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SOLUTIONS

Laboratory Relocation

Why Timing, Planning, and Communication Are Essential

by Christie Dame

Introduction

Relocating a laboratory can be a challenging task that requires intricate planning and precise execution to ensure that your research is not disrupted. Failing to plan for a laboratory relocation can lead to data loss, damage to sensitive equipment, and lost productivity.

We will examine the best practices for laboratory relocation, and the reasons why it is critical to get it right the first time. By following these guidelines, you can ensure a smooth and successful laboratory relocation, minimize downtime, and safeguard your valuable research data.

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Timing, Planning, and Communication are Critical



Clear communication is key to a successful lab relocation. After developing a solid project plan, defining the scope of the relocation, and preparing a backup plan, it's crucial for the project team to communicate effectively with stakeholders. To ensure everyone is in the loop, lab users, managers, business leaders, suppliers, vendors, facility managers, and other relevant parties must be continuously updated on project progress.

To achieve success, the project team must consider a balanced viewpoint, taking into account insights from finance, compliance/quality, facilities, engineering, IT, H&S, the user community, and in certain situations, legal and HR. **This comprehensive approach ensures thorough analysis and informed decision-making throughout the project's lifecycle.**

Timing Is Everything

Establishing a proper timeline and scope will assist in outlining the extent of the project and the diverse services, vendors, resources, and skills required to manage the equipment and assets. By doing so, your laboratory relocation team can set a practical and attainable schedule that will guarantee efficient operation continuity both at the current and future sites.

The first step in developing a timeline is to establish an internal project team well in advance of the relocation to assemble the necessary information: creation of a relocation plan, making prudent decisions, and methodically monitoring progress for seamless completion. **Often a relocation project plan needs to start at least 9-12 months before the actual relocation date.**

For the relocation project to progress smoothly, it is important to have a small yet diverse group of stakeholders who have the authority to make necessary decisions. In addition, they should actively seek feedback from a diverse group of individuals who will be impacted by the relocation, including lab users.

In order to ensure successful outcomes, it is crucial to strategically source and schedule the right partners according to your timeline. This ensures that expectations are clearly understood and met. Choose your partners with care and plan ahead for success.

Planning: Establish & Document Project Scope

Methodically outlining the project's objectives and timelines will ensure that every activity and resource needed to deliver a successful result is identified. By defining and documenting the scope and timelines, you can map against milestones and trigger points to ensure success.

Accurately outline the services needed from internal resources, vendors, and suppliers, along with clear expectations for results. By presenting a comprehensive set of expectations to logistics service partners and vendors, you can establish a precise understanding of your project's requirements. This, in turn, mitigates the possibility of incurring unanticipated expenses and expensive delays during execution and facilitates lab operations to resume optimal levels as soon as possible.

Always Have a Plan B

Having a contingency plan in place is essential for ensuring you're prepared to handle any unexpected circumstances. Taking the time before an issue arises will help ensure that you can respond quickly and effectively when needed.

After the initial project plan is formulated, it's essential for teams to reassess and update their plans continually. As circumstances evolve and objectives shift, so must strategies; no two iterations of a plan are exactly alike.

A well-thought-out approach and an efficient project team are essential for a successful relocation. Ahead of the move, it's important to plan extensively while remaining adaptable - being prepared for surprises along the way with contingencies in place that can handle any potential problems or obstacles.



Create a Communication Plan

Clear communication is key to a successful relocation. After developing a solid project plan, defining the scope of the relocation, and preparing a backup plan, it's crucial for the project team to communicate effectively with stakeholders. To ensure everyone is in the loop, lab users, managers, business leaders, suppliers, vendors, facility managers, and other relevant parties must be continuously updated on project progress.

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External & Internal Communication

To ensure all partners are kept informed, an effective communications structure is vital for the external communication plan. This structure should entail regular updates and comprehensive reporting regarding any changes to the project plan, scheduling updates, and shifting priorities. With over-communication in place, stakeholders can stay informed and work collaboratively toward the project's success.

