

DOUBLEEDGE

Avoiding Disaster With Your IT Relocation

How to avoid the common pitfalls



March 2019

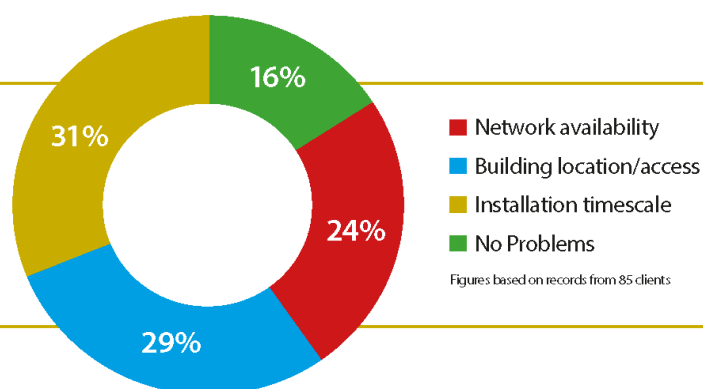
Executive Summary

With over 20 years in the business, DoubleEdge Professional Services have helped countless organisations relocate their voice and data networks. Invariably though, businesses come to us with unforeseen connectivity problems just weeks before the move date.

In a world where IT and comms are a fundamental requirement for practically every business, the impact of having no connectivity in place, when moving into new premises, can be disastrous.

Under extreme circumstances, companies can even be put in danger of going out of business in the prolonged absence of adequate networks.

'Last-minute' Network Connectivity Issues



Through our experience, skills and relationships with the network providers, we have the resources to resolve issues in time, making us the service provider of choice for many market-leading companies around the world.

This report breaks down a few of the typical questions which, whether you're a small business or a multi-national enterprise, you will need to ask when making plans for your business communications in an office move, or the opening of a new office, in order to:

- Meet deadlines
- Avoid pitfalls
- Ensure business continuity
- Cut the cost of your communications relocation
- Reduce ongoing voice, data and mobile expenditure

We hope you find this guide useful and would be happy to hear from you if you have any questions or would like to arrange a free, no-obligation consultation (by phone or face-to-face).

Please visit www.edge-edge.co.uk or contact steve.dourdil@edge-edge.co.uk / 020 3869 2442 for more information.

Key Questions

Every business is different and, likewise, every office relocation has its own unique challenges and points to consider.

However, the following is a breakdown of the most common questions that need to be asked by any company that is planning an office move and/or relocation of its IT and communications infrastructure.

Do you need to arrange wayleave agreements for any installation work?

Without doubt, one of the biggest and most painful challenges that businesses face when relocating (and one of the most common) is managing the wayleave process. Especially when, as in many cases, they have neglected to allow plenty of time for this complex and laborious process to be followed.

An entire report could be written about the many considerations and pitfalls surrounding wayleave requirements. Hopefully the following will provide a useful introduction to the processes involved and the main points to bear in mind.

What is a wayleave?

In basic terms, a wayleave is effectively a legally binding agreement between a land or property owner and a utilities, telecom or fibre provider, giving them the right to install and maintain apparatus such as internet cabling, power cables and overhead lines etc. on the owner's land or property.

In many cases, wayleaves need to be requested by tenants of a building so they can get broadband or other forms of internet access.

How long does it take to arrange a wayleave?

This is unpredictable and depends on several factors - the number of parties involved, the location of the building, the landlord, the various solicitors involved, the company overseeing the wayleave application and their level of experience in managing wayleaves etc.

However, you should allow for **3-4 months at the very least** – longer if possible. Companies should start the process at the earliest possible opportunity to minimise the risk of failing to meet key deadlines...and potentially finding themselves in their new office with no internet access.

What are the typical challenges?

- **Dealing with Network Operators:** often the customer does not have a dedicated Account Manager - they may have just a desk-based account manager and they often change. As a result, they don't have any real leverage with their Telco to "make things happen" whenever issues arise and the process stalls, as it often does.

This is where an experienced, nimble and proactive IT & Comms provider can be invaluable, stepping in and using their contacts, leverage and experience to move things forward.

- **Site Visits:** often painful and unpredictable and need careful management. For example, carriers such as BT often provide only 24 hours' notice and, when the engineer arrives, the customer's site contact is caught up in their day-to-day job. As a result, the engineer is unable to gain access and leaves the site, delaying the project and incurring extra unnecessary costs.

