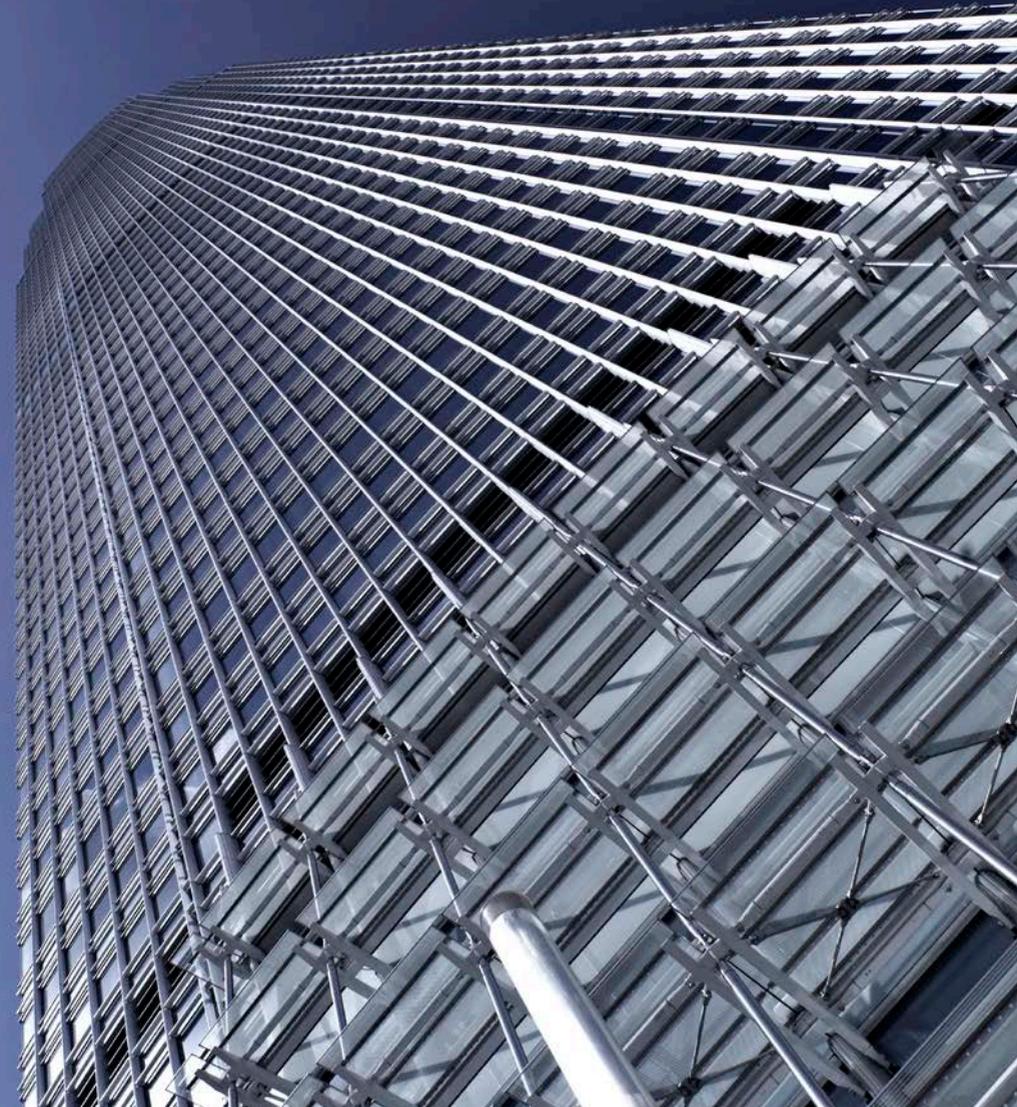


The Six Most Common Deadly Interior Design Mistakes

“Compressing the schedule rushes your vendors and puts too many bodies on the job site at one time.”

