



Office Relocations - contents, computers, maybe furniture and you're good to go. Sounds simple, well as we all know its not! There is a lot to keep your eye on and always some unique challenge: you might have an enormous file coordination to contend with or there is someone currently sitting in the furniture that you need to have de-installed, moved and reinstalled, and you've been given one weekend to make it all happen. The stress can be overwhelming and there is always the inevitable, self affirming "we can pull it off" moment. Well, get ready to add a whole other dimension to move planning - labs.

Moving a lab requires all the resourcefulness of an office relocation project manager and some additional skills as specialized as the labs themselves. A lab relocation PM must possess an overall understanding of the lab R&D culture to understand the scope of the project, must be able to "talk the talk" with the scientific community to understand and translate their needs, and must understand and be able to communicate the equipment and chemical requirements to vendors and tradesman. The value of a PM with the appropriate skill set on lab relocations is priceless.

When working on lab moves the interaction with the scientific staff is more intense than with most other clients. The relocation discussion involves not only where the staff is sitting. The PM must know but knowing where almost every piece of equipment is going no matter the size, where the chemicals will be placed, and what consumable materials are relocating. There needs to be an understanding of what types of equipment will be moving and how long it can take to get it all back up and running after the move, which experiments are in process and when they can be shut down, and if delays can to be expected because the science isn't going according to plan. Lab contacts become the source for all this often dynamic information and a PM needs to be able to interface with the lab community to extract and distill the critical information.

Due to the complexity of the data and the inevitability of change during the course of the project, it is a best practice to have a single point of contact be the spokesperson for the equipment matrix. In almost all cases the relocation PM should be this spokesperson in order to be most effective. Information on the matrix must be verified through lab contacts and on site investigating. Once verified the PM will require a solid relationship with the engineering and construction team to properly translate the lab community's requirements into a physical space.

Getting a handle on the final placement of equipment and chemicals usually coincides with planning for the physical move. The physical move involves people, of course, but also needs to focus on the lab equipment as well as the chemicals and biological materials. Putting these items in transit requires the PM to have knowledge of the risks of damage and loss as well as a knowledge of the vendors that make up the team and what they do. Keeping the communication going between the scientist, construction team and move team is crucial. Delays by any party can mean an impact to research, clinical trials or getting product to market.

During the equipment prep phase the PM typically serves as a middle man between the owners of the lab equipment and the vendors who service it. There can be any number of vendors involved and given the typical size of their service territories it is best practice for the PM to book these resources far in advance and reconfirm along the way. Some equipment requires crating for transit, so the PM needs to confirm whether or not crating materials should to be purchased and movers are needed on site to assist with the handling of the equipment during prep

The equipment is only half of the lab move; there is also the relocation of biological and/or chemical materials. These too need to be prepped and the PM needs to be fully aware of what is being moved and all safety precautions that need to be followed. Bringing in a certified chemical mover is essential; they have the knowledge on how these items need to be packed and the proper licenses to transport them over the roads. Chemical vendors are also critical parts of the team during the pre-move purge. Though a purge is one more thing for the PM to arrange for it can have a significant impact on reducing the cost of the move and is therefore a recommended best practice.

Once the planning and prep is substantially complete focus needs to be turned to the packing. All lab equipment needs to be decontaminated prior to moving, whether it is between floors or between sites. As the lab community is usually responsible for this the PM must be sure the packing and tagging instructions have a section on proper decontamination of the equipment; how to wipe down the surfaces, what to use and how to mark the equipment once is it ready. Equipment sign off, plumbing disconnects, hood bombing, gas tank cylinder pick-up, etc. all need to get done and the PM is involved at varying levels.

Lastly is the physical move. The PM must become familiar with each mover's existing body of lab related work as part of the hiring process. Inexperience on move day is unacceptable, as challenges requiring experience to find solutions are bound to arise. As part of the prep leading up to the move the PM must arrange a detailed site visit at both locations and talk through any concerns about equipment sizes and egress issues, knowing where the loading dock is and what the exit route is going to be isn't enough on a lab move. It may be determined that both a rigger and a mover is needed, the earlier these issues are worked through the smoother the process will be.

## Lab Relocations

### Now You Really Need a Project Manager (cont.)



Is that a moving truck I hear? Are we ready? There are a lot of details and challenges to cover leading up to this point and a lot at risk in not performing well. As mentioned above, lab relocations are not for the uninitiated. If your organization does not have the manpower or the skill set to dedicate to the success of your move don't try to fake it. Place a call to your favorite PM and get them involved early and together "we can pull this off."

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