



PROGRAMMED FOR SUCCESS

Program management proves crucial to integrating 22 different agencies into one massive entity known as the Department of Homeland Security.

In perhaps the greatest federal revolution seen since 1776, government agencies are grappling with a host of new and complicated technologies, and the post 9/11 necessities of large-scale departmental integration and cross-agency communication.

Perhaps the most critical example of the new federal interdependency is the massive Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Currently in the process of consolidating 22 federal agencies into one huge department, the DHS showcases a new level of inter-governmental cooperation.

During the next few years, DHS must combine 22 separate accounting, payroll and human resource functions; physical facilities; and many other systems. Along with the IT integration will come facility and policy changes and a variety of new security equipment and standards.

The scope, complexity and importance of this initiative makes professional management an essential factor in its success.

Charting Unknown Waters

Robbins-Gioia LLC, has delivered successful management consulting solutions to government agencies for more than 23 years. Now the company's experienced program management teams are helping to guide the DHS through this challenging transition.

"We like to think we invented program management," said Jim Leto, president and CEO of Robbins-Gioia. "Over the years, Robbins-Gioia developed the methodology, the tools and the reputation for superiority in the consulting arena relative to setting up an enterprise program management office, running a major program and on down to the project level."

The DHS teamed with Robbins-Gioia to manage a number of large and small operations.

Following the tragic World Trade Center attacks, President George W. Bush directed the federal government to quickly take control of all security



procedures at the nation's 429 major airports. That meant installing cutting-edge equipment, hiring thousands of airport security screeners and many air marshals, training airport personnel, and establishing standard procedures and protocols at all 429 locations.

With much to do and little time, effective program management was essential. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officials contacted Robbins-Gioia Chief Operating Officer, Gene Bounds, within days of receiving the president's directive.

"There are many companies that do program and project management, but not many that have it as their core competency," said Bounds. "This is our core competency. This is what we do."

Bounds, along with Robbins-Gioia co-founder, John Gioia, met with TSA officials to formulate a plan for addressing the TSA's massive task. The plan worked extraordinarily well. The TSA hired and trained 60,000 new airport employees, and built and deployed state-of-the-art security equipment at all 429 airports within nine months, an unheard-of achievement. Though the TSA's needs were unusual, Robbins-Gioia's success in implementing effective program management strategies was anything but.

"We have a reputation as the leader in program management largely because of the skills we've developed over 23 years of doing this," said Leto. "We do it better than anyone else."

On Schedule, Within Budget

The goal of project and program management is to keep projects on schedule and within budget — despite unforeseen problems. Projects range from acquiring major weapons platforms and implementing critical IT systems to facility construction or relocation.

Integrating and upgrading the jumble of technologies inherited from the 22 agencies that now make up the DHS presents an overwhelming task.

"Currently there are approximately 224 systems performing personnel and resource management functions," said Lou Nappi, chief of Robbins-Gioia's Homeland Security Unit. "The department is planning to acquire and deploy enterprise applications to replace these systems within a year. Combine this with the technical and cultural components of linking networks with different security classification levels, and one can see how the challenges within DHS begin to compound."

An experienced project management team makes the task less formidable by scheduling work, setting milestones, ensuring resource availability, anticipating potential obstacles and creating strategies for mitigation, and identifying performance measures.

That ability to effectively and efficiently manage seemingly insurmountable projects is vital to DHS officials and other decision-makers throughout the federal government, where various agencies tackled nearly 900 high-profile projects worth \$18 billion this year.

Robbins-Gioia managed a number of these projects, including a \$1.6 billion initiative to modernize how U.S. Customs and Border Control inspectors track shipping containers entering the country.

Robbins-Gioia also recently won a contract to provide program office management support for the U.S. Visit program that will automate much of the nation's immigration technology.

"The U.S. Visit program touches several different agencies," explained Nappi. "Getting all those people to agree on governance of that program — what's important and what its goals are — can be very difficult. Effective program management deals with those issues."

Robbins-Gioia also continues its work to expedite the refurbishing of various military aircraft. Already the company cut six months from the 18 months it

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used to take to perform detailed maintenance on F-15 and F-16 fighter jets. The Robbins-Gioia team currently is doing the same for C-5 aircraft.

Cost-Effective Today and Tomorrow

For government, the decision to employ private program-management teams is often a necessary one. With internal resources stretched thin, outside professionals can deliver the flexibility and know-how federal agencies need to implement projects quickly.

From a government perspective, hiring Robbins-Gioia can be much more cost-effective than hiring a team of workers whose services may no longer be needed once a specific project is finished, or when a program is up and running smoothly. In addition, hiring Robbins-Gioia often delivers other long-term benefits for agencies.

“When we conclude an engagement, we leave behind government employees who have skills necessary to accomplish good program management,” said Leto. “In many cases, we end up training ourselves out of a job.”

Training others to execute the principles of effective program management is nothing new to Robbins-Gioia. In fact, the company currently works with George Washington University to structure curriculum and teach classes that lead students to program management certification.

