

# INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES



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A Site Selection Guide to Business Properties

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## Moving your company to a new facility

By Joe Cavolick

Moving a company to a larger facility is a major undertaking and one that requires careful planning, competent partners and an in-house relocation team that works closely together.

Contractors experienced in company relocations recount stories of companies that have lost time, production and customers due to a poorly executed relocation. In one case, the associated down time led to the loss of the project manager's job and ultimately the demise of the company.

A successful relocation begins with careful planning. It takes into account long-term business objectives and short-term timing considerations. Some of these considerations might include anticipated growth for the future, but also might have some sense of urgency, such as lease expiration, the desire to move during a slow period in the company's business cycle or the need to be operational in a new facility to meet a production deadline.

As with any other successful endeavor,



leadership and organization are key factors. It is critically important to appoint one individual to have overall responsibility for the entire move. This might be a key department manager or even an independent project manager from the outside, who is hired temporarily to plan and execute the relocation.

The critical factor is having one person accountable for all aspects of the project.

Another key to success is assembling the right project team and insuring that the leaders meet regularly and share critical information.

Generally a project team is comprised of Core Teams and Specialty Teams. Core Teams represent those functions applicable to virtually every move. They include Human Resources, Facilities, Technology, Data/Telecommunications, Purchasing/Procurement, Marketing, Customer Relations and Administration. Additionally, Specialty Teams are added as dictated by the nature and function of the organization that is moving. Those might include Production (be that manufacturing, sales or processing) and any other key function that is unique to that operation. The size of the teams will depend upon the size of the organization, and one person may have multiple responsibilities.

### Sample Timeline

This is a sample timeline to help you plan out your relocation and when to contact appropriate contractors and vendors. Often, you may not have six months to plan. Many vendors can work with tighter deadlines, but creating your own timeline should help you avoid unpleasant surprises.

#### Weeks Before

Relocation	Activity (start times)
24	Begin working with architect Begin working with plant engineer on overall design and line automation Determine HVAC & mechanical piping needs Create electrical plan & determine service needs Create storage plan
20	Contractors apply for permits
16	Begin build-out & building modifications Order storage products Order electrical service
12	Evaluate telecom needs/changes Design office space layout
10	Create detailed moving plan Evaluate computer hardware & software needs Contact graphic designer if changing logos, etc. Order new furniture
6	Plan for new signs Schedule mover Develop p.r. strategy for move Order phone service changes Order computers
4	Install data cabling, furniture & office equipment Prepare plant electrical
3	Order printing
2	Asset inventory Labeling & boxing
1	Begin movement of production equipment

Critically important to the success is selecting team leaders who agree to be responsible, and equally important is having the acknowledgment and support of those people's bosses.

Regular meetings of the Project Team

*over*

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leaders with an agenda circulated in advance are desirable. Weekly meetings as the project matures often are appropriate. The advance agenda guides the discussion, but the interaction and discussion among the team members frequently stimulate new considerations and reveal overlapping effects and necessary coordination between departments or functional areas.

One of the most challenging aspects of any move is identifying all the things that have to be done and then beginning the execution with enough lead



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time for completion, including any setbacks and the inevitable changes made during the process. Additional valuable input can be gained by consulting early with contractors and vendors who are trusted and experienced in facility relocations. Often these resources will provide counseling and printed information at no cost to the company.

The Sample Timeline appearing at left provides some of the lead times involved in a typical relocation, but often a company will not have the luxury of that much time. In that instance, having access to contractors and vendors experienced in relocations can help with complete planning and sugges-

tions for ways to compress some of the lead times.

The Sample Timeline has been provided by the Midwest Industrial Relocation Association (MIRA) as part of their Industrial Relocation Guide. MIRA is a not-for-profit association, whose members provide guidance and services for organizations relocating to new facilities.

The association is sponsoring Relocation Seminars for companies at the beginning of March, April, May and June. More information about MIRA, the seminar schedules and The Relocation Guide is available by calling 800-741-8044 or on the Internet at [www.miramoves.org](http://www.miramoves.org).

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