

# making **sense** of workplace change



YOUR GUIDE TO BUSINESS MOVING

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**A successful move project absorbs enormous amounts of time and resource, however small the move or short the distance involved. Your business premises are a cornerstone of your business strategy, so a move needs to be managed with military precision.**

## Is moving the only answer?

Successful businesses often feel the squeeze. More staff, and more furniture and equipment means pressure on space. It's easy to think that more space will solve the problems but is that really the case?

A business move is not just about moving staff and equipment into a new space. There are associated relocation costs such as:

- Space planning
- Updating and printing new stationery and brochures
- Updating marketing materials
- Communicating the move to your customers and suppliers
- New furniture and equipment
- The removal itself

Sometimes a move may not be the only solution. Often your existing workplace can be reorganised to make day-to-day operations more efficient. Floor plans can be reconfigured and equipment moved to achieve space savings. Filing systems and storage areas can be reorganised, rationalised or reduced. Many companies discover that with a little innovation they can change the way they do things and make their current premises work harder for them.

## An alternative view

As a first step, you need to understand the cost of space per person in your current environment. A simple staff and building audit will help to identify all the costs and might trigger ideas that challenge current space allocation and find new ways of working.

One approach is to challenge the way 'we've always done things' and be totally objective about the problems and the solutions.

Using a specialist and independent consultant to help you assess your current working environment can be money well spent because they will bring a fresh eye and new ideas to a review of work practices and space utilisation. They might achieve significant cost savings if the recommendation is that you needn't move!

## Your premises – a five-year strategy

If a move is the correct solution, focus on your premises requirements. Use your knowledge to draw up a simple five-year premises strategy.

**Base your assumptions on fact and take account of:**

- Your business objectives
- Future plans and expectations
- The possible constraints
- Your business performance over recent years

**Create a 'needs assessment' to include:**

- The space you require
- The function of the premises
- The location of the premises

## A different point of view

It may be cost effective to appoint a consultant to produce the needs assessment from your strategy, produce a property search specification and work with commercial agents. You will benefit from a consultant's property expertise and knowledge of the commercial market, as well as the time they will save you.

### Did you know?

Space allocation per employee ranges from nearly 17m<sup>2</sup> in the public sector to as low as 9m<sup>2</sup> in the private sector.



## What and where?

A needs assessment is a 'wish list' that will help you identify the premises you need by looking at three main areas.

### Cost

You will probably have a good idea of whether you will be buying, renting or even building your new premises but don't close your mind to the alternatives. There might be grants or incentives available that make a previously difficult idea more manageable. Sometimes just thinking about unlikely options can generate new ideas.

Apart from the costs of your building, include projections for the following running costs:

- **Business rates**
- **Building service charge if you are choosing a multi-occupied building**
- **Local charges such as the Congestion Charge in London**
- **The legal advice and other professional advisers you might require to secure the premises you need**

### Facilities

Apart from workspace, consider your other requirements including:

- **Parking and vehicle access**
- **Storage**
- **Reception and meeting areas**
- **Kitchen refreshment areas**
- **Building services such as air conditioning, lifts and power supplies**
- **Telecommunications**
- **Local amenities - public transport, shops, banks, schools/nurseries, crèches**

### Location

Think about future workforce requirements Identify the transport links and infrastructure you might need – access to motorways, ports or airports. Should you be in a city centre, or could you consider a rural location or business park on the outskirts of a town?

## Plan to plan

Never rush into a move. There may be interim solutions that will provide the breathing space you need to plan, manage and execute your move efficiently and cost effectively.

### The pitfalls

We asked 250 organisations which factors negatively impacted their business move. The top five responses were:

1. **Not enough planning**
2. **Design and commissioning flaws in the new facilities**
3. **Telephone and computer problems**
4. **Selecting the wrong suppliers**
5. **Motivating and managing staff**

### Things to consider: pre-planning

- **Business needs assessment**
- **Staff and building audit to see if moving is the way forward**
- **Five-year premises strategy**
- **Analyse costs, facilities and location**
- **Consider all the possibilities**
- **Investigate using a consultant when they can bring value**





# ► search for new premises

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**You've spent time thinking and analysing all the options, and a business move is definitely the way forward. Clearly, it is now essential to find the right premises to meet all of your organisations' needs. In your mind's eye you have a vision of your new workplace that is perfect in every respect. Now you just have to find it...**

## A shopping list

Drawing up a needs assessment (see Chapter 1) will help you identify the 'must haves' and the 'nice to haves' for your new business premises. These, in turn, will develop into a search specification that will help you find the right property. Remember to incorporate your 5-year strategy into your search analysis as you view each potential property. Never lose site of the bigger picture and your long term needs.

Your final choice of premises, in the end, is likely to involve some compromise but you will save yourself time and effort if you start your search with a clear idea of what you are looking for.

