



Moving Decisions:

7 Key Questions for Organizations Planning to Relocate IT & Telecom Services



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At some point, most organizations are faced with the daunting prospect of relocating their operations, raising a variety of financial, strategic and logistical challenges. While some of the challenges are not new — scouting out new locations, negotiating terms, and the logistics of the physical move itself, to name a few — there is one aspect that has evolved significantly in recent years. In fact, if you haven't relocated within the last 5 or 6 years, you may not be fully aware of the various technology pitfalls you could encounter ... or perhaps, even which questions you should ask.

This document is intended to provide a broad overview of the major decisions facing an organization planning to relocate — specifically, the challenges related to relocating networking and telephony assets. While every organization has its own unique requirements and challenges, we've listed below some of the topics most likely to be encountered. The best solution is to work with a professional IT consultant to plan your move, explore your options and manage the actual execution of your plan.

1. Who is the best person in your organization to oversee the move?

Relocations involve an incredible amount of complexities to plan and coordinate — in both technical and scheduling terms. You will need to determine if you have the expertise and resources in-house, or if you will need to look outside your organization. Typically the job requires an individual with significant experience in logistics and project management. Required tasks generally include:

- Collect requirements for systems
- Develop IT relocation budget
- Develop RFPs for systems and professional services for new or relocation items
- Negotiate new contracts or service agreements
- Vendor management
- General construction inputs for design
 - HVAC/power for communications rooms
 - Rack and system layouts
 - Cabling & WiFi design
- ISP & Telco orders and transition
- Desktop & network printing relocation

It's a high-stakes decision; after all, you'll only have one chance to make a truly successful move. Look for internal personnel with the ability to conduct the tasks listed above, and a workload that will allow them to dedicate themselves to the task for at least two or three months, and probably closer to six. If you cannot find the right skill set and availability in-house, broaden your search to external providers.

2. Does the building have cellular services for all carriers in the building, or will it need to be augmented?

New environmental standards help maintain the efficiency of HVAC systems — but the related construction also limits RF signals coming into a building. If cellular services are limited to 1–2 carriers, you'll need to determine whether corporate mobile phones will work, or if you'll need to augment the signal or transition to another carrier.

3. Does your new building have fiber connectivity to your ISP or WAN vendor(s)?

Most buildings have fiber connectivity for multiple Internet Service Providers — but it's unwise to assume that your particular ISP has fiber capacity or connectivity (or any type of service at all) to a given building. You will have to decide whether you want to use what is already in the building or have your ISP "build" it, a process that takes time, and needs to be factored in the move dates and in the larger analysis of choosing to keep or switch service providers.

4. Will keeping your telephone numbers be important to your organization?

Today, maintaining a corporate telephone number after a relocation is easier than ever. But depending on how far you move from your previous location, keeping your number (or multiple numbers) could be expensive. It's important to understand that the additional cost is not only a one-time expense; depending on your circumstances, your organization could incur an ongoing surcharge of up to 20% of your current charges.

- To avoid being blindsided by such expenses, it pays to be proactive. Once you know your new address, contact your service provider and ask for a quote to move the services to the new location. On the other hand, if you will need to change your telephone numbers, you won't have to worry about porting fees and ongoing surcharges. However, you will need to work closely with your communications team to devise a plan for sending external and internal notifications regarding new numbers.

5. Should you move any of your current systems to a hosted, cloud environment, or should you maintain them on site?

Questions about cloud and hosting services are multifaceted, but a few points to consider are:

- **Bandwidth & Budgeting:** Although many organizations are benefiting from hosted solutions, they require planning for bandwidth and an overall budget transition from capital investments to operating expenses.
- **Growth Projections:** While the total operating cost of hosting is typically higher over a 4–5 year model, it allows organizations to grow or shrink rapidly, with costs directly associated with quantity of users.
- **IT Staff Support:** A premises-based solution typically is more cost effective for an organization that is stable in size and has staffing to absorb the administration of services.
- **Security:** An important issue to plan for, and to benchmark cloud providers by, is the issue of security. Understanding enterprise options, operators, data center locations and redundancy plans, etc., should be considered when evaluating the risk/rewards of a hosted cloud environment.

6. Should you continue to use your existing vendors, or have them compete with others to provide compatible products?

There's a lot to be said for staying with a provider that has served you well in the past. Even so, writing an RFP and conducting a competitive procurement can save your organization from 10–30% on both the capital and maintenance expenses over the life of a product. The lower range in potential savings is attainable if you seek bids from specific manufacturer distributors for a specific design. The higher range is possible if you develop specific requirements and seek competitive bids from several manufacturers.

7. Should you buy a new voice and data system, move your old one(s), or do some of each?

Before you start planning your IT move, ask yourself two essential questions about your voice and data network(s). First, do your networks meet your current needs? Second, where are your networks in their lifecycle? If they meet your needs and are early in their lifecycles, moving them might make sense. But if your systems are old, and new functionality would provide an increase in productivity, it might make more sense to procure new systems.

Planning a combination of both strategies is typical. For example, you could purchase new components for only those systems that require no perceptible interruption in service (“hot-cutovers”), and among your other systems you could harvest the best components currently in use.

Plan on Complexity

As noted above, this list of questions is intentionally general and highlights only the broadest and most commonly encountered types of decisions facing the typical organization. As is the case with many decisions involving IT, there are many hard choices to be made, emerging technologies to evaluate, and various potential opportunities, synergies and tradeoffs to consider.

To learn more about our recommendations and advice for optimizing the results of a relocation of telephony and networking assets, please contact us at 703.521.1500 ext. 2 or info@ttg-it.com