

Harrow Green

Moving Professionals



Guide to planning an office move

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Introduction:

If you're planning an office move this guide will provide you with lots of helpful information on how to organise the project by identifying the important tasks you'll need to complete throughout the relocation.

We have been helping organisations move and change for over 40 years and have an enormous amount of insight on how to make your relocation pain free.

With us, your move is in safe hands. Moving to new premises or simply refurbishing your existing office should be an exciting time and we hope that this guide helps it to be just that.



The planning stage

This is the most critical stage of the whole process. Create a brief for your move that lists all your requirements and key facts such as your new address, moving dates and contact information.

Producing a spread sheet will enable you to plan out all the necessary tasks and plot a time line for key milestones that need to be met by you, your removal company and other contractors.



Engage and communicate with your stakeholders

A lack of information about the relocation can cause anxiety and stress for employees. It will make a huge difference if you keep everyone up to speed and encourage their buy-in for the move.

- Choose a 'Move Champion'. This should be done about 12 months before your expected move date. They need to be senior enough to make decisions and should be very familiar with the project's objectives on behalf of the business. They should be good at multi tasking, have excellent communication and organisation skills and an understanding of the budget.
- Think about all the people/departments that have a key role to play: the Managing Director, facilities, marketing, IT, operations and Human Resources. Involving other people and keeping everyone updated will prevent delays and surprises later on in the project. Not everybody likes change, so it is a good idea to gain their co-operation by using 'Departmental Move Makers'. They will be the focal point of communication to their team and give people an opportunity to voice their opinions and ideas.
- Arrange a site tour of your new office in advance to help staff feel more involved.
- Any changes directly affecting staff should be discussed with them, not only is this a legal requirement (in some instances), it's also good business practice.
- Hold regular move workshops and produce a move newsletter to keep staff informed.
- Ensure that your clients are kept fully up to date about the move and highlight any benefits the relocation might have for them.



Tip

Don't overlook your administration teams. They are likely to know more about what's happening in your organisation than anyone else.

Budget management

Keeping control of the relocation purse strings is a key responsibility and does not have to be overwhelming. All good suppliers and contractors will provide cost quotations; you should make sure individual costs are fixed where possible.

We know your effects are valuable so we offer fully comprehensive insurance to cover the full value of your items in transit, for your peace of mind.

Items to include in your relocation budget are:

- Removal company costs
- Project management fees
- Pre-move audit fees
- Clearance and disposal of old furniture, computers and rubbish from existing building
- Insurance.

The new location will include costs such as:

- Design and fit out costs
- Extra security (during the move)
- IT cabling and IT equipment relocation fees
- New furniture, supply and installation
- Telecoms - new equipment and installation
- Temporary storage before, during and after the move.

Tip

Don't overlook your administration teams. They are likely to know more about what's happening in your organisation than anyone else.



Other expenses might include:

- Transaction fees for solicitors, property agents and surveys
- Marketing costs for new stationery, collateral and signage with new address
- Dilapidations
- Environmental assessments; air conditioning, heating and ventilation
- Miscellaneous occupancy costs.

Storage considerations

Having the right amount and type of storage in the correct place can make the difference between happy or dissatisfied employees.

Your office relocation is a great opportunity to reassess and calculate your storage needs now and in the future. Moving is a good opportunity to have a clear out and find better ways of managing your files.

Things to consider

- Your current storage situation: perhaps you have space which is wasted or have considerable storage needs
- How much storage space is required for each department/person in the new location
- The amount of personal storage space required and the methods available such as pedestals or lockers
- Items of historical or monetary value which require secure storage or safes.
- Security of sensitive or confidential papers
- Filing which is now old or no longer used and could be archived or securely destroyed
- Options to move files off site for storage elsewhere

Harrow Green offers document management solutions so that files can be physically stored off site in environmentally controlled areas, put in the Cloud. or securely shredded if necessary.

Tip

By law, you are required to keep a record of any disposal items that leave your site. You are also responsible if your relocation partner doesn't dispose of items properly, so make sure you enquire about their experience of office clearances and take up references.



Choosing the right relocation partner

- Identify at least three office removal companies and meet with them on site to obtain quotes. Read our Guide To Choosing The Right Removals Company for help and advice on finding the right move partner for you
- Ensure that you provide prospective move partners with your brief so they have a full understanding of your move needs
- Engage early on with your relocation partner, if possible three to six months beforehand for smaller projects and much earlier (six months to a year for larger projects). Confirm the date of the office move as early as you can
- Make sure your relocation partner has the necessary skills and resources to help with IT, data and computer relocation, including communication rooms/cabinets, servers, telephony and desktop IT
- Check that your relocation partner can handle office clearances as well as the physical move itself
- Appoint your preferred removal partner and invite them back in as quickly as possible to run through all aspects of your move
- Health and Safety is of paramount importance because you are responsible, even when you hire contractors. Make sure your relocation partner has excellent health and safety processes and is ISO18001 registered.



