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Even the smallest detail needs attention in corporate moves

You've crunched the numbers. You've gone over everything twice, and you're left with one inescapable conclusion: Your current space just isn't right anymore, and your company needs to relocate.



**INSIDER
VIEW**



**CINDY
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With so many elements going into a successful relocation, one is frequently left wondering where to begin. For many companies, that first step is contacting an experienced project-management company that knows how to

navigate the many hazards that are an inherent part of any corporate-relocation project.

Project managers can provide invaluable help and insight from the moment you determine that relocation is your next option.

Obviously, one of the first things that needs to be done is to find suitable new space for the move. Enlisting a qualified real estate broker is a must at this point, but an experienced project manager will be a benefit as well.

Your project manager can conduct a space survey in your current office to help determine exactly how much and what kind of space you will need. In fact, your project manager can help determine if a wholesale relocation is even necessary. You might be better served by moving only a certain division or branch of your company.

Assuming that a relocation is necessary, your project manager can evaluate

various sites and locations, ensuring the best space for you.

Once you've selected your new space, you're ready for the difficult part: the planning process and the actual move.

Pre-planning is easily the most important aspect of your relocation. Any aspect of the move that is not planned and accounted for ahead of time can result in lost man hours, lost research, lost equipment or worse. It doesn't take much to cause a disruption in the project, and minor setbacks can quickly add up to a lot of lost money. Any wasted downtime during a relocation is essentially doubled, because you're effectively wasting both moving hours and set-up time.

If you're going to avoid such downtime, everything that is being moved — personnel and equipment — must be accounted for and determined exactly where and when it's going to be moved.

Your project manager can determine how much lead time is necessary to plan and prepare adequately for every eventuality. The two biggest factors in determining lead time are the size of your company (number of employees being relocated) and the size and type of space into which you will move. Is the space a new construction or a lease of existing space? Is it furnished? How much build-out is necessary to make the space suitable to your needs? How much coordination with the contractors' schedule is needed? These are all factors that impact the project's lead time.

These are not the only factors in determining lead time, however. Certain aspects of the physical move inherently

take a longer time to complete. Voice and data equipment generally require more careful pre-planning time than other aspects. Installing and preparing for new networks at the destination requires a longer lead time than crating up furniture and files. Are you installing completely new voice and data systems? Or are you transferring your existing system?

Even when the physical move is complete, the project manager's job isn't done. And neither is yours. Once you're in your new space, it's important to resume your normal business operations as quickly as possible. How is this accomplished?

The first thing is to get the data systems up and running. If you have an in-house information-technology department that can handle the responsibility in a timely manner, you're in good shape. Otherwise, consider enlisting contracted IT assistants (this is especially true with larger companies). The sooner all your employees desktop equipment is reinstalled and new print queues set up, the sooner everyone can get back to their jobs.

The other important step to resuming normal operations is the installation and placement of common equipment and files — photocopiers, fax machines, high-density file cabinets, etc. If your employees don't know where to find those things they need to do their job, there will be an obvious slowdown.

Relocation is most assuredly a challenge. It isn't, however, insurmountable. Cover all your bases, and you can continue to grow and be successful in your new location with minimum difficulty.

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