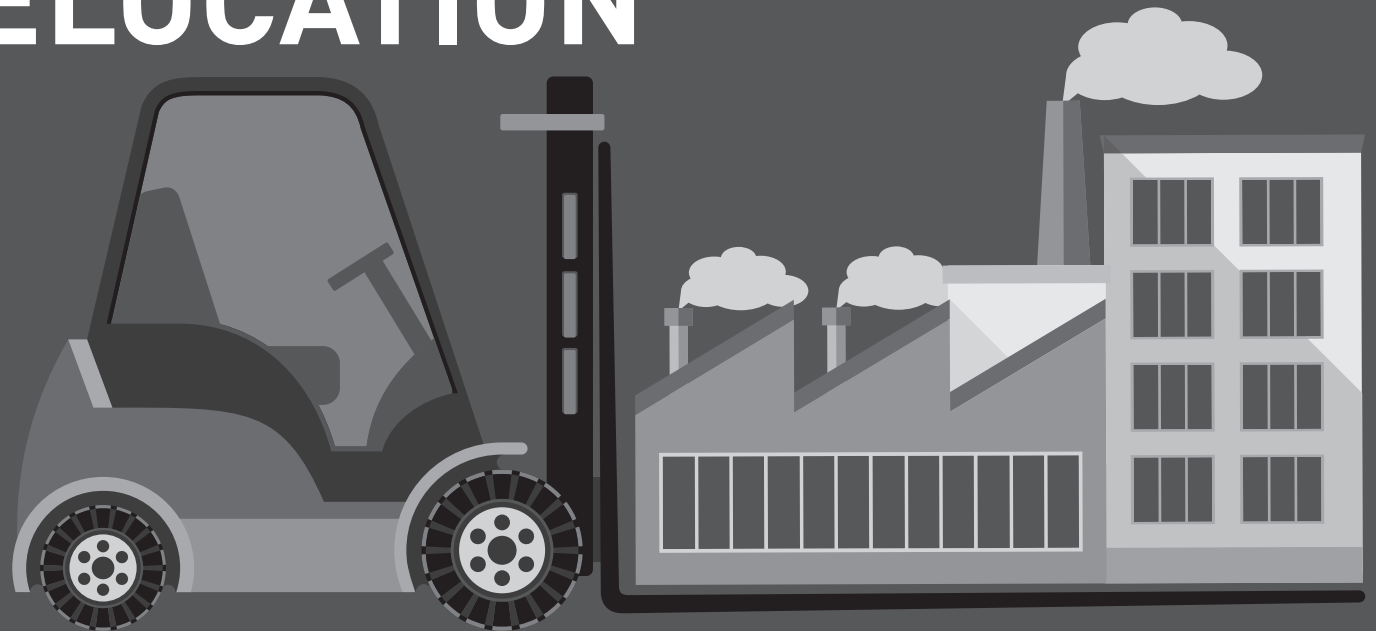


# THE 10 CRITICAL INGREDIENTS IN ANY SUCCESSFUL PLANT RELOCATION



 **DEUFOL**

Relocating to a new plant, warehouse, or other facility? A relocation can be a major event for nearly any type of business, and the process can bring a wide range of risks. Your equipment could be damaged during packaging or in transit. Parts and components could get lost somewhere in the process. The relocation could disrupt your normal business.

Fortunately, you can minimize these risks and hit your objectives if you have a detailed and comprehensive relocation plan in place. Planning can eliminate some of the toughest relocation challenges. Below are **10 items** that should be included in every plant relocation. Use these items as a framework to develop your relocation strategy.

# 1. Written Relocation Plan Document

You likely have written plans and processes for every function in your facility, from how you manufacture your products to how you pack and distribute to even how you protect employee health and safety on the job. Shouldn't you also have a written plan for how you relocate into your new facility?

The answer to that question is a resounding yes. Your written relocation plan is the guiding document for the entire project. It lays out the goals and objectives for the relocation, such as budget, timeline, and the desired outcome. It also identifies potential risks and processes for managing those risks.

The written relocation plan may include many of the elements listed in this paper. Without a plan in place, you may be forced to take an ad hoc approach, which could make you more vulnerable to equipment or facility damage, budget overruns, delays, lost production, and much more. Before you move a single piece of machinery, make sure you have a planning document in place.



## 2. Risk Assessment

In many ways, plant relocation is all about risk management. For many companies, their top priority is to avoid machinery damage or worker injury. You can't minimize these risks if you haven't identified them. Start by creating an inventory of potential risks that could threaten the schedule, cost, or successful outcome of the relocation. What are the threats that could arise?