## The right Commercial Agent

The objective of using any professional agent is to gain from their professional knowledge and expertise. Choosing and using commercial property agents is no different from any other client/agency relationship. You'll



get the best result from a qualified agent who knows the local area and market. However they will need a thorough understanding of your property needs. Spend as much time as possible with your agent; share your 5-year plan and your operational requirements. Create a list of essentials and ensure your agent adheres to them throughout the process.

## Professional help

If you do not have the time to manage the selection process for your new business premises consider appointing an independent property adviser to help you. An adviser will bring objectivity to the search exercise and help you create your shopping list. They will also complete the legwork to find and manage the commercial

## Managing negotiations

Always take professional advice when you are negotiating for your new premises. If you have an in-house legal department, don't assume they will have all the property knowledge and skills you need.

Professional advisers (legal and/or property) will bring an extra edge to the negotiations to secure the best deal – whether it is about negotiating a better break clause or a rent-free period while you refurbish the property, or just advising on the minutiae of the contracts and agreements. The savings and benefits they can achieve will usually outweigh the costs.

### Things to consider: top tips for commercial property negotiations

- Create a property search specification
- Brief your property advisers/commercial agents well
- Take notes and pictures at each viewing
- View shortlisted properties several times
- Compare short listed properties against your specification and 5-year plan
- Use professional independent advisers for the property negotiations
- Look for a rent free period from your landlord while refurbishing
- Get specialist legal advice to arrange your lease and ensure your final contract reflects your 5-year analysis plan
- Enquire about potential grants or government initiatives that may relate to your selected building location

agent(s), as well as view and re-view properties before producing a shortlist for you to consider. It is likely your property search will involve dealings with more than one commercial agent and could involve viewing many properties – some over several visits. Overall this option could save you a substantial amount of time away from your day job with substantial cost savings. Using a property adviser will also keep your plans confidential until you are ready to make an appropriate announcement.

## Site visits

When you are viewing potential properties, adhere to the specification (shopping list) you have created following your needs assessment.

### Take pictures

In the first instance these will just help you remember which property is which as you complete the first viewings and work towards a shortlist. Later you will probably take more pictures of building specifics to help with your final selection. Rank the properties against the specification to help prioritise.

## Time and motion

Your time is valuable. Be ruthless about ignoring properties that don't fit your requirements. And if your agent sends details of properties that don't match the specification you have given them, insist that they work to your brief.

## Test and compare

At the end of this exercise the aim is to have a shortlist of 3-4 properties to choose from. Your final shortlist

must comprise genuine choices, which match your requirements as closely as possible.

## Trade-off and compromise

It is unlikely that any of your final short listed premises will mirror your requirements in every respect – after all, it is a 'wish list!' At this stage identify the trade-offs and compromises, and decide which are acceptable and how you can overcome any issues that might result.

This is the time to identify costs and benefits to your business such as:

- Running-costs
- The cost of space per person
- Fit-out costs
- Landlord incentives
- Business rates
- Grants and financial incentives (if these are available)

Ask specific questions to your agent or advisor if these benefits are not forthcoming.



# ► planning the move



**However small the project, the move will absorb an enormous amount of time, effort and energy. As with most major projects, the planning you do beforehand will pay dividends and may provide you with additional opportunities.**

### Need to know

You can't manage a business move on your own and apart from needing all your staff to pull together to get things done, you will need their help with specific tasks at particular times.

Having said this, people generally don't like change, so how you communicate with your staff, clients and suppliers will be critical (see Chapter 5). It is important not to allow rumours about a move to start before you are ready to make an announcement they may needlessly unsettle your staff.

In the early planning stages and before your plans are finalised, you should only involve other people when it is essential to do so.

#### Top tip

Thinking in 3D about the items you are taking can help with floor plans because some pieces may impact on light, fire safety and evacuation rules.

### Your team

At the appropriate time you will need to appoint a team of key staff members. This team should be familiar to your business and have a good understanding of all the issues and tasks to be tackled across all the departments. Initially this should be a small team of a few senior managers to scope the project.

#### Project Manager

Appoint an internal project manager as soon as you can. They will be responsible for:

- Co-ordinating all the plans and arrangements
- Overseeing the move timetable
- Identifying potential problems or bottlenecks
- Keeping track of expenditure



### Project Team

A project team should support the project manager and take responsibility for specific aspects of the move. Guard against the team becoming too large and unwieldy but you do need to make sure all the key departments in your organisation are represented.

Project Team Members could include representatives from:

- IT
- Finance
- Human resources
- Facilities management
- Marketing
- Operations

The Chair will usually be a senior manager but not the project manager.

#### Team tasks

The role of the project team is to discuss and agree:

- The move timetable
- Responsibilities
- Reporting procedures
- Deadlines and target dates

The success of the team is essential to the smooth management of the project. Their full buy-in to the move is critical.

#### Identifying the scope of the move

Having identified the new premises and potential move time frame you must get an accurate assessment of what has to be moved and managed so you can finalise the budget and project timetable, and appoint the contractors and suppliers you will need.

