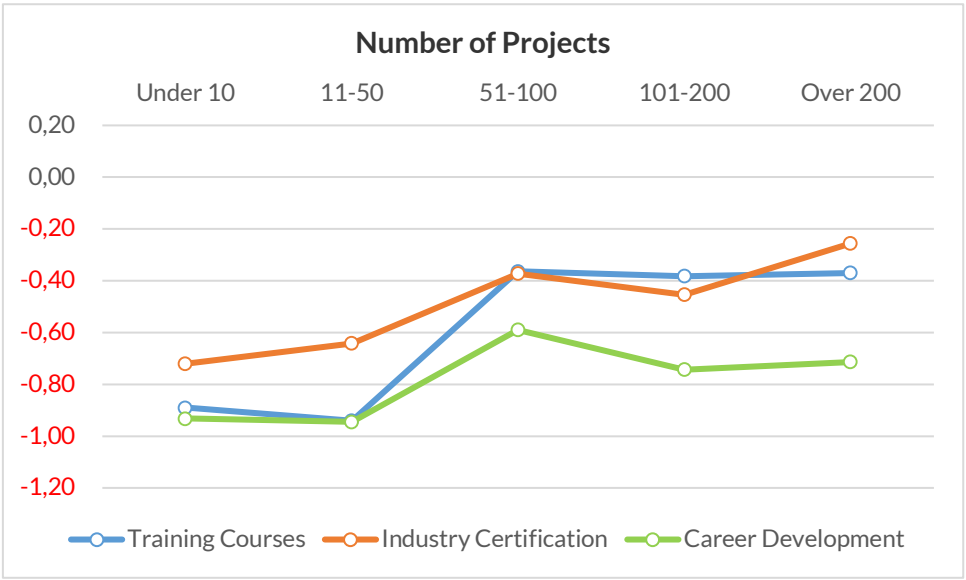
Project organisations appear to be missing an important opportunity to develop their staff, both in terms of general training, but most importantly, providing a pathway and associated opportunities to put that learning into action.

Certification likewise does not appear to have much organisational support, but is valued less than the practicalities of learning and practice.

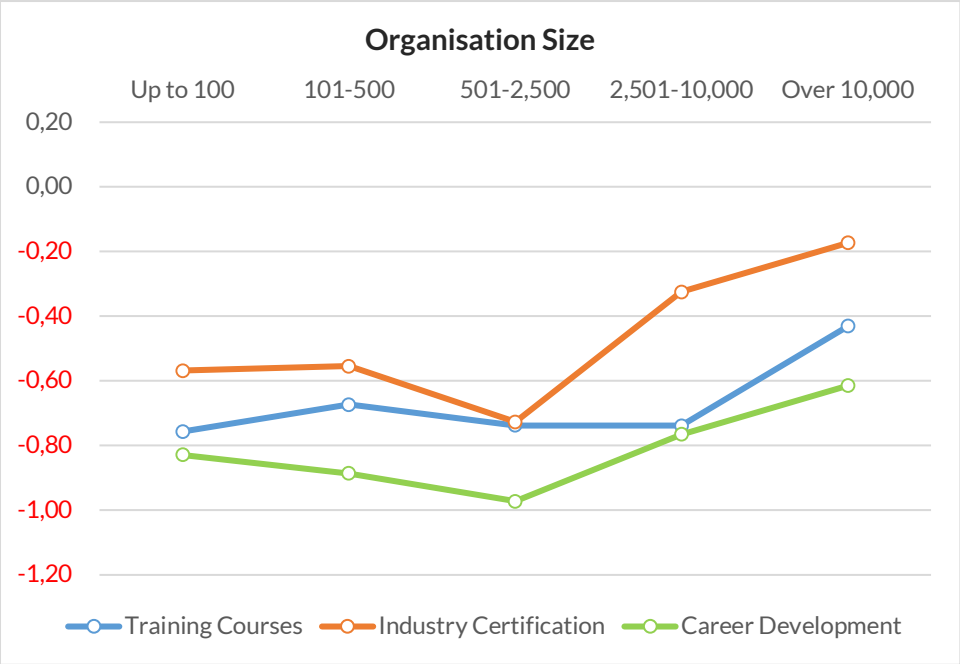


Geographically, project communities in Europe are clearly outperforming other continents in their staff commitment, with South America at the bottom end of the scale.