For instance, perhaps you could suffer damage to equipment or inventory. There's a major risk that the relocation could lead to lost production time and threaten your ability to meet important deadlines. Perhaps you could find out in the relocation process that the new facility doesn't have utility outlets and jacks in the correct areas to accommodate your machinery.

The truth is that the list of potential risks could be very long. Every relocation project faces unique risks and roadblocks. It's up to you to identify which risks are the most likely to occur on your relocation, and which would be the most costly to deal with. You may want to assign a score or weight to each risk so you know which are most deserving of your attention.



### 3. Layout Review

Graphical layouts of the existing facility and the new facility are critical to a successful relocation. This may seem like common sense. However, the reality is that far too many companies undertake a major relocation without first mapping out the transport route.

Your layouts should include the existing facility, the new facility, and the transit routes between the two locations. The layouts should answer some important questions:

- Where do certain machines go?
- Where are you storing materials and inventory during the relocation?
- How should shelving be installed in the facility?
- Are the bay doors large enough to accommodate your equipment?
- Can forklifts and other transport equipment fit down the aisles in your facilities?
- Do your machines need to be placed near outlets, ducts, or vents?
- Are the facility floors properly reinforced to support the weight of the equipment as well as the weight of the forklift or lifting apparatus that is moving it to its new location?

This is just a small sampling of some of the issues you may uncover during the development and review of your layouts. The layout may need to go through several drafts and versions. Also, you could even drill down into detailed layouts of specific areas. For instance, you may have a layout of your warehouse areas to map out how materials should be stocked. Or you could have a layout of the assembly line to provide greater clarity on that area.



## 4. Detailed, Realistic Timeline

Just as your relocation layout should be detailed, so too should your schedule. Many companies make the mistake of creating a broad, high-level timeline. For example, they simply block out the days that the relocation will take place. Others may take it a step further and broadly classify that certain departments will move on certain days.

Ideally, your schedule should drill down even deeper. Go beyond simply scheduling departments. Instead, detail which machines or blocks of inventory will be loaded onto which trucks at specific times. Designate a specific order of packing and unpacking.

The benefit of a detailed schedule is that it helps you see whether you're on track. You can quickly make changes if data show you've fallen behind. You also may be able to develop a schedule and process that allows you to continue some level of operations even while the relocation is underway.



## 5. Equipment Condition Check

The lead up to your relocation is a great time to audit your equipment and machinery. This is helpful for a couple of reasons. First, it gives you a chance to take inventory of the current state of your equipment. You may notice defects or maintenance needs that were previously unknown. You may even decide that some machinery should simply be replaced rather than relocated. That could reduce the amount of equipment that has to be transported to the new facility.

Most importantly, though, you can use this review as a benchmark when you inspect your equipment after the relocation. If a piece of machinery has damage that didn't exist before the relocation, you should be able to backtrack through the process to see where the damage occurred. Be sure to document your equipment review so you can easily make comparisons later.

At Deufol, we use proprietary photo documentation software to give our customers the unique ability to see their products and parts as they move through your supply chain. This isn't figurative transparency. This is literal visibility of your pieces, packages, and crates.

As we package your equipment, we apply scannable bar codes. At each step in the process — from packaging to shipment to unpacking on the receiving end — we scan the parts and containers and upload the data into a cloud-based file structure where you can access the information. The result is that we can ensure quality throughout the process, eliminate delays and inefficiencies, and protect you from in-transit damage.

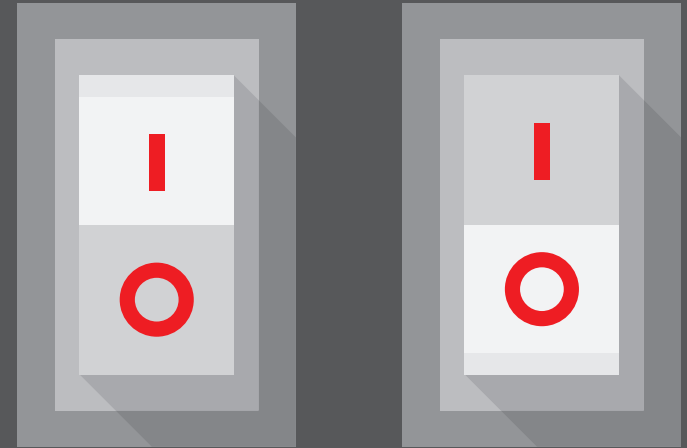


## 6. Practice Run

Practice makes perfect as the saying goes. Obviously, you can't do a full relocation rehearsal with all the equipment packed and loaded on trucks and forklifts. However, you can walk and drive the relocation route. This could uncover hurdles and roadblocks that you didn't know existed.

