

Project Management: Sometimes The Quest For Success Means More Than Achieving Business Goals

(NAPSA)—According to Calvin Coolidge, “the chief business of the American people is business.” Business has changed quite a bit since Coolidge’s time and, in today’s environment of constant change, businesses are increasingly focusing on project management as an integral part of their ability to allocate resources and achieve desired results.

Construction, like many businesses in America, requires the coordination of numerous disparate resources, which may explain the industry’s widespread use of project management to help ensure that a job gets done on time, as well as allow for the possibility that it might get done sooner than expected and for less money. And while many people can appreciate the physical aspects of construction, most never see the forces at work behind the scenes, both before and after the job is completed.

That changed September 11, 2001, when United Flight 77 slammed into the Pentagon’s western wall and “Project Phoenix” was born. With a dedication stemming from sadness, defiance and patriotism, the Pentagon managers and contractors that formed the project’s Integrated Product Team (IPT) were far more successful than just reconstructing a building.

Immediately following the attacks, the IPT moved to set goals, resolve issues and ease communications through the myriad of people and organizations who would play a role in Project Phoenix. On Sept. 12, 2001, with the site still smoldering, 250 construction workers arrived determined to work, even though no contracts had been let and there was no promise of a paycheck. With no plan at the outset and changes to production being made



At the Pentagon, reconstruction efforts began one day after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

constantly, it was incumbent upon the project managers to mold and marshal the workers’ enthusiasm into an efficient and productive team.

The project began with the demolition of more than 400,000 square feet of space—of a total two million square feet damaged. The task was completed in one month and one day, whereas a comparable job typically would take six to eight months. Following demolition, the effort switched to reconstruction, fueled by the labor of more than 3,000 total workers who sacrificed weekends and holidays to put the Defense Department headquarters back in service.

In a testament to their project management expertise, the members of the IPT met twice daily to address schedule and construction changes, dispatched the contractor and a government representative to the site so that the priority and scope of the proposed changes could be assessed efficiently, and then made a team decision to either make the change or proceed according to the original plan. Under the gaze of a clock that ticked down the seconds until 9:38 a.m. on September 11, 2002, the one-year anniversary of the ter-

rorist attack, crews completed reconstruction in time for employees to begin moving into offices on August 15, 2002.

During a rededication ceremony on September 11, 2002, the construction workers were honored for their tireless efforts and the Project Phoenix team was honored with awards by both the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation. In his acceptance of the awards, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz expressed the country’s admiration for those who helped heal the country’s wounds as he declared, “This award recognizes each one of the extraordinary men and women who have rebuilt the Pentagon with some of the greatest tools there are: professionalism, passion and pride.”

A success that surpassed all expectations, Project Phoenix also has been recognized by Project Management Institute (PMI), the global advocacy organization for the project management profession. “Project Phoenix is testament not only to how a country can come together in a crisis, but also to how a team of dedicated professionals can complete a project efficiently and effectively,” says Gregory Balestrero, Chief Executive Officer of PMI.

Project Phoenix Snapshot

- Removed approximately 10,000 tons of debris
- Reconstructed 400,000 square feet of office space
- Managed 3,000 project members, with as many as 1,000 people on site per day at the peak of reconstruction
- Completed 28 days ahead of schedule
- Came in \$194 million under budget

