

## Member Communication Experience

# Fellows' Perspective: 50 Years Of Construction Management And Project Delivery Development

## Part 9 – How The 2010s Made CMAA A Defining Force In The CM Industry

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Construction management did not become recognized as a professional practice overnight – and neither did CMAA emerge instantly as the authority on managing programs and projects in the built environment. What began as an early effort to deliver projects better has grown into the nation’s premier association for professional construction management. Understanding how that transformation occurred helps explain not only where we are today, but where the industry may be headed next.

This post marks the ninth installment in the [College of Fellows' Perspective series](#) exploring the evolution of project delivery systems and the parallel rise of CMAA and its chapters. In this edition, we focus on the 2010s, a decade in which CMAA gained credibility and influence across major owner organizations, in academia, and allied professional associations. These developments fueled a surge in growth and continue to shape the construction management industry today.

### **CERTIFIED CONSTRUCTION MANAGER GAINS ACCEPTANCE**

While the Certified Construction Manager® (CCM®) program

had been developed as an outgrowth of early CMAA initiatives, it gained significant credibility due to its adoption by key federal and state agencies involved in construction, that saw an opportunity to benchmark standards for its service providers. CMAA members such as Bob Hixon, FCMAA, of the General Services Administration (GSA), and George Lea, FCMAA, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, worked to incorporate a preference for CCM-certified professionals in construction management contracts. Similarly, state organizations such as the Virginia Department of Transportation, followed by many local agencies, recognized the CCM as a preferred certification for consultants managing construction projects.

One significant factor in the growth of the number of CCMs was the introduction of online applications in 2014, which greatly reduced the administrative challenge in filing applications, resulting in more than double the number of applicants from the prior year. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of CCMs increased from 1,500 to 5,200, and today there are close to 8,000.

In addition to the CCM, the Construction Management Certification Institute (CMCI) responded to member interest in creating more widely accessible certifications for early-career

and non-degreed construction managers. The Construction Manager-in-Training (CMIT®) certification was established in 2010 and had credentialed more than 5,600 by the end of 2020. That program would be expanded to include stackable credentials in the early 2020s and the establishment of the Certified Associate Construction Manager® (CACM®) certification to recognize individuals in supporting roles to construction managers such as schedulers and estimators.

### **CMAA'S COLLABORATIONS AND EXPANSION INTO ACADEMIA**

Throughout the 2010s, CMAA strengthened its collaboration with other allied associations, including the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME), and the Construction Industry Institute (CII). The partnership with CII provided CMAA members with access to CII's best practices based on funded research of member organizations primarily working on heavy industrial projects, while offering CMAA's Body of Knowledge and certification program to CII members.

In 2012, CMAA took an important step in the advancement of construction management as a recognized profession through its membership and participation with ABET, the leading accreditation body for engineering and scientific higher education programs. Lisa Sachs, FCMAA, and Don Russell, FCMAA, were the first appointees assigned to represent CMAA on the Applied and Natural Science Commission (ANSAC) and the Engineering and Technology Commission (ETAC). CMAA led the development of accreditation criteria for construction management programs, grounded in the Standards of Practice, first at the undergraduate level and later at the graduate level. Today, CMAA's program criteria supports more than 30 programs.


CMAA members serving as program evaluators review curricula, programs of study, and ongoing research efforts to determine whether institutions desiring accreditation for construction management programs meet consistent accreditation standards. CMAA has also participated in the overall governance of ABET since becoming a member society. This role not only enhances CMAA's credibility but also provides essential insight into the development of the future construction manager (CM) workforce and emerging academic perspectives.

### **CMAA GROWTH INFLUENCES**

In addition to the rising interest in CM certification, participation in CMAA grew throughout the 2010s partly as a function of growing awareness of the association's emphasis on strong project management, the gaining recognition of the value of a professional CM under a widening range of project delivery methods, and a rise in program management, which corresponded with CMAA's development of program management standards in its reference publication, *Construction Management Standards of Practice*. A growing network of volunteers throughout the U.S. were instrumental in initiating and nurturing dozens of additional CMAA Chapters, which was discussed in our prior [blog posts](#).

One significant growth factor during the 2010s was the creation of the Mega Member category, a program for large organizations to make CMAA resources available to their entire workforce for a single flat fee. While originally established to address appropriate corporate membership fee rates for a very small number of large firms in an era of increasing industry consolidation, the program was adapted to provide many organizations with ready access to CMAA's training and resources to anyone in those organizations. The program's popularity immediately boosted overall membership and expanded industry awareness of CMAA within many large AEC firms with CM practitioners. The Mega Member category was eventually expanded to include owner organizations and, at present, now has nine owner organizations and 20 corporate members.

### **CONCLUSION**

CMAA membership tripled during the decade and has sustained growth in the years since. From under 5,700 members in 2009, the association grew to just under 17,000 by 2020, and now has more than 28,000. Over the 2010s, CMAA's educational content and conference themes responded to the growing use of technology in construction projects and greater complexity of management challenges with timely topics with a recognizable common thread of delivering value to project owners through consistent management practices and project leadership. These are themes that continue to resonate throughout CMAA today. 



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## About the Article

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The [CMAA College of Fellows Perspective Series](#), written by the Fellows 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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