

BUSINESS PROPERTY REVIEW



Sitting comfortably... Simon Butterfield, from Broadfern, and Steven Jelfs, from Fusion, at Broadfern's new offices

Taking the pain out of relocation

Moving home. It's supposed to be the second most stressful experience after divorce.

But Birmingham-based project management specialist Fusion removed the stress factor by ensuring the success of a £1 million business relocation for one leading energy consultancy.

Energy Consultancy Broadfern outgrew its offices in Oak Tree Park, Redditch, last year and purchased Ravens Court, a 17,500 sq ft new office building with enough space for 160 employees on the nearby Ravensbank Business Park.

To minimise the disruption to employees and clients, the company appointed Fusion to take care of the entire relocation.

"They needed to ensure the move was successfully completed but simply couldn't afford to take their eye off the business," says Fusion director Steven Jelfs.

"The upheaval of relocating a modern, sophisticated business, with all its physical and technological complexities, can set companies back months, even years, if not properly planned and managed.

"Our brief was complex but certainly achievable, provided it was approached in the right manner, and there were encouraging signs from the outset. First and foremost, the company looked ahead and bought themselves that most valuable asset - time."

Planning began well over a year before the move itself, with Fusion hired as relocation project manager in 2004 and brought fully on board from January last year.

Although the distance between the old offices and new location was small, the logistics and sensitivity involved in uprooting a mature organisation and fitting out new office space

were considerable. "Our tasks fell into four main categories," says Mr Jelfs, "time planning, project costing, co-ordinating specialist contractors and IT integration in conjunction with the in-house team.

"More specifically, we had to bring two formerly separate offices together under one roof and ensure there is still room to expand in the foreseeable future."

With such delicate and yet vitally important duties to perform, the client-provider relationship is described as all-important.

According to Mr Jelfs, this key element was helped by the client's willingness to accept advice from the specialists. "Personalities are clearly important, as we are working very closely together over a significant period of time," he says.

"Whether it's domestic or business, moving home is commonly acknowledged as

a potentially stressful experience.

"It was therefore extremely good to work with a management team prepared to accept a vision and with the confidence to allow experts to take the right action at the right times."

This view is shared by Broadfern's Simon Butterfield, who says: "We took a strategic decision to appoint specialists and to give them sufficient responsibility to execute the brief. This enabled us to stay focused on our own affairs, knowing the relocation was in good hands.

"We agreed a project fee from the outset, together with key target dates for clearly identified tasks. The approach certainly paid off for us, with the move completed on time and within the set budget. Most crucially of all, we experienced minimal inconvenience and distraction."