



OFFICE RELOCATION CHECKLIST

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ENSURE A SMOOTH OFFICE RELOCATION



Moving into a new office is an exciting thing. There's something really invigorating about a change of scenery. But if you're the one responsible for running it all, it can be a bit overwhelming. The key to keeping it simple is to break it down into easy steps. We've listed everything you need to think about - from the beginning stages of the project to move-in day.

Choosing the Project Manager

About 12 months before you're planning to move, you should decide who's going to be involved, and start to outline your key requirements. Choose a Project Manager (this could be you) who will co-ordinate everything internally and be the point of contact for the design team and management. Pick the most organised – and calm – person in the office. You'll need someone who can keep everything on track. Select a team and assign clear roles and responsibilities.

Who has what it takes to manage the move?

- Senior enough to make decisions
- Experienced at multi-tasking
- Good motivator
- Knows your business inside-out
- Great communicator

Defining roles and responsibilities

Involving others and keeping people in the loop will prevent surprises and delays further down the line. For example, there's no reason to approve a design unless the MD has seen it - he or she is bound to change it.

- Managing Director
- Finance Director
- Facilities Director
- Office Manager
- IT Director
- Operations Director
- Marketing
- Human Resources
- PA's

Relocation Tip

Don't forget the administration staff. They probably know more about what's going on in your organization than anyone else.

Defining location priorities

You could find what you consider to be the perfect office, but if the location isn't right, then it just won't work for your company. Consider the following criteria when selecting locations for your new offices:

- Good public transportation links
- Easy for clients to visit
- Easy for you to visit clients
- Realistic commute for existing employees
- Local amenities (shops, restaurants, pharmacies etc.)
- Good access to major roadways
- Excellent access to major airports
- Parking
- Image/reputation of the area
- Neighbours/competition
- Security of neighbourhood

Commercial property agents

Make sure you are talking to the best people in the business

- Quality references
- A good grasp of the technical side
- Enough time to devote to your project
- Good knowledge of the area you're searching in

Create a robust design brief

A well written design brief is one of the most useful documents you can have for your project. It should include:

- Your vision for your new office
- Your aims, goals and business needs
- Your brand values (work with the marketing department on this)
- Sign-off from senior management
- Establish "look and feel" - write down some ideas to establish how your office interior is going to look. Minimal, glossy, classic, white, modern, fun, quirky, serious, traditional? Or something completely different?

The project budget

A relocation project can be one of the most expensive events in the life of a business. Moving forward without a clear idea of budgets is like sailing without a compass. All reputable suppliers will provide full cost of estimates, free of charge. This will enable you to communicate with the rest of your business the real financial impact of your move.

Get quotes for everything, and draw up a full budget for the whole project, including:

- Occupancy costs (such as rent, service charges, taxes, energy, maintenance, etc.)
- Transaction fees (for property agents, lawyers)
- Insurance costs
- Fire plan assessment
- Planning permission fees
- Design and fit out costs
- Environmental assessments
- IT - cabling, and IT equipment relocation fees
- Furniture - the cost of new furniture, delivery and installation
- Disposal costs of old furniture, computer, rubbish etc.
- Extra security (during the move)
- Printing costs
- Telecoms - equipment and installation
- Marketing costs -new stationery, announcements, invitations, website update of new address, plus mail redirection
- Contingency (it's not uncommon to budget an extra 20% for contingencies and changes)
- Dilapidation costs for your old space (many leases require you to put your old space back to it's original condition)
- Dilapidation costs for your new space
- Air conditioning, heating and ventilation (check the condition of HVAC plant in your new building)
- Energy performance
- Temporary storage during the move

Feasibility studies

A well done feasibility study will save you thousands. Not only will it help you to determine how much space you need and how to accommodate your people, it will also help you plan for future growth. (Avoiding the need for an unplanned costly expansion or move).

- Take a new look at how your teams work together (you might need to rearrange which department goes next to which.)
- Work out growth rates for each department and plan for changes in your space plan
- How many people / workstations will you need to accommodate?
- What sorts of spaces (kitchen, executive offices, common room etc) would you like?
- How much space do you think you'll need (in square meter)?
- What's your timeline?
- Calculate current size, capacity and usage needs for:

- ➔ Reception areas
- ➔ Meeting rooms
- ➔ Executive offices
- ➔ Presentation rooms
- ➔ Kitchen/tea points
- ➔ Common room
- ➔ Break out spaces
- ➔ Toilets
- ➔ Showers
- ➔ Copy areas
- ➔ Mail room
- ➔ Recycling points
- ➔ Other

Storage considerations

Often overlooked, storage can make the difference between happy staff and grumbling workers. Office relocation is an opportune time to reassess and calculate your storage needs.

