BEST PRACTICES
Moving Your Office

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PREPARING FOR AN OFFICE MOVE?

Moving to a new location communicates a lot about your company and impacts your company's brand. It also plays a huge role in influencing company culture and employee attitudes. Even before the decision to relocate was made, your management team weighed many options and considered the consequences. Moving can support your company's growth initiatives, save costs, boost efficiencies and productivity or realign strategies.

Moving is one of the most stressful situations for a company and can distract from day-to-day business. It's not just a project for your facilities or operations team. A successful move requires input and communication from all areas of your company. The scope of an office move may overwhelm even the most experienced team. Whether it's moving your office to a larger location, merging offices, adding a new office or even moving corporate headquarters, any relocation of employees is a complex project. It can cause uncertainty for employees because their sense of place and community is changing.

Most companies have little experience managing a project of this scale and often need help. To make your move a success, we've developed some best practices in this guide with tips throughout the process.

TIPS

+ Recognize that an office move impacts everyone.

+ Consider employees needs in your plans and factor in ideas to generate their enthusiasm.

+ Understand managing a move is not an expertise that is readily available within most companies.

+ Seek professional advice. Use consultants for design, logistics and project management to save time and money.

+ Pay special attention to the plans for relocating your business-critical systems and equipment to your new office to avoid downtime.

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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PLAN

Regardless of the size or scope of your office move, it's all about the time and detail that you put into the plan. Starting early on a plan is crucial to your success. If you have been tasked to work on a move project, you should first recognize that moving is just a process. Break it down into phases and map them onto a timelime. It's imperative that the details are precisely timed for a smooth transition between sites with little or no downtime. For a sample timeline, take a look at Integra's **A Timeline for Moving Your Company**, to see how the process might look. Be sure to confirm your company's move strategies and goals are aligned with your planning activities.

Develop Checklists – Once the phases are identified, develop comprehensive checklists showing all the details to be tracked and confirmed. Make sure the checklist for each phase is coordinated with your schedule. Ask your team members to contribute to making the checklists comprehensive. Review the checklists frequently to confirm tasks are being completed as planned at each phase and add new items as they arise.

Engage Your IT Team Early – IT services are critical to productivity and keeping all systems and processes running smoothly, as well as providing the connection to your customers. Transitioning these services to a new site requires thorough planning. Make relocation of IT and telecom infrastructures a primary area of focus in your plan. Engage your IT team early and work closely with them to time transitions of business-critical systems.

Focus on the Plan – Many companies underestimate the time that you and other employees on the team are about to invest in planning and coordinating the office move. Remember, you may also have to balance your existing workload and commitments with moving responsibilities. Make sure your management understands the value in planning and the time commitment required.

As you get closer to the actual move date and the pace becomes more hectic, don't forget to keep referring back to your checklists and updating them. You can easily loose sight of the details when the goal is near. Focus on the plan to avoid headaches on move-in day.

TIPS

+ Start planning early and make planning a priority.

+ View the project as a process and break it into smaller phases.

+ Develop a solid timeline and develop detailed checklists for task tracking.

+ Involve your team in developing the checklists.

+ Review and update checklists frequently.

+ Gain visibility of your management on the time commitment needed for planning.

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TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION ARE ESSENTIAL

An office move is a collaborative effort and must include members from all functional areas of your company to represent the interests and needs of all groups. Build this team as quickly as possible and begin regular meetings.

Prioritize Project Leadership – Assign a project leader to manage the whole process and make sure the project manager has authority to make decisions. The quality of your office move relies on the organization and communication skills of your project leader and the cooperation of the team. If your project leader is an internal resource with other responsibilities, ask your management to consider bringing in professional move consultants to support your project's tactical needs. Using a consultant to manage logistics and track the execution of tactical tasks can alleviate stress amongst employees and allow a third-party to follow up on late tasks.

Leverage the Expertise of Professionals – Hiring experienced consultants to add expertise to your in-house team ensures your move occurs within budget, on-time and with less disruption to your business. Consultants you can add include: a tactical project manager from an office move company, a professional office space planner, an interior designer, or an IT and Telecom specialist. These consultants work daily with moving challenges and can quickly solve or avoid obstacles and prevent delays. If you use consultants, fully integrate them with your team and include them in your regular meetings.

Utilize Additional Resources – If you use movers or other service companies to assist in specific phases, make sure everyone on your team is aware of who they are, who the internal contact is, and when they will be involved. Moving involves a cast of many and keeping the team informed assures a smooth integration of much needed help.

Communicate Frequently – Consistently communicate your status to management. Progress on checklist items and timelines are critical to keep the project on track and everyone's tasks coordinated. Providing management full visibility ensures quick resolution as obstacles arise. Provide employees with regular status updates to encourage enthusiasm and engagement for the move. Remember, everyone wants to know your progress.

TIPS

+ Build your move team quickly.

+ Make sure every functional area is represented on the team.

+ Assign a project leader and give the leader authority to make decisions.

+ Hire a professional to help with tactical project management.

+ Hire expertise for specific moving assistance.

+ Provide on-going status reports to management and employees.

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A GOOD CRITERIA SETS EXPECTATIONS

Relocating an office introduces many changes and it may seem that everything is going to change due to the new location. From furniture and office equipment to IT infrastructure and seating arrangements, recommendations are being made to upgrade them. Your move team needs to have clear direction on the extent of the changes that they are managing. Make sure everyone is clear on the rationale, requirements, objectives and limitations for your move.

An office move is the perfect time to consider upgrading to newer and more cost-effective systems. Establish priorities for these changes and develop criteria for each at the beginning of the planning process. This assures expectations are set and no one is surprised. Not prioritizing upgrades and changes can lead to chaos if budget or schedule change.

