



KEEPING YOUR PHONES RINGING DURING A BUSINESS RELOCATION OR EXPANSION

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— Moving or expanding your company office can be a source of tremendous stress and upheaval — but it also offers an opportunity to upgrade and improve a variety of office features, including your telecommunications system.

Many businesses find that they have outgrown their phone system long before they outgrow their office space. When planning a move to a new or expanded office, it is important to examine all aspects of your telecommunications needs — number and location of phones, voice mail, structured cabling, voice and data integration — to ensure that your new system responds favorably to your present needs, and will be able to expand to accommodate future growth.

There are a number of vital considerations to help you plan effectively for a phone system relocation or expansion with the most important being — selecting the right partner to guide you through the process. By choosing a leading telecommunications provider your company can turn a stressful situation into an easy transition eliminating any interruption to your business. However, selecting an inexperienced partner will cost your organization time, money, and possibly some of your customers.

The following check list will help you through the relocation or expansion process so you can make sure you've identified the right company to keep your phones ringing with no interruption in service:

• Select A Telecommunications Provider With Experience, and Rely On Their Expertise. You should elect to work with a provider that has expertise at the installation, expansion

and relocation of corporate phone systems. Does the provider design and install communications systems using the latest technology, including the integration of your office computers with your phone system. In addition to installing your phone system, will the provider consult with you on how your business can maximize your communications effectiveness.

• Communicate Your Expectations. Ask your communications provider to assist you in thinking your plans through on paper first, ensuring that the proper phone configuration is agreed upon prior to installation. Make sure that the provider will work with you to effectively implement any needed changes to your existing system, including adding voice mail or upgrading the phone switch. Be sure to obtain an accurate indication of the time requirements needed to make changes to your system.

• Design Now and Save Later. An experienced telecommunications partner will take the time to review your facility and electrical drawings, which will aid in developing a game plan. They should provide you with design input, space planning and a communications layout for your facilities' entire structured cabling infrastructure. This should include drawings of specific technical components such as the equipment room, telephone system, voice mail, server configurations, overhead paging and music, wireless IP, and Internet access.

The key is making sure your provider builds a compact, easy-to-manage, centralized equipment room, which acts as the hub for your business. Ideally, you should receive a design that is flexible and one that can

expand as your business grows. Poor designs will cost you every time you call your provider when you need to make even a minor change to your system.

Properly designed and implemented in the blueprint stage saves having to retrofit and issue change orders later, which can be extremely costly. Leading companies do not charge for consultative services or design input. This is something to think about as you select a partner.

• Set A Realistic Move Date. If you want to eliminate headaches give yourself considerable time to plan ahead prior to your move or expansion date. Unexpected events almost always cause delays, and your business will function more smoothly if your move occurs when everyone is ready, instead of in the midst of a last-minute "scramble." You should work closely with a telecommunications systems provider to help you set a realistic schedule for your phone system implementation. This will allow you to alert your customers and vendors of any anticipated phone number changes well in advance of your move date.

• Prevent an Interruption in Service. For many businesses, the early installation of phone lines, Internet access and new equipment may be critical to having dual service and to providing your customers with uninterrupted service during the entire move. If your provider waits until the last minute to switchover and does not have a plan to provide redundant service then you know something is wrong. An interruption in service can have a lasting impact on any organization.

• Don't Let Anything Fall Through the Cracks. You should contact your communications system

provider and give them advanced notice prior to your move to schedule a complete analysis of your present and future phone needs. Due to the highly competitive nature of local, long-distance, and Internet service, this additional "shopping" time can result in substantial savings. A reliable partner will walk you through this process identifying areas to save money, especially if you find yourself pressed for time.

Finally, make sure you redirect all of your local, toll-free, and fax numbers. Order this work to be done far in advance of your move, because it is vital that this important service be

fully operational on Day One in your new facility.

Selecting the right telecommunications partner can make a world of difference when taking on the challenge of relocation or expanding your current facility. Choose an experienced provider that can set up a game plan for you and give you a sense of security that the transition will be a success. Leading providers will eliminate any unforeseen headaches and make what could be seen as a daunting task an easy one. If you don't, your business could ultimately be in big trouble.

About Connect Telephone & Computer Group

Connect Telephone & Computer Group is Montana's premier telephone and data communications group. Connect provides industry-leading products, serviced by the most certified technicians in the region. The company's local dispatch center delivers round-the-clock service to ensure system reliability. The Connect Group also offers comprehensive service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and emergency service guaranteed within 4 hours.