

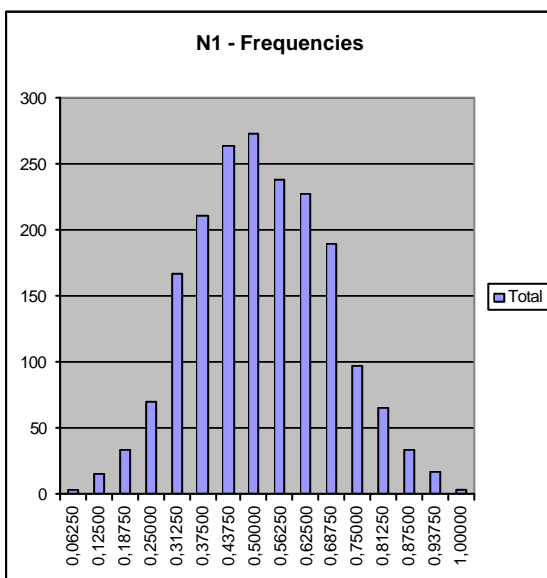
## Norming: How People Deal With Rules

*Metaprogram Research by Patrick E.C. Merlevede, Msc. of jobEQ – www.jobEQ.com*

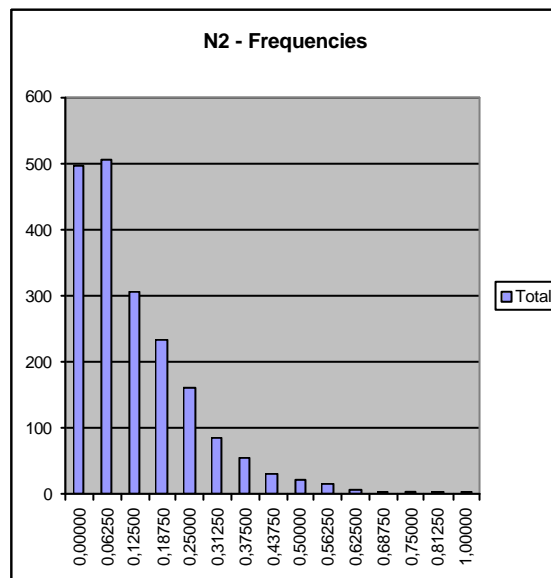
As Shelle Rose Charvet writes in “Words that Change Minds” (1995), the question we deal with when discussing rule structure, or **norming**, at work is: “What are the rules for behavior that a person applies to themselves and others?” During LAB Profile interviews, this pattern is analyzed by asking people questions like: “What is a good way for you to increase the chances of your success at work?” and “What is good way for someone else to increase their chances for success?” After the person answers we determine whether the person is having rules for him/herself and whether person has rules for others. An article published in Rapport in Spring 2000<sup>1</sup> concluded that the way this metaprogram was divided in the LAB Profile had its weaknesses. To solve this issue, iWAM has a new way of dividing the metaprogram. In the iWAM reference manual, norming is divided into the following four patterns<sup>2</sup>:

- N1: Assertive** (High "Universal Rules") people know the policies and rules and are willing and able to tell others know what they should do.
- N2: Indifferent** (High "No Rules") people have rules for their own lives, and care very little about other people's rules.
- N3: Complacent** (High "Organizational Rules") people need others to tell them the rules and policies, or they will not know what they are. When they know the rules, these people make excellent examples of what the rules define as good conduct. They want to do the best for the company or organization.
- N4: Tolerant** (High "Particular Rules") people know the rules and policies for themselves but do not feel it is appropriate to impose those rules on others and so, they are unable to pass those rules on to others . They have a "different strokes for different folks" attitude.

The following graphs show the distribution of the scores on these 4 patterns for the 1,911 iWAM questionnaires used in this study.



