

Chapter 3: The CM Professional

3.1. A Professional

A professional is an individual who has been recognized as having achieved the qualifications required to be a member of a specific profession. Those qualifications typically include:

- License or Certification by an organization authorized to issue it.
- Academic credentials.
- Experience in practicing the profession.
- Recognition by peers.
- Successful completion of testing in the profession.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) describes professional work as work that “involves exercising discretion, analytical skill, judgment, personal accountability, and responsibility for creating, developing, integrating, applying, and sharing an organized body of knowledge:

- Uniquely acquired through extensive education or training at an accredited college or university;
- Equivalent to the curriculum requirements for a bachelor’s or higher degree with major study in, or pertinent to, the specialized field; and
- Continuously studied to explore, extend, and use additional discoveries, interpretations, and applications to improve data quality, materials, equipment, applications, and methods.”

A profession is an occupation that promotes qualifications to provide advice or service for a financial gain. The primary purpose in requiring such qualifications is to ensure public health and safety. Professions are regulated by professional bodies (such as CMAA) whose main purpose is to provide the required qualifications for professionals, manage the affairs of the profession on behalf of its members, and promote the profession. In addition, associations provide certifications and continuing education services to encourage the

professional development of its members and to establish standards of practice and the code of ethics to render a high level of excellence in their fields of expertise. Professionals have control over their affairs, and evaluations of their ethics and procedures may be judged by the profession from within the membership.

Society may recognize the accomplishments of professionals through their contribution to society in many ways. Construction professionals contribute to society primarily through their professional practice.

There have been continued debates on who is and who is not a professional. Society recognizes and attaches the title to certain occupations. Professionals' qualifications rely on a mastery of a body of knowledge (Nanda² 2005). CMAA developed a large body of knowledge and requires construction management professionals to master it in its entirety, but it is not sufficient to master only the body of knowledge. A professional CM must also be capable of applying this knowledge to specific conditions that will meet a client's needs.

The individual's professional knowledge coupled with practical experience will effectively support the development of appropriate solutions to the specific requirements of a project. It is important that the professional exercise judgment by applying the principles outlined in the body of knowledge.

Studies made by Ernest Greenwood³ and others in the 1950s led to the development of a list of nine attributes of a professional. While obviously quite ancient, the thoughts are still valid.

1. **Professionals turn out standardized products and services.**

Construction professionals deliver customized projects and services based on standards of practice. A project that is identical in design will still be customized for a specific location. Two projects delivered using the same delivery method may have management approaches that are quite dissimilar.

2. **Professionals are well versed in an exclusive body of theoretical knowledge and, at times, technique.**

The foundation of construction methods is based on a body of knowledge that is applicable to all types of projects. However, the techniques involved in the

² *Professional Services: Text and Cases*; Thomas J. DeLong and Ashish Nanda, McGraw-Hill, 2003.

Who is a professional? Ashish Nanda, Harvard Business School, Harvard Publishing, 9-904-047
March 24, 2005

Professional Associations, Ashish Nanda, Harvard Business School, Harvard Publishing, 9-904-054
May 22, 2004.

³ *Attributes of a Profession*. Greenwood, Ernest. 1957. Social Work 2:45-55. in

Amateurs, Professionals and Serious Leisure; Robert Stebbins, McGill Queen University Press, 1992.

execution methods will vary between one project manager and another depending on the experience and the skillsets of the manager.

3. **Professionals share a sense of identity with their colleagues from whom they develop a sense of community, a sense of being members of an in-group.**

Construction is a team-based profession and as members of a team, professionals should share directly in the project successes or failures. As a result, these team members develop collegiality and a shared connection among themselves.

4. **Professionals master a generalized cultural tradition associated with their line of work.**

The construction industry has a deep-rooted tradition in developing, managing, and building unique projects, keeping with the tradition of quality, cost, and timely delivery.

5. **Professionals use institutionalized means of formally or consensually validating the adequacy of training and the competency of trained individuals.**

This attribute refers to licenses and certification examinations that emphasize and substantiate the professional status of individuals. The Certified Construction Manager (CCM) credential is a strong example of establishing a level of professionalism and a testimony for the recognition of an individual as belonging to a professional group (CMAA), and additionally provides professional recognition by their colleagues in the profession.

6. **Professional work constitutes a calling in which the primary concerns are consistent application of a standard and provision of a service or product, and the actual monetary return is secondary to the work itself.**

The construction profession has always had its admirers since the builder of any project sees and recognizes the results of his/her work and are always proud of the outcome.

