BUSINESS insights

Relocation checklist for your telecom system

The decision to move your business to a new location is usually based on an opportunity to make it more successful and more profitable. You may be relocating to be in a more visible location, reduce your overhead or make it more convenient for your customers to reach you.

Whatever your reason, one of your biggest concerns about moving is the downtime and the sales opportunities you might miss during the actual moving process. Because your telecom system is the lifeline to your business, the last things you need during your move are delays that prevent you from conducting business.

There are dozens of details involved in relocating your telecom system. However, if those details and a moving plan are carefully addressed in advance of your move, you can minimize any problems.

Telecom and data facilities, such as dial tone and Internet access, can take some time to implement and install. These should be the first items addressed in your relocation plans.

Your plan should be built on determining answers to the following questions:

1. What are our current telecommunications needs (seats, features, bandwidth, etc.) and what might they be in the future?
2. What type of telecom system will we use in our new location: a hosted PBX or customer premise equipment (CPE)?
3. Can we move existing equipment or do we need to purchase or add new equipment?
4. What vendor will we use to provide the service and/or equipment?
5. What will our costs be initially and ongoing?
6. How long will it take to get the system up and running and tested after the move?

Answering these questions and preparing an effective telecom plan that supports your business goals can be a time-consuming task.

It's a good idea to tap the expertise of your chosen telecom provider. They have helped other businesses like yours and often provide the professional expertise you need to formulate the right plan, then implement it in a timely manner.

The following checklist can help make sure that no important element is overlooked in your planning process.

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PLANNING CHECKLIST	DONE
1. Meet with employees and managers: • **Evaluate what is being used and not used on the current telecom system for voice, mobile, and data.** • **Ask for a wish list of features and capabilities they think might help make their jobs more efficient and productive.**	
2. List desired features and capabilities necessary immediately, and think about future growth plans in terms of additional seats, bandwidth, features, costs, etc.	
3. Decide which telecom option you will use in the new location -- Hosted PBX or customer premise equipment. (See last month's article for the pros and cons of these two options.)	
4. Select your telecom provider if you are not staying with your current provider.	
5. List equipment that can be moved and re-used based on the type of telecom system you plan to use at your new location.	
6. If CPE is the choice, establish where in the new facility the equipment can be housed. Then answer these standard questions: • **How much room will the system require?** • **Is there proper ventilation to prevent overheating?** • **Does cable need to be run to each seat for the data network?** • **What phone jacks or other connectivity is already available in the facility?** • **Are any upgrades or additions necessary if existing CPE is being moved from the old location?**	
7. Coordinate with your telecom provider to build a timeline for the installation and testing process. This is critical as it will determine actual business downtime.	
8. Assign one or more employees to handle or oversee each aspect of the installation.	
9. Be sure to establish a plan for systems restoration in case of fire or other disasters.	

With all of these issues resolved and noted in advance of the move, it's possible to reduce the downtime your business will experience and keep operational losses to a minimum.

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