



Planning Your Office Move



Planning Your Office Relocation or Expansion

Regardless of the size of your business, once the decision to relocate has been made, a systematic plan must be setup to accomplish that goal with minimum disruption to daily business and productivity. Failure to allow adequate time for this process can result in confusion, conflict, and cost increases. The following steps offer guidance for a successful move.

PHASE 1 - THE PLAN - 12 Months Prior

Designate a project leader and task force.

Your task force can consist of two to three individuals (no more than three). The team should have regular meetings with a designated coordinator to oversee the move plan and delegate responsibilities. The earlier everyone is involved, including professional consultants (i.e. leasing agents, interior designers, space planner, etc.) the greater the chance that the overall plans will meet with success. Relieve the project leader of as many of his daily responsibilities as possible so he can devote as much time as possible to the move. This is a major responsibility and there is a lot of decisions needing someone's full attention.



PHASE 2 - THE TEAM - 9 Months Prior

Choose a Space Planner/Designer.

By contracting with professionals who specialize in balancing function, space, and aesthetics, the relocation has the best potential for solving your requirements. A planned environment is a productive environment. By carefully planning your new office, you can get the most out of every square foot of office space, stimulate work output and increase company morale.

Develop and finalize the facility plan.

The task force together with the space planner/designer should solicit and evaluate staff input relative to current problems and needs. A plan should then be designed to facilitate those needs as well as projected growth within the boundaries of a predetermined budget. At the earliest possible opportunity, consult with furnishing professionals regarding furniture options.

Know how long your furniture takes from time of order to delivery and mark the "order date" on your timetable calendar. There is nothing more frustrating than moving in only to find your furniture has not yet arrived.

Advertise and interview for additional staff.

This process should begin early to allow you to have time to be selective in securing the best possible people.

PHASE 3 - THE LEASE SPACE - 5 Months Prior

Locate and secure new space.

With a firm grip on the facility plan, along with the guidance of a leasing agent and space planner, this can be accomplished efficiently and lessen the risk of securing a place that will not accommodate projected needs and growth. The lease should be written with its commencement date set as close

as possible to the expiration date of your old lease.

Order new furnishings, equipment, and a telecommunication system.

Focus on allocated budget, utilization of existing furniture (if any), the purchase and installation of new items, and securing the services of an office furnishings firm. Lead times vary and you can expect to allow anywhere from three to six months.

Finalize details of move.

Outline and schedule any property improvements to be made. Assign with deadlines, the responsibilities listed in Phase II and III.

PHASE 4 - FOLLOW THROUGH - 2 Months Prior

Select and schedule mover.

Evenings and weekends are usually more expensive, but may be worth the extra cost to avoid

weekday activity and business interruption.

Order new forms, cards, stationery, signage, etc. Now would be a good time to consider redesigning logos or forms, identity package, etc.

In this phase, you should consider the deadlines to place your new telephone number and address in the yellow page advertisements. It is necessary to contact your telephone company and your long distance carrier to transfer service. You may consider purchasing or leasing a new telephone system.

Advertise and notify clients of move. Seek newspaper coverage and consider publishing a flyer or mailing postcards.

Gain building access. Secure an agreement with owner and/or occupant to allow onsite access by designers, contractors, suppliers, consultants, etc.

Make arrangements for new coffee service and plant service.

Design and install graphics and signage.

PHASE 5 - IMPLEMENTATION -1 Month to 1 Week Prior

Installation of interior finishes. This process takes time and it is vital for the carpeting, painting, and wallpapering to take place before the building has been occupied.

Publish and distribute new building operations manual to staff. This is a must for security personnel and can be helpful to other staff members as well.

Perform packing, labeling, and dismantling of equipment. Create a standardized method for identifying a master checklist for recording the contents of boxes, furniture, and equipment. Purge files when possible.

Occupy building. Technically, this occurs on the commencement date of the lease agreement. Gain licenses and public occupancy permits. Don't wait until the last minute as regulations vary from city to city and county to county and revisions may be required to the plan.

Install furnishings, equipment, and telecommunication system. Preferably, your move coordinator should be on site to receive, inspect, and sign off deliveries.

Move.

HOLD GRAND OPENING!

Give yourself time to get settled, to have all furnishing touches in place and then have a wonderful time. Remember, a move gives you not only the opportunity to relocate, but also to improve the many facets of your business.



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