



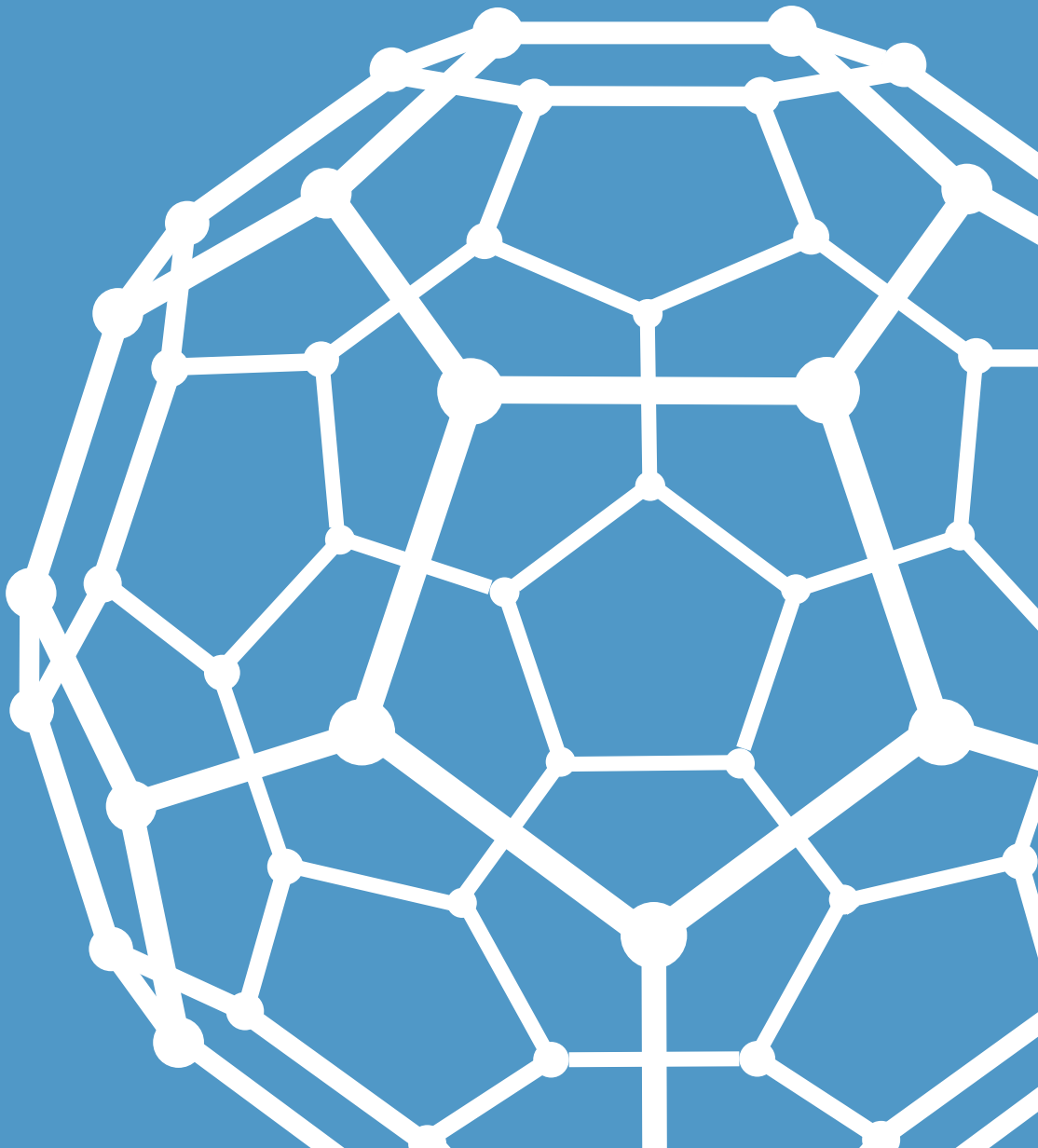
GLOBAL  
BUSINESS TRAVEL



# Praxis Framework Case Study

American Express – Global Business Travel

March 2019



## INTRODUCTION

Traveler Care (Operations) is a group within American Express Global Business Travel. Projects and programmes are an integral part of operations and the group has recently turned to the Praxis Framework to support project and programme management (PPM) staff, processes and outcomes.

Working with Brijender S Rathore ( Director for Global Service Transformation at American Express Global Business Travel), this case study is intended to reflect the group's initial experience of the Praxis Framework.

## THE ORGANIZATION

American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) is a multinational travel and meetings program management company headquartered in the United States. The company has approximately 12,000 employees and operations in nearly 120 countries.

The company has three divisions:

- Traveler Care (Operations)
- American Express Meetings & Events
- Global Business Consulting

American Express GBT are experts in business travel, providing end-to-end corporate travel management, meetings and booking solutions. The company's travel management solutions and services allow travelling employees to hit the ground running, helping to control costs and realize meaningful returns across an organization's whole travel programme.

Traveler Care (Operations) (is the largest group within the company in terms of employees. It includes all the service delivery teams that service clients by phone, email and chat, as well as all support functions like Transformation, Customer Onboarding, Tools Deployment and Workforce Management.

## PPM ACTIVITY

Traveler Care – Operations (TCO) is no stranger to projects with over 100 different projects running every year. Projects are focused on a range of topics and can usually be attributed to process improvement for front and back office, outsourcing, robotic process automation (RPA), new tools/platforms deployment, re-engineering and cost reduction.