04

Compressing the schedule



Poor Selection of Designer or Contractor

01

First, the most common and most costly mistake is poor choice of designer / contractor. If you don't allow enough time to properly plan a move, you may end up making your selections in haste. The simplest route is to pick a designer who is able to deliver a 'turn-key solution' for you.

In the event you wish to choose every vendor individually, be prepared because there are indeed many vendors to consider when you are moving office from interior designers, general contractors, project managers, telephone Systems and services vendors, computer Systems and networking vendors, cabling installers, security System vendors, furniture System vendors, and movers/haulers, just to name the main ones.

Hiring a bad vendor can jeopardize the entire move. A vendor who can't deliver on time can cause other delays further down the line and additional costs can multiply.

Selecting the most suitable designer / contractor always seems easier than it really is. Since it is assumed that all designers are created equal, **the temptation is to hire the vendor with the lowest price – don't believe it.**

“Hiring a bad vendor can jeopardize the entire move.”

Most relocation managers will be seeking references of satisfied customers who used a specific vendor before but no vendor will furnish names of dissatisfied customers. So what should you do? There are important areas of focus that will help you find the right vendor and they go way beyond the price and reference approach.

First, you need to determine the typical project size and scope in which your designer has the most experience. **You want to match your project as closely as possible with your designer's experience.**

You also need to check whether the designer works on offices of a similar size to yours or do they suit a different size projects, do they have project management capabilities, what are their support abilities and do they have the full compliment of associated vendors.

The choice is ultimately yours, and there is no right or wrong answer. Once you have shortened the list of potential designers, you can arrange try to take a tour of a customer site. This will give you a good idea of the vendor's real life experiences. You want to ask the questions. Speaking of questions, you need to arm yourself with meaningful questions.

Starting too late – When should you start planning?

02

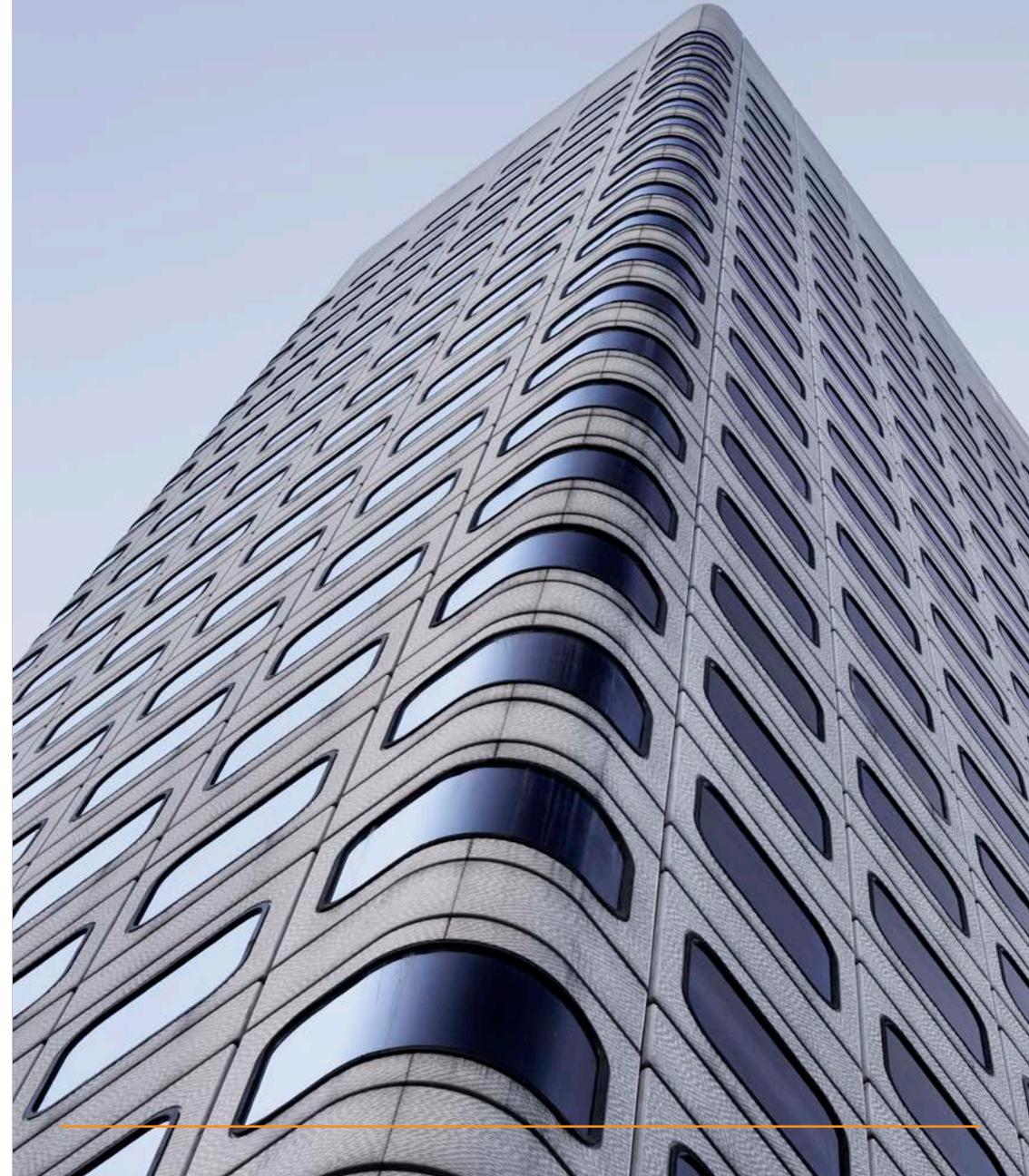
The second most common mistake with any office relocation is starting to plan too late, either evaluating your office space needs, selecting an agent or agents to work with, selecting the right office, selecting contractors / designers etc. An office move can take many months, even after a site has been selected and a lease has been signed.