**Fig. 1:** N1: Frequencies for “Universal Rules”

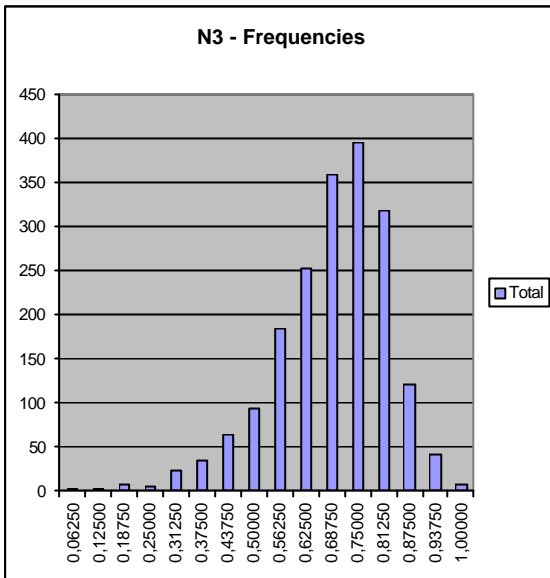


**Fig. 2:** N2: Frequencies for “No Rules”

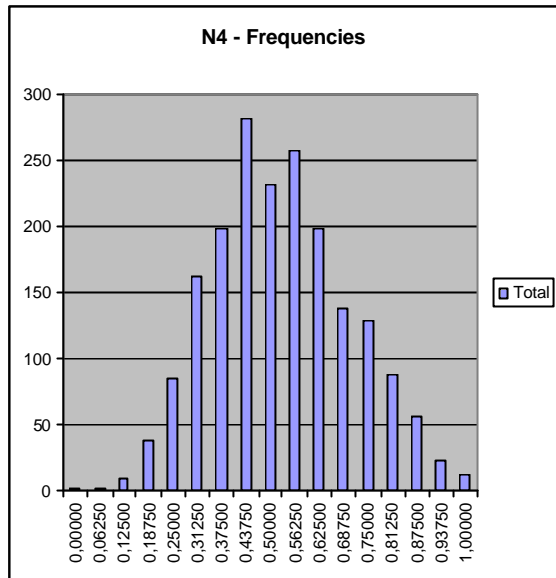
<sup>1</sup> “My, My, I met the LAB Profile”, Rapport, Issue 47, Spring 2000, by Patrick E.C. Merlevede & Peter Van Damme

<sup>2</sup> “iWAM Reference Manual, Rodger Bailey & Patrick Merlevede (LAB Profile International 1998 & jobEQ 2001)





**Fig.3:** N3: Frequencies for “Organizational Rules”



**Fig.4:** N4: Frequencies for “Particular Rules”

If one looks at the mean scores for these 4 parameters, one notices that most people dislike “no rules,” prefer “organizational rules,” and score Universal Rules and Particular Rules in between.

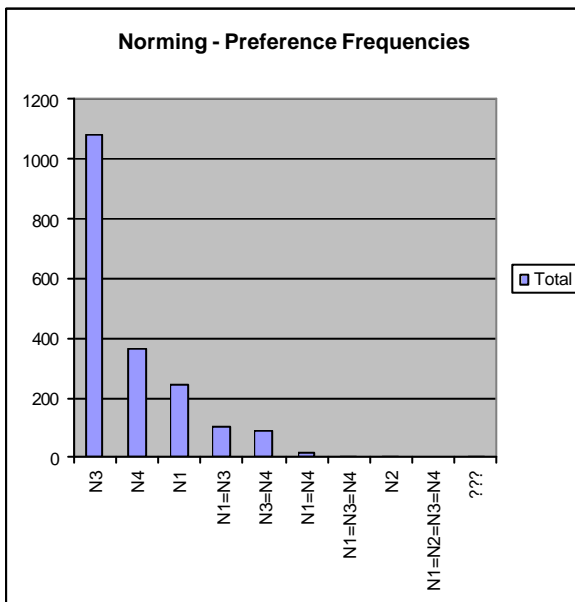


Figure 5 and the table below indicate the preferred norming pattern.

Preferred Parameter		
N3	1082	56.6%
N4	363	19.0%
N1	244	12.8%
N1=N3	105	5.5%
N3=N4	85	4.4%
N1=N4	18	0.9%
N1=N3=N4	6	0.3%
N2	4	0.2%
N1=N2=N3=N4	1	0.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

From analyzing the table, one can conclude that almost no one is indifferent. Only one person out of 1,911 indicated absolutely no preference for one of the 4 possible

parameters. The largest group (56.6%) clearly thinks that one needs “organizational rules” (N3). They accept that the rules come from the organization they are working for, and are willing to comply with these rules. A second group is more tolerant (N4: 19%) and believes that the rules that apply for them do not necessarily apply for others. This is a more relativistic point of view. The third large group believes that rules are universal – they know what to do and are assertive in telling others what they should do. These 3 first groups are followed by 4 groups of people who tend to combine at least 2 of the patterns. Very few people really think that there should be no rules (N2: 0.2%).