



A checklist for an office move

TN26 Training Notes series: Administration

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This set of notes has been written for any mission agency considering a change of office location. Some issues are immediately obvious: cost, floor-space, explaining the move to supporters. But others may not be considered until it is too late. Hence the idea of a comprehensive checklist as a starting point.

Some of the points will not be relevant to particular agencies and some have to be held in tension with others. But the hope is that this list will help your move of office to go smoothly, because it has helped you consider everything that needs to be kept in view.

N: NATIONAL LOCATION

N1 Location in an international context *(for agencies operating beyond the UK)*

- 1 The international profile and image of the location
- 2 The image for specific countries where the agency is active
- 3 Access to embassies or cultural centres
- 4 Access to international airports or ports

N2 Location as a Christian statement

- 1 The association of the location among Christians
- 2 Association with other mission agencies (eg. if sharing premises)
- 3 The principle of incarnation: a location among those the agency is serving
- 4 The principle of ownership: a location among the agency's supporters

N3 Location as a denominational or professional statement

- 1 Links to the denominational or professional centre of gravity
- 2 Easy access to denominational or professional organisations
- 3 Regional offices linked to denominational or professional areas
- 4 Likely long-term stability of such locations

N4 Perception of the location by the agency's non-office staff and supporters

- 1 Relations between office staff and 'field' or regional staff
- 2 Perception of the location by volunteer workers
- 3 Perception of the location by prayer and financial supporters
- 4 Perception of the location by other relevant stake-holders

N5 Suitability of base for staff who travel

- 1 Distances to be travelled by staff based at the office in the course of their work
- 2 Access outwards to airports, rail links, road networks
- 3 Issues of whether regional staff work out of a central office, local office or home
- 4 Location in relation to homes of executive (or all) staff who work partly from home

N6 Ease of access for committee members and others

- 1 Transport links: public and private, parking, etc.
- 2 Ease of access for existing and potential future Board/Committee members
- 3 Time and travel costs for other visitors, volunteers, etc.
- 4 Access for office-holders, potential staff and others

A: AREA LOCATION**A1 Quality of area environment for staff**

- 1 The setting of the office in its immediate area
- 2 Views outside from the working area
- 3 Access to shops, and to leisure and other facilities
- 4 Safety of access (eg. on foot at night)

A2 Office accessibility for staff

- 1 Distance, time and cost of commuting for present staff
- 2 Similar issues for recruitment of new staff
- 3 Public transport networks and bicycle routes from local residential areas
- 4 Road infrastructure and staff parking facilities

A3 Residential areas for staff

- 1 Perceived quality of life of the surrounding area
- 2 Provision of leisure, schooling, health and other facilities
- 3 Price of housing in the new area compared with existing location
- 4 Suitable overnight accommodation for visitors

A4 Ease of staff and volunteer recruitment

- 1 Existence of other Christian employers in the area (so competition for staff)
- 2 Proximity of suitable churches
- 3 Population of the immediate hinterland
- 4 Local population of supporters likely to become volunteers

A5 Availability of expertise and services

- 1 Provision of both staff and maintenance for IT and other equipment
- 2 Areas for same-day deliveries from key suppliers
- 3 Access to printing, banking, post, etc.
- 4 Whether to change current professional suppliers of services or not

O: OFFICE FACILITIES**O1 The purpose of an office**

- 1 The need or otherwise for a central office – a time for radical thinking
- 2 Functions to centralise and those to regionalise – another rethink
- 3 The length of time in one location to make the move worthwhile
- 4 Regional and 'field' structures: homes or offices

O2 The working area

- 1 Open plan layout and/or private spaces required
- 2 One level layout required or multi-level acceptable
- 3 Size of floor area required, including plans for future needs
- 4 The value of solo occupancy versus sharing with other organisations

O3 Provision of normal facilities

- 1 Availability of kitchen facilities for staff and catering facilities for events
- 2 Availability of toilets, etc.
- 3 Availability of sufficient storage area and spaces throughout the office
- 4 Availability of lifts, and appropriate equipment for moving heavy objects

O4 Provision of adequate meeting rooms

- 1 Suitable spaces for Board and Committees
- 2 Suitable spaces for small meetings and private interviews
- 3 Suitable areas for staff relaxation, eating, etc.
- 4 Flexibility of spaces for efficient usage

O5 Suitable environmental standards

- 1 Pleasant office environment: carpeting, décor, etc.
- 2 Appropriate heating, lighting, ventilation, freedom from unnecessary risks
- 3 Disability awareness: access, lifts, appropriate facilities
- 4 Compliance with health and safety legislation

