COMM
Program Management | Project Management | Site Management
Construction Owners Management Model™

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. **What is the difference between the Construction Owners Management Model (COMM) and CURT 2.0?**
    *   CURT 2.0 is a focused and integrated strategic direction for CURT that leverages our greatest assets – Owner knowledge, collaboration, and industry expertise. At a high-level, it includes the development of a standardized body of knowledge, a more effective communication and delivery mechanism, and the development of value-added products and services
    *   COMM is at the heart of the CURT 2.0 strategy and is an initial initiative to start standardizing collective Owner knowledge around a common body of knowledge framework

2. **How is COMM unique and how is it different from other existing industry offerings?**
    *   COMM is an Owner-driven framework that captures a consistent set of standards for members to assess their capital construction project organizations. It is based on the collective real world experience of CURT member organizations
    *   The main and initial focus is on developing program management standards. Everyone talks about program management, but the capital construction industry lacks a clear framework to deliver on it; information is fragmented, hard to find, and in some cases largely academically-driven – CURT believes there is a notable gap in program management guidance tailored to Owners
    *   COMM formalizes what "minimal standard and leading practice" looks like, and fast-forwards connections between Owners…you might call COMM an "Owner advocate"

3. **What happened to the CURT Productivity Triangle?**
    *   The Productivity Triangle was CURT's initial tool to define all the basic elements affecting productivity and has been replaced by COMM
    *   COMM is an evolution of the concepts behind the Productivity Triangle – but enhances the model by focusing on the greatest areas of impact for improving productivity and cross-functional coordination for capital construction projects

4. **What is a "management model"?**
    *   Comprehensive framework for consistent execution with all the key elements in one place
    *   Performance assessment and continuous improvement tool

5. **How does COMM take CURT to the next level?**
    *   At CURT, our mission is to provide a "competitive advantage" for construction users. We represent the "Owners voice" to the industry. A high-impact initiative like COMM reinforces our mission by driving the sharing of leading practices and continuous improvement tools
    *   COMM is also a body of knowledge that creates "networking with a purpose" opportunities. It is a platform for new and existing members to connect with others in CURT across various industries and geographies

6. **Who is developing COMM?**
    *   CURT is working collaboratively with top-performing member organizations to develop a consensus on "what excellence looks like" for capital construction projects and programs
    *   Standards are developed by Owners based on real-world experience – not consultants or academics
    *   Your voice counts! CURT will continuously evaluate the effectiveness of each set of standards and solicit your input and feedback along the way

7. **What exactly is the "product" from COMM that provides value for Owners?**
    - A framework provides a common language to facilitate Owner dialogue and provides the ability to capture Owner knowledge that is easily accessible. Owners can benefit from a common framework in many ways:
        - Learn about minimum and leading practice performance standards and speak the same language across broad and diverse organizations, industries, and geographies
        - Collaborate with peers to define and prioritize gaps and opportunities through self-assessments and benchmarking
        - Connect with leading practice professionals for specific implementation guidance ("how do you do that?")
        - Improve their capital construction project and program processes
        - Communicate and influence other areas of their business
    - As part of a parallel effort, CURT will invest in developing future value-added products and services and improvements in its communication and delivery platform to help members achieve the full benefits of COMM (examples include peer collaboration, workshops, committee deliverables, training programs, etc.)

8. **I am not an Owner. Can I still benefit from COMM?**
    - Contractors and business partners play a big role in industry success and can benefit from an Owner-driven framework – they can anticipate and support Owners as they seek to obtain continued productivity growth in their capital construction programs
    - CURT will also actively solicit the input and feedback of contractors and associations in the development of specific areas of the COMM framework

9. **My company already has several written procedures to organize projects cradle-to-grave/my company does this well already – how would our organization benefit from COMM?**
    - The benefit of a CURT membership is that it facilitates continuous improvement through knowledge sharing and collaboration on leading practices across a broad spectrum of organizations, industries, and geographies at various maturity levels.
    - COMM is the framework that will enable this cross-fertilization of ideas and incorporate the latest advancements in the industry by capturing collective Owner knowledge:
        - Leading practice member organizations benefit from fresh perspectives
        - Members (and potential members) benefit from opportunities to learn, collaborate, and improve
    - COMM also includes a self-assessment framework that serves as a tool for CURT member organizations to identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and opportunities in their current capital construction programs

10. **How will you keep COMM up-to-date? Is it a static framework?**
    - COMM is an evergreen initiative – this is a living and breathing program which will continue to grow and be refined through the valued input of CURT member organizations
    - CURT will "pressure-test" standards with a selection of subject matter experts in order to validate and refine the model
    - In the future, committees, benchmarking, and membership pulse surveys will be used to ensure that COMM continues to adapt to membership needs and dynamic changes in the industry

11. **What is "pressure-testing?"**
    - "Pressure-testing" is a process of working with a selection of CURT member organizations to confirm/refine COMM standards based on subject matter expertise. It can involve workshops, interviews, focus groups, and document reviews