Having a communications provider to manage the project and get on top of things immediately will obviously increase the percentage of surveys being done first time.

- **Site Specific Risk and Method Statements ("SSRAMS"):** many landlords no longer accept generic RAMS and now require "Site Specific" RAMS. These require additional drawings and photographs that show the route of the fibre installation from the 'Meet Me' room to the customer's comms cabinet, including labelling of all fibre at pre-determined distances. The landlord will often determine what is required in the SSRAMS.
- **Managing Wayleave Parties:** a wayleave can be bi- or tri-partite (or more) and will involve the landlord's solicitors, tenant's solicitors and telecom solicitors. In some cases, property agents may also be involved. Coordinating discussions between these parties, chasing up solicitors etc. and ensuring any inevitable hold-ups in the process are addressed is both time-consuming and difficult to manage.
- **Lead Times:** as mentioned earlier, the whole process can take 3-4 months or more. Having an experienced IT & communications provider managing everything, while leveraging their contacts and carrier relationships, can significantly help reduce the burden on a company's resources and ensure that deadlines are met with a minimum of hassle.
- **Inadequate Indemnity Insurance:** sometimes the network carrier's level of indemnity insurance does not meet the landlord's minimum requirement. In these situations, the customer must then enter into a tripartite agreement and top up the insurance themselves. For example, the landlord may require a minimum £10m insurance while the carrier will only offer £5m – in this case, the customer would need to provide the remaining £5m indemnity cover themselves.

As well as the additional complications, costs and legal fees, this can also add a further 3-4-week delay to the project.

- **Fall Back:** in some cases, for example where companies have simply left it too late before beginning the wayleave process and/or placing the necessary orders, it becomes physically impossible for circuits to be delivered in time. Under these circumstances, it becomes necessary to implement interim solutions to provide connectivity to allow the company to continue operating as normal.

In such situations, working with a flexible and proactive communications provider, who can pull out all the stops and offer innovative alternative options in order to keep your business running, can make a world of difference.

Do you plan to keep your existing phone numbers?

If your company already uses “virtual”/cloud-based telephone numbers (e.g. SIP or Number Translation Services), retaining these numbers is simply a case of reprogramming them to terminate at the appropriate extensions at your new premises, no matter where in the UK you are moving to.

It is important to bear in mind though that, in the case of Number Translation Services (NTS) - where programmable, cloud-based numbers are used to deliver inbound calls to equivalent “dummy” numbers that reside on physical telephone lines (typically ISDN30) - new ISDN circuits will need to be installed at the new premises, along with a DDI range of the required size.

Note: the area code for these “dummy DDIs” is irrelevant, as they are unpublished and are used merely to accept incoming calls to the published virtual numbers.

The lead time for installation of new BT ISDN30 circuits is typically up to 20 working days, but is dependent on the site survey, the area, Openreach engineer availability/workloads and the time of year (e.g. BT and the other network carriers have a Christmas freeze period of around 1 month during which no new installations are carried out).

However, any business still relying on traditional ISDN circuits should be seriously thinking about moving to VoIP/SIP, especially if an office move or new office installation is planned (see the following section *“Should you consider moving from ISDN to SIP”*).

On the other hand, if the numbers associated to your business (your “published” numbers) currently reside on physical ISDN or PSTN circuits, keeping these numbers on traditional circuits is possible only if your new offices are in the same telephone exchange area as your current premises.

If you’re happy changing all your business telephone numbers, then clearly thought needs to be given to updating internal directories, stationery, websites, business cards etc.

However, there are still other options available:

1. Timescales allowing, bearing in mind the time required for wayleaves and circuit installations, the obvious choice in most cases would be to port your current numbers to an Internet Protocol (IP)-based service such as SIP (Session Initiation Protocol), with calls being carried over data circuits instead of traditional voice lines.

Although there are a few factors that need to be taken into consideration, this is a route that an increasing number of businesses are taking (and many have already taken); not only for the inherent flexibility and, usually, cost savings that such solutions provide, but also largely in anticipation of the imminent phasing out of ISDN services across all of the UK (more details in the section below, “Should you consider moving from ISDN to SIP?”).