7. **Professionals are recognized by their clients for their special authority based on knowledge, experience, and in some cases, technique.**

This attribute is of great significance since specialized knowledge and experience in the specific field of construction is evidenced through the selection process of construction management firms.

8. **Professional services and products provide an avenue for attainment of certain important social values.**

CMAA has established the Code of Ethics, which was developed internally by the membership in order to set the basis of conduct driven by social values in the practice of construction management.

9. **Professional work is self-regulated or autonomous.**

Self-regulation is a hallmark of any profession and such is the case with construction management. The founding of CMAA was a result of a meeting of 37 firms' representatives who decided that it was time to establish an organization that

would set the standards of practice of professional CMs and promote the profession to the construction industry.

These attributes and definitions only serve as a guide and only set the criteria for the understanding of what a professional is.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Construction professionals provide services throughout their field of expertise.

Professionals whose primary experience may lie in highway and bridge construction can also render their expertise in other transportation sectors or even building projects.

These projects can be focused on the client, the public, or both. What is unique about the construction business is that this condition places a major burden on construction professionals in delivering construction projects. In order to achieve the needs of clients, public involvement in all private and public projects must be satisfied. Any construction project requires the involvement of public entities at least with respect to zoning and permitting. Professional services in construction projects are driven by client-centered and public-centered elements as shown.



The initial role of the professional in providing service to a client is to either develop with the client the needs statement or receive the needs statement from the client. The statement of needs is the most important document in the initial phase of project development. It serves as a guide, which establishes the project needs. They should be developed in a manner that will facilitate the interpretation of the document when read by persons of diverse professional backgrounds such as architects, engineers, accountants, attorneys, and others who will be involved in the subsequent stages of development of the project.

THE CM'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PROFESSIONAL

Construction management is the practice of professional management applied to the planning, design, and construction of projects from inception to completion for the purpose of successfully managing time, scope, cost, and quality. It is a management

approach that focuses on the delivery of professional services. Construction management is a fundamental realignment of traditional construction relationships. It removes the overall project management functions required by the owner from both the contractor, and the designer and places them in a specific entity, the Construction Manager (CM).

To engage in the profession of construction management requires training and academic preparation concerning the specialized management services that a CM furnishes. An individual or firm possessing competence in this specialized management field, and who is a CM as a livelihood, furnishes a professional service to its clients. As a result, a CM will be held to a higher professional standard of care with respect to its activities and business relationships. The application of this standard to the practice of construction management has far-reaching implications for the CM.

Construction management is a service business and the CM performs those services that are specified in its contract with its client, the owner. Those services should be established in consultation with the owner and documented in the service contract. It is best to take a contract-based approach in determining the role and responsibilities of a CM with respect to the multiple services offered by a CM from the pre-design planning through the design, procurement, construction, substantial completion, and occupancy by the owner and final completion of the project.

Determining the CM's role and responsibilities for a particular project cannot occur until:

- The scope of CM services is clearly defined.
- The type of Owner-CM contract is chosen.
- The responsibilities among the CM and other project participants are fully coordinated.

The CM's role and responsibilities are affected also by (1) laws that regulate the construction management practice (e.g. those requiring certification, licensing, or registration), (2) federal and state statutes, and (3) case law interpretations.

There are several variations of the construction management practice. Each has its own definition, characteristics, and menu of services. However, all variations can be placed in either 'agency' or 'at-risk' forms of construction management. The agency CM generally acts as the owner's principal agent to advise on or manage the process from project conception to completion, but does not perform design or actual construction work. When the CM's role includes a construction performance function for an established price, it is now commonly known as the CM-at-Risk approach. The CM provides professional management assistance to the owner prior to construction and advice on constructibility, budget, and schedule considerations, along with a variety of related issues. The CM converts later to the equivalent of a contractor during construction.

A key difference between these two forms is that the CM-at-Risk is in fact a distinct delivery method due to the CM's responsibility for construction performance. Agency CM, on the other hand, is a distinct set of services that can be applied to any delivery method.

HOW TO SUCCEED AS A PROFESSIONAL

Recall that the qualifications to become a professional typically include five elements:

- License or Certification by an organization authorized to issue it.
- Academic credentials.
- Experience in practicing the profession.
- Recognition by peers.
- Successful completion of testing in the profession.

But to qualify is not enough to ensure success as a professional. Attention must be paid to those same elements as your career develops if you want to truly be considered a successful professional...by yourself and by others.

Play an active role in the organization that granted you your license or certification. You should accept a self-imposed obligation to help keep the organization informed of current and future needs of the profession. Your input could be crucial.