### IT and telecommunications

Consider your IT and telecommunications systems at the first opportunity. These are crucial to the running of your business and the configuration of your systems are likely to determine the floor plans in your new premises. They will also be a key priority to get up-and-running on the move day (See Chapter 4).

#### Asset survey

Each department needs to complete a full asset review of equipment and furniture. Everything should be catalogued with:

- Details of the make and model
- Age
- Condition
- Dimensions
- Asset numbers

In due course the lists will be reviewed to agree what is to be taken to the new premises, what will be left behind and what needs to be purchased.

Every item of furniture or equipment that is going to be moved must be measured carefully and a note made of all the dimensions. This will not only help you with your planning but will assist your removal company as well.

#### Office equipment

Office equipment such as; photocopiers, faxes, mailing and vending machines may well be leased. If you have existing leased equipment, discuss the move with the leasing company. It may be written in to your leasing agreement that the leasing company can only move the equipment. Make arrangements either for new machinery in the new office, or for the leasing company to supervise or transport the machines to your new office.



## Stationery and marketing materials

Each department should make a list of all the stationery and marketing materials that will need to be changed.

- **The list should include documents and materials on the computer system as well as the items you will need to reprint.**
- **Are these necessary and/or cost effective?**
- **Do they fit with your corporate identity?**
- **If you haven't got a marketing team to co-ordinate this exercise, assign someone on your project team to take responsibility.**

## Get a move plan

Choose a removals company that specialises in business moves and can offer specialist advisers. It's good to have help at hand quickly if you identify a problem.

A specialist removal company will be aware of the potential pitfalls, and will alert you to the risks. You may have your own specialists in-house, but bear in mind they might never have been involved in a business move and may not know just how complex the project may become.

For example, your IT department will have the responsibility of maintaining and running your existing systems and networks in the run-up to your move. During the planning phase they will also need to work with space planners and designers to plan the new IT infrastructure, test the wiring plans and configurations against the proposed floor plans, organise the decommissioning and reconnection, installation and testing of all the equipment, as well as

manage the back-up and security of your company's data and applications through the move. A specialist adviser could help with some or all of these tasks.

## Space and workplace planning

You may take the opportunity to introduce new ways of working at your new premises – for example, changing to open plan offices, 'hot desking', or moving individual departments to achieve work efficiencies. You might have the budget to buy and install new office furniture, or choose to use a combination of old and new furniture.



## Choosing a removal company

- Prepare a preliminary inventory
- Prepare a preliminary move specification
- Research a shortlist – ask business contacts for recommendations
- Choose at least three removal companies to quote – one of these should be local or at least have a local office for cost comparisons
- Check shortlisted companies are registered members of British Association of Removers' Commercial Moving Group ([www.bar.co.uk](http://www.bar.co.uk))
- Investigate the company's quality accreditations to understand their approach to quality
- Ask shortlisted companies to tender for your move against the inventory and specification
- Give each company a chance to visit your current premises to scope the project
- Check terms and conditions, insurance and indemnity and health and safety procedures
- Ask for and check at least 3 local references
- Investigate whether you require an off or on site project manager
- Ask to meet the move manager who will be responsible for your move. Involve your project team in these meetings
- Ask your chosen supplier back to 'walk the course' at each site and attend a move planning meeting with your project team

## Recognise the constraint

Your IT, telecommunications or electrical requirements, will affect workspace layouts. For instance it may not be possible to organise team desks in circular pods if the floor boxes for wiring are arranged in a linear configuration. In this case you will either have to change your floor plans or pay for the floor boxes to be moved. Make sure you identify what you can and can't do as soon as possible.

### Things to consider: top tips for planning your move

- Allow enough time to plan
- Appoint your project manager and project team early
- Agree tasks, responsibilities and reporting procedures
- Agree the move timetable, deadlines and target dates
- Analyse the needs of each department and work with a space planner to plan the new space
- Communicate the plan to your employees
- Review and rationalise filing, storage, stationery and marketing materials
- Manage staff input to control workplace politics
- Select and appoint your removal company at least three months prior to your move to get some advice and guidance and to understand the costs of the project
- Recognise and understand the resources you will need – appoint specialist advisers as and when you need to
- Ensure your relocation specialist provides a detailed move plan with allocation of resources within the quotation

## Furniture and floor plans

Many office furniture suppliers offer a free planning service and this can be useful, especially if you're going to buy everything new. If you intend to retain existing furniture it might be cost-effective to employ an independent space planner who will be objective about incorporating the items you want to take with you and who will work with you to optimise the benefit of existing office furniture. Don't forget to supply your planner with the measurements of all the items you will be taking with you.

## Get buy-in

When managers have agreed the plan, communicate it to your staff. You should have a mechanism to listen to staff feedback but don't allow staff to decide where people will sit. Throughout this process your managers should be working hard to get their teams to buy-in to the new plans.

## Case study

A financial services company based in London wanted its staff to feel more involved with the office relocation. The management allowed its staff to choose an element of the workspace, the colour of their new chairs. A small selection of colour swatches were issued and each department chose a colour scheme.