In order to deploy a SIP solution, the key requirements are:

- i. A stable, QoS (Quality of Service)-enabled internet connection with adequate bandwidth to carry Voice traffic. In the event of network failure or other issues with the primary circuit, it is also recommended to have a backup circuit in place.
 - ii. If an on-site telephone system is to be used, it needs to be IP-enabled. If your existing PBX does not support IP telephony, moving to a hosted voice system is also an increasingly popular option, removing the need for maintenance contracts, upgrades and on-site equipment. Hosted voice solutions are paid for using a simple Opex model (per seat per month) and can be quickly and easily scaled up or down according to requirements.
2. Alternatively, porting existing numbers from ISDN to a Number Translation Service will also allow you to continue using them to receive calls. This porting process takes up to 22 working days (longer if porting requests are rejected for any reason). In addition to this, as explained earlier, new ISDN circuits and associated DDI numbers will also need to be provisioned, with the usual lead times that need to be considered.

As with SIP/VoIP, Number Translation Services also allow you to retain existing numbers and have complete control over where your inbound calls are delivered (excellent for Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery scenarios). However, unlike SIP, they do carry the additional cost of delivering calls from the virtual numbers to the ISDN endpoints.

In other words, you pay not only to make calls but also to receive them. This fact alone may make a SIP solution more desirable for many businesses.

Where companies find themselves just weeks away from relocating, with no measures yet in place to retain their numbers and/or no data connectivity yet installed; other, more temporary solutions can be put in place when working with a more innovative communications provider.

The question of how to retain existing numbers when moving offices to a new exchange area clearly raises numerous other considerations. Office relocations can be daunting, involving many separate moving parts which need to be carefully, holistically managed in order to complete the move on time, within budget, without downtime and with minimal disruption to the business.

With an experienced and competent IT & Telecoms service provider managing the whole process for you and doing all the heavy lifting, you can not only avoid problems and delays but also discover

sometimes unexpected ways to leverage the latest technological innovations to drive efficiency and growth along the way.

Should you consider moving from ISDN to SIP?

While as little as 5-10 years ago, many firms may have been nervous about taking the leap from traditional ISDN to SIP, this is now rapidly becoming the norm.

In fact, Vodafone, COLT and Verizon have already stopped selling ISDN and, with BT also ceasing supply of ISDN by 2020 and phasing it out completely by 2025, firms will have no choice but to switch to IP-based technologies for Voice communications.

There are several compelling arguments for moving to SIP sooner rather than later and an office relocation, with your existing networks having to be moved anyway, could be the ideal time to make the switch.

Key benefits of SIP include:

- Reduced call costs
- Free calls between sites
- Scalability
- Complete control over call routing
- Rich features and functionality, particularly around conferencing, collaboration and mobility

Depending on your type of company, business model, current infrastructure and priorities, there are many ways to go about moving to SIP – should you use your existing phone system or move to a hosted platform? Should you use ethernet connectivity or is fibre broadband enough for your requirements? How much resilience needs to be built into the solution?

There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution and these are all questions that are best discussed in detail with experts in the field. Make sure to work with an IT & Telecoms company who have years of demonstrable experience in helping firms of all shapes and sizes carry out successful, pain-free SIP to ISDN migrations.

Should you keep your existing phone system or move to a hosted voice service?

As outlined earlier, this will depend on your business requirements and priorities. Questions that need to be asked include:

- How scalable does our telephony solution need to be?
- Could our IT resource be put to better use if we no longer had to worry about maintaining the phone system, installing security patches, software updates etc.?
- Would a “per seat per month” Opex model be preferable to a CapEx model?
- Is equipment depreciation an issue for us?
- How important is it to our business that we retain our own physical on-site phone system?

Hosted telephony can offer numerous benefits, but it does not necessarily suit all businesses. Consulting an expert communications provider can provide useful guidance and aid in identifying the best options for your business.

What are your carriers' timescales for any network connections?

As well as lead times associated with obtaining wayleaves, it is also critical to factor in the time it takes carriers to install the necessary circuits at your new site. This varies from carrier to carrier and will also depend on whether the site is already "on-net", i.e. if the required infrastructure is already present on the premises.

Depending on these factors, lead times typically vary significantly, from around 20 to 90 working days. No timescales will be confirmed before a site survey is carried out and any potential issues are identified so, once again, the key is to begin the process as early as possible and plan for the worst.

Have you checked network requirements and local availability at your new site?

Existing availability of your preferred network(s) at your new site is not a given. Some carriers may be present, some may not. If your site is off-net for a certain carrier, bringing it on-net will have an impact on timescales and cost.