To the extent you can, contribute back to the academic institution and its associated groups that granted you your academic credentials. While there is always a need for financial support, there are many other ways to make a difference. Faculty and students typically welcome guest speakers who will speak at current events in the profession. Mentoring students is a powerful tool for helping to ensure the strength of the CM profession. Establishing or supporting summer internships and cooperative education work programs can be a real benefit to both the company and the students.

Your experiences on the job will play a key role in developing and maintaining your professionalism. To the greatest extent your employer will allow, try to choose them wisely.

If you want to specialize in a particular market sector such as transportation, be sure to gain experience in the many facets of managing such projects such as cost control requirements, governmental requirements and constraints, schedule requirements, client relations, etc. Conversely, if you want to gain experience managing different types of projects, you can still vary the areas of management in which you want to gain more expertise, as well as the project types. The opportunities to vary your areas of focus from one project to the next, even if you choose to work for the same employer, are truly one of the wonderful aspects of the field of construction.

Peer recognition of one's accomplishments is important to most of us. This is generally best achieved through active participation within a profession and its industry associations.

Establishing a strong network of friends and colleagues at the beginning of your professional career and maintaining it through the years definitely facilitates this. Of course, your being recognized as a success is not only important to you personally, but to those you work for as well.

Once you have received your credentials as a professional, there may be requirements for occasional formal testing in the future. Formal testing usually comes in the form of continuing education or professional development requirements but the real testing of you as a professional comes in your everyday work life. The challenges of serving your clients and pleasing your supervisors will be significant. However, the rewards are great and easy to see in the tangible form of completed projects.



3.2. Ethics of the Professional CM

The concept of professionalism has always been closely associated with ethics. Ethics is generally accepted to be a set of moral standards or values that guide our actions and thoughts.

Most professional associations have developed codes of ethics to guide the professional behavior of their members. The guidance is intended to help ensure that the profession's members act in such a manner that their reputation and integrity, and that of the Association, will be protected and held in high regard by society.

Whereas ethical codes are important and serve as general guides, they usually do not address all of the many facets of ethical concerns that are intimately woven into the fabric of everyday practice in our profession.

For example, some states have seat belt laws: to not comply is illegal, but it is not unethical or immoral. If you do not go to church, it is not illegal or unethical, but based on your religion, it might be immoral. If you speak derogatorily about a client or employee, it is probably immoral. Is it ethical to wine and dine a client to obtain business? How much can you spend on a client before it becomes ethically questionable? Is it ethical to make political contributions to gain work? Is it ethical to try to take work away from another firm? Is it ethical to try to gain an advantage by trying to maliciously injure the competition? Is it ethical to low-ball a fee? Ask yourself, *"Is it ethical to do many of the things we do every day?"*

ETHICS IN MARKETING CM SERVICES

Ethics start with marketing of professional services. A good marketing program is essential to survival of a firm. Unfortunately, construction management services are susceptible to

overselling. Overselling may appear at the time as a subtle transgression, but it becomes far less subtle when the firm cannot deliver as promised. That can quickly lead to a disappointed owner regretting its selection of the CM, and the onset of misgivings about the construction management profession itself. So be honest about your capabilities.

CM firms can, and should, constantly improve the quality of their services. New capabilities and technologies can and should be added to the firm's list of services. But be careful about how you describe things you really have not done before. It is hard to go wrong when you 'under-promise and over-deliver'.

ESTABLISHING CM FEES ETHICALLY

A clear understanding of the project scope and scope of services the owner wants to buy is essential to the development of a successful...and ethical...professional relationship. Clarify the scopes of both in advance and put them in your proposals to provide services.

When price is a selection criterion, there is often a conundrum on what your fees need to be to win the work versus what level of effort is required to provide the scope of services requested. This is particularly true when you have completed an initial phase of the project or program, and now have a true understanding of what it will take to finish the job. Give it your best price and deal with it fairly. Inadequate fees translate into either a poor quality service or a financial loss. If you cannot do a quality job for the right price then your only option may be to walk away. Integrity is one of your best marketing tools and much of your reputation is centered on doing what you say you will do. Overselling and accepting fees where you do not have enough money to do the job are clearly ethical questions. In short:

- Do not sell people you do not have.
- Do not 'bait and switch' services or people.
- Do not sell what you do not plan to, or cannot, deliver.
- Compete fairly with your competitors.

Failure to deliver what you have promised and attempting to sell your services by discrediting your competition are among the most unethical offenses that a professional or firm can commit.

