

Efficient Planning: Key for Effective Relocation

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ABSTRACT

Before commencement of any project, invest time and effort in the planning of the project. Detail and precise planning of a project helps the team to organize work efficiently and deliver the project more effectively. Relocating your office could be the one of the most important decisions you made for several years, so it is necessary to plan it properly to ensure your shift to a new place is as smooth as possible.

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1. Introduction

Proper planning and organization are the keys for success of any project and so for successful office relocation. When you have an office to relocate it is a full time project to manage. Time required for the project depends upon the size of the company. In any office relocation, handling of records must be done very carefully. Once the decision is made to relocate, the first task is to create a relocation plan. The relocation plan outlines the tasks necessary to complete a successful move and it should include each and every task. The plan should also specify the person responsible for each task and when the tasks must be completed. A smooth relocation demands a painstaking co-ordination. By creating an outline of every step in the relocation process, you can ensure that tasks are completing in the required timeframe. With a good project plan, downtime and loss of productivity are kept to a minimum. Each office move is different and requires customization based upon business needs. Whether it takes six weeks or six months, the main tasks remain the same. Any office move, even for a small office, is a major responsibility and great team effort is necessary for the successful outcome. This paper discusses the detail planning of office relocation, possible risks and corresponding mitigation strategies. Risk management in a project is a complex process of identification, analysis, evaluation and control of risks

Office relocation project plan defines how the project will be executed, monitored and controlled. Appoint a Project Manager for your office move project as soon as possible after the decision to move has been made and he is the person who will be responsible for entire relocation project. It is the responsibility of the project manager to select a team and assign roles and responsibilities to each person. Putting together the right team of people to manage the office move is a critical task. A good team includes people who will facilitate all aspects of the move. This paper focus on the following parameters while planning office relocation:

- Resources or budget necessary for relocation
- Factors to be considered while selecting new location
- Internal layout and design of the new office
- Factors to be considered on final day move

- Possible risks and corresponding mitigation strategies

In addition to above parameters there are other factors which must also be considered while planning:

- Identify mode of internal communication through which you will share information with staff, management and service providers.
- Determine the space requirement for new office. While determining the space requirements consider the future growth plan of the business also.
- Choose a move date

First step in planning is to create project planning checklist. A checklist is just a list of activities to be performed. The idea is that before starting any project, identify all the activities to be performed. Next step in planning is to create Project Work Plan which specifies the activities, deadlines and person responsible for each activity. Project Work Plan helps to monitor the progress of the project.

2. Office Relocation Plan Checklist

a) **Identify Parameters for New Location Selection:** When you are relocation your office then which parameters to be considered like availability of budget, future space requirement etc.

b) **Project Budget:** For relocating an office, first thing is to prepare the budget for relocation. Relocating without proper budget is like sailing without compass. While preparing budget, following factors must be considered:

- **Occupancy costs:** When you are relocating to the new location, calculate the occupancy cost of the new office which includes rent, service charges, taxes, energy, maintenance, etc.
- **Transaction fees:** When you are taking a property on lease or rent, you have to pay money to the

property agent and also to the lawyer for authorised paper work. Insurance costs

- Internal layout design cost
- **Transportation Cost:** Money to be paid to Logistics Company.
- IT equipment relocation and installation cost
- **Furniture** –if some more furniture is required for the new office, then the cost of the new furniture and its delivery cost.
- Telecommunication instrument relocation and installation cost.
- **Marketing costs** – announcements of new address and phone numbers
- Cost involved in printing new letter heads, envelopes, update address on website and redirecting posts to the new address.
- Contingency fund: keep extra 20% for contingencies and changes

c) **Location Selection:** An employee survey can help in location selection to best accommodate employee needs and preferences. Factors to be considered while selecting location are:

- Availability of good public transport for employees and clients
- Location should not be at one side of the city. It should be at some central location so that it will be easy for clients to visit the office and also easy for employees to visit clients.
- Availability of local amenities likes ATMs, restaurants, pharmacies, etc.
- Excellent access to airport
- Availability of parking

d) **Office Design:** Identify inefficiencies in the current office and plan how the new office should be designed to overcome those inefficiencies. Office design plan includes:

- Space planning
- Interior design

3. Project Work Plan

Project Work Plan is used to for efficient, organized, and timely completion of the relocation project product according to schedule, budget and contract requirements.

