

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO MOVING YOUR COMPUTER DESKTOPS

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A company move can be a complicated undertaking and a bit overwhelming. How much pressure are you experiencing? Time constraints, budget constraints, organizational pressures, and overworked staff all contribute to the perfect storm.

Moving computer desktops doesn't have to be complicated. Follow the steps detailed in this guide and your desktop move should be smooth and trouble-free.

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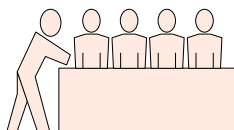
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MOVE PHASES

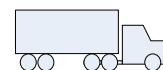
Your move consists of these main phases: **Preparation, De-Stage, Transit, and Re-stage.**



Preparation



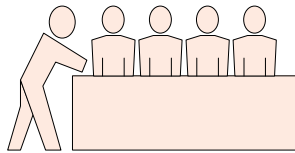
De-Stage



Transit



Re-Stage



Preparation

PREPARATION

The key to a successful move is preparation. The listed items should be done months in advance of the move. Each item is described along with the rationale to help you understand its importance.

1. Backup

Desktop backups are almost universally neglected. However, moving any piece of equipment raises the potential for damage. Decide on your desktop backup strategy months before you undertake the physical move. If your CEO's desktop doesn't come back up, would you lose your job because you don't have any data backed up? Unfortunately, there are numerous examples of employees who store critical company information locally. Have a backup and restore plan in place to keep your company in business after the move.

2. Seat Assignment Drawings

This simple drawing can save you hours of frustration. At a minimum, the drawing should show the location of electrical outlets, Ethernet ports, phone jacks, and furniture placement. Use this drawing to spot potential problems and to help you organize the move. This drawing should be available to you at least four weeks before your move.

3. Have a complete inventory of the desktops to be moved

Use the inventory to plan your desktop moving crew size and to estimate the amount of time to de-stage and re-stage the machines.

Labels ☉

4. Labeling Scheme

Understand the labeling scheme used for your move. This is typically provided by your moving company. Desktop computers are usually labeled the same way furniture is labeled with a colored sticker and a unique number designating the destination of the item. Temporary signs at the destination guide the movers to place the equipment. Every office, cubicle, and work surface should have a temporary sign with its unique number at the destination.

5. IP assignment method, Domain Controllers, and Domain Name Service (DNS)

Every computer connected to a network has a unique IP address. Sometimes this address is provided automatically and sometimes this address is configured manually. For your move, you will need to understand how the desktop computers will get their IP address. If the method is manual configuration, you need to decide if you will perform the configuration prior to moving or after moving. Likewise, you will want your entire network services tested and in place at the destination. Common services include DHCP (Domain Host Control Protocol – hands out IP addresses), Domain Controllers (allows authentication to your network), print servers, and Domain Name Service (DNS – translates names into IP addresses).



6. Responsibility Matrix

This simple document helps you plan a successful move. What tasks are the responsibilities of the movers? What are you asking your users to do? What role does your Information Technology (IT) department play? What vendors are needed for specialized equipment and warranty issues such as leased printers? Are you relying too much on company volunteers?

7. Walk the origin and destination paths

Avoiding surprises can mean the difference between a successful move and an unmitigated disaster. Walk both your origin and destination location with your mover to determine how the desktops will be placed on carts and how they will be unloaded. Follow their exact path to your loading dock or curbside where they will be loaded into trucks. Follow their path of unloading at the destination. Note all door widths and transom crossings. Note any elevator access required.

Determine if trucks with lift gates will be used. Determine if you have any landlord or building restrictions for when equipment can be moved with special attention to buildings having multiple tenants. Have your mover document where floor, wall, and elevator protection that they supply will be located.



DE-STAGE

This phase of the move consists of shutting down the desktop machines, dis-assembling them, bagging the keyboards, mice, cables, and other small devices. It's important during the de-stage phase that you use people who are familiar with disassembling and reassembling computers. Using unqualified personnel often results in machines that are broken and equipment that is reconnected incorrectly.

1. Use Two Person Crews

Organize your de-stage crews with two persons per crew. Often desktops have cables that need to be fished from behind desks and furniture. With two people, a desktop can be disassembled more efficiently and safely.

