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### **New CMAA *eJournal* Paper Examines Perceptions of Women in CM**

Most male Construction Managers who have worked with female Construction Managers don't perceive them as any less capable of performing their job. However, men who have never worked for or alongside a female CM may sometimes perceive them as less effective, capable, and/or approachable than their male counterparts. These are among the findings of a newly published survey in the Construction Management Association of America's *eJournal*, examining perceptions of women in the CM industry.

Even though women now make up about 46% of the general workforce, they make up less than eight percent of Construction Management professionals. Authors Barbara Chun, David Arditi and Gulsah Balci sought to take a closer look at how the construction industry's long history of male domination has influenced perceptions about the effectiveness of women in CM positions. This was accomplished by evaluating three categories of respondents: women, men who had never collaborated with women in the CM industry, and men who had worked with women in the CM industry.

As stated above, most male CMs surveyed who had worked with female CMs didn't perceive them as any less capable, effective or approachable than their male counterparts. Because of this, one can assume that the perceptions of the males who had never before worked with female CMs were vulnerable to stereotypes in the industry, which are likely to dissipate as more women play increasingly active roles in CM.

The survey also looked at whether women in CM positions perceive bias against them in the form of skepticism and indifference as a result of their gender. The majority of women survey respondents agreed that being female does not help when their performance is assessed. The majority of men surveyed, however, contend that there is no negative perception associated with women in CM. This difference in perception may be a reason why more women don't seek out careers in construction.

Most respondents subscribed to the modern belief that women are equally as capable as their male counterparts to perform the duties of a CM. When asked whether female managers' management style is different from male managers' management style, a large majority of 67% said "no".

The survey's findings suggest that an attitude that accepts women as an equal part of the construction population is gaining momentum. One survey respondent's comments explain this transition:

"Many people (males) of an older generation still hold stereotypes toward women. Many tradesmen still feel women have no place on the jobsite. I have worked with many females in construction in all levels of management and as trade workers and see that the stereotype is wrong and has no place in the construction world these days...The new generation does not look on women in construction management negatively."

Results from the study support the notion that negative perceptions about women as CMs are likely to be seen less as more women become involved in the industry.

CMAA's *eJournal* is a peer-reviewed, scholarly online journal for CM professionals. Its focus is the examination of timely technical issues confronting the architectural, engineering, construction and facilities management communities. The *CM eJournal* presents the multiplicity of views that exist within the CMAA membership and all involved in the construction process.

Those interested in submitting a paper for review by CMAA's eJournal staff should visit <http://cmaanet.org/cm-ejournal> for details.

CMAA is North America's only organization dedicated exclusively to the interests of the professional Construction and Program management industry. On behalf of its 25 regional chapters and more than 5,500 public and private firms and individuals throughout the nation, CMAA promotes the Construction Management industry and provides professional resources, advocacy, professional development, certification, and business opportunities to its members. CMAA's national headquarters is located in McLean, Va. The Association's website is [www.cmaanet.org](http://www.cmaanet.org).

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