Work Plan includes:

Activity	Duration	Start Date	Finish Date	Predecessor	Owner
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In office Relocation activities are:

- Identify Parameters for New Location Selection
- Project Budget
- Location Selection
- Office Design
- Planning Final Move
 - Selecting and finalizing logistics company
 - Packing office objects
 - Disposal of unrequited material
 - Shifting to new location

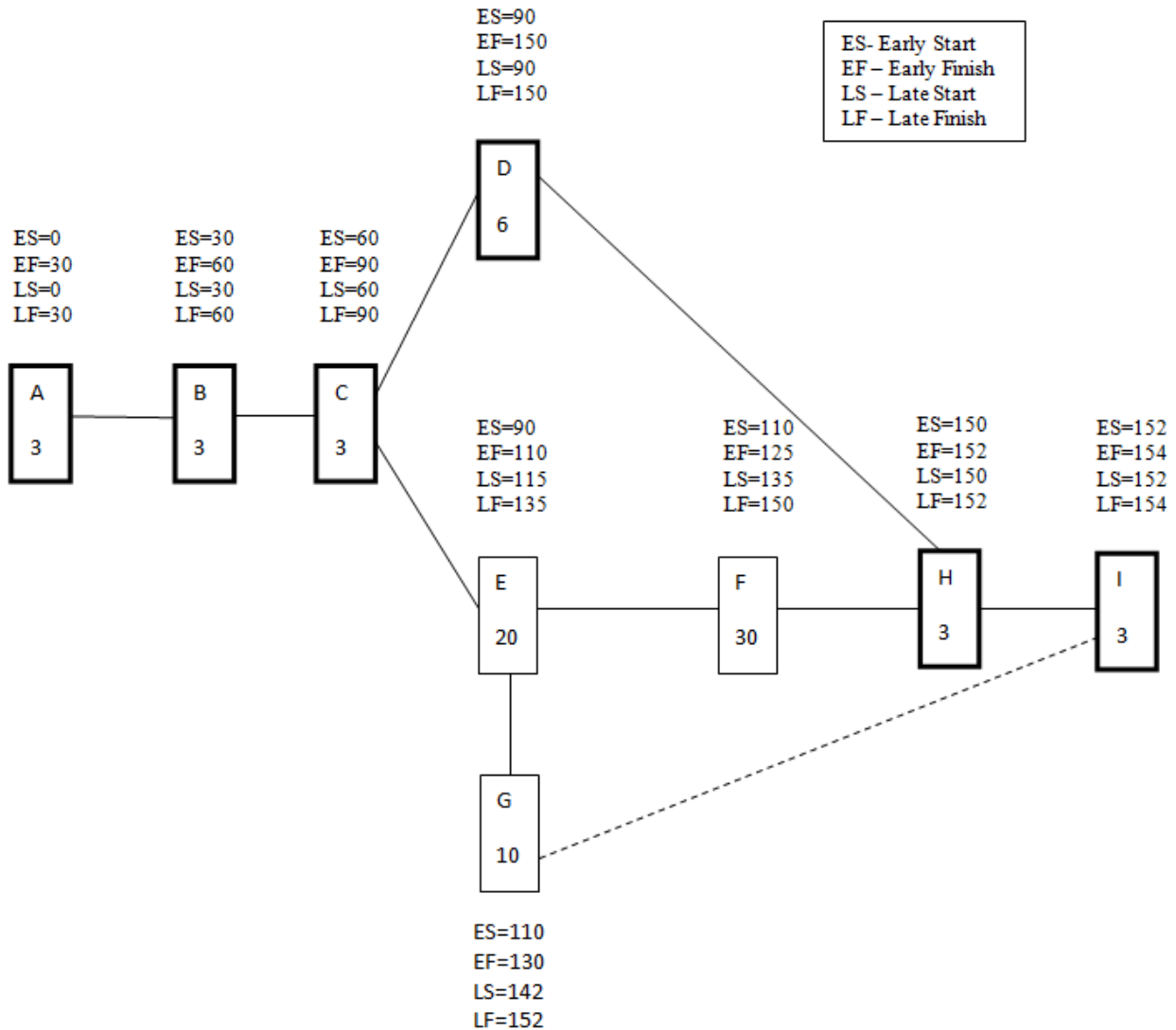
- Fit out and construction
- Furniture selection and procurement
- Mechanical & electrical design and installation
- Air conditioning, heating and ventilation
- Plumbing
- Health and safety
- IT cabling, moving and installation
- Identify number of telephone lines required. Kindly check whether you can retain your old numbers or not. Telephone systems. Check telephone providers in your area and the packages offered by them before placing order for telephone installation.