Most tenants will work back from their lease expiry date, making allowance for moving out of their current space early, to factor in sufficient time to reinstate their current premises. However, many are still too optimistic over the time schedule which leads to serious complications later (*See mistake no 5*).

Reinstatement can take between 2-6 weeks, fitting out 1-3 months, ordering of materials before fitting out can take over 1 month and settling the legal paperwork can take longer than many expect and before you know it you are already behind schedule. **On average you should start to plan your office relocation 7-12 months in advance depending on the size requirement.**

Generally most tenants underestimate the time they need for each stage of the office relocation and the watchword here is to be prepared and allow ample time. Often plans / designs change during the course of the process, so starting early is a safeguard against confronting huge pressures in the final stages.

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“Without guidance, entire systems are forgotten until the last minute, and must then be procured with unbudgeted funds. ”

Inadequate budgeting

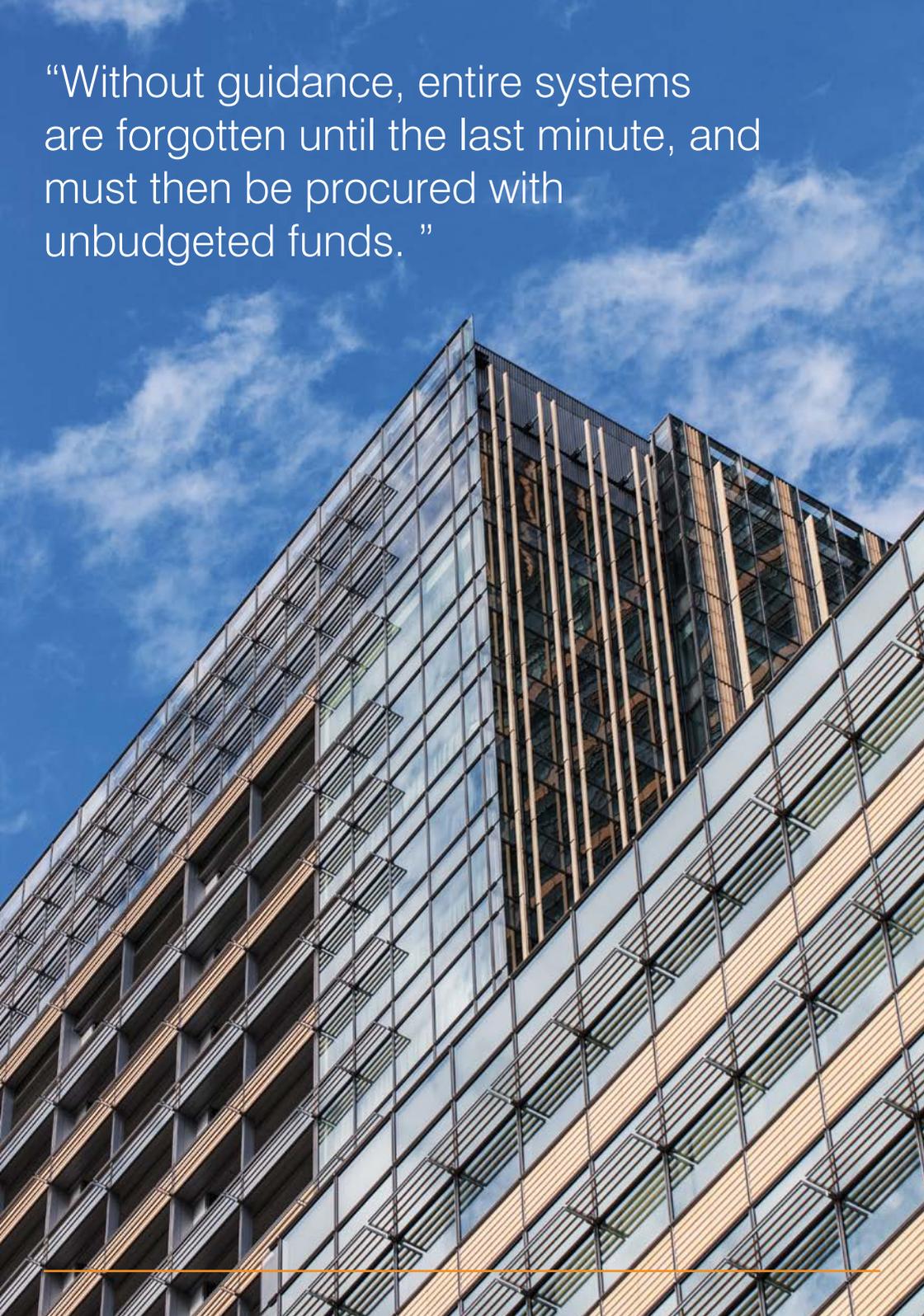
03

The third mistake most commonly made is inadequate budgeting. Many companies have no idea what they will have to spend on their office move, and have no firm budget established. Others will establish **an arbitrary budget that has no relation to reality.**

Both strategies are doomed. Without guidance, entire systems are forgotten until the last minute, and must then be procured with unbudgeted funds. Constantly repeating it's not in the budget serves no one's interests.

If you expect your vendors to perform free services, you can pretty much imagine the quality of employee your vendor will give you. There are many places to look for help in getting budget estimates for all the goods and service required – *see our checklist for Office Moving Costs.*

Having no budget or an unrealistic budget is inexcusable. Take the time to go through the budgeting process before you begin the search for a new site. It will pay off in the end.



Compressing the schedule

04

Closely related to starting too late is the fourth deadly mistake, compressing the schedule. **Trying to make up for lost time or a late start by reducing the allotted time for completion is very dangerous.** It is important to plan for enough time to allow each vendor to complete his task as agreed.

