

Interior designers are well suited to provide this service. Interior designers have been trained to pay attention to details, and to care about all aspects of the interior, especially the satisfaction of the occupants upon move-in. Yolanda Mazzoni is an interior designer who often has the project assignment role of relocation specialist. She says, “My role as a relocation specialist allows me to use my expertise with design, furniture, construction, and management and apply it to a role that provides clients with a well-rounded individual that is able to lead, plan, and manage minute detail. The strategic aspect of the planning involved in large complex scenarios is challenging. It is very similar in nature to master planning. The results are black and white. It can be either successful or it fails. When the proper planning is in place, it is always successful and rewarding.” Tom Bay, an interior designer who is working as a project manager at the Pentagon, agrees that interior designers are well suited for this specialty practice area. According to Bay, “Usually architectural firms are hands off as far as relocation services are concerned. Even interior design firms were not interested in performing these services after the early 1990s recession. The younger designers are not familiar with the tasks that are required, nor do they understand the furniture aspects that comprise much of the relocation services. This can be viewed as a good thing. Interior designers and architects have refocused on their original goals and calling. This refocus has left a void. And voids result in opportunities for others. For those interior designers who are “old geezers,” relocation services represent something we always did. For me, I fell into relocation consultation by accident. Water seeks a void in a downhill struggle. It’s a natural flow. There will always be a need for these services, and my background offers the experience that many younger designers just don’t have or want to have.”

The relocation specialist works with key members of the client’s staff and assumes primary responsibility for the relocation process. He or she offers guidance to the client regarding the preparation of the facilities and the communication to the employees affected by the move. The specialist works closely with the client in developing requests for proposal (RFPs) to forward to potential vendors and identifies any outside consultants and/or vendors that may be needed. (See Figure 19-2.) A relocation specialist may perform any or all of the following tasks:

- ***Establish a realistic budget and schedule.***
- ***Assign responsibilities.***

- *Coordinate vendors and contractors.*
- *Qualify and select move vendors.*
- *Provide furniture management.*
- *Coordinate specialty areas.*
- *Prepare employees.*
- *Provide on-site coordination.*
- *Perform post-move evaluation (see Figure 19-3.)*

Yolanda Mazzoni's services are designed to take companies through a step-by-step process of decision making during the entire relocation process. She describes the process as a team process: "The process begins with the formation of internal and external project teams who set goals and objectives for the move; continues with monthly target dates for meeting set goals and objectives, and ends with a post-move-in evaluation. Generally, the most complex relocation tasks are those involved in the phased relocation and reuse of existing furniture and equipment for the new facility. There is serious work involved in organizing the relocation process that could be overwhelming to an inexperienced team. Creative use of tools and carefully defined procedures minimizes employee downtime, equipment downtime, lost production, and interruptions to customer service."

The typical candidate profile of a relocation specialist reflects a very organized and detail-oriented individual. He/she must be able to interact with all types and levels of individuals from the temporary "move vendor" employees to the client's CEO. The most effective individual is one who is very familiar with furniture systems, electrical/data coordination, and general construction practices. Marci Porritt, an interior designer, was introduced to relocation consulting as an outsourced provider, planning and supervising a series of small moves for an insurance company. She then provided outsourced relocation management at the World Bank, with two other interior designers, moving 4,300 bank employees over an 18-month period: "We handled all of the pre-move activity and vendor coordination. From Thursday through Sunday we would supervise the actual move activity, and on Monday morning we would handle the post-move adjustments." Naoto Oka, a design manager at the World Bank, simply defines such relocation services