

Read the case study and come up with three critical success factors (reasons the project succeeded).

## **Case Study: COLORADO SPRINGS WELCOME HOME PARADE**

### **Background**

With a short amount of time and limited budget, the city of Colorado Springs planned one of the largest parades in City history to welcome home troops returning from Iraq. Using project management techniques, the project team planned and executed the parade successfully in spite of limited time and budget.

The parade was scheduled for June 5, 2004. Multiple organizations came together to plan the event. The project management team was led by a local law firm, which had previous parade planning and fundraising experience. The City also donated resources and personnel to the project, including the Assistant City Manager, who was the main link between the City and the project team. Providing the team with daily access to City officials ensured key communication throughout the project.

In addition to the project team, the City also established a management team committee, composed of stakeholders and representatives from each six local military bases. These two teams met regularly to give status reports, offer or ask for assistance, and determine the next steps in the project. This open forum for communication fostered a greater understanding for each party's role in the project and what the end result would be. All high level changes were made by the committee, while the detail changes were made by the project team.

### **Challenges**

The two major challenges of this project were the lack of money to fund the parade and the limited timeframe to complete the project. Security and safety also stood as risks to the event.

The project team faced the challenge of raising all funds for the parade, as the City could not finance the event. The event budget and reimbursement for their services would come only from the donations and sponsorship money raised. The City capped the fee amount the local law firm managing the project could charge them, and also established a separate account for the event so they could accurately track finances.

Last minute changes also posed a challenge. Project stakeholders from one of the local military bases requested the troops be fed lunch after the parade. The City raised the fee caps, but the project team had to include catering, organization and clean-up in an already tight schedule.

### **Solutions**

In order to combat the limited budget and timeframe, the project team used every stakeholder's resources, asking what each organization could contribute to the event. The project was then approached in reverse order; the scope of a project is typically established before the resources, but the project team had to establish resources to determine project scope.

Although the City could not contribute monetarily to the project, it offered in-kind services by having every department participate. In addition to those workers, the project team used its own volunteer base of 35-40 people. Many of the sponsoring organizations also offered their services at reduced fees or free of charge. In return, sponsors and donors received a banner and viewing stand at the parade for their contributions.

The team used project management techniques throughout the project to:

- coordinate a donation of 40 City buses to transport the soldiers participating in the parade
- work with City Police to handle parking
- coordinate with City engineers to control traffic lights to minimize effect on traffic flow
- inform citizens in advance of any road closures or delays caused by parade preparations
- secure free lunches for the soldiers from a local restaurant, using a City park as the venue with volunteers from the local Chamber of Commerce serving the food

The project team and management committee held joint meetings with City Fire and Police to:

- discuss and coordinate response plans
- address traffic congestion by finding alternate routes for cars during parade
- plan the positioning of rescue crews along the parade route in case of an emergency
- set up staging areas where paramedics can distribute water to prevent dehydration

## **Results**

The parade consisted of 22 floats, 23 fire trucks and eight marching bands. Many antique military aircraft and other vehicles took part in the parade, with more than 65,000 people in attendance.

The City made its Marketing Department available to handle all publicity and interviews at no cost, as well as to help facilitate all of the area media on hand to cover the event (three local TV stations and six local radio stations).

Project management techniques enabled the project team and management committee to coordinate the event, raise funds and accommodate last minute changes within a remarkably short time frame. As a result, the Colorado Springs Welcome Home Parade was the largest and most successful event of its kind ever held in Colorado Springs.

## **Key Achievements**

- ✓ The project team and management committee worked together to organize and execute all aspects of the event such as fund raising, the coordination of soldiers and aircraft, and planning a lunch reception for 9,000 people, all within a five-month time period.
- ✓ The project team and management committee executed the parade under the allocated budget, which enabled the City Manager to donate excess funds to military charities.