PROJECT DELIVERY

Balancing fees with resources and quality of services to meet professional standards is probably the biggest challenge facing the construction manager. Project control becomes all too important. Lack of adequate control can put you in a position of making the decision, "Do I put what I need to into this project to finish and deliver a quality job and lose money, or do I cut back and minimize my costs to avoid a loss?" This becomes both a business and ethical

issue and it presents a difficult dilemma. Most reputable firms will put reputation above loss; however, the firm would have to have the resources to absorb the loss. The obvious answer is to not contract for inadequate fees, to maintain sufficient project control, and to make the necessary decisions that will keep you from facing this predicament.

A summary of the ethical aspects of project delivery might be:

- Deliver what you promise.
- Balance your fees against resources needed and scope of services
- Implement project controls that will maintain that balance.
- Maintain your professional standards.
- Do not compromise quality for schedule.
- Do not assign responsibility where the training or experience is not adequate.
- If you are wrong about something, take ownership.
- Be candid with your client.

Training and recruiting also present ethical issues. The two most common complaints of people leaving construction management firms are:

- Being given a job without proper training or direction as to what they are to do.
- Not performing the role that they were told they would be doing when hired.

CMAA CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Since 1982, CMAA has taken a leadership role concerning critical issues impacting the CM industry. A key initiative early on was to establish ethical standards of practice for the Professional Construction Manager.

The CMAA Board of Directors has adopted the following Code of Professional Ethics of the Construction Manager. It is expected that all members of CMAA will make a commitment to conduct themselves and their practice in accordance with this Code.

1. **Client Service.** I will serve my clients with honesty, integrity, competence, and objectivity, establishing a relationship of trust and confidence, and furnishing my best skills and judgment consistent with the interests of my client.
2. **Representation of Qualifications.** I will only accept assignments for which I am qualified by my education, training, professional experience and technical competence, and I will assign staff to a project in accordance with their qualifications and commensurate with the services to be provided.
3. **Standards of Practice.** I will furnish my services in a manner consistent with the established and accepted standards of the profession and with the laws and regulations that govern its practice.

4. **Fair competition.** I will build my professional reputation on the basis of my direct experience and service provided, and I will compete fairly and respectfully with my professional colleagues.
5. **Conflicts of Interest.** I will seek to avoid any and all conflicts of interest and will immediately acknowledge any influences and offer to withdraw from any assignment when any actual conflict exists which may impair my objectivity or integrity in the service of my clients.
6. **Fair compensation.** I will negotiate fairly and openly with my clients in establishing a basis for compensation, and I will charge fees and expenses that are reasonable and commensurate with the services to be provided and the responsibilities and risks to be assumed.
7. **Release of Information.** I will release public statements that are truthful and objective, and I will keep information and records confidential when appropriate and protect the proprietary interests of my clients and professional colleagues.
8. **Public Welfare.** I will not participate in any racial, sexual, or political discrimination related to any assignment I may undertake. I will avoid any conduct that would be considered unethical or will interfere or conflict with any laws, statutes or regulations and I will uphold the safety, health and welfare of the public in the performance of my professional duties.
9. **Professional Development.** I will continue to develop my professional knowledge and competency as a practitioner, and I will contribute to the advancement of CM practice as a profession by fostering research and education and through the encouragement of subordinates and fellow practitioners.
10. **Integrity of the Profession.** I will avoid actions that promote my own self-interest at the expense of the profession, and I will uphold the standards of the Construction Management profession with honor and dignity.

3.3. The CM as a Leader

Construction managers who have proven to be good leaders as their careers progress are a valuable asset in the design and construction industry. The challenges are great, but so are the rewards. Fortunately, there will be many opportunities for developing and practicing your leadership skills at virtually every stage of your career. It will require effort on your part to expand your skillsets. However, the real key is being able to recognize those opportunities to demonstrate your leadership abilities, and then, take advantage of them appropriately.

CMAA has conducted a number of owners' surveys over the years, gaining input from hundreds of domestic and international project owners. The owners believe that one of the major problems in the construction industry is a lack of leadership on projects. That is a

perception that needs to be changed. Whether it is a real problem or a misconception on the part of owners, CMs must all dedicate themselves to fixing it.

CMs frequently serve as leaders of the teams that owners entrust to successfully complete their construction projects. Development of leadership skillsets and the understanding of the key roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of such leadership positions are essential for the professional CM.