Align Criteria with Business Objectives – Know the key drivers for your move – what are the business objectives and what changes does your management want to see? Include your company's short and long-term growth plans. Help your team focus by establishing criteria for items and processes that are slated to change. Review the criteria with your management and gain approval. Share the criteria with all employees to ensure everyone is aligned.

Set a Realistic Budget – Cost savings is often an objective of an office move. Review your initial budget carefully and add items that are missing or require additional funding. Don't try to cut corners – if you need to employ consultants, justify these resources early in the process. Using professional expertise avoids mistakes and is less costly than hiring them after you run into problems.

> **TIPS**
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> + Align move objectives with your plan.
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> + Know the priorities for things that should change.
>
> + Establish criteria for new equipment and services.

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ASSESS YOUR TECHNOLOGY AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES

Besides a new location, a new office triggers an opportunity for upgrading infrastructure and systems to help you boost business efficiency and productivity. Your network or business communications systems were adequate for your current office but may not support the needs of a new office or prepare your company for future growth. Instead of trying to make your existing infrastructure and services fit the new site, it makes more technical and economic sense to synchronize your technology upgrades with your move.

Establish Technology Requirements for the New Office – Know the technical and connectivity requirements of the new site, including: cabling, speed, latency, and uptime. Your IT group should identify physical space needs for central technology resources such as power, cooling and other environmental considerations as well as requirements for conference rooms to support video conferencing and presentations. Technology that enables collaboration and wireless connectivity should also be factored in.

Assess Existing Infrastructure and Technology Solutions – Your office may not be keeping pace with recent technology advances and a new office helps you better prepare for the future. Review your current technology infrastructure and services with your company's growth plans and IT initiatives. Here are few questions you can start with:

+ Are you planning to migrate services to the cloud?

+ Is there technology needed to support new IT initiatives?

+ Does your data backup solution support your Business Continuity plans?

+ Do you have enough bandwidth?

+ Do you need to upgrade your phone system to a new IP-Voice solution?

+ What services can you renew, eliminate or consolidate?

Identify Upgrades and Replacements – Develop a comprehensive list of technology services and equipment to upgrade or replace. Prioritize them and assign budget for upgrades early in the process. Include new technology or services to add. This is a perfect time to review service agreements and contracts for more favorable terms and to ensure you get the quality, cost, reliability your company expects.

TIPS

+ Take advantage of a move to upgrade technology.

+ Establish technology requirements for your new office.

+ Assess existing technology and ask critical questions.

+ Review service agreements and contracts and negotiate more favorable terms or changes in services.

+ Look for opportunities to consolidate or replace technology services.

+ Identify and prioritize upgrades and assign budget for them.

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PLAN FOR THE WORST AND EXPECT THE BEST

At the beginning of this guide we said it is all about the plan and it seems fitting to end with an emphasis on planning. You can never start too early to plan for a move and you can't predict if and when obstacles and changes will occur. The best advice we can give for a successful move is to have contingencies prepared for the unexpected. Setbacks and changes often occur when you have budget, timelines and numerous suppliers to manage.

Develop Test Plans – New systems and equipment is exciting but making sure you have the appropriate time for installation and testing is crucial for everything to work on the first day. Work closely with your providers and suppliers to schedule the build out and installation of infrastructure and services. Keep their schedules updated and communicate regularly with them. Add testing and readiness milestones to your timeline.

Detail the Transitions – Keeping disruptions to business at a minimum requires the project team to manage the details of the transition closely. Multiple service providers and vendors may be involved as you turn-up new systems. Map the transitions between old and new systems and communicate changes in advance to everyone impacted.

Communicate Logistics to Employees – Your plan must include specific communications to the employees who are moving. Provide information on what is needed from them for a successful move, including packing and labeling instructions and information on what to expect at the new site. The thoroughness of your communication to employees determines their satisfaction with the process and avoids lost and broken items that may ruin the first day for some.

Enlist Extra Resources for Move-In Day – All of your planning and coordination result in a seamless transition to the new office for your employees. Your plan should include an issue resolution process for the first day. Schedule your service providers and technical resources to be present on move-in day to help quickly resolve issues.

TIPS

+ Plan to test systems and equipment before the move day.

+ Map timelines for transitions from existing to new systems.

+ Communicate what employees need to know for moving in advance.

+ Develop an issue resolution plan for move-in day.

+ Schedule your service providers and technical resources on-site for move-in day.

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SHARE YOUR SUCCESS WITH THE TEAM

Your move to a new office is a success because you and your team invested in planning and made the most of the opportunity. Upgrading and adding new technology contributes to affecting positive change management for your company. The new office improves morale, productivity, collaboration, and impacts overall business performance. Before you close this project, share your success with the team and add your best practices so others can learn from your experience.

How Can Integra Help?

Make moving to a new office easier with Integra. As one of the largest facilities-based providers of communication and networking services in the western United States, we offer a combination of advanced networking, communications, and technology solutions. Our sales and service teams are experienced in helping companies with office moves. We work with you through the entire process.

Contact Integra for help with your move.

CONTACT US ▶ (877) 953-7747

ABOUT INTEGRA™

Integra™ provides facilities-based communications and network services to enterprises, small and mid-sized businesses, government agencies and carriers throughout the western United States, with nationwide and international connectivity delivered via a robust IP/MPLS network. Integra's vast, privately owned network connects customers to 6,400 miles of long-haul fiber optic infrastructure and 3,000 miles of metro fiber across 35 cities in 11 states.

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