### Top tip

If you are having new furniture you could ask your supplier to build a new workstation in your existing offices so people can see what it will look like and how the space will work.





**Your business cannot perform without telephones and computers, so arranging the removal of these systems is central to your plans. Early planning is key.**

### Who to involve

Moving your IT systems will be a pivotal element of the move, so you must scope the project as soon as possible. Your IT department will need to manage and maintain your computer system and network during the move programme and may not have relocated a computer system before. Be realistic about what is involved and

seek professional advice if you need it. You may decide to appoint specialist contractors to relocate your entire IT infrastructure; or you may prefer to appoint specialists only to undertake certain tasks. Either way, you must fully scope the project to identify all the tasks and costs involved.

### New site survey

Before you think about moving equipment, complete a thorough survey of the new premises.

#### Cable management

Identify where your server room/data centre will be located and make sure all the cabling and wiring in the new building will support your IT and communications infrastructure.

#### Space planning

As soon as you can, get accurate plans of the new site showing the position of:

- Power cables
- Power points
- Floor boxes
- Telephone lines

These will determine the location of workstations, desks and office furniture, as well as office equipment such as computers, telephones, printers and photocopiers.

### Testing

The cabling and telephone system in the new site should be tested at the first opportunity. It is important to confirm that all areas of your new premises can support the IT infrastructure that has been designated to it.

#### Top tip

Involve your IT specialists at every stage to confirm systems and equipment can operate regardless of the changes that may have been made to floor plans or workplace configurations.

### Server / Back office

The relocation of servers and data centre equipment requires a detailed method and approach. The server environment and the nature of the systems can dictate the move timetable and might even limit the time frame available.

#### Equipment audit and impact analysis

Undertake a detailed equipment audit, which should include.

- Existing rack position
- New rack position
- Name, serial number / asset identifier

You should also do a system/service delivery impact analysis to establish:

- Current user dependencies
- Connectivity
- Local/wide area business processes

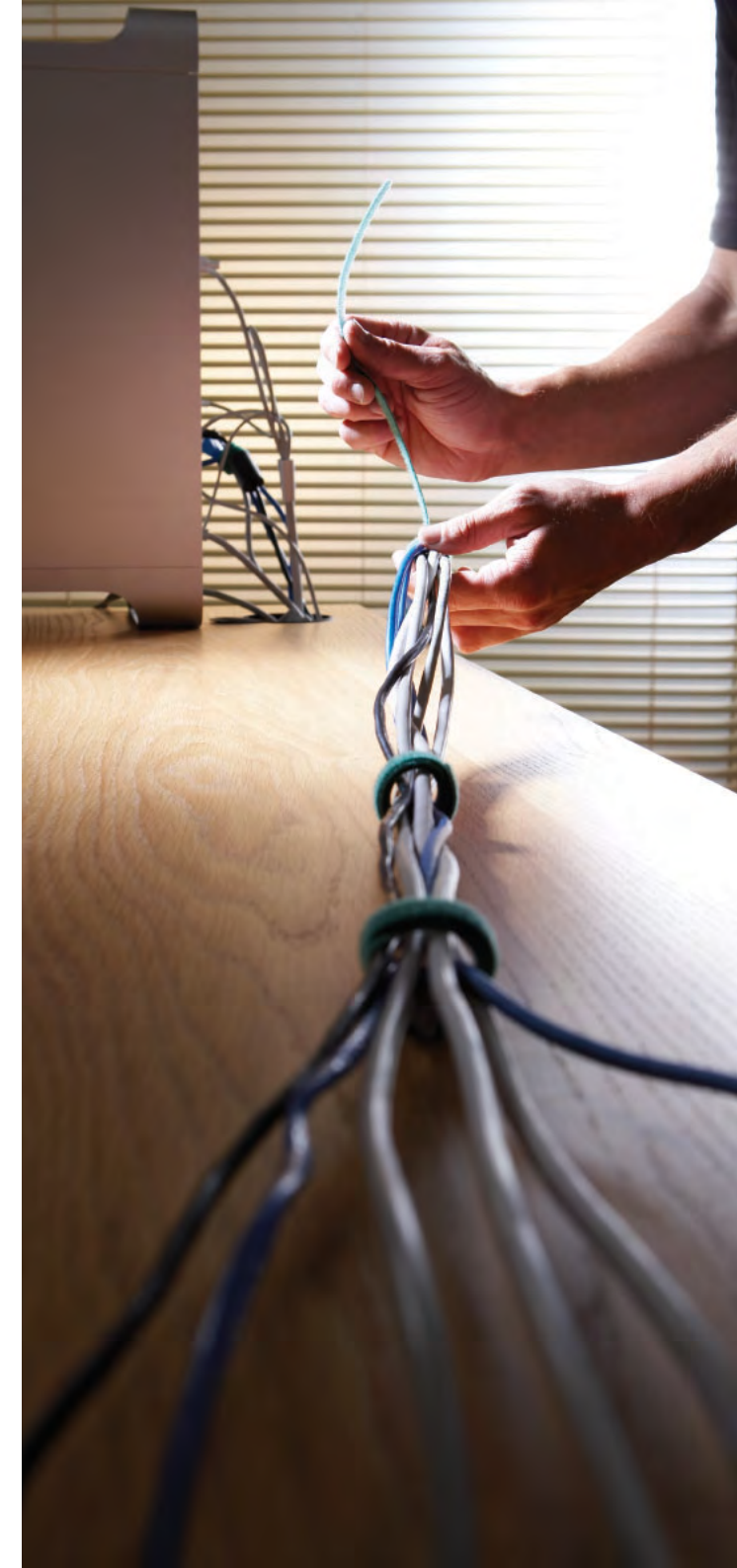
The audit and analysis will help you to create a graphical view and timeline of the server relocation programme to ensure minimal disruption to the dependent users.

