

Facilities Management from A to Z



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Facility Managers are usually responsible for managing vast numbers of internal moves and changes every year but once in a while they are faced with the prospect of relocating an entire office. One of the big removal companies report that that companies move every eight years on average which is three years less often than people move home.

A relocation is a major project which requires a lot of advance planning. Choosing the new location, finding and acquiring suitable property, disposing of the old site, fitting out and furnishing the new building and setting up all the new services required are all complex challenges to be met before even considering the relocation of staff which might involve a raft of home moves, redundancies, recruitment and so on.

A comprehensive project plan, a good project manager and a cross functional project team with a senior business sponsor, adequate budget and a bevy of professional advisers are all necessities for a successful relocation. If the FM is to take a leading role in the project they may need to take on interim resource to back-fill their role at the current building.

Relocation is often a useful opportunity to introduce fundamental changes in space design, facilities operation or other working practices. As with all business change this means even more serious planning and robust project management processes. Such change may meet with resistance and strong communications protocols will need to be embedded in the project methodology.

In developing the relocation plan it is important to ensure that everyone involved understands the objectives of the exercise. Organisations relocate for a variety of reasons and each may affect decisions to be made during the project. For example the move may be driven by the end of a lease and a desire to take advantage of current market opportunities; or the decision may have been triggered by a change of business strategy, a new client relationship or simply a need for more (or less) space.

Space audits of existing offices and pre occupancy surveys can be really helpful in informing design parameters for the new location. Post occupancy evaluation studies can be carried out to measure the effectiveness of the new designs and whether the objectives and benefits of the relocation have been successfully achieved.

The British Association of Removers (BAR) has published a useful "Guide to Commercial Moving" which is available from www.bar.co.uk/consumer/GuidestoMoving which offers practical and expert advice on how to prepare for a move