Your vendor planned for this project, based on information you provided during your competition. They were selected based in part on their ability to get the project completed on time and on budget. Now, you must reduce the available time because of some schedule slippage caused by another vendor or unforeseen event. **How can your vendor get the same quality job done in less time?**

One way is by throwing extra bodies at the project. Another is by working overtime (longer days, double-shifts and weekends). You can't expect your vendor to eat this additional cost, since it is beyond their control. They will expect to be paid extra for this.

If you decide to play tough guy and refuse to pay for the overtime your schedule slippage has caused, your vendor's only defense is to treat your project as a loss leader.

This means that will take their A-Team off the project, replacing them with less experienced employees who earn less money. **Now, you have placed your project at risk.**

“Compressing the schedule rushes your vendors and puts too many bodies on the job site at one time.”

Even if you still have your vendors A-Team on site, compressing the schedule rushes your vendors and puts too many bodies on the job site at one time. Imaging the sight of a dozen vendors, all on-site at the same time, fighting for elbow room alongside the construction sub-contractors.

Nobody can be productive under these conditions. Don't kid yourself into thinking that your project will be different.

General contractors are notorious for compressing parts of the construction schedule. If they can't obtain their permit to close up the walls, they will spend the time installing ceiling tiles. While this sounds like they are making good use of their time while maintaining their OVERALL schedule, think about how this one change will affect other vendors.

Your cabling vendor will have far less time to install the cabling than planned. Who pays for their overtime? If the carpet is delayed, you already know how other vendors are affected. Will the general contractor pay for the overtime required of the furniture vendor, cabling vendor, and telephone System vendor? Even his small actions have major consequences.

Poor coordination

05

The fifth deadly mistake, poor coordination, is responsible for delays and cost overruns. Letting your vendors run wild without tight supervision is a formula for disaster. Often relocation managers will allow their designers to handle the coordination issues / manage the schedule. and this is often the most efficient way of handling the process except remember this usually results in a schedule that meets their needs, not yours. Why should you be more involved in coordinating the project? Because if you don't, you will be the referee for every fight and disagreement between the various vendors. **Any time there are a dozen or more vendors involved, there are going to be conflicts. Every time the schedule is amended, ALL of the other vendors are affected. If you are constantly reacting to these amendments, you will become unpopular in short order.**

The vendors hired for a relocation project usually fall into two broad categories; construction related, and non-construction related. The construction related vendors are obvious. The first of these is your designer who designed the space, specified the materials and furnishings to be used, wrote the RFP to find a construction contractor, and applied for the permits. Next, the general contractor will oversee the actual building of the interior space. He hires and manages all the sub-contractors whose products and services include electrical, HVAC, plumbing, carpentry, drywall, carpet, resilient flooring, acoustical ceiling, millwork, paint, signage, and possibly others. Then there is the

“Letting your vendors run wild without tight supervision is a formula for disaster.”

project manager to oversee the construction project, this person will also fall into this category. He would be responsible for the timely completion of the construction project on budget. His effort, however, would be limited to the construction project.

Not every vendor involved is directly tied to the construction project. You will likely be looking for vendors to provide and install a telephone System, access control security System, computer networking equipment, communications cabling, Systems (modular) furniture, telephone services (including dedicated data lines, ISDN, DSL, and T-1), and a furniture-moving vendor. While these vendors need to coordinate their efforts to maintain your project schedule, they are not considered to be construction-related. And here is where the coordination becomes critical. **Every change in the construction schedule potentially impacts the non-construction related vendors.** If the general contractor discovers that the carpet you want is back-ordered, the modular furniture vendor cannot begin installation on time. The cabling vendor and electrician can't wire the cubicles until they are installed. The phone and computer vendors can't install and test their equipment until the cabling is finished. **So, you can see how arbitrary changes made to the schedule would have a domino affect on every other vendor.** You can't allow one of your vendors to make changes to the schedule, no matter how minor, until you have assessed the impact on all other vendors. Your project completion could be delayed beyond the move-in date.

Insufficient staffing

06

“You will have to recruit employees from within your organization who can carry part of the load.”