#### Connectivity audit

For more complex cabled equipment you should complete an audit of wiring schematics to assist with the re-commissioning of the data centre/server room at your new premises.

#### Photographs

Digital photographs of original connectivity will help with the re-commissioning process and final power-up sequence of the equipment at the new site.







- position
- Keyboards
- Docking stations
- Printers
- Other electrical devices such as PDA cradles, dictaphone machines and telephones

The information gathered should include:

- Floor/ location
- Name, serial/asset numbers
- Equipment type
- Voice/data port details

Everything should be collated into a spreadsheet format for easy reference.

#### Dispose and replace?



A business move offers the opportunity to update or replace equipment such as old computer monitors with new flat screens. Don't forget there are a number of regulations and directives governing the disposal of electrical equipment. Your removal company or contractors will be able to help, and also advise about the options for recycling.

### Planning for the move

It is likely your entire move sequence will be dictated by IT requirements.

#### Project Manager

Your moving company will offer a specialist technical project manager to work with your IT department. They will use the audits to complete a feasibility study and risk analysis before devising a relocation plan, which will include:

- Data and system back up
- Under floor requirements
- New rack configurations
- Labelling
- New layouts
- Connectivity
- Schedules for patching of data

#### Activity schedule

You will need to agree a separate resource and activity schedule for your IT systems to include:

- Back up times
- Disconnection and re-connection times
- Testing
- Roll-out
- Supply
- Installation and support

#### Engineers and technicians

You may need additional engineers and technicians to help on move day. As soon as you have confirmed the date, book the resources you need.

### Move day

Your IT and telecommunications equipment will be the priority for packing and relocating on move day.

#### Server/data centre

Back-ups need to have been taken and verified before shutdown can begin; and re-configuration information and connectivity carefully photographed, labelled and logged.

Extra care and attention is needed in the packing and transportation of servers and data centre equipment. Make sure your moving company can provide the specialists you need as well as the special packaging and transportation required for example:

- Protected server cases
- Anti-static packaging
- Crates and cages
- Air-ride vehicles

At the new premises each item should be cross-checked against the audit list before being individually checked and installed back into the correct rack configuration. Your moving company will complete basic checks and testing

on equipment before handing over to your specialist contractors or IT team for final connectivity and network testing.

#### Desktop equipment

'Shut down' should be managed to an agreed procedure and sequence once system back-ups have been completed and verified. Labelling will be critical to control unpacking at the new premises and equipment and peripherals should be logged on an audit sheet. As cables and connectivity is removed from equipment it should also be bagged, labelled and logged. All items should be individually wrapped in anti-static packaging before being crated and secured for transport; and unpacking should be done at the user location and equipment checked against the audit list.

#### Re-commissioning

Don't underestimate the time and resources required for:

- Cable management
- Checking cables and connectivity
- Server testing
- Confirming 'power-up' functionality
- Checking voice and data connections
- Portable Appliance Testing
- Re-installation of software and programs
- Printer re-mapping
- Telephone extension checks
- Switchboard testing

### Specialist help

Planning and managing the relocation of IT equipment requires an enormous amount of skill, expertise and manpower. It is worth talking to IT specialists at an early stage to scope the project accurately so you can decide when and where you might need additional resources.

#### Avoiding the pitfalls

- Plan well in advance and get specialist help
- Scope the project fully
- At every stage, check floor plans and workplace configurations for IT
- Complete a thorough audit of all equipment
- Employ specialists to move complex and critical equipment
- Confirm your moving company's security arrangements for IT equipment
- Organise extra technicians and engineers for move day
- On move day check system back-ups have been taken and verified
- Don't underestimate the time required for testing and reinstallation





# ► the communications challenge

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**Communicating your move effectively involves a raft of tasks, so planning is essential.**

## Plan for momentum

Before you announce the move, develop a detailed communications plan for staff, customers and suppliers to give them the information they need, when they need it.

