drying said crosslinked. modified polysaccharide, wherein said crosslinked, modified polysaccharide has an initial Absorbency Under Load at least about 200 percent greater than said water-soluble, modified polysaccharide.

2. A crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide formed by a method comprising the following steps:

forming a mixture comprising at least about 75 weight percent water and an amount of a crosslinking agent effective to provide a desired degree of crosslinking, wherein the crosslinking agent is water soluble and comprises a compound having at least two functional groups or functionalities capable of reacting in an aqueous solution with a carboxyl, hydroxyl, or amino group of a modified polysaccharide;

adding to said mixture an amount of a water-soluble, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide, that is free from a substantial degree of crosslinking, said water-soluble, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide being added to said mixture such that the weight ratio of carboxyalkyl polysaccharide to water is from about 1:2 to about 1:40, wherein said carboxyalkyl polysaccharide becomes crosslinked and wherein said crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide comprises a substantially non-crosslinked, water-soluble, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide core and a crosslinked, water-insoluble carboxyalkyl. polysaccharide shell at least partially surrounding said crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide being swellable in said mixture; and

drying said crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide, wherein said crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysacharide has an initial Absorbency Under Load at least about 200 percent greater than said water-soluble, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide.

3. A crosslinked, modified polysaccharide, said modified polysacchadde comprising:

a substantially non-crosslinked, water-soluble, modified polysacchadde core; and

a crosslinked, water-insoluble, modified polysacchadde shell at least partially surrounding said core, wherein said shell is effective to increase the initial Absorbency Under Load value of said crosslinked. modified polvsacchadde by at least about 200 percent compared to an identical substantially non-crosslinked, water-soluble, modified polysacchadde.

4. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **3** wherein said modified polysaccharide is selected from the group consisting of carboxylated, sulfonated, sulfated and phosphated derivatives of polysaccharides, their salts and mixtures thereof.

5. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **3** wherein said modified polysaccharide is selected from the group consisting of the carboxylated, sulfonated, sulfated and phosphated derivatives of cellulose, starch, carrageenan, agar, gellan gum, chitin, their salts and mixtures thereof.

6. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **3** wherein said modified polysaccharide is a carboxyalkyl polysaccharide.

7. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **6** wherein said carboxyalkyl polysaccharide is a carboxyalkyl cellulose.

8. The crosslinked, modified carboxyalkyl cellulose according to claim **7** wherein said carboxyalkyl cellulose is carboxymethyl cellulose.

9. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **9** wherein said shell is crosslinked with a metal cation having a valency of 3 or more.

10. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **3** wherein said core and said shell comprise the same modified polysaccharide having different levels of crosslinking.

11. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **3** wherein said shell is crosslinked with an aluminum cation.

12. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **3** wherein said crosslinked, modified polysaccharide has an initial Absorbency Under Load value of at least about 8.

13. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **1** wherein said modified polysaccharide is selected from the group consisting of carboxylated, sulfonated, sulfated and phosphated derivatives of polysaccharides, their salts and mixtures thereof.

14. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **13** wherein said modified polysaccharide is selected from the group consisting of the carboxylated, sulfonated, sulfated and phosphated derivatives of cellulose, starch, carrageenan, agar, gellan gum, chitin, their salts and mixtures thereof.

15. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **14** wherein said modified polysaccharide is a carboxyalkyl polysaccharide.

16. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **15** wherein said carboxyalkyl polysaccharide is a carboxyalkyl cellulose.

17. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl cellulose according to claim **16** wherein said carboxyalkyl cellulose is carboxymethyl cellulose.

18. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **1** wherein said crosslinking agent is selected from the group consisting of an electrolyte comprising a metal cation having a valency of 3 or greater; organic compounds comprising at least two carbon atoms and having at least two functional groups or functionalities capable of reacting in an aqueous solution with the carboxyl, hydroxyl, or amino group of a modified polysaccharide; phosphoryl chloride; and phosphoryl bromide.

19. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **18** wherein said crosslinking agent is an electrolyte comprising a metal cation having a valency of 3 or more.

20. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **19** wherein said crosslinking agent comprises an aluminum cation.

21. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **1** wherein the weight ratio of water-soluble, modified polysaccharide to water is from about 1:2 to about 1:10.

22. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **21** wherein the weight ratio of water-soluble, modified polysaccharide to water is from about 1:2 to about 1:5.

23. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **1** wherein said crosslinked, modified polysaccharide is dried to remove at least about 50 weight percent of the water originally present in said mixture.

24. The crosslinked, modified polysaccharide according to claim **1** wherein said crosslinked, modified polysaccharide has an initial Absorbency Under Load value of at least about 8.

25. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim **2** wherein said carboxyalkyl polysaccharide is selected from the group consisting of the carboxylated derivatives of cellulose, starch, carrageenan, agar, gellan gum, chitin, their salts and mixtures thereof.

26. The crosslinked, carboxyalkyl polysaccharide according to claim **25** wherein said carboxyalkyl polysaccharide is a carboxyalkyl cellulose.