

Lab Manager[®]

MAGAZINE

Run Your Lab Like a Business

July / August 2008

Volume 3 • Number 2

TIPS ON
MOVING LAB
EQUIPMENT

Running
♦ your lab like a

Business

**TOOLS AND
TECHNIQUES**
Lab Managers Need
to Succeed



MOVING LABORATORY EQUIPMENT

LABORATORY RELOCATION REQUIRES EXPERTISE IN MANAGING THE COMPLEXITIES ASSOCIATED WITH MOVING SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS AND SAMPLES. THIS ARTICLE DISCUSSES SOME KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN EVALUATING POTENTIAL RELOCATION PROVIDERS.

As pharmaceutical and other science-focused organizations restructure in this era of consolidation and outsourcing, the need to move research and testing equipment, samples, and even complete laboratories to new locations is an increasing trend as companies look to optimize utilization of their capital investment or shift production to geographies with lower costs of doing business. Laboratories, regardless of size or field, can minimize the financial, scientific, and regulatory compliance risks associated with relocation if they make the right moves along the way.

One of the most important steps a laboratory can take is finding an experienced instrument and scientific sample relocation specialist. The use of a specialized relocation service provider can do much to streamline the transition process, ensure the safety of instruments and samples, maintain a laboratory's compliance standing (where necessary), and provide the lab manager with real-time visibility throughout the process.

Relocation requires deliberate, careful, and documented steps and entails many facets, all of which must be addressed in a manner that ensures maximum uptime at both ends of the process. Instrumentation needs to be inventoried and decisions made about what to move versus what to retire and how to best deploy instrumentation at another facility. Protocols must be followed for

decommissioning and recommissioning. Significant care must be taken in preparation and transport of scientific instruments and valuable samples.

Moving across international borders introduces additional complexity, including customs regulations and specialized shipping documentation. Challenges are ramped up another notch in heavily regulated industries that necessitate compliance with Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

Since a typical laboratory relocation can take four to six months of planning, such a project is best handled by outsourcing to laboratory service providers whose specialized expertise in scientific asset relocation can minimize the impact of moving on the laboratory's scientific mission and productivity.

Relocation specialists often assume end-to-end responsibility for all aspects of the move, working closely with a laboratory's internal resources and external providers. In this scenario, laboratory personnel can focus on research and testing while their relocation partner's experts manage the many business and logistical needs specific to the move. No matter what the laboratory's size or scope, deploying a laboratory relocation specialist can ease the burden and logistical challenges and minimize disruption to the laboratory's primary mission.

Project Tracking and Scheduling

Deliberate, proven processes are key in any lab relocation, starting with research as fundamental as identifying in-house assets destined to be relocated. Corraling the multitude of details — including instruments, contacts, and samples as well as meetings and timelines — should be streamlined with the use of expert project management software.

Management software ensures accountability for both processes and timelines by tracking key events and maintaining inventory control. Items to include:

- **Instrument inventory**
- **Regular strategy meetings**
- **Labeling/tagging equipment**
- **GLP/GMP document creation**
- **Equipment relocation timelines (with move and install dates)**
- **Chemical move provisions**
- **Sample handling and transport**
- **Post-calibration**
- **Repair**
- **Qualification**
- **Large equipment moves**

A relocation consultancy should explain the tools they employ to efficiently manage and schedule a relocation project as well as the processes employed that will verify accuracy when completing tasks such as a comprehensive inventory audit and asset labeling. The relocation partner should also ensure that the project management process can accommodate the inevitable changes to tasks, relocation needs, and timing. The timeline and process should proactively address potential hurdles, such as the special needs of moving oversized equipment, and provide the lab man-

ager with maximum visibility throughout the engagement.

Once in the new location, project tracking should continue through reinstallation of all laboratory instruments and holistic testing prior to performing any qualifications or validations required post-move.

Collaboration and Teamwork

As with any large and complex project, collaboration between your relocation partner and your internal team is a critical success factor.

An effective model is to establish a corporate team including a project manager and representatives from facilities, engineering, quality assurance and compliance, along with scientists and the construction manager. The service provider should designate their on-site project manager, scientists supporting the project, customer service engineers, and support staff.

Your service provider should then structure lines of communication and timelines including the client and any subcontractors handling the physical move, chemical waste management, and other specialized logistical support.

Joint meetings are crucial to the success of any relocation project; and your relocation partner should ensure these forums occur on a regular basis. Success often requires that teams need to meet weekly or biweekly, particularly in the latter stages of relocation engagement, in order to avoid miscommunication and maximize efficiency.

Multi-vendor Qualification and Validation

Knowledge of regulatory compliance is crucial in any move involving regulated laboratories. Whether an instrument is moved down the hall or across the country, its regulatory status must be



safeguarded. As your partner, your relocation specialist should demonstrate knowledge of compliance requirements and have the technical expertise and resources to handle analytical instrument validation/qualification across a range of technologies and manufacturers.

For laboratories in heavily regulated environments, a relocation service provider's demonstrated regulatory compliance experience and expertise should be critical selection criteria. Selecting a firm with proven multi-vendor compliance capabilities can provide essential insights regarding overarching regulatory compliance issues and implications associated with laboratory relocation, and help protect the lab from undue risk during the move process.

Significant financial and operational efficiencies are gained when the relocation service provider can also perform qualifications/validations on a variety of instruments from various manufacturers while maintaining the integrity of the document audit trail during the entire relocation process — an approach that ensures maintaining GXP status. Cross-manufacturer expertise also enables the service provider to manage all equipment manufacturer protocols and create consistent reporting templates to harmonize documentation while streamlining control, the auditing of each instrument, and review of instrument-specific histories throughout the relocation process. In some instances, the service provider can even develop custom qualification protocols.

Whether it is regulatory knowledge, scientific instrument expertise, or operational efficiency, depth of knowledge comes into play most critically when the unexpected happens. That's when the utilization of a specialized laboratory relocation provider with experience in mitigating the myriad of issues that can arise during the relocation process proves itself as one of the smartest investments today's well-informed lab manager can make.

Summary

Moving analytical instrumentation is an innately complex process that requires careful planning and execution to ensure that scientific instrumentation, laboratory equipment, and precious samples arrive at their destination safely, and that the new laboratory meets all compliance requirements and is able to become productive as quickly as possible.

With management of the entire relocation process by a specialized laboratory relocation partner with dual expertise in scientific asset relocation and multi-vendor instrument services, both scientists and laboratory managers can focus on scientific and business goals with minimal risk and downtime.

Joseph Tehrani, Ph.D., is Global Business Leader of Multivendor Validation & Laboratory Relocation; Kevin Ajoku is Senior Manager of Territory Marketing & Business Development; and Ralph Dioguardi is Business Manager for Laboratory Relocation for PerkinElmer's OneSource Laboratory Services, which includes laboratory relocation. www.perkinelmer.com/onesource.



PerkinElmer[®]
For the Better

Corporate Headquarters

940 Winter Street

Waltham, Massachusetts 02451, USA

Customer Care: +1-800-762-4000 (USA)

Corporate Inquiries: +1-781-663-6900