

Boston Business Journal

February 24-March 2, 2006 Vol. 26, No. 4

BostonBusinessJournal.com

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CORPORATE RELOCATION & EXPANSION

Smooth move: A small primer on relocations

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ACBJ WIRE SERVICE

No one will ever love every minute of their office move, but there are steps to take to make it easier on everyone involved.

In no particular order those steps include:

■ Communicate

It sounds trite, but here it is again: Communication is king. If you doubt whether someone needs a piece of information, err on the side of yes.

Some pieces of information your employees, vendors, utility companies, customers, letterhead printer and the post office need: date of the move, new address and new phone numbers.

Some pieces of information your employees need: how to get to the new location, what bus or rail lines it's on, where to park, how much packing you're expecting them to do and when you're expecting them to do it.

Some pieces of information your employees will be grateful to have: What local services are available (including lunch spots), why you're moving, what's in it for them.

"We tend to want to share more rather than less," said **Christine Mosholder**, a partner with **Corporate Project Partners** in Boston. "But what you share needs to be 100 percent accurate — there's always enough angst around a move."

■ Plan

The one thing as important as communicating is planning. The more planning, the less chaos, the less trouble, the less time spent actually moving, the less time spent not making money while you move.

A mover "can't overcome a disorganized customer," says **Jim Durfee**, vice president of sales for **Office Movers** in Washington, D.C.

If you are careful about your own internal organization, you'll help your vendors do their jobs well enough to make you happy.

"Don't underestimate the time involved that a staff member needs to spend on a move," Mosholder said. "To do it right takes a lot of time."

■ Coordinate

Technical system management can be the hardest part of a move. No one, after all, likes to be out of the loop.

"The analogy I like to use is it's like being an astronaut on the dark side of the moon and you don't have any contact with Houston," said **Michael Olivieri**, publisher of the **Boston Business Journal**, whose office recently moved. "You keep hoping for the other side of the moon to come up."

Peter Abrahams, publisher of **DC** magazine in Washington, D.C., was actually in the middle of an office move when we reached him. At that point, "the only challenge is allowing plenty of time to establish the technical infrastructure," Abrahams says.

Have you talked to all the people you have equipment-leasing agreements with? What about the folks who service your high-tech equipment? Are you allowed to move equipment yourself, or does your leasing company need to handle it? Do you need to have any of that equipment serviced in conjunction with the move?

The last thing you want to do is violate your warranty; if there are problems later, you want to be above reproach.

■ Get referrals

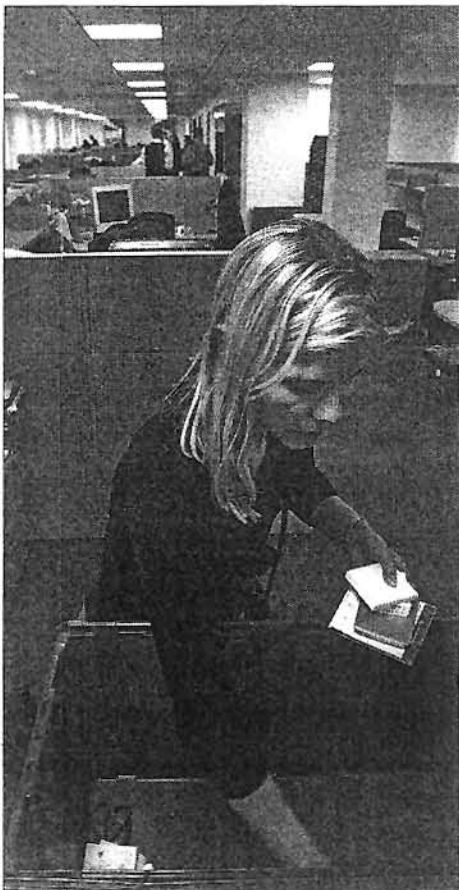
Ask companies similar to yours in size and needs how they did it and which vendors they used. Use others' good — and not so good — experiences. Factor the cost of dealing with things that go wrong into the price of the move.

Once you've asked around and found the best people for the job, have faith that they're the best people for the job.

Follow their advice. They have done this more often than you have.

Ask all the questions so that you'll have confidence in the systems, but then use the systems. Your movers are the experts.

CHRIS MAHONEY, Focus editor of the Boston Business Journal, contributed to this report.



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Boston Business Journal reporter Lisa van der Pool unpacks at the new office. The crates were rented for \$3 each for a 10-day rental.