Again, planning well in advance is key – find out which networks have a presence at your site, what connectivity options are available and any associated one-off and recurring costs. Ideally, you can find all this out before you even choose your new office and use this knowledge in your decision-making process.

Is fibre available for faster broadband?

Again, fibre broadband / FTTC (Fibre to the Cabinet) / FTTP (Fibre to the Premises) availability can never be assumed. Even in major cities such as London, there are large areas which still do not have access to fibre broadband...so make sure to check well in advance. Work with your communications provider, before you decide on your new office, to establish whether the sites you are considering have fibre availability.

Does network access inside and outside the building allow for resilience?

How resilient does your infrastructure need to be? While some companies may feel that a single ethernet circuit with fibre broadband as failover is enough to meet their needs, others require something far more robust. This may involve multiple circuits, using diverse carriers and different

entry points into the building, possibly with links to data centres and/or other sites to allow voice and data traffic to follow a different route in the event of, for example, any network or circuit failures.

The more resilient your infrastructure needs to be, the more critical it is to understand what options are available to you, and what limitations there are, in order to design a solution that meets your requirements. Again, consulting with an expert communications provider can give valuable insights and help you make more informed decisions.

What measures do you have in place to avoid downtime?

When the day finally comes to move your infrastructure across to your new site, it's important to have a plan to ensure that your IT and communications switch over seamlessly...and also consider what could potentially go wrong and have contingencies and roll-back options in place.

Do you have a full inventory of your IT & Telecom equipment, lines and services? Are any of these no longer used/needed?

In other words, what do you have now and what do you need going forward? Moving offices provides a perfect opportunity to reduce any unwanted circuits and re-negotiate contracts to reduce costs. Often this exercise flags up resiliency and Disaster Recovery inadequacies that can also be addressed as part of the project.

DoubleEdge have decades of experience in helping companies, from SMEs to multinational corporations, with audits and benchmarking exercises; and our cutting-edge consultancy services ensure our clients remain competitive and have the peace of mind of knowing that their IT and communications are lean, reliable and cost-effective.

Summary

The above list of considerations is by no means exhaustive but covers the main points that we encounter on a daily basis and which all absolutely need to be taken into account by any firm planning or even just considering an office and/or infrastructure relocation.

Other questions include:

- Is it better to move from cable to WiFi?
- Do you need to revise your disaster recovery policy?
- Have you taken network installation costs and surcharges into account?
- Do you have a configuration plan for all your telephones and computers?
- Where are power points located and where are new ones required?
- If you're moving into larger offices as a result of business expansion, what additional hardware and software licences are required?

We understand that every business is unique.

Whether your company is a small or medium-sized local business with limited IT resource, a nationwide enterprise looking to gain an edge over your competitors, or a global corporation frustrated with dealing with endless red tape for what should be straightforward procedures, we hope you found this report helpful and thank you for your interest.

To arrange a free, no-obligation consultation (by telephone or face-to-face), please contact Steve Dourdil at steve.dourdil@edge-edge.co.uk / 020 3869 2442.

DOUBLEEDGE

About DoubleEdge

DoubleEdge Professional Services is an independent, specialist IT and communications service provider. We believe in the power of new technology to transform the way businesses are able to work. But we also believe that proactive, knowledgeable support from people who really care is at the heart of delivering performance improvement.

Recent years have seen a transformation in IT service delivery. In the competitive battle to improve productivity and save costs, all service providers are adopting process automation software and customer management systems to reduce headcount.

The problem is, technology designed to eliminate human error is also eliminating human input, and service quality is suffering. Clients now see the tangible business benefit of a personal service from individuals with the proactive, conscientious qualities that get things done. This service deficit is compounded by a seemingly continual stream of mergers and acquisitions.

We've all seen it - a perfectly good supplier/customer relationship is terminated by an acquisition where, for reasons of cost rationalisation, client support is moved to a faceless, multinational service provider. The client is treated like a number, not a person, and decides to move to another support company. Proof that size is no guarantee of quality.

Faced with these issues, businesses come to DoubleEdge for a service that combines slick online services with uniquely personal support from people who care.

Visit www.edge-edge.co.uk for more information.

© Copyright DoubleEdge Professional Services Ltd 2019. All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, adapted, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of DoubleEdge Professional Services Ltd.