



Karen Skillings.

Ready, set, go...

How can you gauge if your business is ready for the move ahead? KAREN SKILLINGS reports.

Moving day is stressful enough, but the impacts are felt long before and can linger on for far too long afterwards.

Here, we look at the role of the FM/workplace teams and the challenge of integrating the relocation strategy and change program to ensure business readiness on day one.

The FM/workplace teams contribute to the policy and procedural changes in the business and are often responsible for the transfer of product knowledge and skills to staff prior to, during and after a move.

These teams will need help when there are added complexities such as a change to the ways of working, which affects more than locational change, but also behaviours, etiquettes and business process. To draw out and prepare for the changes ahead, the change manager should look to introduce diagnostic tools such as a Business Readiness Assessment.

DRIVING EXPLORATION OF WHAT IS CHANGING

The FM/workplace teams are responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the workplace and are charged with demonstrating to staff (to a minimal level) how to navigate new infrastructure and processes.

So what sort of things will change when moving to new premises that need to be considered? Well, the usual things, such as an unfamiliar building, mail redirection, building management to befriend, new vendor relationships and almost undoubtedly new technology.

It is easy to look at all these things and say 'no big deal, done it before, won't take long', but don't be complacent. A Business Readiness Assessment will crystallise what's required for day one.

AS YOU BEGIN

Keep things relative. It is important to understand the impact on your team before relating it to the business.

I have heard it said that being an FM professional is about providing support for the best user experience possible. With this in mind, it is a good idea to put the FM team in others' shoes. The change manager should explore this team's view of the difficulty and complexity level of any changes. It is a good idea to help them identify their capacity for change and understand the difficulties for others.

As FM/workplace teams are all about supporting the business and trying to provide the right user experience every time, encourage them to focus on what a successful transition looks like.

SIX MONTHS OUT FROM RELOCATION

At this time, the FM/workplace teams will start making adjustments to process and providers. To keep traction, the change manager may book weekly meetings with this team identifying what will change, how each change will be managed, by whom and when?

Many of the changes identified in the Business Readiness Assessment may be owned by other teams, such as Operations. If some of the operational processes of the building, such as air-conditioning, sit with

To draw out and prepare for the changes ahead, the change manager should look to introduce diagnostic tools such as a Business Readiness Assessment.

another business support group, it is still practical and desirable for the FM/workplace team to capture these in their one 'source of truth' and coordinate with the other work streams as appropriate.

The same applies for procedural changes that belong to other business support groups such as HR (human resources). An example of a time when a HR issue may cross into the FM/workplace services space may be when there are changes to car parking arrangements.

THE MYRIAD CHANGES POSSIBLE

The table opposite is to get you thinking about your readiness and the myriad changes possible for your team to manage. Granted, some are small changes, but they all take time. The Business Readiness Assessment will flush out activities that have more challenging solutions. For example, planning your new mail solution for an agile workplace may take priority on your action list, as you are the developer of the solution, whereas the technology solution for meeting rooms is being sorted by the accommodation project.

WHAT WILL CHANGE	WHAT IS THE IMPACT
You now have neighbourhoods.	No ownership of work settings, furniture and fittings and adjustment to the way the FM/workplace team supports the space; i.e. cleanliness, clean desk policy, repairs and maintenance.
You no longer number workstations. How does your space optimisation software support this workplace for future block and stack changes?	You are moving to a solution of locating staff via Skype for Business or Way Finder. What impact does that have on your team? Any training required?
There will need to be a change in reporting of maintenance issues, as you no longer have numbered desks for reference.	Use of smart technologies such as QR (quick response) codes for quick tracking and reporting of required repairs and maintenance is to be introduced. Who manages this piece of work?
You have no staff car parking available in the building and there will be changes to salary sacrifice or remuneration arrangements for those who require it.	Contractual car parking arrangements are affected. You should have all solutions available for alternative parking surrounding the new building.
Work is required for the Workplace Services A-Z guide. New videos for inductions and fire online training are needed, and new emergency response documents will have to be developed with possible people changes to wardens and first aiders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rewrite of these processes may be required. Vendors who provide online tutorials may need to create new videos. • HSE (health, safety and entertainment) reps will need to be advised of changes and legislation met in appropriate placement of safety boards at the new building.
Redirection of mail, mail process and delivery is required.	Getting mail to staff can prove challenging when moving to neighbourhoods. A new process will have to be worked out. Is there the opportunity to approach vendors to provide digital statements and journals rather than hardcopy to reduce incoming volumes?
Inductions for day one and new security passes/IDs.	What is the building management process for cards? Can you reuse existing photo IDs or do you need to run a program for new photos?
The existing hotel selection may need to change if you are currently located in an urban area, or on the fringe of the city and now going into the CBD (or vice versa).	The travel team may be required to update hotel selections for areas surrounding the office.
There are references to your old address all over the intranet.	Any number of stakeholders, managing different portals, are to be advised of change to service requests and updates.
There is a new cleaning and possibly a new security contract required. Meetings with the landlord will occur. Scope possibly adjusted to support agility.	You may want cleaners doing extra wipe downs of desks.
You need to work out scenario issues for BAU (Business as Usual) at the new premises.	<p>BAU processes are reviewed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lost cards • out of hours access • QR service KPIs, and • visitor sign-ins.
You have a new meeting room booking system and need to land on a naming convention for these rooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting and training room booking procedures are to be developed, including those for non-bookable rooms. What technology is provided in rooms? • Liaison with accommodation project team on integrating some themes into the new workplace.
You need to update addresses for legal, contracts, procurement, regulators, JV, marketing, business lines, corporate affairs, contract owners and across all IT platforms.	This is a big piece of work that often gets overlooked. The process will vary business to business, but, be aware, this can often be a project in itself.
Relocation, day one and week one activities.	Add another 200 lines right here people!

CONSIDER STAFF FROM OTHER LOCATIONS IN YOUR GAP ANALYSIS

When undertaking a Business Readiness Assessment, it is important to remember that the change does not only directly impact the employees' relocation to the new premises, but also those in other locations. Consideration needs to be given to the way they interact with the new premises and facilities such as meeting room bookings, car parking locations and public transport availability.

INSPIRING CONFIDENCE

Everyone is going to be curious about the new workspace and the FM/workplace team should be ready for questions for which they may not yet have answers. Ensure the team

has a plan for how to respond to questions where this is the case.

Don't overlook the possibility that this may be the first of a national rollout of projects. This year's challenge for the Adelaide team may be next year's challenge in Melbourne. The Business Readiness Assessment may well document the national standard of how space is used and managed. ●

→ *Karen Skillings is the principal of Skillings Education and an expert in information management, change management and relocations. An accomplished author, she has several publications to her name and has developed nationally recognised training programs.*

What does a Business Readiness Assessment help with?

- It ensures that, in implementing the change, the team has adequate resources to deliver and support what's needed.
- It determines the best approach to managing and delivering training to support teams in any new processes.
- It ensures ongoing stakeholder engagement with EAs/PAs and other influencing stakeholders of business areas is regular.
- It determines channels to inform and communicate the changes.
- It draws out any change activities that need to be aligned with the relocation program.



123RF's Maksym Yemelyanov
© 123RF.com

It is important to understand the impact on your team before relating it to the business.