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12th CMAA/FMI Owners Survey Sheds Light on New Expectations and Needs

For the first time, construction owners responding to the annual CMAA/FMI Owners Survey have ranked “Transitioning to ongoing operations and maintenance” as the most important area in which they expect their Construction Managers to make significant contributions to their success.

The finding was one of several that reflect continued adoption among owners of a “more holistic, life-cycle view” of their projects.

This is the 12th edition of the annual survey that the Construction Management Association of America has conducted together with FMI, soliciting the views of CMAA owner members. In addition, owner members of the Construction Industry Institute, the Construction Industry Roundtable, and other organizations were canvassed.

The growing emphasis on project commissioning and transition to ongoing operations has been noted in several previous recent surveys. In 2009, for example, the 10th Annual Survey of Owners revealed that this shift would accelerate between 2009 and 2014.

Now, only two years into that five year projection, the transitioning function for the first time ranks highest among 16 key functional areas in which CMs could be expected to contribute to owners’ success. In addition, “77 percent of owners expect their CM to have either expertise or thorough working knowledge of facility startup,” the survey report states. Other traditional CM functions such as document quality concerns and issues/disputes resolutions were the other top CM functions identified by the survey respondents.

The new survey results also show that owners are looking to professional CMs for leadership and guidance when implementing Integrated Project Delivery (IPD). The report states, “77 percent [of owners] expect their CM to have either expertise or thorough working knowledge of IPD.”

This trend of greater CM leadership with regards to IPD creates an opportunity for firms to deliver greater value to construction program owners.

Separately, the national economy continues to affect the procurement process. Owners were asked how the continuing global economic uncertainty has affected their solicitation and procurement policies. More than half of survey respondents reported that, “due to national economic conditions, we find many bids are priced well below the levels we expected” the results show.

While nearly half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they plan on taking advantage of these opportunities to contract work at the lowest price possible, among those owners with best-

value procurement policies the results are clear: nearly 61.4 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “in the interest of realizing these savings, we are departing, if necessary, from best-value strategy.” This shows that owners, while being presented with a unique opportunity to execute important projects at major cost savings, very few are willing to depart from best-value strategies just yet.

The Owners Survey questionnaire was developed with the guidance of a panel of CMAA owner members that included Stephen Ayers, AIA, Architect of the U.S. Capitol, Mark Cacamis, PE, CCM of the Virginia Department of Transportation, Michael Germinario, PE, CCM of the Department of Homeland Security Customers and Border Protection Service, and Allen Parry of Hilton International.

The Twelfth Annual CMAA/FMI Survey of Owners provides insight into the ever evolving construction industry through both emerging trends and those of long standing. The path to success for CMs remains in adapting quickly and appropriately to owners’ dynamic needs including a more complete range of services, a higher caliber of knowledge and competence across subject areas where owners expect the most significant contribution.

CMAA is North America’s only organization dedicated exclusively to the interests of the professional Construction and Program management industry. On behalf of its 28 regional chapters and more than 8,400 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.

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