The preparation stage

Furniture and equipment:

- Carry out a review of all your current office furniture and equipment. Identify what can be removed completely or updated. Restore Harrow Green will be able to help you to environmentally dispose of any unwanted assets through our Refresh environmental programme
- Create a full inventory of the furniture and equipment with a status of 'moving', 'upgrade' or 'recycle'. That way you will have a record of what you are taking with you, what needs replacing or disposing of
- Arrange for desks to be disassembled, moved and re-assembled at the new location
- Arrange the disposal of items such as furniture and equipment that will not be moving to the new site
- Purchase and confirm the delivery of any new equipment, furniture, stationery or other items.

IT:

- Arrange back-up of all computers and servers
- Arrange for the disconnection/reconnection of all electronic equipment (computers, printers, copiers, servers etc). Check with your lease providers regarding the relocation of photocopiers and similar equipment
- Make sure every item is tested once it's been reconnected. Visit our website for more information.

Packing:

- Packing:
- Book a delivery of crates for advance packing and decide if you need help with packing
- Agree a simple colour coding system to use on stickers, crates and furniture to identify where they should be situated in the new premises
- Obtain bags, boxes or crates for packing up personal items.

Other:

- Your marketing department and facilities management people need to work with suppliers to arrange for the new address to be ready for signage, stationery, marketing collateral and electronic use of address details (ie. building signs, letterhead, business cards, website, email footers) and order any items as required
- Arrange for extra bins and recycling points to be set up to make it easier for staff to have a clear-out
- Put proper security in place at the old and new sites
- Liaise with the council and/or building managers of the current and new locations to discuss and arrange parking for the move day
- Confirm the layout of the new premises to your removals company including highlighting the location and configuration of communication and power outlets.

Tip

Crate hire and furniture dismantling are the most popular additional services which clients most like to take. IT Relocation and move management is gaining priority and interest.



Inform your stakeholders

- Send out a newsletter with key dates for staff and clients
- Distribute contact numbers and an escalation process for all key people and contractors involved well in advance
- Circulate maps and details of the new office location to staff, your move partner and suppliers
- Inform your utility suppliers (gas, electricity, water) and other building service providers about your move to ensure that services are immediately available in your new location. If you need to use new providers then make certain that they have the full details and have set up your account and have service provision in hand
- Notify the Post Office of your change of address and arrange for a mail forwarding service to be set up
- Identify other stakeholders who should be notified of the new address, such as Companies House, HMRC, local council, key suppliers, clients and stakeholders
- Changing locations can provide an opportunity to switch suppliers or to re-negotiate with existing suppliers to gain more favourable terms for your business
- Liaise with the local council to arrange access areas, book parking suspensions and loading docks for your actual moving date. Harrow Green can take care of all access and parking arrangements for you, during all move activities.

Moving day

- Ensure that your 'Move Champion' is on hand to help supervise the move, deal with snags and last-minute changes
- Assign another member of staff to supervise the exit from the old (outgoing) office
- Unpack essential items first, based on your business priorities
- Ensure that floor plans are clearly displayed on each floor in the new location. Your removals partner should have received these in advance
- Have refreshments available at the new site, if possible
- Set up a 'lost property' system at both sites
- Distribute keys or entrance cards and codes to staff and inform the relevant people of alarm procedures
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the fire exits and nearby meeting points in case of emergency evacuation
- Supervise the final clearing and cleaning at the old site and arrange for inspection and handover with landlords or building managers
- Thoroughly test everything, especially phones and computers
- Keep a record of any issues that arise in case you need to take action later.



Tip

Undertake a 'Lessons Learned' exercise where you examine what went well vs what could have been done better. You never know when you might need to move again...





After the move

- Put up a "We've Moved" sign at your old office detailing your new address and contact details
- Arrange a celebration event for all staff
- Check that your website has been updated with the new location, directions and maps
- Ensure that stationery, other materials and emails all state the new address
- Check the answer phone message is correct
- Arrange the collection of all empty boxes, packaging and crates with your removals partner
- Reconcile all supplier invoices against their quotes and identify and resolve any discrepancies
- Moving into a new location can be a good reason to host an 'office warming' party where you can invite clients and boost your brand.



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Get in touch with the team
for more information:

T: 0345 6038774

E: info@harrowgreen.com

harrowgreen.com