

# Gold Seal Certification and The Owner's Project Manager

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In the fall of 2004, individuals qualifying under the senior practitioner and examination criteria for the newly developed category of Owner's Project Manager will have the opportunity to move one step closer to obtaining their Gold Seal Certification from the Canadian Construction Association.

*"Why Gold Seal for the Owner's Project Manager?"* Since 1993 the CCA has recognized the accomplishments and commitment to education and experience of its own construction managers in the occupations of Project Manager, Superintendent and Estimator. An area of the industry that was noted to be devoid of certification, while playing an important role in the project delivery process, was that of Project Management from the owner's perspective. Acknowledging the absence of a program to certify the Owner's Project Manager, the CCA established a focus group in 2003 of Owner's representatives from both the private and public sectors. Its aim was to study and develop a new category **that would provide recognition and importance of the role of the Owner's Project Manager and the major contribution they make to the overall success of the end product. Moreover, the Gold Seal Committee recognizes that the ongoing interdependence between representatives of the Contractor and Owner and a strong understanding of each others roles make for a more seamless management of the project.**

The process undertaken required that the members of the focus group provide the Contractor representatives of the National Gold Seal Committee with a clear definition of what the Owner's Project Manager's roles and responsibilities were within the project delivery process and how these could be

developed into a profile and curriculum for the purpose of educating and certifying of individuals in this field. The challenge of the task involved the incorporation of a new category into an already established program. The focus group provided the definition of the Owner's Project Manager to the Committee in the Spring of 2003 and from this the profile was established. The group met with Gold Seal educators to formulate a curriculum that would be the main template to be followed for certifying the individuals in the new category. At the completion of the curriculum development and upon receipt of approval by the National Committee, the task was set to build an examination that would test and confirm an individual's knowledge in the field of the Owner's Project Manager. Included with an examination, guidelines for certification, senior practitioner, examination and intern applications, along with the application forms were put to the group for creation. In July of 2004 the focus group met with the National Gold Seal Committee to present the program and obtain approval to implement.

*"How does this new category of Owner's Project Manager vary in task from the current Project Manager (Contractor)?"* The key component that differentiates between the two project managers is to whom the manager is accountable. The Project Manager is accountable to their company representative while the Owner's Project Manager is accountable to the Owner. This fundamental difference in accountability becomes apparent when recognizing that the Owner's Project Manager is tasked during the early planning and definition stages of the project, which is well in advance of the Project Manager for the Contractor being tasked to provide the constructed project

deliverables. Taking into consideration that each of the two project managers may have roles that overlap in the project delivery process, it is the Owner's Project Manager who is ultimately responsible in the development of the business case, the scope of the project, and the management of aspects such as: project risk, project procurement, construction contract process, and the project close-out and commissioning on behalf of the Owner.

From an Owner's point of view the main benefit of the new category for their representatives is the raising of the profile and therefore an understanding of the Owner's Project Manager by their Contractor peers. It also provides a method for recognizing their commitment to continued education and experience in the construction industry. The primary benefit of the new program from a Contractor's perspective is that the Owner's Project Managers have declared their interest in aligning themselves with the Contractors to provide certification of individuals who confirm a commitment to their industry. By doing so the Contractors and Owners jointly elevate the level of experience and education and thus, through Gold Seal, bring a standard of recognized competency to the project delivery

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*"This is just the tip of the iceberg,"* says Griziotis. *"The CSC has already developed other material for on-line learning, such as pipeline construction safety training, and the concept is generating a lot of enthusiasm in the industry."*

Terry Brown, General Manager for Greyback Construction Ltd., and a member of the CSC Board of Directors, can vouch for that: *"Distance learning technology is a revolution in construction training,"* he says. *"It will go a long way to providing opportunities for the continual up-grading of construction manager's skills, and for life-long learning - in all regions of Canada - by making standardized training easily accessible,"* says Brown, who is also the chair of the CCA's Gold Seal Committee.

