

# Supporting the workplace relocation



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The change manager plays an important role in workplace relocation and it's one of support, writes KAREN SKILLINGS.

In the final months leading up to workplace relocation the change manager will work with the relocation work team to review their assignment of tasks, their moving plan and their preparedness for day one and week one in the new place of business. The key focus areas that the change manager will support include: transfer of knowledge, gap analysis (change readiness), business continuity, review of volume of preparatory work and relocation in focus topics.

## TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

The change manager will help transfer knowledge to staff and support the relocation work stream through change readiness activities. These activities could be delivered face to face or support guides for the new environment that could be made available on the project intranet page. The change manager continues the transfer of knowledge to staff and the managing of employee expectations about the relocation process by working with the business unit managers and move champions/change leads. They provide reassurance to all groups, particularly those in mission-critical areas and ensure that rollback plans are in place, should there be any major issues.

The change manager will promote an understanding among employees that there will always be some 'teething issues' when moving into a new work environment; they'll provide an approximate timeline for this and specify that these will be dealt with promptly, i.e. through first day support staff.

## GAP ANALYSIS

Through the gap analysis work that the change manager has been carrying out over the past months, there will be a number of new processes and support practices for day one planned. The change manager has worked to endorse the longevity of the new workplace by encouraging employees to interact with it, to understand the underpinning design principles and to find ways to optimise the new facility's performance. By this time, there has been ample development of new workplace procedures for sustainability. The gap analysis work should have been strictly undertaken each fortnight throughout the change program with all work stream leads and their teams attending.

## UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS CONTINUITY NEEDS FOR THE RELOCATION

The change manager will introduce the business continuity process in a meeting before sending out a questionnaire. The business continuity questionnaire should be reviewed by the change, relocation and IT work streams and integrated into the relocation planning. The change manager will identify any business risks identified during the change program. The relocation change manager will send out the business continuity questionnaire to the move champions for them to complete.

This questionnaire focuses on teams that cannot move at the same time as their colleagues on relocation day and asks move champions to consider it and inform in the areas where there are restrictions.

The questionnaire can be broken up into eight or more topics (these will be relevant to your business) and to capture the possible restrictions and the known business restrictions during a standard day.

On return of your business continuity questionnaire, and for those teams with restrictions, the relocation workstream will set up a meeting to discuss each team's requirements in detail. This information will be documented and included in any command centre processes, with all command centre

staff (including the external providers) being aware of the agreed relocation scenarios for teams.

An example business continuity questionnaire can be seen on opposite page.

## VOLUME OF PREPARATORY WORK COMPLETED

The change manager will work with relocation and workplace services teams in the last months to ensure the volume of preparatory work for the new workplace has been completed. Discussion points and impacts will be worked through and signed off as completed.

The change manager will check that the volume of housekeeping, design and process change information has been communicated to employees (as it will be considerable) and that there are no communication voids. They will engage staff in the planning for their areas once they understand the context of what is required of them and will help the relocation team and staff dedicate time and a planned approach to tackling things in the right order.

The change manager will support the communication that it is the responsibility of all staff to assess the housekeeping and process changes required, and that it is everyone's responsibility to plan for the required logistics on day one at the new workplace.

## RELOCATION IN-FOCUS THEMES

The change manager will workshop the relocation team to determine the topics on which the business will need information. These topics may include:

### One week to go communication support:

- intranet and other information repositories such as FAQs are updated
- conduct a final pre-move briefing with teams (including with business unit managers and move champions/change leads)
- issue instructions, checklists and any last-minute reminders regarding pack-up day and day one
- ensure all final clean-up activities have been organised

- respond to any employee or business unit manager/move champion requests
- make sure all first day support materials are ready, including temporary signage, 'welcome to your new desk' and UAT (user acceptance testing) sheets, floor plans and orientation aids
- issue last mover bulletins, and
- update issues log.

#### Last day pack-up support:

- issue final email reminders to employees first thing in the morning
- review and answer all email and phone queries
- update FAQs as new questions arise
- update issues log as required, and
- draft email to notify project sponsor (or whoever is deemed appropriate) that all preparations have been finalised and the business is set to move as planned.

#### First day/week in the new workplace:

- assist with speciality operation centres and check with them that everything is going well
- check all desks have a UAT sheet or a 'reminder what to check' sheet
- review and answer all emails and phone queries
- update issues log as required
- draft email to notify project sponsor and PCG that the move was successful
- email employees a 'welcome to new workplace', including links to relevant information areas, and
- assist business unit managers and move champions/change leads with settling-in tasks such as:
  - coordinating unpacking of team items
  - coordinating flattening of boxes or consolidation of crates (and ensuring they are put in the right area)
  - ensuring teams check PC/printing/phone etc
  - checking employees have tested security access, and
  - collating any issues and work with project team to resolve.

#### Handover documentation and internal briefing:

- complete handover of operational process and procedures relevant to the facility
- develop and deliver presentations to key internal groups, including move champions and change leads, and
- communicate to staff how to resolve issues post-project closure (i.e. through Workplace Services and IT).

Project name:	[Insert name]
Move coordinator:	[Insert name]
Business unit:	[Insert name]
Tell us about your team	
Working hours:	Please state the business hours your team is required on-site.
Monday to Friday:	[Insert standard business day times]
After hours:	[Insert hours]
Weekends:	[Insert hours]
Staffing numbers:	Please provide the number of staff required to do the team's work outside normal business hours.
After hours staff:	[Insert amount]
Weekend staff:	[Insert amount]
Work location:	Where do your staff work from? (Including building, floor and restricted areas.)
Monday to Friday:	[Insert location]
After hours:	[Insert location]
Weekends:	[Insert location]
Security access:	Does your team's work locations include any secure access? If yes, please provide details. [Insert details]
Office equipment:	Is there any special IT or office equipment that needs to be relocated? If yes, please provide details. [Insert details]
	Is there any IT or office equipment that must run 24 hours? If yes, please provide details. [Insert details]
Dependencies on your team:	What dependencies/interdependencies do others have on your team? [Insert examples customised to your company]
Business continuity plans:	Please identify any business-critical IT or activities in your team's business continuity plans that need to be considered and detail them here: [Insert details]
Relocation restrictions:	Is there a day of the week/month/year that renders your team unable to relocate? If yes, please explain why. [Insert details]

### VALIDATING THE SUCCESS OF THE RELOCATION

The change manager will work with the relocation work stream to validate the success of efforts in the relocation planning by reviewing the acceptance level and measurement of settling-in issues and the number of Command Centre issues logged.

If both of these two validations prove successful, then you can say your relocation was well-planned and executed. However, don't forget that in planning a relocation there are over 80 distinct activities that should be undertaken to ensure you don't miss anything; planning is 80 percent of the work.

Gauging the success of the relocation program and validating the success of the efforts can only be done if the staff and their leaders have a thorough understanding of the changes and their likely impact. This takes time – so make sure it's done well before the month of the relocation. ●

→ *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.*