2. Bag and Tag

Have your movers provide see-through plastic bags large enough to hold keyboards, mice, power strips, and USB cords. Bag everything associated with the desktop that you'll need to re-assemble the machine.

3. Have extra labels

Equip your move crew with extra moving labels. They will encounter machines with no labels, labels that have fallen off, or mis-labeled equipment.

4. Use a paper de-stage/re-stage ticket

Use this ticket to note any anomalies during the de-stage. Place the ticket in the bag for re-stage. You'd be amazed how many people believe they can "remember" what happened during de-stage, but don't. Write it down.





5. What about laptops?

The main issue with laptops is they can easily be stolen during a move. The common method for handling laptops is for employees to take them home before a move and bring them with them when they arrive at the destination to unpack. Sometimes, this is not feasible.

In no circumstances should you allow your mover to move laptops on the rolling wooden carts, book carts, or media carts. Ask for a special laptop crate that can hold laptops with foam padding, a lockable lid, and wheels. Take care to inventory the laptops at the origin that go into this case and then again at the destination.

6. Avoid These Common Mistakes

- **Not Enough Labor** – De-staging without enough people can result in costly mistakes.
- **Rushing De-Stage** – Allocate plenty of time to de-stage the desktops to avoid breaking or forgetting something.
- **Security** – Equipment is easily stolen or misplaced during the commotion. Have a security plan that covers your unique situation.
- **Backup, Backup, Backup!** – The quickest way to lose your job is to assume there is nothing important on your organization's desktops.
- **Failure to keep Desktops, Monitors, and peripherals packaged together** – Furniture movers don't always bundle these together unless you ask. When things arrive out of order in a chaotic move, you are more likely to lose equipment.
- **Failure to properly label** – Don't stick labels on the display portion of screens. Don't fail to label monitors.



RE-STAGE

Putting everything back together is easily the most stressful phase of the desktop move. Machines can arrive broken, can be lost, or can be missing critical components. A false sense of optimism often evaporates quickly during this phase. Brief your re-stage crew on what to expect.

1. Inspect for damage
Don't rush to re-place your desktops before inspecting for damage. Note all damage on the mover's documentation (which you have to sign) as well as your own master list.
2. Read the de-stage/re-stage ticket
You can prevent the majority of issues by reading the de-stage/re-stage ticket before assuming you know how to re-assemble the desktop.
3. Re-assemble the computer
Using trained crews can make this step go smoothly.
4. Test and communicate any issues
Keep everyone informed to keep anxiety to a minimum.



5. Avoid these common mistakes

- **Expecting Employees to re-assemble** – Organizations who assume their employees can re-assemble their computers often experience the highest and longest lasting resentment of the move.
- **Skipping the Testing Phase** – Allocating time to test will pay dividends during the chaotic process of moving.
- **Printers** – Getting printer mapping fixed is an important satisfier for users.
- **Allowing Employees to be prematurely onsite before re-stage is complete** – Employees get upset easily during the chaotic move process. Keep them away from the move until your vendors have completed the process.
- **Failure to properly sequence the unloading of equipment** – Don't let the transit company dictate how items are loaded. You want computer equipment unloaded first (meaning it should be loaded on the truck last). This is so you can get a head start with equipment re-assembly.
- **Believing you can assemble furniture during the re-stage process** – Failure to plan the proper unloading sequence - You want to unload computer equipment first to give your vendors plenty of time to re-assemble equipment until your vendors have completed the process.



CONCLUSIONS

All relocations require pre-move planning and systematic execution. Start early and build a move plan that includes risks and contingencies and carefully plan for staffing workloads during the move phases.

LEARN MORE

E-OASIS PROVIDES SERVICES TO BUILD OR REVIEW YOUR MOVE PLAN AND HELP YOU AVOID COSTLY MISTAKES

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Contact Blaine Berger via e-mail blaine@e-oasis.com or phone 303-485-1115. Electronic Oasis Consulting, Inc. provides expert relocation services. See <http://datacentermoving.com> for more information.

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