

5 questions to ask when moving your telecoms to new premises

Whatever the scale of your office move, pulling up stakes and moving to a new premises is a major step and it can be daunting to know where to start.

There can seem like a long list of things to consider in the run up. Alongside people, furniture and other physical assets, it can be particularly stressful managing the relocation of IT and communications.

When it comes to your critical telephone systems, it's best to start the planning process as early as possible to avoid any potential disruption, making sure you're aware of all the options available.

Ensuring these five questions around your telephony are answered means one less headache for your business during the moving process.

1

Do I want to keep my existing numbers?

If the office you're moving to is served by another Local Exchange (DLE) you will not be able to keep your phone number.

Your business number is the first point of contact for your customers, both existing and prospective.

It's common for companies to underestimate the impact of changing phone numbers when relocating. If you choose to change your numbers, how many new business cards and brochures will have to be made up? How many websites, blogs, listings, signage, advertisements and other materials have your current numbers on them?

Your numbers may also be stored in places that you simply can't change, such as customers' smartphones.

How will you go about educating everyone on the change? It may reflect badly on your business if customers have to spend time writing down, storing or remembering new numbers.

It's vital to weigh out the pros and cons of whether a change of numbers is worth the expense, distraction from running your business and risk of potentially losing customers.

2

Do I need to move everyone in one go?

Your office move may involve a hundred people over the course of a weekend, or thousands over the course of many months.

Whatever the size of your organisation, you will want to move as quickly as possible. But most specialist office moving companies recommend going for a phased approach as moving staff by floor or department can minimise the impact of unforeseen obstacles.

Once you've decided how you will stagger your move, you will need to factor in communication between the different sites, customers and suppliers.

The main challenge from a telephony perspective is how you will control where calls to each of the direct dial-in (DDIs) are delivered - will they go to the old site or the new during the move? Your inbound calls still need to reach the right people.

Some staff may need to work from home or an alternative site for a period of time while the move is underway.

In this case, you might need to enable some staff to pick up calls from their mobile numbers during the interim.

3

Am I prepared for the unexpected?

When you move you need to know that your business can carry on as usual without the risk of missing calls.

The complexity of relocating offices can mean a wide range of potential problems, and you need to decide how much of a risk to your business it would be if someone could not get through to you on the phone.

Leave room in your planning for unexpected setbacks that can cause downtime. Many companies do not factor in contingencies such as power outages, lost or faulty equipment or connection problems that can cause delays to your move.

It's important to contact your telecommunications provider well in advance to schedule the installation of services. This should ensure everything will be up and running on the first day in your new office and that there are no gaps in service.

But should there be an unexpected problem with the telephone line at your new site, you will need to have a failsafe in place to be able to answer calls.

4

Can I afford to adopt new technology?

When moving to a new premises, many organisations consider whether or not they would benefit from upgrading to a new telephone system.

Companies need to carry out a full assessment of the risks and benefits, thoroughly investigating all the options and analysing their needs before making the decision as there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

Migrating to a new system might not be necessary - in many cases it might be simpler and more cost effective to use your existing telephone infrastructure, as it means one less piece of technology to think about.

You also need to consider whether there will be any hidden expenditures involved such as new phones.

Crucially, moving to a new telephone system can be risky, potentially creating a period of disruption and network downtime that could affect calls to your important numbers.

5

Do I want to introduce new working styles?

Office relocation is the ideal time for a fresh start. Consider how a new premises could also be a great opportunity to introduce more efficient working practises or give productivity a boost.

For employees, the ability to work more flexibly can mean greater autonomy, increased wellbeing and less stress, making them willing to go the extra mile for your company.

A recent report 'Working anywhere: a winning formula for good work?' by Lancaster University's Work Foundation claims that flexible working will soon be the most common way of working, adopted by 70% of UK organisations by 2020.

In the process of moving to a new premises, could your organisation shed its reliance on desk phones and allow staff to be more mobile?

How BT smartnumbers can help

Many organisations are choosing to use BT smartnumbers for their office move, as it gives them the ability to take their existing geographic numbers to their new location anywhere in the UK without their customers needing to know there's been a move.

BT smartnumbers allows inbound calls to be redirected to a predefined alternative number, DDI by DDI, as people move location, so organisations can migrate their staff to new premises team by team or number by number.

During the event of a network issue, power outage or anything else that could go wrong during a move, it allows them to rest assured that their inbound calls will always reach the intended person.

If they do decide to undertake a migration project to SIP, BT smartnumbers can safely protect an organisation's phone lines from any disruption during the process.