ROLES OF A LEADER

In general, the fundamental roles of a leader can be identified as:

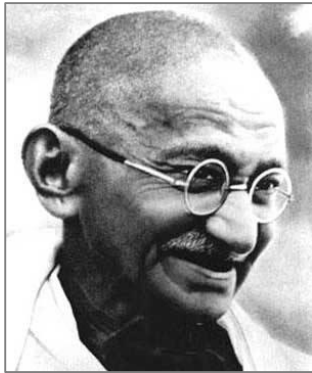
- Envisioning the goal of the group.
- Communicating that goal clearly to the group.
- Inspiring the individuals in the group to achieve the goal.
- Ensuring that the group has the resources necessary to achieve the goal.
- Monitoring the progress of the group in achieving the goal and realigning the resources, if necessary.
- Commitment to project success



Virtually every group needs a leader if it is to accomplish any task. We easily recognize presidents of companies as leaders. CMAA has a full-time President and a board of directors to provide overall leadership for the Association. However, leadership is necessary at all levels of an organization. Field teams need leadership. Cost estimating groups need leadership. Sustainability goals need leadership. BIM teams need leadership. There will be opportunities to develop your leadership skills throughout your career. All you need to do is recognize those opportunities and take advantage of them when they present themselves.

Developing good leadership skills should be a continuous journey. Good leaders keep learning until the day they retire or die. They also look beyond the technical side of the business to add the necessary personal skillsets to their repertoire. Make no mistake about it, leading people is a challenging job, but the rewards can be great.

TYPES OF LEADERS



There have been many volumes written about the people our societies have recognized as leaders throughout history. The usual listing of types of leaders seems to be based on the means they use to **incentivize people** to follow them.

The literature is rife with material about *charismatic leaders*, such as Gandhi or JFK. There are *transactional leaders* that are adept at ‘trading’ rewards for desired actions...sometimes referred to as the carrot or the stick approach to leadership. A few people in

our globalized business world are recognized as *transformational leaders*, those individuals who are really good at radically changing organizations while often turning around failing companies. Then there are the thousands of *situational leaders*, those who don’t usually have the title but they ‘rise to the occasion’ when leadership is necessary to accomplish a goal of the group of which they are a member. It is this type of leadership that seems to be the breeding ground for developing most of the leaders in our industry.



DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

It is important not to wait for a title or an assignment that finally places you in a leadership position. **Doing so may ensure that it never comes. Work on developing the leader’s skillsets, especially the personal skills that will help you deal with people. Pick someone in your organization that is regarded as a leader and see if they are a good fit to be a mentor for you. Seek assignments that will test your developing skills. Volunteer to lead activities outside your workplace. If your company does not have a formal Leadership Development Program, make one for yourself, and keep it current.**

Your personal program might include the following elements:

- **Identify opportunities for personal growth with respect to your current strengths and weaknesses.**
- **Establish your personal goals.**
- **Describe the outcomes you want to achieve.**
- **Identify the process and resources you will need along the way.**
- **Develop the timeline for your plan.**
- **Review your plan with a proven leader, preferably your mentor.**
- **Document your plan in a simple matrix format.**
- **Review your plan initially and then periodically—preferably with your mentor.**

One of the easiest but most neglected ways to sharpen your leadership skills is through reading on the subject. There are thousands of books and articles on the subject of leadership. Some of the books are texts, others are more anecdotal in nature, and many are life stories that read like novels. Make it a point to read at least one a month. This simple investment of your time can pay great dividends.

3.4. Professional CM Role and Responsibilities

The fundamental role of the professional CM is to assist owners in completing construction projects in accordance with their desires, goals, and requirements. The CM does this by applying professional management expertise, standardized procedures, and integrated systems during the planning, design, and construction of those projects. There are important roles to be filled by the CM from the time of project inception through turnover and occupancy. CMAA currently maintains the concept that the CM's services are primarily for the purpose of controlling time, scope, cost, and quality. During your career, it is anticipated that focused leadership of the delivery team and maximizing collaboration among the various delivery team members will become integral to the CM achieving those goals.

Many of the CM's roles and responsibilities are consistent from phase to phase of the delivery process, such as controlling costs or serving as the owner's representative to the team. Others will be required in certain phases but not in others such as Change Order Management during design and construction, but not during Planning. Certain responsibilities may be assumed when serving on Program Management teams that are not required when delivering a single project under a Project Management agreement.

Responsibilities of the CM should be based on the requirements of the program or the project, the resources available to be applied, and the direction of the owner. Those responsibilities should be clearly identified in the CM's service contract with the owner.

Detailed discussion of the professional CM's functions in filling those roles and satisfying those responsibilities is provided in the Managing CM Assignments section (5.1)

Regardless of the function, the type of project or program, or when the CM's services begin or end on a project, the professional CM's basic and invariable role and responsibility is to serve the needs of the owner. That dedication is the hallmark of the professional CM.