

Your Guide To Moving Offices



Better Business Communications

Contents

About This Guide	3
Be Clear Why You Should Move	4
Getting Organised	5
Choosing A Location	6
Finding A Place	7
Planning The Move	8
• Utilities	8
• Your IT Needs	9
• Making Stakeholders Aware	11
The Move	13

About This Guide

This guide is written for small and medium business owners who are moving office premises to help make the move a seamless transition.

You probably already know why you're moving location. The chances are you've either outgrown your existing premises, are downsizing, looking to reduce your rental costs, consolidating offices, or are experiencing some change in your business that's triggered your need to move.

Let's face it. Moving offices isn't something that you really want to do on a frequent basis. If you have ever moved home, you won't have forgotten the stress that comes with it. Well, moving office is a similar experience in that you need to move from one location to another in the same day. The big difference is that you need to continue to function as a business while moving!

While we mention the word office throughout this guide, it can also apply to your retail store, factory or new premise move in. We hope you enjoy this guide.

Best wishes,
The Blueface Team

Be Clear Why You Should Move

Unless everyone is clear as to the rationale, requirements, objectives and limitations behind the move - all subsequent office move planning and execution will be severely hindered.

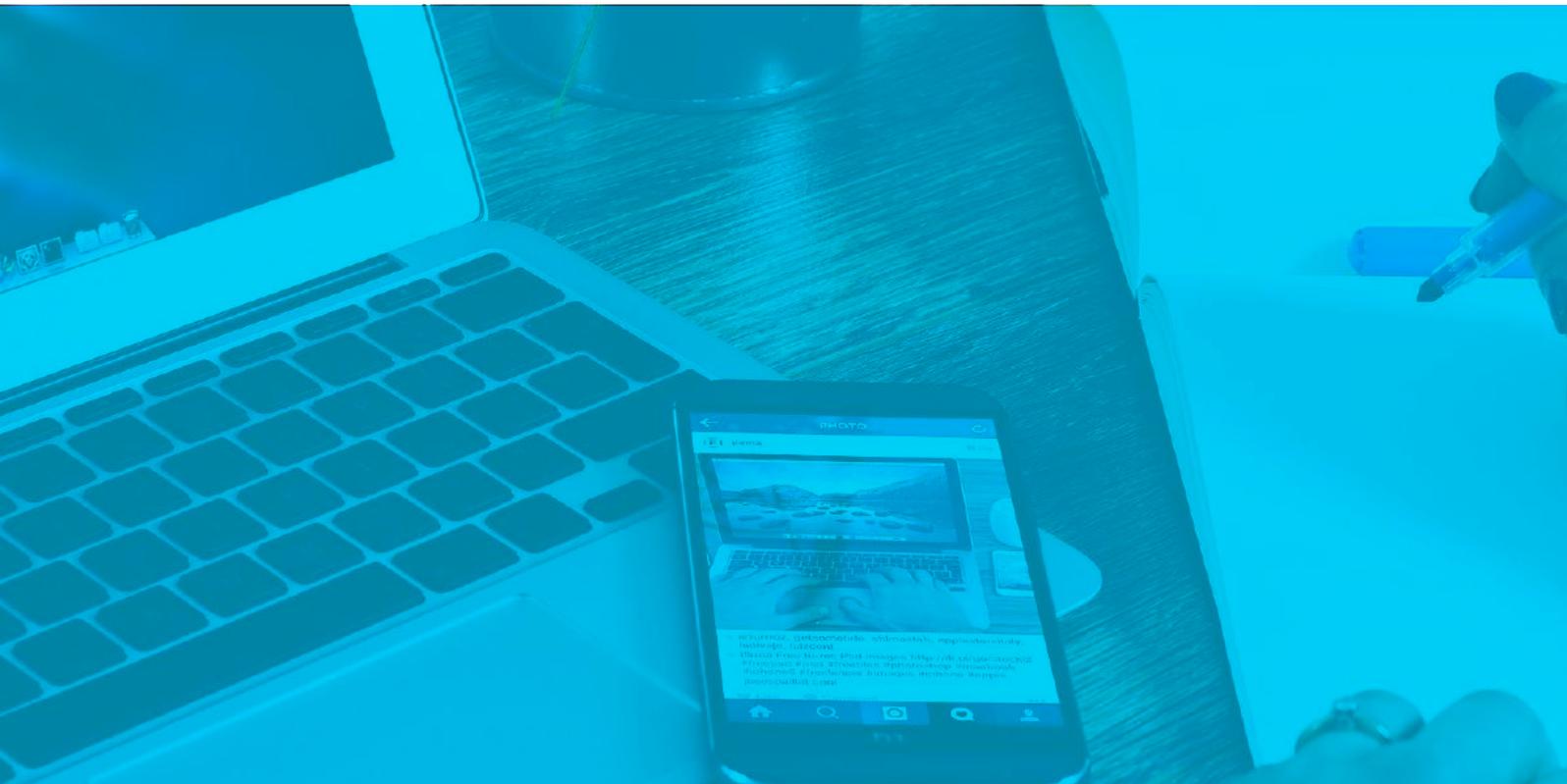
There are some big decisions that must be agreed as the start point in carrying out the move which will then form the basis of the detailed planning process. So make sure you have the answers to the following questions,

When do you have to or want to move by, is there a deadline?