For example, we recently uncovered a serious risk during a walk-through for a customer's relocation. We noticed that the floor in their facility wasn't reinforced and may not be able to support the weight of a forklift as it transported machinery. Because of that observation, we were able to work with engineers to support the floor and minimize risk exposure.

You could discover that your bay doors aren't wide enough, or that your originally planned route may have low overhead clearances. You may discover that you'll need large vehicle permits to navigate certain roads. A practice run can help you identify these risks and more.



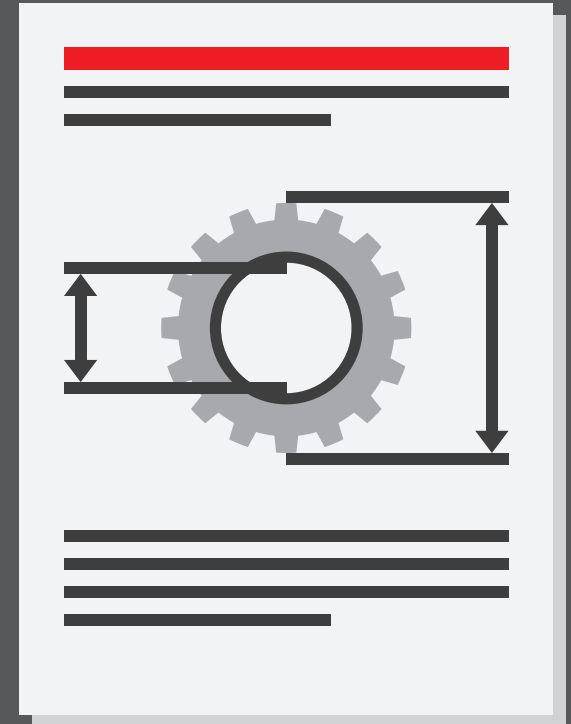


## 7. Detailed Work Instructions

Who will actually disassemble the equipment and package the parts, materials, and other items? Your in-house employees? Or contractors?

In either case, they'll need clear instructions on exactly how and when each piece should be disassembled, packaged, and loaded. After all, you went to the trouble to develop a schedule and packaging plan. You want to make sure it's implemented.

An experienced packaging partner can create detailed work instructions that are so specific that they answer virtually all questions about the packaging process, and so that there's no guesswork.



## 8. Relocation Database

It's easy to keep track of a piece of large machinery during a relocation. It may not be as easy to track small parts and components. That's why it's helpful to set up an easily-accessible database at the outset of the project. You can use the database to track parts and containers in real-time and ensure that everything has made it to the appropriate destination.

One helpful strategy is to use scannable tags with barcodes. These tags can be applied to individual parts or entire containers or pallets. Your team can scan the tags as they move through each step in the relocation process. You can track your parts and products in real time, ensuring that they reach the correct location and that the job stays on track.



## 9. Key Metrics and Indicators

You want your relocation to happen on schedule and under budget, with minimal damage or injury. However, those are broad goals that require timely measurement to allow for appropriate adjustments to be made. You may want to establish key metrics and indicators you can monitor throughout the relocation to determine whether you're on-track to hit your goals.

For instance, you might set detailed deadlines about when certain containers or equipment should be on trucks or at the new facility. You may set targets related to labor hours or even quality checkpoints. The key is to establish metrics aligned to your most important goals. Then you can better monitor the progress of your relocation and make changes as needed.



# 10. Performance Review and Lessons Learned

Finally, once the relocation is complete, it's helpful to review your performance. Did you hit your objectives? What went well? What areas and processes could have been improved?

Granted, facility relocations may not be frequent events in your business. However, you could have a need to relocate machinery in the future. Examine your performance on this move and document any lessons that were learned. Those could save you time and money on future relocations.

Perhaps the best way to address all of these items is to partner with an experienced company who can manage your relocation for you. They'll have the expertise and knowledge to develop and implement a strategy and to protect you from excessive risk.



Ready to plan your relocation? Let's talk about it. Contact us at Deufol today to learn more about our facility relocation services. We welcome the opportunity to discuss your needs and goals and develop a plan.

**Contact Us**