In Europe's case however, their self-rated performance was roughly equivalent to the Asia and Middle East/Africa communities – so it is unclear whether this commitment leads to improved performance, or is just substituting development that staff elsewhere take upon themselves.



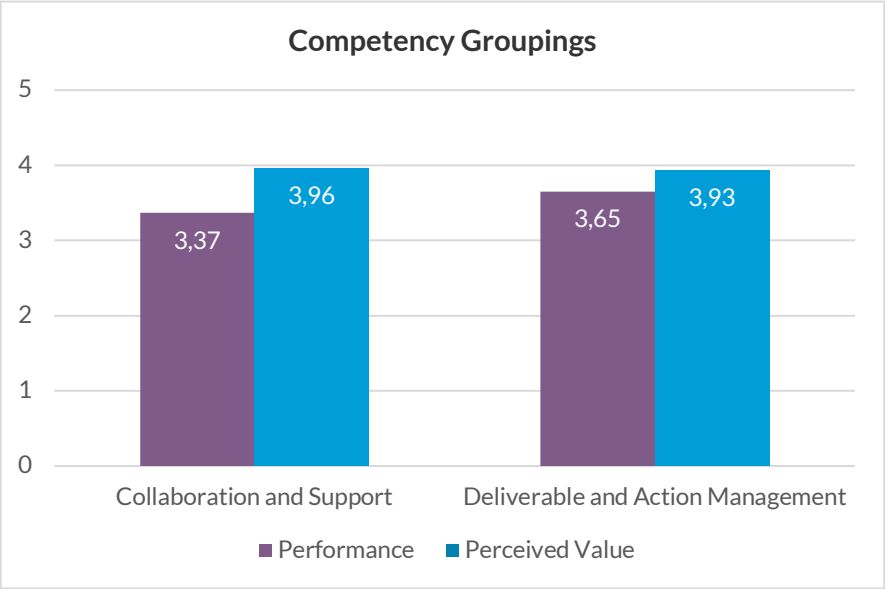
Per these two graphs, it seems there is a "sweet spot" of both projects undertaken (above 50) and organisation size (more than 2,500 people) that dramatically increases the investment in project training and career development.



Further follow-up would be instructive as whether this need be the case, or the "bar" can be lowered to smaller organisations.

Whilst responses suggest that a lack of organisational investment is substituted by staff in their own time, this likely has hidden costs for the organisation – for example, reduced loyalty and people jumping to other organisations for opportunities that might be available, but not obvious in their current organisations.

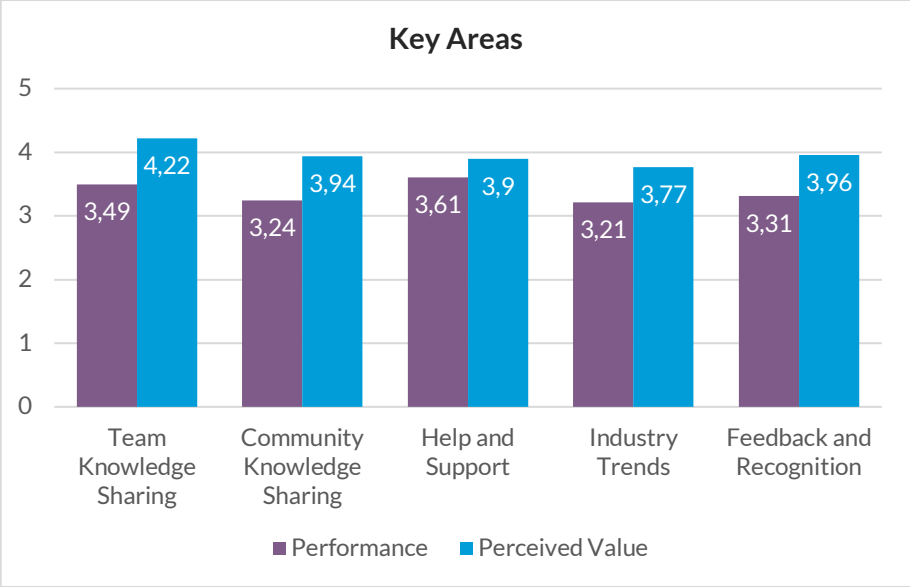
COLLABORATION & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT



There is a significant shortfall between the perceived value of team collaboration and how it is being practiced, in particular knowledge sharing.