Where are you moving to?

When do have to or want to move by?

What constraints did you have with your current office?



Getting Organised

Project Manager

Maybe you've been thinking about taking on this move single handedly. If you're the business owner, the first thing you need to realise is that you can't look after every aspect of the office move yourself.

You need to continue to run your business before, during and after the move. Start off by appointing a designated person on your team to project manage the move.

If you are in a micro business and don't have the luxury to create a PM, then at least learn to delegate some of the work.

Survey

Undertake an audit of all the equipment you have in your office. It's a great time to remove clutter, discover how much stuff you actually have in your office and improve your set-up. Categorise each item in your office as 'moving', 'replace/upgrade', or 'disposal'. Document everything and create a log of all materials.

Check Your Lease

Read the the terms and conditions of your lease before you progress any further with your planning. How long have you left on your lease?

Do you have permission to sub-let if you have a number of years remaining on your lease? Take professional advice if you have any queries on your lease.

Timeline

Make sure that you or your PM create a "moving the office" project plan to help you establish and follow a timeline and make sure the project is progressing on time.

There are a few online tools where you can create a Gantt Chart quickly, e.g.

Gantt Pro or you can use our *Excel Spreadsheet Template*.

Choosing A Location

Consider Your Staff

The most important group of people who are going to be impacted will be your staff. When deciding on a new location, don't forget to consider where your existing staff live and also where you'll recruit your future staff from. Also while you might not be able to afford to kit out your offices like Google, a nice office environment can improve your employees' happiness. Engage with them early and often to get their buy in. A relocation can be a catalyst for change in business, it can open opportunities for new channels of communication and employee engagement in shaping the future of the business.

Location, Location, Location

Consider transport links, parking, proximity to shops/restaurants, and any other amenities closeby that might be of benefit to staff. Although you can't choose a new home for your business by committee, it certainly helps to have staff in favour of the move. An employee's commute time can be an important factor in attracting and retaining staff. If you're a retail business, this is an even more important factor to consider for your customers to visit your store.

Size

How much space do you really need? This is one of the most important questions you need to answer. Start off by reviewing your occupancy levels in your existing place. *Generally speaking*, 4.65 square metres should be the minimum amount of floor space allowed for every person employed in any room to include the area occupied by the office desk and chair but excluding filing cabinets and other office furniture. This office space calculation allows for communal areas such as conference rooms etc. *Use this calculator* that will help you get an idea of how much space you will need. Don't forget to consider your company's plan for growth within the period of the lease.

Security

Security is something which may slip your mind or not be be high priority for you. However you should give it consideration. How secure is the premises you're looking at? While some areas experience higher rates of crime than others, you still should remain vigilant around the security of your office.

Will your company's space be as part of a shared building with others?
How will your employees access your premises?

Remote monitoring alarm services from companies such as *Netwatch* or *Digiwatch* can help secure your premises on a 24/7 basis. Also, relocation can be a chaotic time for your business. Ensuring all sensitive documentation is secure throughout your move should be a key consideration.

Finding A Place

Once you have considered where and how big you need your office to be, it's time narrow your search on what's available within your criteria. And allow yourself plenty of time to find one.

Where To Start The Search?

You can get an initial idea of the market and what is available via online property sites. Alternatively if you have specific needs, get help from an office letting agent. The process, just like with looking for a house to buy or a room to rent, can be long and painful. There just might be nothing to let in the area you are looking at or for different reasons, you just won't be able to imagine yourself and your team feeling comfortable there.

So make sure you have plenty of time to search for it to avoid rushing into making a decision that you might regret in a couple of months and having to go through the entire process again.

Use this checklist to make sure you have thought of everything when finding a place!



Planning The Move - Utilities

Congratulations On Finding Your New Office!

It's now full steam ahead for the real planning and organisation of the move. Start with a site survey to map out where furniture will go. There are a few tools on the market that will help you do that, like [Ekahau](#).

Utilities

Take care of setting up the below utilities as soon as possible. Mind you, there might be a pre-contracted provider (electricity, waste disposal, water) in the building you are renting so you won't have any choice but to go with it.

- Electricity
- Gas
- Broadband
- Insurance
- Waste disposal
- Telecommunications
- Water

Sometimes, you still will be able to choose and if you need any price or services comparisons to help you make up your mind, [Switcher](#) will help you decide on gas and electricity. For waste disposal charges check out this [guide](#) and for any type of business insurance, get a quote [here](#). For broadband coverage check [IrelandOffline.org](#).

