

So, you're in charge of a relocation project for the first time?

Where do you start?

In larger projects, there may be a team made up of representatives from each area of your business managed by an overall project manager, usually a facilities manager or a professional move manager.

For smaller projects or moves involving a single department, the move could be managed by a facilities manager or more likely, department manager or administrator. If you find yourself in this situation, then Olympia is here to help!

Once you have been appointed, make sure this decision is communicated to all relevant managers and staff – make sure they understand your role and responsibilities.

- You should have overall responsibility for planning the move strategy and implementing it. The strategy needn't be onerous, for a small move it could be just a single page outlining what you need to achieve and by when.
- Ensure you have the authority to make decisions and appoint suppliers without having to continually consult with every department.
- Outline which elements of the move you will be responsible for, i.e. appointment of suppliers, design of office lay-out, physical relocation and so-on.
- Hold review meetings at regular intervals leading up to the move to ensure that the arrangements are proceeding as planned and are communicated to the whole company.

Communication – Staff, Suppliers, Customers – Who to tell and when

People always like to know what's happening, especially if it has a direct effect on them. For a business, moving will effect your staff, suppliers and clients in different ways.

Staff

Staff are generally interested in the practical issues, like the journey to work, where to park, public transport etc. and tend to be quite selfish focusing on where their workstation will be, whether or not they can have their favourite chair and any direct responsibility for the move.

From the outset, involve your staff, ask them for suggestions and try to implement the best ones. It is important that you have the framework of your plan in place and avoid falling into the trap of planning by committee.



The best way to communicate with your staff is to give them all the information they need in a Move Manual which can take a paper or electronic format.

The guide should include information such as:-

- The names and contact details for each member of the move team and what they are responsible for.
- The move date(s) – broken down by department / phases, but making it simple for an individual to see when they will be moving
- Details of where departments / individuals will be located within the building
- Instructions on how to pack and label crates, furniture and equipment prior to the move
- Instructions on when crates should be packed prior to the move and unpacked after
- The address and contact information of the new building
- Transport information, location map, public transport links, parking arrangements etc.
- On-site staff facilities, such as catering and refreshments, crèche etc.
- On-site professional facilities, such as meeting rooms, video conferencing, printing and copying facilities
- Site security information
- Location of first aid facilities and staff qualified to give first-aid
- Details of any post move help-desk or co-ordinators

Don't assume that your team will actually read the moving guide! You will have to re-enforce any deadlines or action you expect them to carry out.

Suppliers

Your suppliers can be divided into two categories: Level One - Suppliers who provide goods or services essential to the delivery of your own products or services, and Level Two - ones who provide secondary goods and services, such as utilities, security and catering.

Level one – it's a good idea to let key suppliers know about your move well in advance. It's unlikely to cause any problems but it's always a good idea to make sure suppliers support you at every stage. If you are planning to move away from the area completely, make sure you know if suppliers costs are likely to increase – additional delivery or packing charges can make a big difference to your costs over time.



Level two – the chances are that you can transfer existing suppliers to your new property, but it is a good opportunity and a worthwhile exercise to compare costs for services such as utilities, cleaning, catering and security.

Checklist: Who to tell you're moving

- Your Staff
- Clients
- Communications Providers
- Bank
- Post Office
- IT Contractors
- Web Site Registration
- Accountant
- Insurers
- Lawyers
- Stationery Suppliers
- Cleaners
- Caterers
- Local Authorities
- Tax Offices
- Shareholders
- Gas, Electricity and Water Utilities
- Landlord
- DMV (For company vehicles)
- Vehicle Leasing suppliers
- Marketing Agency
- Security Providers
- Courier Firms – FedEx TNT etc
- Suppliers of leased equipment such as copiers, faxes, printers, vending
- Waste Management
- Recruitment Agents / Consultants
- Subscriptions – publications
- Any suppliers who provide maintenance

Naturally, depending on the size and sophistication of your business, the list will vary. Your finance department should be able to produce a full list of suppliers from your accounts system.

Clients

Tell your customers about your move as soon as you can. Let them know if they can expect any disruption to the services or products they buy from you and give them as much notice as you can. Try to focus on the reasons for the move and how this will benefit the client.

Your marketing department/agency can devise a campaign that gets the message across effectively using direct mail, email and even advertising. Many companies will host an event inviting clients, employees and suppliers to celebrate the opening of a new building or office.

The key is to involve everyone connected to your business at the earliest possible stage.