That commitment to the basic principles and understanding of program management sets Robbins-Gioia apart, according to Bounds.

“It’s all about commitment and knowledge,” he said. “We focus on the end result, which is successful program cost, schedule and functionality. That’s our sole interest. I can’t think of another company that is as unbiased and committed to that goal.”



Case Study:

COMPLETE COORDINATION

TSA Coordination Center Rises to the Challenge

Last year, Curtis Powell tackled a task that was critical to the nation’s security: creating a Coordination Center for the newly formed Transportation Security Administration (TSA). The job came with an \$18.3 million budget, a 97-day deadline and a project-management staff of one ... himself.

Powell knew his mission was both vital and potentially overwhelming.

Charged with overseeing every airport and seaport in the United States and generally protecting the nation’s transportation systems to “ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce,” TSA officials were accustomed to working on short timetables.

In less than nine months — between March and November 2002 — the agency hired 45,000 screeners operating under standardized security protocol in 429 airports nationwide, installed state-of-the-art security inspection equipment in the same facilities, oversaw the installation of hardened cockpit doors on all commercial airplanes, and put in place dozens of new security mandates and standards.

It was an unprecedented achievement — but one which officials performed with enthusiasm and little complaint — understanding that in a post 9/11 world, their mission was of the utmost national importance.

Powell’s assignment was similarly important. The TSA Coordination Center would facilitate the gathering and dissemination of security information for the nation’s transportation system, which includes a vast network of roadways, railways, seaports and airports.

But where to begin?

“I was the program manager, but I didn’t have any staff,” said Powell. “On a big project like this with an accelerated timeframe, I needed help.”

Powell turned to Robbins-Gioia LLC, for expertise in managing the massive foundation-to-functioning project. "I didn't have to be sold on Robbins-Gioia," Powell said. "Their past performance sold me."

In fact, Robbins-Gioia had worked with the TSA to manage the agency's nationwide rollout of new staff, equipment, and security standards that had taken place only a few months earlier.

Powell said he was familiar with the superior job Robbins-Gioia had done during that engagement and was also well acquainted with the company's work from his days as a consultant at a big-five firm in New York City.

"I knew Robbins-Gioia was unique," explained Powell. "Their customer service is like none I've ever seen. They show a lot of concern, right from the very top."

Robbins-Gioia provided a team that included a program leader, Don Curtis; two financial specialists; a master scheduler; a civil engineer; and a "floater."

"Along with me, the team was able to oversee this massive amount of effort going on," said Powell. "And it ended up working tremendously well."

Quite an achievement considering the 97-day project involved constructing a facility that was far from average. The TSA Coordination Center had to be both ultramodern and completely secure. There were standard issues, such as design, materials selection, interior furnishings, and even carpet installation. But there was also a massive, cutting-edge IT infrastructure to be put in place, detailed security measures to be taken, and precise disaster mitigation issues to deal with.

At any given time, as many as 300 skilled workers helped to assure the facility came together as quickly and as flawlessly as possible. There were daily decision-making meetings focused on meeting deadline and budget requirements while creating a state-of-the-art facility.

Robbins-Gioia provided project management skills that kept every level of the build-out running smoothly.

"What was particularly great was the composition of the Robbins-Gioia team," said Powell. "The team was tailored to exactly what I needed. I tailored it."

Robbins-Gioia financial experts kept "the money rolling," according to Powell, while the master scheduler integrated sub-schedules so the project stayed on target, and the Robbins-Gioia civil engineer "kept people honest with code, prices and procedures."

Seamless collaboration between Powell, the Robbins-Gioia team, and the hundreds of workers who took part in the project produced a Coordination Center that came in both on time and under budget.

"When we began the process, I was virtually a one-man band," said Powell. "There's no way I could have done this without the help of Robbins-Gioia."

Robbins-Gioia professionals understand the critical mission government security agencies perform, and they have the skills and insight to manage all sizes of project and program implementations. And Robbins-Gioia provides this expertise cost-effectively.

"Because Robbins-Gioia saved us so much money by questioning prices, staying on time and maintaining quality, they practically paid for their entire team," said Powell. "Many times you pay a lot of money and get very little back. I got a great return on investment because Robbins-Gioia not only completed it on time, but saved me money during the process."

Today, should a suspicious incident occur on a rail line, or at an airport or seaport in one area of the country, officials within the Coordination Center can quickly scan the nation for similar activities that might indicate terrorism. That integrated exchange of information is at the very core of TSA's mission.

Dozens of federal agencies remain in the process of coming together under the umbrella of the DHS, and that likely will drive significant programs and projects for several years to come.

Throughout that process, government officials can rely on Robbins-Gioia for vital program and project management expertise.

"With Robbins-Gioia you get specifically the talent you need for specifically the amount of time you need it," said Powell. "In our case, we finished on time and under budget. What more could you ask?"



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