You cannot 'over communicate' on a subject as important as this but try not to overwhelm people with too much detail too soon because essential information may be overlooked or forgotten. Timing, content and frequency of

messages is crucial and every means of available communication should be considered:

- Posters
- Bulletins
- Internal employee magazine
- E-mails
- Memorandum and meetings

## Your staff

Employees need to be enthused and motivated. If they recognise the positives behind the decision they will actively contribute to making the project a success. Conversely, staff who feel threatened or worried by the change may become unsettled.

### Define key messages to communication

Business relocation is often a positive move, a reflection of business growth or expansion. Prior to the announcement, define four or five key messages, which create positive reasons for relocating. These could include:

- A better working environment for employees
- A new location to make it easier to service the company's customers
- New premises to allow for future expansion and growth
- A working environment to accommodate a new 'leaner' organisation to best deliver excellent service to customers

When the key messages have been defined, plan to roll out these points consistently to staff, customers and suppliers.



### Announcing the move

As soon as you have agreed the moving date, announce the move to your staff. The move announcement should include:

- Your key messages
- Details of the new premises
- Date of moving
- The name of your project manager
- Names of the individuals on the project team (if this has been appointed)
- Information about meetings and presentations to provide staff with more details

### Staff meetings and presentations

You want staff to feel excited rather than worried, so give them as much positive information as you can. Brief department managers so they can discuss the move with

their teams immediately after the announcement. Make arrangements for managers to feed back to you about how these discussions went and the questions that were raised. There might be issues you hadn't anticipated and need to address.

### Regular communication

Circulate news and information about the move to your staff regularly to build a feeling of team enterprise and keep the project moving forward. Some organisations produce regular newsletters to communicate information about a move to their staff. Your employees will play a vital role in communicating with your customers and suppliers as they meet and talk to them. Make sure they reiterate key information about the move and in particular the changing contact information.





## Welcome pack

Produce a welcome pack for your employees. This could include:

- A letter thanking everyone for their help
- Floor plans
- New systems information (telecoms, computers)
- Telephone lists
- Health and safety information, including fire escape routes

## Your customers

Tell your customers about your move when they can usefully do something with the information. Every business move will be different but think about:

- Who to tell
- The positive messages which can be communicated by your sales team
- How much lead time
- How many reminders

Use a combination of methods for the messages – mail, email and telephone – and don't forget to put information on your website. Think about your customers' needs to devise a timetable.

## Your suppliers

You may need to tell your suppliers about the move before your customers. For example, if you lease photocopiers or office equipment you will have to discuss the contractual arrangements and what needs to be done for the move. Again, think about what and when your suppliers need to know so you can get the timing and messages right.

## Banking

As well as notifying your bank about the move you may need to give your new address to companies to whom you pay standing orders.

## Royal Mail

Don't forget to arrange for your mail to be redirected. Remember, if you are moving to a new postal district your franking machine will need a new setting.

## Official bodies

You will need to advise the official bodies, your trade association, the local council, HM Revenue & Customs about the change of address.

## Staff communication: Things to consider

- Write the key messages that define the reasons for the business relocation and the positive impact of the move
- Create a plan to communicate with employees, customers and suppliers
- Team meetings immediately after the move announcement
- Create a mechanism for staff feedback and questions
- Control the rumour mill with good communications
- Use different media for different messages
- Involve your project team in the communications plan
- Feed news and information to staff regularly
- Post photos and floor plans of the new building on the intranet
- Circulate the move timetable to all staff
- Produce a Welcome Pack for staff
- Manage staff expectations and limit their ability to change your plans
- Motivate your staff – recognise effort and achievement
- Advertising might catch missed opportunities
- Protect your customer relationships





# ▶ preparing for the move

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**Move day is approaching fast and it's at the front of everyone's mind. It's time to complete the final details of your plan.**

## Plan for momentum

Your removal company will have assigned you a Move Manager, who will appreciate another chance to 'walk the course' at each property to:

- Confirm the move specification and undertake a risk assessment at both properties
- Double check access, parking and entry points
- Place floor plans at the entry of each floor and room plans at the entry of each room

Most removal companies like to move from the top of a building down to the ground floor but your business priorities might mean this sequence has to be adapted.



## Planning meeting

Organise a planning meeting to go over the final details of the move with your suppliers. Although the planning meeting will cover some old ground it will also confirm:

- Dates, deadlines and timings - including legal possession, power, services, telecommunications
- Access and parking, police and local authority permissions and permits
- Floor and desk plans
- The key personnel at both sites.
- Move day schedule including start/finish times and meal breaks
- Security arrangements, including keys, door staff, passes, premises protection
- Insurance for contents and premises
- Communication arrangements on move day
- Delivery dates for crates and other move supplies
- Labelling conventions - colour and position codes to be cross-checked against the new floor plans
- Health and safety - make sure you have basic first aid materials available and a procedure for all eventualities
- Maintenance engineers - access to and availability of lifts engineers
- Access to power in the new premises
- Equipment leasing

At the planning meeting make note of all actions that are agreed so that all the stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities and contribution to the move.



## Labelling conventions

The importance of labelling cannot be over-emphasised. The labelling is the responsibility of every employee and errors at this stage can have consequences at the new premises.