Crafting an efficient internal communication plan requires adopting an employee-centric approach, especially in the case of relocation, which can bring about significant changes. **The key to managing such transitions successfully is to maintain open channels of communication.** This involves outlining the benefits and implications of relocation, keeping affected employees informed of key dates, detailing expectations, charting progress, and outlining next steps. By prioritizing transparent and comprehensive communication, organizations can set themselves up for sustainable growth and success.

Phases of a Successful Lab Relocation



Phase 1: Communication

- ✓ Establish a communication team
- ✓ Determine the business needs and processes
- ✓ Create a scope of work

Phase 2: Planning

- ✓ Establish a workable timeline
- ✓ Build a comprehensive relocation plan
- ✓ Consult on the equipment move list
- ✓ Evaluate and assign decommissioning and reinstallation responsibilities
- ✓ Estimate cost of service for the PM group

Phase 3: Logistics

- ✓ Track new equipment and coordinate services
- ✓ Solicit quotes from OEMs
- ✓ Evaluate OEM quote for scope
- ✓ Submit POs and gather invoices

Phase 4: Execution & Risk Management

- ✓ Schedule with OEM field service engineers
- ✓ Communicate important dates and actions to end users
- ✓ Schedule and complete validation and calibration services
- ✓ Manage, schedule and facilitate vendor escorts
- ✓ Schedule and complete vendor services
- ✓ Relay important information and requests of end users to OEM field service engineers

Phase 5: Post Move Quality Care

- ✓ Document in the asset management tracking system
- ✓ Ensure that all relocation line items have been completed to satisfaction



Additional Success Factors

Relocating a lab is a crucial event for businesses in terms of importance and cost. The process constitutes a complex chain of activities, which necessitate meticulous planning, smooth coordination, and precise execution for successful completion.

- ✓ The equipment specifications include electricity, gas hookups, workflow, etc.
- ✓ Aligning utility requirements with the manufacturer's operational standards
- ✓ Designing optimal bench placement and instrumentation dimensions to enhance operations and maintenance.
- ✓ The right staff on-site to reinstall, test and validate equipment.

A well-thought-out lab map can help reduce lost productivity, and time, and improve future lab productivity.

Ensuring Instrument Compliance

Moving lab equipment can be a costly endeavor if not done with care, leading to delays in project delivery and operational disruption. Take the proper precautions so your team's objectives are achieved without damaging setbacks!

Be sure to have the IQ, OQ, and PQ processes in place to ensure compliance and minimal disruptions.



Ensuring the smooth operation of instrumentation in a lab setting requires meticulous attention to detail at every step. That includes verifying location, power source and supporting software are correctly installed, as well as confirming all connections necessary for proper functioning.



A service engineer will check the instrument's performance to ensure it meets the requirements as outlined by its manufacturer. This important process guarantees smooth functioning and optimal results.



Establishing a comprehensive test plan that will guarantee the efficient performance of the instrument in any lab setting. With PQ implemented, users can trust their results are reliable and accurate.

Identifying Potential Pitfalls

Allocating more time for a lab relocation is often the biggest pitfall that can be mitigated. Planning, scheduling vendors and field technicians, and availability of supplies and resources all factor into the timeline that needs to be built to accommodate a smooth relocation project.

Laboratory relocations often suffer from timeline shortfalls, disorganization, and poor execution, resulting in unnecessary setbacks and expenses. Many organizations attempt to undertake these projects on their own, without a proper understanding of the complex skill set required. Seek experts to handle your laboratory relocation with efficiency and precision.

Many times, the task of relocating falls to a project manager who may lack proper knowledge of laboratory instrumentation, timelines, service and support needs, and other crucial factors that impact relocation project planning. **This gap in technical proficiency can hinder project progression and overall success.**



Minimize the Stress & Downtime to Accelerate Science

The success of laboratory relocations hinges on meticulous planning, efficient organization, and precise execution, all within strict timelines and production schedules.

Effectively managing the multi-faceted elements associated with laboratory relocation necessitates utilizing the services of a provider with substantial scientific expertise, industry acumen, and a proven record of executing intricate laboratory moves with minimal impact on operations.

Choosing a reliable relocation specialist will ensure the proper handling of your equipment and samples. Partner with seasoned experts who can guarantee the protection of your valuable equipment during decommissioning and installation. Don't compromise on experience.



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