Planning The Move - Your IT Needs

IT services are critical to productivity and keeping all systems and processes running smoothly, as well as providing the connection to your customers. Transitioning these services to a new site requires thorough planning. Make relocation of IT and telecom infrastructures a primary area of focus in your plan. Engage your IT team early and work closely with them to time transitions of business-critical systems.

Plan in Advance

Make sure that the following tasks occur months in advance:

- Schedule a site visit with IT at the new office location to review network cabling requirements.
- At least 2 months before the move: contact all carriers, ISPs (internet service providers), and technology vendors and inform them of your move date or if you can't move them with you, cancel the service and switch to an alternative provider.

Communications Requirements And Options

Assess your communications requirements. The new office might not have the installed cabling and infrastructure that your business requires. Ask yourself these questions in order to discover what you need and if anything needs to be added to the existing office:

- How many phone users?
- Is there cabling in place?
- How many power outlets?

Consider your telecommunication options, make sure you shop around for the right phone system and service contract.

Consider what kind of growth or expansion you expect in the next 3-5 years; this will help determine whether you should consider a new *business phone system* for your new office location.

If you had an old, copper lines phone system, this is the best time to look around for what new technologies are available on the market, like a *cloud based phone system*, and how they can work for your business.

This *guide* will help you determine which phone system is best for your business needs.

Additionally, consider the following:

- Transferring your existing number to your new location.
- Set up call forwarding if you're changing your phone number.
- Establish and order the type of internet access required for the new location.

Equipment

Evaluate your equipment. If your network infrastructure is ageing, the office move is a good time to update your equipment. If you plan accordingly, you could even have your network up and running in the new space before moving day arrives.

Here are a few steps to consider when moving your equipment:

- Audit all equipment to determine whether it still meets your needs and will be suitable in the new location.
- List any equipment that needs upgrading or replacing and order any necessary equipment.
- Return any leased IT and phone equipment that is no longer needed.
- Properly dispose of old or broken equipment. Recycle with and ensure you are WEEE compliant in the disposal of electronic equipment.
- Evaluate server room requirements.

Lastly, Protect Your Data

It's critical to secure and backup your data and be prepared for worst case scenarios at all times, but most importantly during an office relocation. Just think what would happen to your data if something went wrong during the move (like the moving truck is involved in an accident and your equipment is damaged). To avoid that, complete the following tasks to protect your data during your move:

- Make several backup copies of all company data systems including firewalls and servers, store copies where they will not be affected by the move.
- Ensure full recovery is possible so that, if something does go wrong, you'll still be able to access all your company's crucial data.

Planning The Move - Making Stakeholders Aware

Moving offices can be unsettling to all the stakeholders of your company- employees, customers, suppliers. However, effective communication about the move can minimize uncertainty and fear and smooth the disruption. For employees, moving offices, when handled well, can be a motivational and positive change. So prepare *an office move communication plan*.

Tips On Planning The Communication With Employees:

Define key messages for the office move

For example, put the main focus on a better environment for staff to handle future growth and expansion. Get people excited and paint a picture of the future. Include in your communication the countdown clock to the milestones, images of the future office and local area, restaurants, parks, etc.

Communicate About the Office Move Early

Plan a Communications Schedule for the Office Move

Where possible, preschedule communications regarding the office move for every stage of the move. There are tools available on the market that will help you do that, like *SnapComms*.

