

restrictions placed upon the preparations by security requirements. Including them within the summit planning sessions will result in clear lines of communication between the levels of government. They will feel fully involved and see how their own contribution of facilities and services fits into the larger picture.

Is a Site Office Required?

The proximity of the host city to the capital becomes an important factor when the decision of whether or not to open a site office is made. Implementation of the two-office system requires a great deal of flexibility by both staff and management, and should be very carefully considered.

In the case of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver, the host city was five hours away by air. A site office, staffed with a site manager and a small complement of local assistant managers, was therefore established six months prior to the summit. This enabled the summit organizers to maintain a presence in the city in lieu of more frequent travel.

The staffing of the site office is done in stages on an "as required" basis. Along with a site manager, the first two areas which will most likely require assistant managers right away are Logistics and Administration/Personnel, with the possibility of a third in Conference Facilities. The site manager should be responsible for monitoring and guiding the work of the assistants, should keep the Executive Director apprised of overall preparations from the site's perspective, and should handle certain horizontal tasks (such as relations with the levels of government). The assistant managers from each of the various sections will receive their instructions either directly from their division director or through the site manager. This system has to be flexible. The site manager must provide general guidance and supervision to each of the assistant managers, and yet not interfere with the direct lines from their directors in the capital.

The Organizing Task Force should move completely to the host city eight to ten weeks ahead of the summit.

When this occurs, the site office becomes the main headquarters for the summit. The site manager's functions with regard to monitoring and guiding the office cease; the assistants report exclusively to their directors and are folded into the Task Force. The site manager can be re-assigned other special duties, becoming for example coordinator of a specific event, senior assistant to the Executive Director, etc.

If the chosen location for the summit is within a one or two hours travelling time from the capital, there is probably no need to open a site office prior to the actual transfer of the Task Force. Management will still want to establish physical premises in