

## Case Study

### Georgia Institute of Technology Technology Square Project

#### **PURPOSE**

In the summer of 2003, three hundred Georgia Tech staff and faculty were relocated to the newly constructed academic complex, Technology Square. The use of relocation management specialists centralized the planning, coordination, and supervision of simultaneous moves from multiple locations. This case study reviews one of the largest relocations of staff and faculty in the history of the Georgia Institute of Technology.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The development management firm of Jones Lang LaSalle opened a mixed-use complex of 1.1 million square feet of academic and commercial space located in Midtown Atlanta in July 2003. The six groups populating Technology Square included the Georgia Tech Foundation, Dupree College of Management, Economic Development Institute, Distance Learning and Professional Education, and departments of the College of Computing and the Institute of Sustainable Technology and Design. Staff, faculty, and equipment originating from 10 separate buildings were relocated to a total of 6 different destinations.

#### **THE CHALLENGE**

The challenge was to develop the most efficient move plan possible to minimize the impact on staff productivity by reducing down-time, to control move costs through a critical RFP process, and to supervise the relocations to eliminate cost over-runs. Given the need to support the on-going academic schedule, most of the organizations expressed a desire to relocate at the end of the summer session in order to have staff and faculty in place before the start of the fall session.

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Business Relocation Services, LLC (BRS), a relocation management company, was contracted to provide relocation project management for the Technology Square Project.

BRS met with each organization to quantify their unique requirements and prepare a relocation plan and schedule. The moves included faculty files and resources, computers, labs, libraries, and instructional equipment. The resulting move plans were coordinated with construction, technology, and furniture providers through the Jones Lang LaSalle development manager and melded into the overall development schedule. Business Relocation Services provided the Technology Square Project with a single point of contact for relocation planning and services freeing the client to focus on core responsibilities while maintaining productivity throughout the process.

Business Relocation Services coordinated a vast number of details to provide uninterrupted, seamless moves. Details included:

- Preparation of a summary inventory of contents, files, and equipment at each origin.
- Preparation and issuance of a Request For Proposal (RFP) to qualified moving companies, analyzing the proposals, and making the most cost effective recommendations.
- Checking with State, City and Institute agencies for celebrations, sports, and social events that might generate traffic conflicts on move days.
- Coordinating with specialty movers for high value equipment.
- Staging equipment into a more accessible location with one week's notice before scheduled maintenance shut down the building service elevator.
- Conducting move orientation sessions for each organization and providing instruction on how to efficiently pack and label.
- Preparation of color-coded floor plans and move signage to facilitate the pick-up and accurate delivery of files and equipment.
- Encouraging the archiving, destruction, and recycling of out-dated files and equipment.
- Establishing road closures to protect loading and off-loading zones.
- Coordinating dock and elevator access to support the move plans and delivery of furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E) to the site.
- Providing on-site supervision of two moving companies from beginning to end of each move.

Success was in the details:

- The RFP process aligned preferred moving companies with customers while reducing the overall cost by \$19,000 – a 25% net savings. The RFP analysis paired the strengths of chosen moving companies with specific customer requirements.
- All of the moves started on time and were completed according to plan.
- Moving companies had unimpeded access to all 10 of the origin sites and all 6 of the destinations.

- Three hundred staff and faculty were successfully relocated in the minimum possible time with the least possible disruption. Of the 300 people moved, 255 were relocated on one weekend.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

Engaging a relocation manager to plan, coordinate, and supervise large relocations allows staff and faculty to

- remain focused on core responsibilities during the preparatory period
- to minimize the down-time during relocation
- to re-establish quickly their work environment after the move.

Relocation managers provide the client with a single point of contact for all move related activities and act as a clearinghouse for move related issues. By coordinating the details between the customer to be moved and the supporting resources, relocation managers are able to anticipate potential problems and minimize surprises. Using a relocation manager provides consistent direction, planning, and preparation to each of the organizations involved in moving.

The complexity of every relocation multiplies with each organization involved. The ability of a relocation specialist to anticipate and address the myriad of details significantly reduces the risks associated with any move. Experienced relocation managers are best equipped to manage the details efficiently. Relocation managers simplify and de-mystify the process by teaching staff and faculty what to anticipate. An educated customer knows how to pack smarter, quicker, and more efficiently. Understanding the process reduces fear of the unknown and the stress related to change.

Planning to engage a relocation manager starts with the project budget. Including funds at the very beginning of a project budget provides the option to engage a relocation manager to plan, coordinate, and supervise the movement of staff to the new office space. Failure to include funds during the planning stages of a project usually precludes the use of a relocation specialist.

## **SUMMARY**

When conducting large or complicated relocations, a new paradigm is required – engaging relocation specialists to plan and manage the process. Relocation specialists are best equipped to manage the details because of experience and knowledge of the inherent details and risks of a move program. Contracting with “out-of-house” specialists allows

- cost effective handling of a large or complex process
- avoidance of risk and consequences to the organization
- maximizing staff productivity while minimizing downtime.

11/17/2003

Through experience, relocation managers can get more “move for the buck”.