Keeping connected when moving office.

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Your IT in safe hands

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INTRODUCTION

In the modern day computers, telephones, mobiles and broadband are the lifeblood of your business. If your phones can't ring and your emails and internet are off line when you move into your new office then you can't operate.

It cannot be overstated just how important it is to have the right telecommunications partner when you are planning an office move. Delays and downtime can grind your operation to a stop not to mention the financial consequences for your business.

Hearing about horror stories and bad experiences was the driving force in writing this simple checklist, often telecoms and data is not even considered until after choosing a new location, but the two questions below may change your mind and the rest of the guide will hopefully give you some key tips on planning for a successful move of your telecoms and data.

NEW SITE SELECTION

When moving office there are two simple things that should be checked before you make your final decision, these are often not checked before deciding to move and only come to light when you have to find a solution to the problem.

1. **Is your new location still provided by the same Openreach exchange as your current office?**
    Reason this is important: Towns and Cities have multiple Openreach exchanges, if you are moving from out of your existing exchange then you cannot keep your existing number as a traditional analogue or ISDN telephone line, the solution will require planning and may even mean your existing equipment is no longer compatible for your new office which can result in unbudgeted and unexpected costs in your move, or a change to your main business telephone number.

2. **What speed will my data connection be at the new site?**
    Reason this is important: If your new premises has a worse internet speed than your current office this can be frustrating for users, however if connectivity is vital to how your company trades or your IT solutions and software may require a certain speed to function properly then it's no longer a frustration but a hindrance on your operation and the cost of purchasing a dedicated internet connection to solve the issue can run into hundreds of pounds per month which may not be in your budget and can also suddenly make a cheap rent deal expensive.

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COMMUNICATION REQUIRMENTS

Don't assume that the new office will already have the cabling and infrastructure you are going to require. Arrange a site visit to both your current office and new premises with your telecoms provider to check the new office has what you are going to need:

Infrastructure	We currently have	We are going to need	The new office has
How many phones / handsets on desks? (Can your current system provide enough extensions in its present state)			
How many analogue lines? (These are phone lines than are also used for broadband, fax, PDQ's, lifts or alarms)			
How many ISDN or VoIP Line? (These are different line types that you may have or need)			
Structured Cabling Points? (CAT5 or CAT6, remember phones, printers, computers uses these to connect)			
How many power outlets? (Phone, computers, printers can all need power)			
What is the broadband speed in the area? (What type of data connection do I need)			

THE NEW SITE VISIT CHECKLIST

Items to check	Tick
Work out where people will be sitting and map out where the computers, printers, fax machine, scanners and telephones are going to be required.	
Assess the existing voice and data networks at the new site and identify what can be moved, what needs replacing and what extra cabling points are required.	
Are there sufficient power outlets for the devices you are going to need at each workstation.	
Confirm the current server room meets the minimum requirements you require (cabinet size, electrical, cooling and security)	
Confirm there is sufficient telephone capacity to the building to provide the lines you will need, if not this will lead to delays on install times as Openreach won't give guaranteed install date until there is enough line capacity at the building for your order.	
Not all buildings offer great wireless/mobile potential due to the building structure check your mobile network for coverage if you plan to use WiFi for your computers check the range as you may require signal booster to provide full coverage.	

OFFICE PHONE AND DATA CHECKLIST

Items to check	Tick
Review current lines and capacity to check if you need to order more phone lines or convert to different line types.	
Check if your current phone system can be moved and can grow to the requirements you have in your new premises.	
Get prices from three local telecoms providers to check the competitiveness of keeping your current system or replacing it. **TIP:** Many telecoms providers partner with one particular manufacturer and that solution may not always be the best fit for your requirements best this is why it is good to compare three different options.	
Order or transfer your phone lines dependant on your requirements and new solution, it is best to try and keep the lines and calls with the same provider you use for your equipment if possible, for ease of management and trouble shooting. **TIP:** Be aware of long lead times it is common that lines can take up to 6 weeks before installation so try to allow at least 8 to 12 weeks from you ordering your lines to when you actual plan to moving premises.	
If you are having to change number will you require call forwarding or caller re-direct features	
What kind of growth are you planning for in the next 3 to 5 years? This may also determine whether you need to consider a new system when you move office as upgrading after a move can still be as expensive as moving in the first place.	
Telecoms is a fast passed industry so look at any frustrations you may have on your current system, you may find there are now solutions for these issues that will make your business more efficient.	
Try to plan for your data circuit to be installed at least a week before you move this will allow you to move your IT network more efficiently and will also mean you IT department can make some of the configuration changes ahead of your move.	