

## R.E. & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# A real estate deal's final frontier: The move

BY CHRISTINE MOSHOLDER

As soon as your company knows it will be relocating — ideally nine to 12 months before the actual move — IT professionals should be involved in the planning and relocation process. Senior management and site decision-makers must ensure the facility chosen not only meets space requirements, but also technology infrastructure requirements.



C. Mosholder

### Equipment strategy

Determine if you will be buying all new equipment, moving all of your existing equipment to the new location, or a combination of the two. Typically, this is driven by the cost and risk implications of each scenario. If you're buying all new equipment, you can have it set up, tested and operational in advance of the actual move. If you're going to move everything and everyone all at once, you need to work out a detailed migration plan to avoid any unnecessary downtime during and after the move.

### Analysis and planning

Analyze and rank the various job functions in your company according to their business impact and then prioritize the technology those functions use. The goal of a successful move is to have everyone back to work with as little impact upon day-to-day operations and, ultimately customers, as possible.

Moving the people and the technology in a seamless transition is important, but equally important is the new facility's infrastructure to support your technology. The electrical capacity and redundancy, the available telecommunications providers and size of their connections, the mechanical cooling solutions available and the

structural capacity of the proposed technology space, all must be assessed and possibly retrofit prior to the move.

Design and map out where everything will go in the new space: racks, servers, phones, printers, copiers, etc. Write it down, map it out and then communicate your plan to all parties involved in the move.

"Even though the amount of space new technology requires is getting smaller, the amount of computing power in that same space is much larger," said Bill Leuci, a principal at Boston, Mass.-based safety and systems firm D&L Engineering.

"A single rack of blade servers can utilize about 15 kilowatts (kW) of power and cooling in the same square footage that used to require 1 to 2kW. This type of density puts a tremendous load on your infrastructure and requires specialized solutions," he said.

### IT resource coordination

Decide who is going to disconnect, move, reconnect and test the equipment: IT staff or consultant resources? There is no right or wrong strategy. IT professionals need to evaluate this peak resource demand and determine success criteria and the associated resources to ensure a seamless move. Athenahealth Inc. recently relocated its corporate headquarters from Waltham to The Arsenal on the Charles in Watertown. "For our specialized equipment, we had the vendors move it for us to be sure it would be operational when we needed it after the move," said Chip Ach, director of systems for athenahealth.

Approximately three to six months before the actual move date, contact your local service providers to order all of your long-lead telephone/data lines (for example T1, voice circuits). Ach suggests giving yourself "as much leeway as possible" when it comes to tel/data services.

### Project oversight

Overseeing a move is a complex, demanding job — especially when trying to do your normal job at the same time. Consultants are available to work with you to make your move as seamless as possible, they include:

- IT design engineers to conduct an inventory of current technology, what's needed at the new site, and what you want to upgrade.
- Professional engineers to evaluate the mechanical, electrical, structural and tel/data infrastructure in your new space and compare it to your technology requirements today and into the future.
- Architects and planners to review plans and options for future growth space and associated technology.
- Security services to protect any equipment that you set up before the move.
- Specialized technology movers to execute the physical move of your technical equipment from the old to the new site.

Before moving one piece of equipment to your new office, confirm the operational readiness and security of your new space: Ensure technology cabinets are installed, cables pulled and tested at every work position, data and voice closets are fully operational, and major building systems tested and functioning.

Throughout the entire move process, clear communication and effective coordination is essential — with your employees, customers, partners and outside consultants. It's never too early to start thinking about the various steps you need to take to successfully relocate your company.

*Christine Mosholder is a partner with Corporate Project Partners (CPP), a Boston-based project and relocation management firm. For more information visit [www.cpppartners.com](http://www.cpppartners.com).*