Tips to Plan a Smooth Office Move

by DENNIS MUELLER, CJ & Associates, Inc.

The good news: your company is growing and you'll soon be moving into new or remodeled offices. The bad news: you have just been assigned to order new furniture and coordinate the move and you're not sure what steps to take. Following are several tips to help you plan your move successfully:

1 Find an office furniture supplier. Contacting the right firm can help make the move as smooth as possible. When considering a firm, find one that offers:

- in-house design services so they can help with workflow planning.
- in-house installers that will work within your time schedule, not at their convenience. This often means the installers are working at night or on weekends.
- 24-hour emergency repair service.

2 Review each of your departments and/or staff people's needs regarding phones, computers, faxes, copiers and other office technology. If a department will be upgrading equipment when they move, you need to have this information. Nothing's worse than moving into your new office and realizing you don't have the proper phone or Internet hookup. Your computer/purchasing department or the equipment vendor can provide the specific types of hookups that will be needed for each device.

3 Review the new office floorplan, technology needs and budget with the furniture company's in-house designer. The designer will develop a workspace and flow plan that maximizes office efficiency as well as meets your budget. Many designers will help you select wallpaper, paint, carpet and wallcoverings as well.

4 Work with your office furniture supplier to develop a timeline. A good office furniture supplier will have an experienced Furniture Project Coordinator to help with the planning. For example, it's vital to perform certain tasks in a specific order. For example, if the walls or office dividers are finished before the wiring is installed, the contractors may need to tear down or drill through walls to perform the necessary wiring. The Furniture Project Coordinator will contact the phone company, utilities, data communications firms and other vendors to make sure their installations are scheduled for the right time.

5 Stick to the deadline you have developed. Missing an important deadline could set your move date back. For example, it often takes several weeks to receive the carpet and furniture you ordered and missing a selection date means you may have to change your moving date.

6 Prepare the office associates for a smooth move. The office furniture company will give you a checklist as well as moving carts and other equipment to assist with the move. Determine which department should be moved first and make sure they are packed BEFORE the installers arrive. Computers should be shut down and unplugged and desks should be emptied.

7 Enjoy your new office space.

Following these basic steps can help assure your company has a smooth move and you have minimal stress in coordinating the move. ***It's your space...make the most of it.***

CJ & Associates, Inc., whose president, Kim Hastings was named a 2007 Woman of Influence, is one of the Top 25 Largest Women-Owned Businesses in Wisconsin. The company is a 2007 Top Milwaukee Workplace honoree and was selected to the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce/Council of Small Business Executives Future 50 List.

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