Use the Office Move as a Catalyst for Wider Change

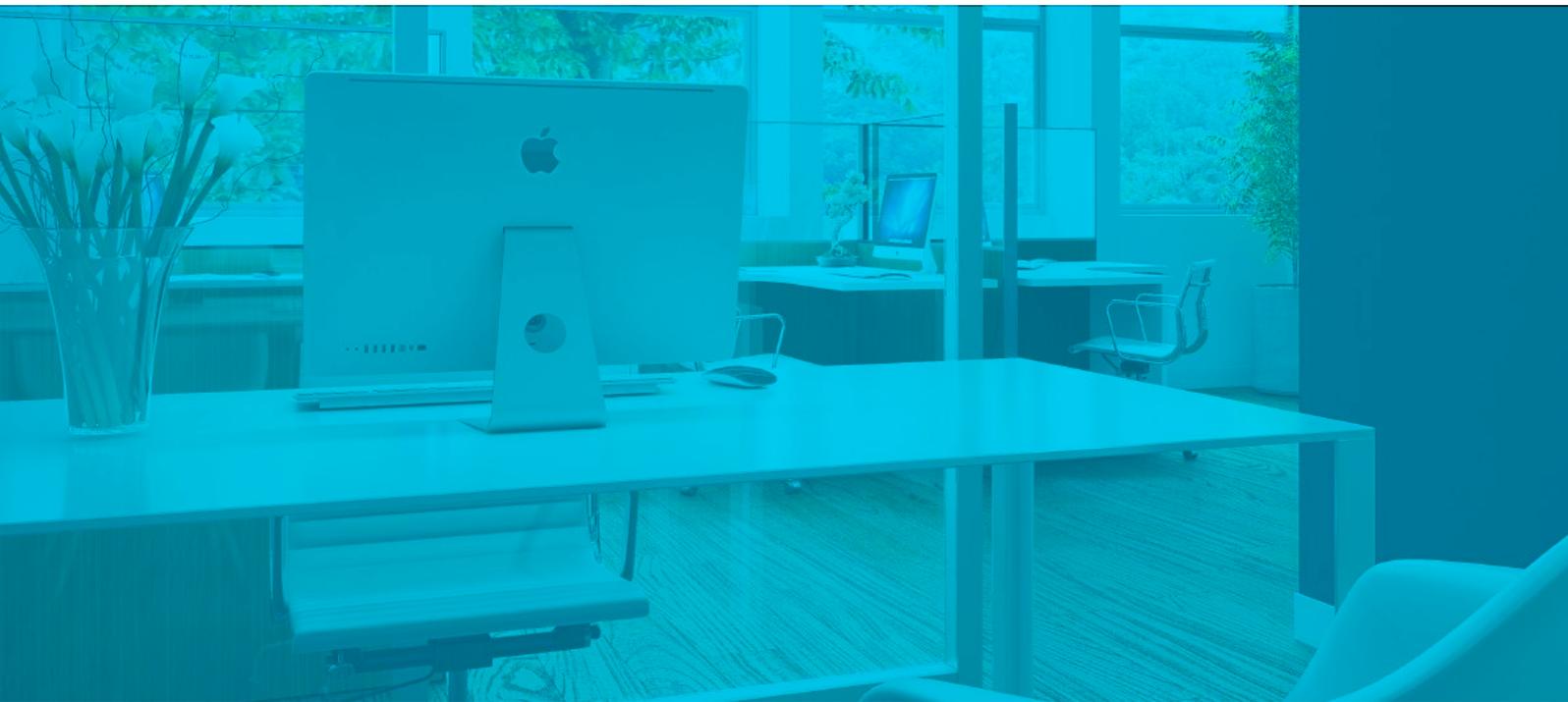
An office move can provide a great opportunity to inspire positive change. Open up the lines of communication by involving employees in the office move. For example, ask them to name new buildings and meeting rooms etc. This is also a good opportunity to refresh or re-communicate the internal brand values.

Celebrate the move

Moving offices can be a busy and stressful time for everyone. Remember to arrange a moving in party for staff and other important stakeholders. Moving the office is potentially the biggest inconvenience for your employees. But don't forget about all the other stakeholders and make sure you inform all the people that apply to you. Use this *list* to make sure you have everybody covered. Use all channels available to inform the stakeholders about the move and the new address - mail, email, website, social media channels. Let your sales team know what the confirmed move date is and make sure they inform your customers when talking to them over the phone.

Corporate Considerations

Ensure all marketing collateral is updated (stationery, business cards, website, brochures etc). Announce office move to staff, customers, vendors and office service providers. Update/renew all service agreements, licenses, insurance, equipment leases etc.



The Move

Physical Move

You need to consider here both relocating all your office equipment to the new location and leaving your old office in good shape as well.

You will need to consider the following steps:

- Meet with an *office moving company* and get their assessment of the work required to move the equipment
- Arrange for the specialist removal of any technical equipment
- Arrange for crates and labels for staff
- Confirm move date with the office moving company
- Arrange any off-site storage and/or archiving requirement
- Conduct a clear-out of any unwanted items prior to move
- Take this opportunity to shred the old confidential documents
- Ensure you have a floor plan showing the new home for every single item
- Redistribute a floor sitting plan among your staff
- Inform your staff throughout the process
- Appoint a contact person who will coordinate the move and their back up

After the move

Create a list of damages incurred to any equipment or adjustments needed to any office facilities. Submit the list to the appropriate suppliers and arrange a date for the work to be carried out. Hold an opening party at the new office move with staff and clients. Implement any training on new IT and/or phone systems.

Main dos and don'ts.

1. Have a clear goal behind the move
2. Don't leave it too late
3. Organize a team responsible for the move
4. Have a plan
5. Have a realistic budget
6. Communicate clearly

The End

Who are we?

Blueface is a leading Unified Communications-as-a-Service Provider to Businesses, Enterprises and Carriers. Founded in 2004, Blueface's proprietary cloud voice platform services over 20,000 Business customers globally of all sizes ranging from SME's through to Large Multinational Enterprises.

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