12. **What is the difference between program management, project management, and site management?**
    - Program management – focused on strategic business success factors across projects, functions, and processes. Six characteristics distinguish program management:
        - Strategic
        - Provides a focal point for ownership and accountability for business results
        - Aligns functional objectives to business objectives
        - Cross-project and multi-disciplinary
        - Enables multi-disciplinary collaboration and interfaces
        - Requires capable business leadership
    - Project management – focused on tactical success and alignment of project schedule, cost, and quality
    - Site management – focused on activities required to make the most effective use of people and resources at the project execution level

13. **Why is the initial and main focus for COMM on program management?**
    - Program management has the greatest impact for Owners and Owners have the greatest influence at the program level. CURT believes that there is a notable gap in program management guidance tailored to Owners in the capital construction industry
    - Program management solves problems project management can't – it provides the strategic direction and leadership to drive consistent implementation and continuous improvement across a program of capital construction projects. Recent industry research shows the results of project performance remain frustratingly inconsistent. Owner control at the program-level or front-end engineering stages of a project is essential to realizing corporate business goals and maximizing return on investment in capital assets

14. **Will CURT develop the additional project and site management COMM tiers?**
    - CURT will work with member organizations to address the project and site management tiers once the program management tier has been fully developed
    - CURT will work with committees to evaluate the feasibility of integrating existing project and site management leading practices into the COMM framework

15. **Is CURT abandoning all the other initiatives/committees?**
    - No – the CURT committees have put in a lot of hard work, and CURT does not want to lose all the great content and value-add that has been developed
    - However, CURT will evaluate opportunities to better integrate committees around the COMM framework and provide more structure to our work over time
    - We have to also ask ourselves what areas offer the greatest impact for our members – as a result, CURT may retailor or reprioritize initiatives based on committee feedback

16. **Where is the full COMM model, I only see limited content at this time?**
    - COMM is in the early stages of development and is a work-in-progress initiative. CURT will develop each tier of the COMM framework through a phased approach in order to apply lessons learned from the implementation experience
    - CURT is working hard with Owner organizations and committees to identify resources to volunteer and support the full implementation of the COMM framework

17. **How will CURT measure success for the COMM implementation?**
    - "Pressure-testing" feedback and membership "pulse" surveys
    - Workshop participation rates
    - Real world success stories
    - Tangible membership development and growth

18. **Is COMM just another lengthy document/set of written procedures?**
    - The COMM standards documentation serves as an initial delivery mechanism for collecting and reviewing Owner input for these standards
    - COMM is much more than a standards document – in parallel, CURT will invest in developing future value-added products and services and new and exciting improvements in its communication and delivery platform to help members achieve the full benefits of COMM (e.g., ability to distill and assess specific standards, collaborate and network via workshops and working groups, and connect with leading practice organizations)

19. **COMM defines the high-level standards, but where do I get assistance on actual implementation guidance and specific tools?**
    - COMM standards are a common framework for Owners to collectively agree on "what excellence looks" like for construction programs and projects
    - In the near future, CURT committees/working groups will use the output of COMM standards to generate implementation guidance and leading practice methods around high-impact areas (i.e., develop the answers to the common question of "how do you do that?") and connect members with leading practice organizations that have been successful in achieving those standards

20. **What is the difference between suggested minimum performance and typical leading practice performance?**
    - Suggested Minimum Performance: Minimum standards are core behaviors/practices/processes necessary to begin realizing the benefits of program management, i.e., implementing standards at this level is the minimum for a well-functioning program management model
    - Typical Leading Practice Performance: Leading practices build on minimum standards to achieve the full benefits of program management and set the stage to advance program management benefits further, i.e., implementing standards at this level of proficiency positions the organization at the cutting edge of the program management model

21. **Are all COMM standards real, practical, and achievable or are some based on theoretical/stretch goals?**
    - COMM standards are meant to be real and achievable targets. Each standard was added based on the successful implementation of a leading practice organization
    - Many organizations will fall across different areas of the spectrum on minimum and leading practices

22. Will CURT partner with other industry organizations on developing COMM?
- CURT has always believed in wider industry collaboration. As part of CURT 2.0 – we are in the process of determining and evaluating potential opportunities for synergy

23. Every organization is different. Does every standard apply to my organization?
- COMM standards serve as a general reference guide for the adoption of minimum standards and leading practices. Companies should determine which areas are most applicable to their industry, geography, business model, and strategy
- It is important to understand that no company should attempt to achieve leading practice performance in all areas. Member companies need to determine which standards are "critical" to their particular industry and corporate strategy. Companies should then look to create leading practice performance in those areas only

24. Who is ScottMadden and what is their role?
- General management consulting firm that specializes in the energy industry and corporate and shared services
- CURT is using professional services from ScottMadden in the early development of COMM in areas that include: business case development, project planning, structuring COMM standards, and implementation and change management

25. How can I contribute?
- Your input for this initiative is critical – actual Owner expertise is required to develop and refine COMM and will set the industry standard for what "excellence looks like" for construction programs and projects
- Contact CURT to see how you can get involved in developing or "pressure-testing" standards