Agree the labelling conventions at your planning meeting:

- If floor areas are large, or there are a large number of cellular offices, it may be necessary to draw up an individual plan for each room
- Every item to be moved must be labelled and the room and position numbers on each label must correspond with the floor plan
- Labels must be placed in the correct position on each item of furniture or equipment
- The system must tie in with your floor and workspace plans as well as the IT and telephone systems

## Brief staff

Most business moves happen over a weekend to reduce downtime and everyone must understand the timetable for shutting down beforehand. Briefing staff adequately prior to the move is key.

Organise team meetings to discuss and confirm:

- Arrangements for move day
- Labelling convention
- Packing plan and responsibilities
- De-commissioning and re-commissioning of equipment
- Move timetable

## Storage and disposal

Each department needs to identify unwanted supplies and equipment for storage, disposal or recycling so extend the labelling plan to include these. Once the items have been identified your removal company will arrange disposal. Prepare a list of the items not to be moved so your removal teams have a checklist to refer to on move day.

## Clear out

Moving is an opportunity for a clearout, so:

- Organise a 'purge day' in advance and book a skip. Issue large plastic rubbish bags to staff so they can dispose of unwanted files and stationery
- If you need extra help to move items and clear work areas arrange portage services with your removal company
- Lock drawer type filing cabinets and keep the keys
- Back up all computer files

## Packing Up

Packing of individual work stations is usually carried out by employees, though professional packing services of other items is advisable to ensure that health and safety procedures are followed at all times.

- Identify any archive material that can be packed in advance
- Crates will be delivered several days prior to move day to allow time for packing of working areas
- Security crates should be supplied for confidential documents, personnel records, accountancy files, tape, discs and sensitive information

## Did you know?

A crate packed with paper can weigh up to 50 kilos.

## Packing crates: hints and tips for your staff

- Empty crates are delivered in stacks of 20 to 25, nested into one another for space economy
- Crates can be used for the packing of most office items - files/paperwork/books/desk contents. Crates hold approximately 2 feet of filing or the equivalent of a drawer of a four-drawer filing cabinet
- Crates should be not be filled over the stacking bars or lid
- Crates should never be placed on desks
- Delicate items can be wrapped before placing in the crate
- Fragile items should be placed in cartons marked 'Fragile'
- Take care not to pack crates too heavily - a packed crate should still be capable of being carried by one person with care, and by 2 persons with ease



## Avoiding the pitfalls

- 'Walk the course' with your contractors
- Hold a planning meeting
- Confirm space plan
- Agree a timetable for IT and telecoms system backups and shutdown
- Develop contingency plans
- Agree the move sequence so it takes account of your business priorities
- Agree a labelling convention that ties in with IT and telecommunications
- Consider labelling for items that need to be disposed of or recycled
- Organise 'purge days' to clear unwanted files, papers and desk contents
- Brief all your employees about the move and their responsibilities

## Move Day

Move day is about action and requires the execution of a number of interrelated tasks within a tight timescale:

- **Communication:** staying in touch is very important so everyone involved in the move should have access to a mobile phone
- **Get a decision!** It is important to reach somebody who is authorised to take any decision that needs to be made
- **Security briefing:** Remember to brief all your contractors, suppliers and staff about the security arrangements
- **On site security:** While the move is taking place it can be useful to have security staff at each door, checking who is entering and leaving the building

## Unpacking

Many companies want to make their office move seamless and trouble-free for their employees, so they can hit the ground running when they get back to work. Your removal company will be able to offer post-move assistance, which can include:

- **Unpacking and restoring files and filing systems**
- **Having technicians available to sort out any moving or repositioning of desks or equipment**
- **Unpacking and storing office supplies**
- **Unpacking, stacking and clearing crates to holding areas**
- **Crate hire reconciliation to avoid incurring extra charges**

## Things to consider:

- A precise schedule for move day
- Lift engineers in attendance or on standby
- Access and parking, as well as permits
- Attendance of key staff on move day
- Keys, passes and security arrangements
- Communications on move day
- Insurance
- Clearing rubbish generated by the move
- Health and safety
- Power supplies
- Catering, rest areas and washrooms

## Rubbish

Packing and unpacking crates and boxes can produce a lot of rubbish, and the protective packing materials around equipment will also generate large amounts of waste. You may need to make special arrangements to dispose of the rubbish that is generated by your move.

## Check and test

Whether it is computers, machinery or telephones you should aim to check and test all the office equipment that has moved with you. Computers, telephones and office equipment should be tested at the earliest opportunity. In addition to getting your IT specialists to check all equipment consider organising an electrician or other specialists to check other equipment and machinery.

## The crates

Crates are normally rented and it is easy to lose track of crates after a move, or delay unpacking them, and

then find you have incurred substantial extra costs. The charges can be punitive because they are usually calculated on a daily rate.

