

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS RELOCATIONS.

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Is your company about to make a move to a new facility? If you've never had to deal with a major relocation, I'd like to share with you a few of the things I've learned in more than 30 years of panning and managing successful moves.

I think the single biggest challenge of a relocation is making sure you're thinking of everything-and I mean everything-that has to be done. It's then absolutely crucial to stay on top of all those details, making sure you raise issues early enough so you can deal with them proactively rather than knee-jerk reacting to them out of necessity.

Three Common Mistakes

Over the years, I've seen three major mistakes repeated in numerous corporate relocations. The first is underestimating the amount of human and financial resources necessary to plan

and execute a detailed move. Second is the inability to develop early agreement on responsibility, coupled with the failure to assign a single person the ultimate accountability for the project. This can often be accompanied by a reluctance to provide that person with appropriate resources and authority. The last common mistake? It's the failure to recognize and react quickly to events that could jeopardize one of more phases of the project.

Building Support

Top management buy-in and support must be present for a relocation project to succeed. In my experience, it's always necessary to take a top-down approach, working closely with C-level management and keeping them informed every step of the way. But employees are just as crucial to a relocation project's success.

I believe it's critical to empower employees as part of the planning and preparation process, then keep them informed so they remain supportive and are motivated to suggest better ways of structuring the move and of doing business in the new location. It's also very important to conduct the process with minimal disruption to employees' normal business routines.

Maintaining morale is paramount. It is vitally important it is to keep things light, to stay positive and to see the humor in virtually every situation. The

importance of managing the process so that everyone involved remains confident of success cannot be overestimated.

Being Proactive

I've learned you have to be proactive in every phase of a project. First of all, that means starting early. You don't want to be in a position of having to catch up when you've just begun. You also have to be brutally realistic in bringing up problems and potential roadblocks as soon as you spot them. But bringing them up isn't enough; you also have to be willing to make the tough decisions quickly. You have to stay on top of a move.

I've also learned that rigid thinking is the enemy of executing a relocation that provides optimal benefit. You have to be willing and able to think beyond the defined scope of an assignment. Let's face it, parameters can change, goals can evolve, unanticipated opportunities may present themselves. Maintaining a creative, flexible mindset is key to making sure that any relocation delivers maximum results.

Consider Outside Help

Do you or one of your team members have the know-how and the time to manage a complicated relocation? For most companies, the answer is no. You and your key people are reloca-

tion experts. More important, you have to continue to take care of business. We all know that's a full-time job. If that sounds like your company, it may be a good idea to work with an outside relocation consultant.

Outside specialists like my organization bring the knowledge and experience your team probably lacks. We work closely with your CEO or designated project leader and we set up and

oversee the most appropriate internal teams. We help locate and prepare the new location, and we will assemble the best relocation experts to serve as permanent members of the team. We can also bring in world-class professionals who are at the top of their fields to fulfill limited engagements for critical assignments. We are accountable for every aspect of the move, from planning, budgeting and scheduling to managing all personnel

and coordinating all activities. Most important, we make certain your move is accomplished on time and on budget.

Start Moving Now

As soon as you think your company is considering a move, don't waste a minute. Take it from someone who has handled more than 35 major moves, the time to get moving is right away.