Moving your computing center from an old facility to a new facility is undoubtedly one of the more stressful tasks encountered by your organization. Clearly, a lot of planning needs to go into such a move. To guarantee an early and accurate alignment between your schedule and the budget for the move, every step of the process must be planned, communicated, and managed carefully.

To minimize the risk of extended outages and service interruptions to your customers, your organization must have Plan A, Plan B and Plan C.

A project such as this requires much planning. A lot will depend on who you select to put in charge of this project. Your move necessitates project planning as well as technical and organizational skills of the highest degree in order to be prepared for all eventualities.

To reduce the nightmare of data loss and other potential disruptions to critical business operations and damage your organization's business and reputation, what follows are some questions and issues to consider:

Have a project team with key advisors – Your team must include:

1. Members from IT operations
2. Representatives from your vendors such as:
    a. Applications, data network operations
    b. Telephone companies
    c. Data companies
    d. Internet Service Providers
    e. Applications and technologies partners
    f. All other Business Associates

Key stakeholders must to be recruited early on as advisors for your move in order to ensure the thorough planning throughout your organization and your business associates.

Have a PROJECT PLAN – Your move demands planning with ALL inter-connected activities including technical and operational components of your IT organization. Additional components of your project plan should include:
    a. Structure and scope of the move
    b. Cost
    c. Timelines for all required technical resources
    d. Timelines for all business resources

Have a Project Manager **–** Your move must have a dedicated project manager who is closely aligned with the IT organization, to lead and coordinate all activities during the planning phase, through the implementation of the data move or relocation, and during the post-move occupancy. This person must also ensure newly defined processes and procedures will continue to be utilized going forward.

Knowing what's there - Before you begin planning the move, you need to know precisely what is currently housed in your office. Although this is a question few organizations can answer, it is also a required element for a successful move of your data center. Inventories of the systems and infrastructures that will be affected by the move or consolidation have to be documented; this requires up-to-date inventories with a very strict change-management policy for your servers and applications.

Back up ALL of your data – Most regulations require the availability, integrity and availability of your existing data. You need to have a current, complete, and accurate back up of your data and applications. Your team also must test and re-test to make certain all of your electronic information is there, usable, and accessible from the customer and the end-user perspectives.

Have a Disaster Recovery Plan – Moving your servers, applications, infrastructure, and workstations is a daunting task. Simple scenarios with regard to what happens needs to be a part of this plan such as: What would happen if a server came over dead on arrival; what do you need to do to fix it?

A sudden, unplanned calamitous event could cause great damage or loss. Your team needs to have an executable policy and procedures to handle these events. Your policy and procedures must include activities and programs that are designed to return your entity to an acceptable condition to restore your infrastructure and your critical business functions.

Opportunity for change and better secure your network – Why not start fresh, now that you have a clean slate? Your team should look at some of the following to see how they can be beneficial to your organization:

      a. Moving stuff vs. buying new stuff
   b. Evaluate all of your technology vendors

Accurately predict the technology impact on your relocation. The first question you need to address in preparation for a move is how long you can afford to be down. In a large enterprise-type environment, the typical answer is that no amount of downtime is acceptable. These types of environments need to have a backup data center that can handle operations while the primary data center is being moved.

To minimize the risk associated with data center relocation and server migrations and to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the critical data and to ensure all of the end-user performance expectations are met, your team needs to accurately predict problems and issues such as:

    a. Server configurations for each application

    b. Complexity of your applications, technology and your inter-server dependencies. With this, you are able to create a staged move plan and identify which servers must be moved together

    c. Determine if any modification to network infrastructure is necessary

    d. Determine whether techniques such as terminal services or WAN optimization will effectively resolve potential performance issues

    e. Discover application design issues that might make data center relocation problematic

    f. Validate disaster recovery and business continuity plans

GET HELP – Your team must have a realistic expectation for the move. To undertake and prepare for the move, a "sanity-check" with regard to the team, your limitations, budget and timelines, and other projections with outcomes needs to be carried out.
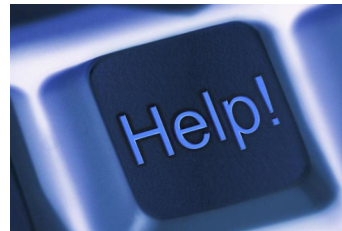
More often than not, your datacenter move can be completed on-time, within budget, and with minimal disruption of services by getting outside help. COMMON$_d$ can help you address these critical concerns before your move. To ensure the success of your data center relocation, make sure you get proper company to assist you. For additional information regarding how COMMON$_d$ TIPs^{TM} can assist you with your data center move, data center security, or any data-related issues, please visit, our website at www.commond.com or contact us directly via email at roi@commond.com or via phone at 303.521.4044.