## Count them in, count them out

- The crate hire agreement will specify a delivery date before moving and a return date afterwards
- Make sure all your employees understand the return deadline and know that everything must be unpacked before then
- If all the crates are not available for collection on the assigned day you are likely to be charged for additional collection and uplift costs, as well as the extra days' rental charges
- Your project manager should control and manage the crate reconciliation. They will have had to sign a consignment delivery note when the crates were delivered and will need to sign another when the crates are collected

## The old site

Conduct a sweep of the old site to check that:

- All rubbish has been removed
- Unwanted items have been disposed of (or sent for recycling)
- Professional cleaning of the premises has been completed
- Any necessary minor repairs have been made

If you leased your old site, remember to check the obligations you had to your landlord. All leases require tenants to repair all or part of the premises and at the end of the term the landlord will want to check these have been done. There is also likely to be a clause that specifies how the landlord wants the premises to look. You might, for example, be required to repaint areas or

replace carpet or flooring when you vacate the property.

## Reviewing the move

### Debrief

Your removal company and other move contractors will always want feedback from you about their service and how they handled your move. It can be useful to arrange a debrief meeting to review the project.

### Costs

Before the move some costs might have been listed as variable, and things might have happened on move day that hadn't been planned. Check costs against estimates and discuss any issues that might have arisen with your suppliers. You will also want to review the actual costs against the budgets and timescales you set for the move.

### Insurance

There will be a time limit for making an insurance claim after your move, which is why it's so important to check there has been no damage to equipment, supplies or the fabric of your premises.

## In the final analysis

Every business move is unique, and everyone at all levels of an organisation will be affected by the change. However small the project, it will require robust planning and preparation to be a success.

If you haven't got the time or resources to manage key tasks, then employ specialists to help. The cost of doing so will be outweighed by the potential cost and disruption if things go wrong. The priority must be that your move will cause the least possible disruption to your business – your customers, your staff and your bottom line.



# ► 30 point move checklist

**Planning a business move can be a logistical minefield so Pickfords Business Moving has created a 30 point move checklist to help you plan your relocation.**

## In the months before the move...

- **Finalise new location search**
  - Analyse potential HR, IT and telecoms issues
- **Appoint internal project manager and project team**
  - Define, agree and document objectives, tasks and responsibilities
  - Confirm the timetable and deadlines
- **Define Space Plan for the new location**
  - Agree with key department heads and communicate to teams
- **Appoint removal company**
  - Utilise their specialist Move Manager within your project team
- **Arrange planning meeting with project team and move manager**
  - Analyse requirements and define the move plan
  - Schedule regular planning meetings
- **Communicate move plan to department heads**
  - Define move sequence, responsibilities, deadlines and actions
- **Communicate move plan to suppliers and service providers**
  - Make contact with IT, Telecoms, Utilities and key Suppliers

## In the weeks before the move...

- **Arrange for key personnel to be available to attend on move days**
  - Make note of mobile telephone numbers of departmental representatives and IT Helpdesk
- **Agree and confirm during the planning process**
- **Review and rationalise items to be relocated**
  - Complete a purge of unwanted and unnecessary items
  - Identify items for recycling, reuse or disposal
- **Agree labelling strategy in line with Space Plans**
  - Issue labels and briefing note to department heads on labelling conventions and procedures
- **Confirm final move dates**
  - Communicate to all individuals and departments in the Move Chain
  - Ensure crates are booked for delivery in the week prior to the move
  - Issue briefing note to department heads on packing procedures
- **Notify organisations of your change in contact details**
  - Insurance; buildings; contents, motor
  - Royal Mail
  - Leasing companies
  - Your bank
  - HM Revenue and Customs
  - Equipment suppliers
  - All suppliers
  - Customers

## In the week before the move takes place...

- **Brief staff on labelling procedures**
  - Check that all items to be moved are labelled
- **Brief staff on crate packing procedures**
  - Arrange for additional manpower from your moving company if required
- **Display floor and room plans at both locations**
- **Ensure fit-out contractors remove debris from new location**
  - Ensure removal company arranges protection of vulnerable areas
- **Ensure adequate catering and toilet facilities are available for all on site during the move**
- **Ensure inter-site communication is arranged for the move**
  - Issue mobile phone contact number list

## During the move...

- **Have move plan to hand and work to it**
  - Monitor progress and ensure achievement of milestones
- **Walk both sites to ensure completion**
  - Check everything is transferred
  - Confirm correct placements at new site
- **Identify key functions are working ahead of first working day**
  - Test IT and Telecommunications

## In the week after the move...

- **Conduct a final sweep of the old site**
  - Implement furniture disposal or recycling plan
  - Ensure the site is ready for handover to landlord
- **Complete unpacking of crates**
  - Ensure deadlines to complete the unpacking are achieved
  - Allocate pre-booked assistance to key areas
- **Ensure all crates are collected from site to avoid unnecessary charges**
- **Conduct ‘welcome briefing’ for staff**
  - Issue Welcome Packs to staff
- **Complete formal debriefs with:**
  - Project team
  - Removal company

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