- What's your storage situation like at the moment? How much and what do you need for the new office?
- Storage for individuals - at desks or lockers
- Document storage
- Storerooms (for office supplies and equipment)
- Secure storage and safes
- Off-site storage (can you reduce the amount of space you need by moving long-term storage off-site?)
- Calculate future needs for all areas above
- Don't forget the basics - coat racks or closets

Communication with your stakeholders

Confusion at the time of relocation can cause anxiety amongst staff. It will pay dividends to keep everyone involved and create buy-in for the move.

- Give people a way to voice their honest opinions and objections (such as an online forum)
- Provide access to an Extranet to share files and plans (for the project team)
- Hold formal presentations of design ideas for staff
- Go on site visits with key stakeholders
- Give staff tours of the office before it's finished
- Create a "move" newsletter for staff
- Give staff an info pack on the new local area

The neighbourhood

- Are any competitors based nearby?
- Are any potential partners / suppliers based nearby?
- Are the other tenants good quality companies?
- Are there any off-putting noises, smell or other issues?
- Are there issues with the local area?
- Is there somewhere to buy a sandwich?

Legal and financial

- Lease terms (any unusual clauses?)
- Landlord incentives (any extra perks on offer?)
- Have you negotiated a rent-free period?
- Have you looked into future levels for service charges?

Relocation Tip

Ask your future landlord if there are any major upgrades planned to the building. Because you may have to pay for them in your future service charges!

Insurance

Make sure you have all the insurances in place before the work commences

Sign the lease

Once all the terms are agreed you your satisfaction, sign on the dotted line.

Drawing up the designs

- Now it's time to take those indicative designs and produce a full layout of your new office
- Put together some mood boards - what look and feel are you going for?
- Agree a colour scheme that reflects your brand and identity
- Ask your designer to put together a Sample Board

Finding the right furniture

It's not just about the cost. There are things like health & safety and ergonomics to consider.

- Is your furniture practical for everyday work?
- Are your chairs ergonomic?
- Is everything covered by warranty?
- What will it cost to deliver or assemble?
- Do you have enough storage?
- Are you getting good quality for you money? The cheapest option isn't always the best in the long run
- Will your furniture work well with all your computers and other kinds of equipment?
- Does the style suit your identity?

IT, data and computers

What sort of systems are already in place? Will all your equipment work properly? What else will you need?

- Powerpoint - how many an where?
- Floor boxes / data points - how many and where?
- Printers and faxes
- Common room / cabinets
- Cabling
- Backup generator
- Servers
- Service and support
- IT management and coordination - who'll make sure it all works?

Telephones and internet

- Order your telephone connections from your supplier as soon as possible
- Assess your current set-up (the pros and cons)
- Shop around for telephone providers and packages
- How many lines do you need?
- Could an internet-based system be better?
- Can you keep your current phone numbers?
- Do you need voicemail or a call answering service?
- How will you let people know about your new numbers (mail-out, call forwarding)?
- Don't forget the basics - do you have enough handsets?

Client communication

Make sure all your clients and suppliers know where you're moving, and when.

- Send out a letter
- Send out and email
- Schedule an update to your company website
- Schedule reprints of company stationery and forms

Work on site

Ensure environmental compliance

- Recycle any plasterboard, carpet and other materials being stripped out
- Separate waste
- Follow the proper procedures to dispose of hazardous materials
- Run weekly meetings on site
- Keep track of progress, with your project manager
- make sure there is a sign-off procedure for any changes
- Take photos of the work at every stag, and make notes of any defects

Planning the move

- Talk to your IT specialists about the transition (they may need time for testing)
- Put someone in charge of managing the packing and de-clutter process
- Make arrangements with your removals company
- Check your new office is fully secure, for when things start arriving
- Arrange all the crates and labels for packing up
- Coordinate holidays, making sure all the key people are available
- Make sure all your staff know what's happening (when to clear their desks, what to tell clients, when to move, etc.) They may need reminding!
- Send out an internal newsletter with key dates for the staff
- Arrange to have someone on-hand on the day, to help deal with snags or last-minute problems
- Put proper security in place - at the old site and at the new site (things could go missing amongst all the confusion.

De-clutter and getting rid of old equipment

There is no point paying to move anything you're not going to need

- Get rid of any unnecessary clutter
- Clear out old files
- Scan documents you don't need in hard copy
- Dispose of any information securely (shredding, etc.)
- Donate any unwanted furniture, computers, appliances, etc... , to charity
- Have plenty of extra bins and recycling points set up (it makes it easier for staff to clear out as well as encouraging recycling.

De-snagging and new office preparation

- Look for snags (schedule a thorough walkthrough with your contractor)
- Clean-up on site
- Thoroughly test everything - phones, computers, lights - one non-working handset can ruin your day
- Final handover
- Arrange delivery to the new office - tea, coffee, platters, champagne?

Celebrating success

- Arrange a move-in party for staff and / or clients
- Take that long deserved holiday