O6 Provision of suitable furniture

- 1 Desks, chairs, filing of appropriate standard
- 2 Layout, partitions and sound-proofing to enable staff to work well
- 3 Suitable IT connections and power points
- 4 Suitable telecommunication points

O7 Provision of equipment to required standard

- 1 Networked IT systems of appropriate standard to minimise staff frustration
- 2 Quality software for databases, finance, etc.
- 3 Quality reprographic equipment in dedicated spaces
- 4 Appropriate telecommunications equipment for all needs

O8 Provision of adequate security

- 1 Adequate buildings security for guarding against theft and vandalism
- 2 Reception facility and/or main door security systems
- 3 Fire security and emergency exits
- 4 Compliance with health and safety legislation in this respect too

O9 Suitable arrangements for maintenance and insurance

- 1 Appropriate provision of cleaning services
- 2 Provision of external and internal maintenance contracts
- 3 Adequate buildings and contents insurance policies
- 4 Move of location's impact on fleet of vehicles

F: FINANCIAL ISSUES**F1 Freehold, leasehold or rent**

- 1 The use of the agency's capital and any need to raise new capital
- 2 The long-term future for the agency and the implications for property
- 3 Office purchase costs for freehold v long leasehold or rent
- 4 Impact of the decision on future revenue accounts

F2 Office running costs

- 1 New rentals, rates and service charges compared with existing
- 2 Suitable duration and forms of lease, rent reviews, etc.
- 3 Hiring rooms for meetings and other direct costs if necessary
- 4 Average likely running costs for freehold premises and cash flow implications

F3 Relocation costs

- 1 Staff redundancies, loyalty bonuses, relocation costs, etc.
- 2 Cost of the move in lost time and work for the agency
- 3 Moving costs for the office itself and decisions over service suppliers
- 4 Costs of recruitment, retraining, reprinting materials, etc.

F4 Refurbishment costs

- 1 Building work necessary on new premises
- 2 Purchase of new equipment and furniture
- 3 Decoration costs, dilapidation costs
- 4 Costs of delay in moving in to new premises

F5 Timing the move

- 1 Terms of existing lease and penalty clauses
- 2 Seasonal issues
- 3 Timing of the move to minimise disruption to workflow
- 4 Implications for associated organisations

F6 Professional advice

- 1 Surveyor's fees and all associated costs
- 2 Solicitor's fees
- 3 Consultancy fees
- 4 Funding advisor's fees

S: STAFFING AND SUPPORTER ISSUES**S1 Those responsible for the move process**

- 1 Appointment of group to handle the whole project
- 2 Clear statement of all other expertise and resources required
- 3 Board's support for and in involvement in the process
- 4 Role to be played by CEO in the process

S2 Future staffing requirements

- 1 Posts, skills and experience needed for the agency's work
- 2 Total numbers of staff likely in medium and longer-term future
- 3 New location's implications for salaries and other benefits
- 4 Use of hot-desking, home working and volunteer staff

S3 Care of existing staff

- 1 Existing home locations of existing staff and implications for move
- 2 Care, retraining, loyalty bonuses etc. of staff who decide to leave
- 3 Financial package offered to those who stay and move house
- 4 Communication to staff at all stages of the relocation process

S4 Recruitment of new staff

- 1 Assessing dislocation to the work should there be a total changeover
- 2 Recruitment of new staff if necessary, training and overlaps
- 3 Decision on whether new staff need to be believers / 'OR' implications
- 4 Supervision implications for a significant changeover in staff

S5 The change process

- 1 Impact on staff of uncertainty prior to decisions about relocation
- 2 Policy on whether to aim to hold all staff if possible
- 3 Handling the change process for all involved, communication and team-working
- 4 Risk assessment of what might go wrong and how to correct it if it does

S6 The move itself

- 1 Encouraging staff not to leave well before the move
- 2 Timing the move within the annual work cycle
- 3 Terms for staff having to move house
- 4 Minimising disruption to the agency's ministry

S7 Explaining the move to all parties

- 1 A carefully managed process to avoid splits and actions to stop the move
- 2 Informing and educating all supporters over an adequate time span
- 3 Updating all directory entries and other records
- 4 Arranging for postal redirection, telecoms, internet, etc.

S8 People's perception of the change

- 1 Explaining the move to all supporters and others
- 2 Bad publicity caused by any loss of identity or heritage
- 3 Bad publicity caused by upheaval of staff
- 4 Effect of any change on gift income and legacies

Note: the logistics of the actual move would require an additional set of notes!

These notes are available at <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Training-Notes-index> then TN26.

Contact John if you would like to enquire about the possibility of his advising your organisation.

Cartoons are by Micki Hounslow for filing categories of Leadership, Management, Structures, Planning, Communication, Administration. File TN26 under Administration (with a link to Planning).

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