At present, a formal PMO function does not exist within TCO. PMO functions have existed in the past but have been disbanded due to perceived disconnect between the PMO function and what was actually happening 'on the ground'.

Prior to Praxis, there was no standardized PPM framework which all PPM staff and teams followed. There were some basic expectations of project managers, but each individual / team was free to choose the most appropriate framework or methodology for a given project.

## PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

The TCO team have encountered a range of PPM-related issues and challenges. These can be summarised as:

- ❑ **Planning:** Planning is not sufficiently thorough and often fails to account for future resource requirements and stakeholder support.
- ❑ **Sponsors:** Sponsors are not fully aware of their role and accountabilities.
- ❑ **Stakeholders:** Key stakeholders are not engaged effectively or engaged too late.
- ❑ **Requirements:** Requirements are not captured formally or in sufficient detail and are mis-aligned with key stakeholders.
- ❑ **Benefits management:** Existing benefits management practice lack the necessary rigour.
- ❑ **Change management:** Effort is underestimated and not fully understood and supported by stakeholders.
- ❑ **Consistency:** As there has not been a standardised PPM framework or methodology across the group, there are often fundamental differences in outputs (e.g. project approach and documentation) and expectations.

## WHY PRAXIS?

Given the challenges highlighted above, the TCO team has been seeking to establish a more formal, standardized approach to PPM activity.

There are three key features that attracted the team to the Praxis Framework:

- ❑ **Simple, tailorable approach:** PRAXIS offers a body of knowledge and methodology that are straightforward to understand and apply. The framework can be tailored effectively to suit the organization's requirement; often a weakness of other frameworks and methodologies.
- ❑ **Praxis website:** The PRAXIS website is a great support resource for reference and it's easy to navigate. Resources and tools for all key aspects of PPM are just a few clicks away and it's all available online, for free, 24/7.
- ❑ **Praxis Local:** Praxis Local is a tailorable pdf file that summarises all the main functions and processes of project and programme management. It provides links to the Praxis Framework web site to access all the extensive supporting detail that is available including competencies, checklists and tools & techniques from the encyclopaedia.

## IMPLEMENTING PRAXIS

Having reviewed existing processes and practices within AMEX GBT, the team found many disparate project management tools, templates and processes; not surprising given the size of the organization and the needs of its different divisions across the globe.

The team recognised that the Praxis Framework is useful in its entirety, but in order to embed it as an agreed project delivery infrastructure, a series of steps was required.

The first step was to link existing processes and templates held on the organisation's intranet and show that they were not looking to change what already works. The objective was to gain integration and consistency. [Praxis Local](#) provided the ideal tool to demonstrate these links, and it could be held alongside existing processes and templates within the intranet. The use of Praxis Local also enabled a step-by-step approach to implementing the full framework. AMEX GBT could

decide which of the Praxis 'building blocks' to focus on first. Links within the Praxis Local tool could then take users into the full website for further guidance where needed.

The second step was to educate project management staff. Given the global distribution of project management staff, a series of virtual training courses was delivered. This approach ensured everyone was educated at the same time and speaking the same language. The need for senior management briefings was also identified as fundamental to engage key stakeholders.

The third step was to identify champions in each region (EMEA, Asia-Pacific and Americas) to support the implementation of consistent processes and help embed the required practices. Appraisals for Project Managers would focus not just on what projects had delivered, but also how the project was delivered. The [Praxis 360 assessment tool](#) provides the means for project managers to gather this evidence.

### **EARLY EXPERIENCE & COLLEAGUE FEEDBACK**

Feedback based on early experience of Praxis has been very positive. The team are delighted with not only the volume of content and resources available, but also the quality and ease of which the framework and supporting resources are understood.

The fact that the framework and supporting tools and resources are available online is a welcome added benefit of Praxis and members are impressed at how easily the framework can be tailored to individual project requirements.

An immediate benefit is the creation of a common language for PPM which everyone has understood. This has been a challenge in the past given the use of multiple frameworks in the past.

There have been a few challenges. For example, there can terminology confusion where team members have previously been trained in other frameworks/methodologies.

This case study is intended to reflect the onboarding process for Praxis and initial experiences of the team at AMEX GBT. As experience with the Praxis Framework grows and gains can be measured, so this case study will evolve to reflect how the Praxis Framework has facilitated benefits in terms of addressing the problems and challenges highlighted on page 3.

### **RECOMMENDING PRAXIS**

Brijender would have no hesitation in recommending the Praxis Framework to other PPM professionals and organizations.

## CONTRIBUTOR

Brijender S Rathore is Director for Global Service Transformation at American Express Global Business Travel. Brijender leads a portfolio on multi-million dollar regional and global initiatives with a team of project and programme managers across multiple locations. Brijender has led on AMEX GBT's adoption of the Praxis Framework.

Find out more about American Express Global Business Travel at:  
[www.amexglobalbusinessstravel.com](http://www.amexglobalbusinessstravel.com)

## ABOUT THE PRAXIS FRAMEWORK

Praxis is a free framework for the management of projects, programmes and portfolios. It includes a body of knowledge, methodology, competency framework and capability maturity model. The framework is supported by a knowledgebase of resources and an encyclopaedia.

Discover the framework at [www.praxisframework.org](http://www.praxisframework.org).

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