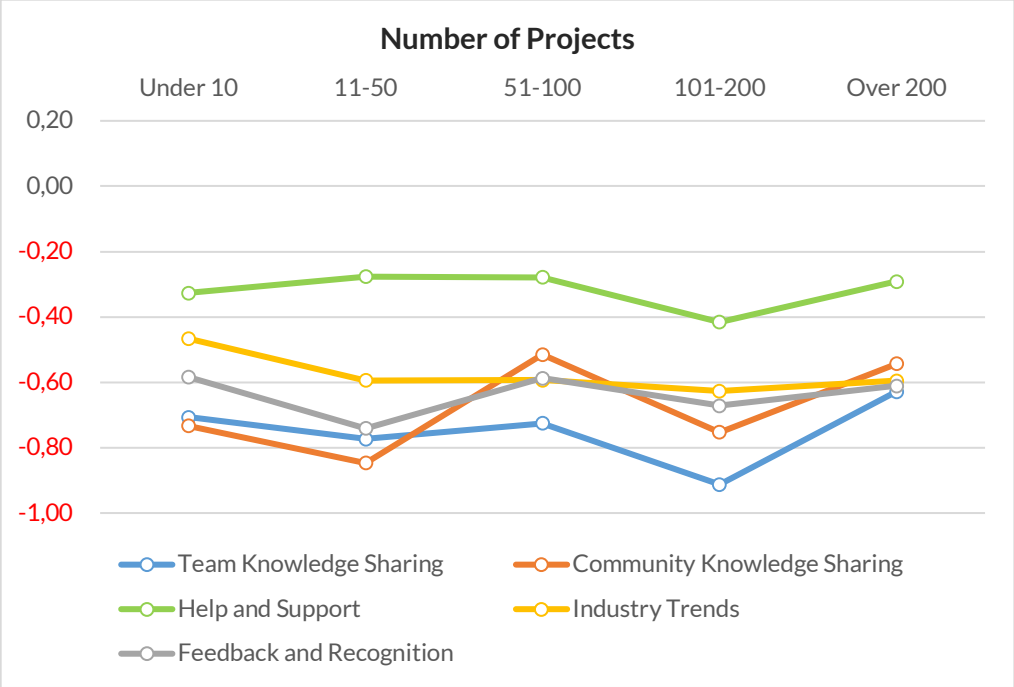
The "people" aspect contrasts strongly with the much better performing deliverable and action management, presumably easier to control as an individual practitioner.

Collaboration and Support



Nearly every area of collaboration and support shows a large gap between performance and perceived value – within project teams, communities, in relation to the industry, and from formal feedback channels.

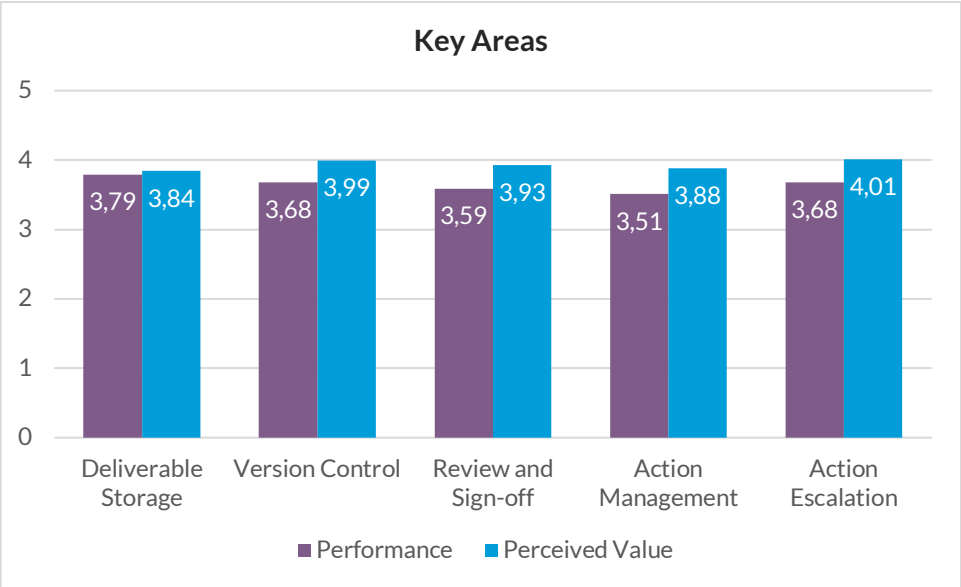
The one exception is Help and Support during projects, suggesting "reactive" responses are currently more effective than deeper reflection and support channels.



