

Member Communication Experience

Fellows' Perspective: 50 Years of Construction Management and Project Delivery Development

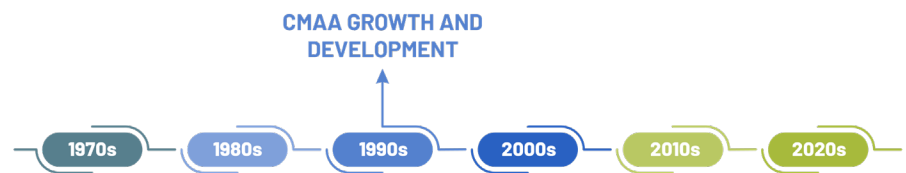
Part 3 – CMAA's Growth and Development in the 1990s

Written by: CMAA College of Fellows Communications Committee

As CMAA enters its fifth decade, it's time to look back and revisit how the organization was instrumental in the evolution of project delivery systems for capital construction programs. This is the third post in which the College of Fellows shares posts on the development of various project delivery systems and how CMAA emerged and developed in light of changes in construction delivery. Exploring the past offers an understanding of the present and may even provide insights into what comes next.

Today, we recognize that CMAA is the premier U.S. industry association dedicated to the practice of professional construction management, but that was not always the case. How did CMAA start and what motivated its development? While today's CMAA represents a membership of more than 25,000 and is well recognized for its support of construction manager (CM) certification and accreditation, it began as a fledgling movement to establish standards and practices in an emergent disruption in how large capital programs were delivered. In this blog series, presented by members of CMAA's College of Fellows, we explore the history of CMAA, including the evolution and trends impacting delivery methods that influenced CMAA (and vice versa!).

We also review the development of CMAA Chapters and ultimately recap how professional construction management practices can continue to realize positive outcomes regardless



of which delivery method is used, drawn from lessons learned during the entire CMAA era.

In our first two blogs, we explored market conditions in the 1970s and 1980s that led to the formation of CMAA and covered the growth of two alternative delivery methods, [multi-prime contracting](#) and [CM at-Risk](#). In this post, we cover the development of CMAA in the 1990s.

CMAA'S INITIAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

As a newly formed association representing a distinct but growing segment of the larger design and construction industry, early members of CMAA spent considerable time developing a vision for the organization. During the 1980s, the concept of a professional construction manager was not widely known, as specialists that focused primarily on construction and project management were relatively rare. In that environment, CMAA's early activities were primarily about like-minded practitioners determining what the association wanted to be. By the early 1990s, CMAA's purpose was defined as follows:

CMAA provides a unified voice for the construction management industry in those areas where collective representation and action as an association is the best method of achieving common goals.

At this time, CMAA's goals included:

- » Setting standards of practice and developing contract documents for construction management.
- » Expanding the understanding of the construction management concept and its use in the marketplace.
- » Research and education to assess and advance construction management performance.
- » Providing a network of information resources and business contacts.
- » Advocacy for construction management in the legislative, regulatory and judicial arenas of federal, state, and local government.
- » Certification of individual construction management practitioner knowledge and capabilities.
- » Leadership and consensus-building on critical issues, such as safety, quality management, insurance, and qualifications-based procurement of construction management as a professional service.

During the developmental years of CMAA in the 1980s, membership was limited to service providers and there was uncertainty as to whether owners of capital construction projects and programs would be appropriate members. However, by the mid-1990s CMAA recognized that the constituency with the greatest influence on the acceptance of the profession would be owners. Not only did owners have the most to gain from quicker, smoother, more efficient project delivery, but it was the owner community's urgent need for better construction outcomes that gave the initial spark to the creation of the construction management profession. As an additional benefit, the presence of owners provided an opportunity for CMAA membership to gain more insight into owners' needs and access their own expertise.

As described in a CMAA article by staff member John McKeon in the early 2000s titled *Evolution of a Profession*, the federal government was the arena in which CMAA efforts first bore fruit. Such major players as the U.S. General Services Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers

saw the benefit of CMAA's Standards of Practice and became members of the association. Major state, regional, and local government entities, including the New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority, followed suit.

In the first two decades of existence, CMAA's advancement of the CM Body of Knowledge was through the establishment of numerous technical committees that developed procedures for key aspects of construction management practice, such as time, cost, and quality management, all of which led the initial release and continued development of the *Construction Management Standards of Practice*.

One of the most important advances in CMAA's development was the creation of a model certification program. With Standards of Practice, standard contract forms, and a body of knowledge established, the CMAA Board of Directors authorized the development of a model certification program in 1986. In 1993, the Board of Directors approved a program to certify individuals as construction managers and thus clearing the way for implementation of the current CM Certification Program. A practitioner who met all the certification requirements would be designated as a Certified Construction Manager ® (CCM®).

During the 1990s, CMAA also continued to recognize a number of the founders of CMAA through recognition as Fellows. In this period, it was most common for only one or two Fellows to be recognized each year, who were distinguished not only as key figures in the developing CMAA but also were truly pioneers in establishing construction management as a profession and vital role within the construction industry.

Finally, during the 1990s, CMAA saw the development and growth of several chapters. By the end of the decade, there were 10 such chapters, concentrated primarily on the coasts (the topic of chapter development will be addressed further in episode five of this blog series).

As interest and participation in CMAA grew throughout the 1990s, the construction industry was adopting practices with the emergence of a new delivery method, design-build, which will be the focus of the next blog. 



About the Article

The CMAA College of Fellows Blog Series, written by the Communications Committee, will share posts on the development of various project delivery systems over the years and how CMAA emerged and developed in response to changes in construction delivery. The Fellows hope this exploration of the past offers an understanding of the present and may even provide insights into what comes next.

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