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PCMA to Acquire the Corporate Event Marketing Association

If the deal is approved, CEMA will become a wholly owned division of PCMA, with distinct memberships.

by [Michael J. Shapiro](#)

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Sherif Karamat, president and CEO, PCMA

The [Professional Convention Management Association](#) is pursuing an agreement to acquire the [Corporate Event Marketing Association](#), a deal that would make CEMA a wholly owned division of PCMA. Sacramento-based CEMA was launched more than three decades ago and now has more than 800 members, among them global brands like Cisco, Salesforce and Oracle. Much of its membership is concentrated in Northern California.

The two organizations formed a strategic alliance in January 2020. This deal represents the logical evolution of the relationship, according to PCMA president and CEO [Sherif Karamat, CAE](#), and [Stuart Ruff-Lyon](#), vice president of events and education for the Risk Management Society and chair of the PCMA board of directors, who together broke the news in an article on PCMA's website.

Thus far, the organizations have collaborated on educational sessions at one another's annual events. According to Karamat and Ruff-Lyon, the acquisition will result in:

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- Enhanced professional development and networking through the combination of the two organizations;
- Access to a broader range of educational content and research to members of both associations;
- Expanded network connections and the opportunity for collaboration across a wider, more diverse community; and
- Long-term stability and growth opportunities for CEMA

Although members of each organization will gain access to a wider network and range of insight, the membership in the two associations will remain distinct under the new plan. CEMA members will have the opportunity to join PCMA at existing rates.

What was formerly the CEMA board of directors will become an advisory board, which will preserve CEMA's current management leadership, events and content. The organizations don't anticipate any job losses as a result of the deal.

Members of CEMA are currently voting whether or not to ratify the proposal that has been approved by the two organizations' boards. Leaders expect to announce the voting results next week, with an eye toward completing the deal in January 2021.

While CEMA has been affected by the pandemic, Karamat and Ruff-Lyon specified that the organization was not a "victim" of the distress experienced as a result of Covid-19. CEMA leadership has been transparent with members about financial challenges. PCMA, on the other hand, is "in a good place," having quickly turned its focus to hybrid events and educational products — of which PCMA's Digital Event Strategist certification is an important component. PCMA is currently in a position to invest in CEMA.

"This is a win-win for both organizations, their respective members and business partners, as we together focus on the recovery of business events through the pandemic and beyond," wrote Karamat and Ruff-Lyon.

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