Organisations undertaking greater numbers of projects did not significantly improve in any of these areas, and in fact medium-sized project portfolios performed worst of all.

As with the poor scores for PIRs and Lessons Learned, this suggests project teams are under significant stress and pressure, feeling they don't have capacity to slow down, reflect and improve practices.

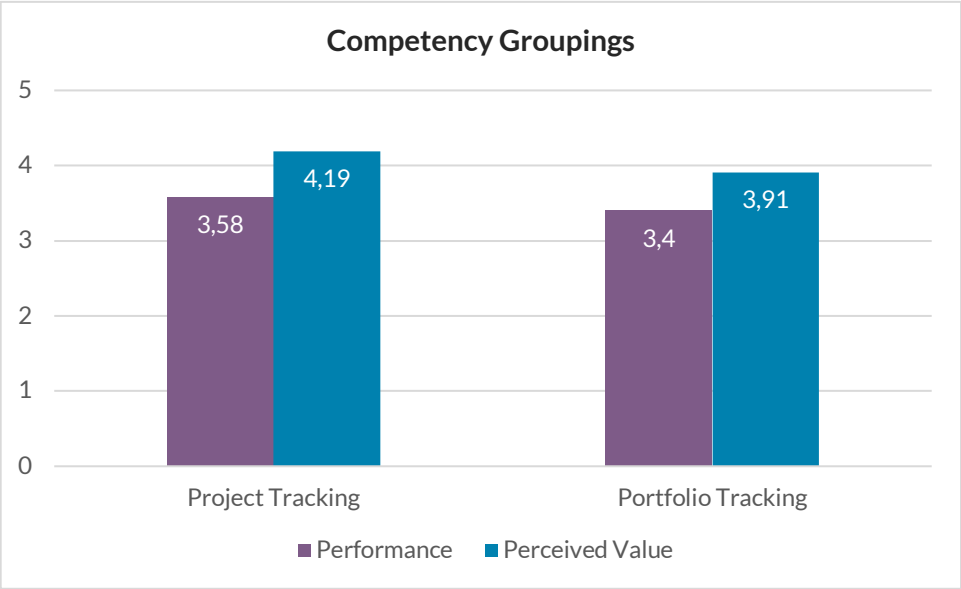
Deliverable and Action Management



This is the closest to "success" of any competency included in the survey, with performance closest to perceived value.

It's notable that this area contains competencies that are relatively predictable and mechanical, which likely accounts for their superior results – tasks that are visible and direct, hence easier to cross off.

DELIVERY



Oversight of projects and portfolios is, as expected from the rest of the survey results, in need of uplift across most organisations.

Projects perform slightly worse with a differential of -0.61 (compared with -0.51 for portfolios), emphasised by also being the 2nd highest valued project competency overall.

Competency Breakdown

	Project Scores			Portfolio Scores		
Competency	Performance	Value	Gap	Performance	Value	Gap
Risk Management	3.38	4.18	-0.80	3.32	3.96	-0.64
Issue Management	3.78	4.24	-0.45	3.44	3.93	-0.49
Defect Management	3.75	4.12	-0.37	3.30	3.75	-0.44
Scope Change Management	3.63	4.32	-0.69	3.41	3.95	-0.54
Resource Burn	3.08	4.01	-0.93	3.16	3.83	-0.67
Project Financial Management	3.67	4.14	-0.47	3.68	3.97	-0.29
Schedule Management	3.74	4.29	-0.55	3.48	3.98	-0.51
Insights	*The "value" scores are very high, reflecting project disciplines being seen as critical to successful project delivery.* *The worst performing disciplines are either unpredictable areas (risk, schedule, scope) or financial.*			*Lower "value" scores suggest that organisational focus is on projects rather than a strategic viewpoint.*		

ABOUT ME

I'm Ian Stalvies, originally from Sydney, Australia, now living in Berlin.

My career started with a Marketing degree, before various twists and turns took me into Project Management with a focus on UX, back when it was still known as "usability".

PM/KM

This survey is part of an overall vision to help people run better projects:

- Better assessment of risk and complexity factors
- Clear methods frameworks to plan and manage each step
- Clear collaboration tools
- Dashboards for updates from tools like Jira

My intention is to help project teams cut the boring stuff, have clear purpose and targets, and get the job done with minimum stress.

If you'd like to know more, feel free to find me online at:

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