e) Planning Final Move

- Begin preparation of change of address (and telephone numbers) announcements.
- Write to your insurance company, bank, government agencies etc.
- Make sure all your mail is redirected to the new address
- Begin to select who is getting which new cubicle.
- Select, hire and schedule logistics company
- Put someone in charge of managing the packing and de-clutter process
- Arrange for disposal of furniture and equipment not being moved
- Put proper security in place – at the old site, and at the new site
- Every item in the existing space should have a label indicating its location in the new space
- Arrange all the crates and labels for packing up
- Send out an internal newsletter with key dates for the staff
- Engage cleaning crew to remove packing and clean up damage after move.
- Check inventory against the pre move inventory

- Unpacking and settling down

Activity	Duration (in days)	Start Date	Finish Date	Predecessor	Owner
A. Identify Parameters for New Location Selection	30			S -	
B. Project Budget	30			A	
C. Location Selection	30			B	
D. Office Design	60			C	
E. Selecting and finalizing logistics company	20			C	
F. Packing office objects	15			E	
G. Disposal of unrequited material	10			E	
H. Shifting to new location	2			F,C	
I. Unpacking and settling down	2			H	



Total time required for entire project to complete is 154 days. Activities A, B, C, D, H and I are critical activities so we cannot delay these activities. Delay in these activities will result in the delay of the entire project. We can delay activity E by 25 days, activity F by 25 days and activity G by 32 days without delaying the project.

4. Risks in Office Relocation

Risk is an uncertain event, if it occurs, will have a negative effect on the scope, schedule, quality or budget of the project. Every project has some unique set of risks and it is the

responsibility of the project manager to identify all these risks ahead of time and include them in planning of the project. During planning of any project, it is necessary to identify, estimate, and assess all possible risks related to that project and also identify the corresponding mitigation strategies. A risk management plan allows a business to respond to risks more quickly and appropriately. This saves the project’s time and allows workers to spend more time working on tasks related to the project.

Risk management analysis consists of three coherent activities:

1. Identify risks
2. Assess their probability of occurrence
3. Estimate its impact on the project in terms of working time

In office relocation, major possible risks are related to:

1. **Technology:** Data circuits will not be available by date. This will affect the working of the office after relocation.
2. **Fit-outs and Construction:** Interior fit-outs and construction will not be complete by date. So, the company will not be able to relocate according to schedule and what will happen if you have already given notice to your present landlord that you will vacate on that particular day.
3. **Operations:** Inadequate insurance Logistics Company may be underinsured.
4. **Move:** Equipment breakage.

Now the next thing is to identify the response strategy for each risk. There are four response strategies:

- **Avoid Risk:** Identify the cause of the risk and avoid that cause if possible eg. during construction chances of accidents are more on a rainy day so stop the construction work on rainy days.
- **Mitigate Risk:** Reduce the changes of risks eg. during construction make it mandatory for all workers to use proper safety gears. In this way we can reduce the chances of accidents.
- **Transfer Risk:** Buy insurance cover for your project so that if something happens then the insurance company will bear the loss. In this way you are transferring risk to another company.
- **Accept Risk:** There are some risks that you cannot avoid and mitigate, accept such risks eg. you cannot do anything against natural climates like earthquake or floods. Accept such risks and keep contingencies funds for such risks.

In case of office relocation, possible risks and corresponding response strategies are:

Risk	Response
Technology: Data circuits will not be available by date.	Contact wireless solution vendor as redundant provider
Fit-outs and construction: Construction build not complete by date. Company will not be able to relocate according to schedule.	Delay lease termination notice of current location
Operations: Inadequate insurance. Logistics company may be underinsured.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check coverage 2. Review policy
Move: Equipment breakage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adequate packing 2. Hire professional packing/moving company 3. Ensure spare equipment available

Once all potential risks and corresponding response strategies are identified, the project manager must form a risk management team that will take responsibility of addressing the risks and implement corresponding response strategies.

5. Conclusion

Success of any project is in planning. Project planning is done to increase the likelihood that the project will be implemented efficiently and effectively. There are so many

things involved in office relocation, so earlier you start, better your chances of achieving a smooth and successful move. Project manager is like captain of a ship responsible for both success and failure of the project. A project manager through effective planning can save time and money both and can also avoid any critical mistakes. Projects that have risk management plans in place can more easily be financially prepared when a problem arises.

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