*"By delivering high-quality industry courses through the Internet, we can bring the bricks and mortar to the user's doorstep or, should I say, laptop."*

To learn more about the Construction Sector Council and its e-learning initiatives, and for updates on the Gold Seal e-learning initiative, visit [www.csc-org.ca](http://www.csc-org.ca). Further information on the CCA Gold Seal certification is available at [www.cca.acc.com/goldseal/htm](http://www.cca.acc.com/goldseal/htm).

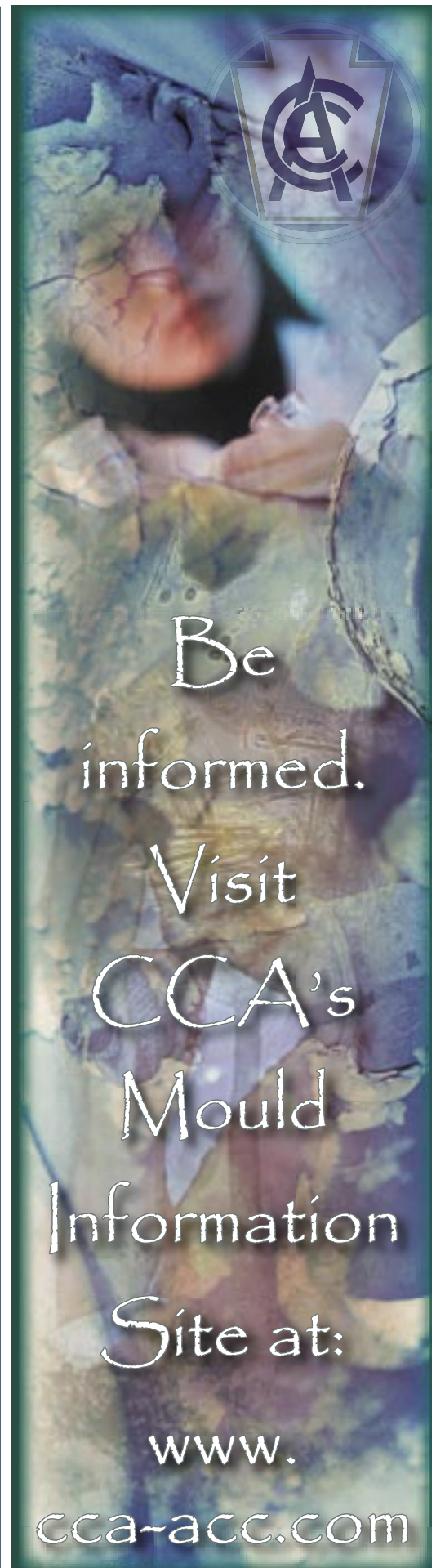
Created in 2001 to serve the human resource needs of the industry, the CSC is a national partnership between business, labour and government, committed to the development of a highly skilled workforce. Funding for this project is being provided by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program.

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process. For both the Owner and Contractor the new category can be seen as a method to close the gap that has existed between these two groups by certifying this new category under similar guidelines that the Contractors have been utilizing since the conception of the Gold Seal Certification Program.

The Canadian Construction Association, through its affiliations with both the private and public sectors, has provided through the focus group, a complete curriculum that directs the interested individual to the definition of the Owner's Project Manager and the specific requirements for experience and education that enables that individual to be certified as such. One of the main challenges for the Canadian Construction Association's National Gold Seal Committee, in the early stages of implementation of the new certification program, is expected to be the communication of the message to the individual who would be seeking certification. To its credit and commitment, the Canadian Construction Association continues to involve its National Gold Seal Committee in dialogue with various organizations to find the most effective method of reaching out to the widest range of potential applicants that meet the criteria of the category.

It is anticipated that the Owners would embrace the program that was developed through the collaboration of a focus group of their peers and the Canadian Construction Association, and therefore would encourage their representatives to seek certification.



The advertisement features a background image of a person's hands holding a large, cracked stone or concrete block. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo containing a stylized 'A' with a construction crane and a gear. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

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