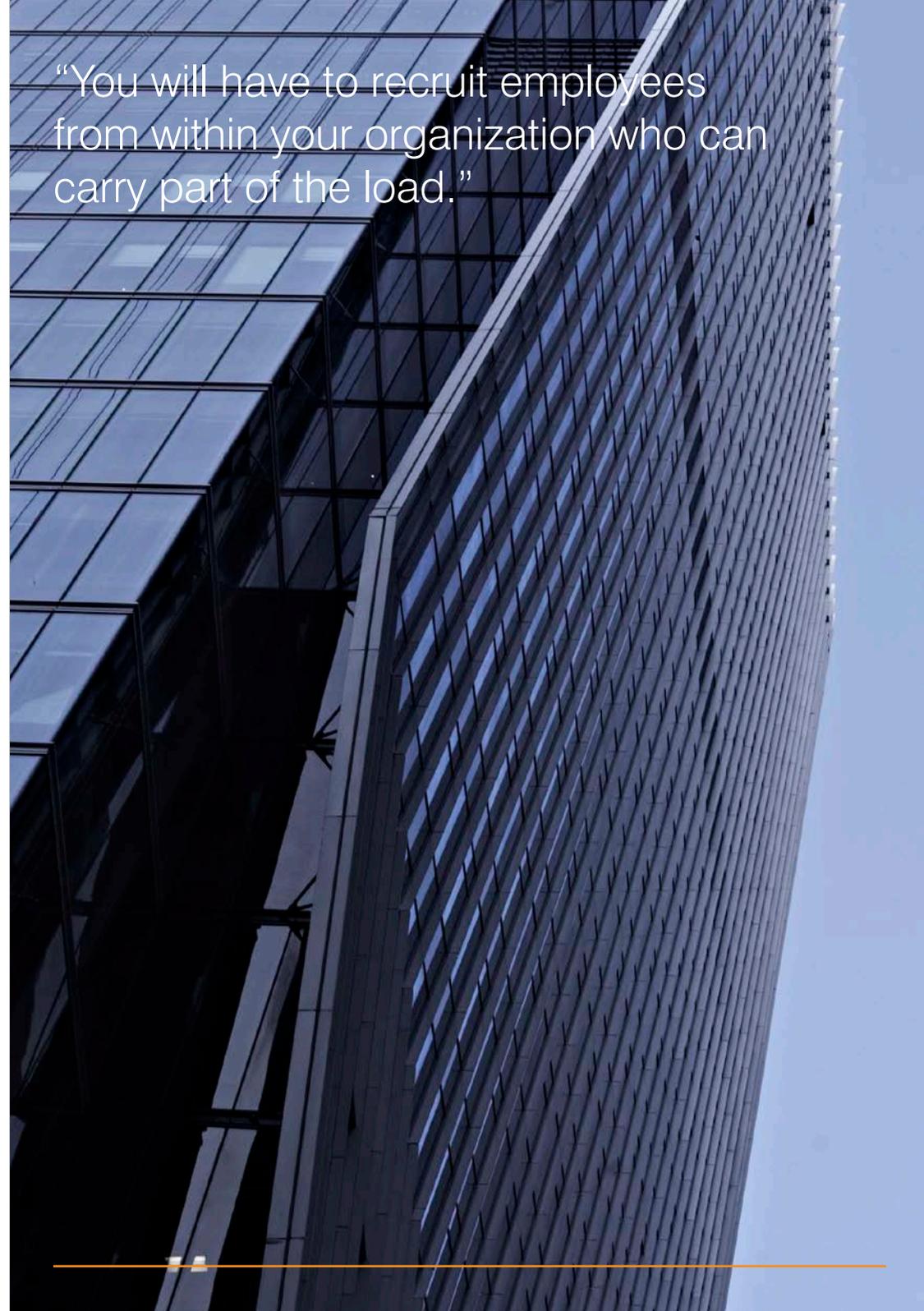
Inadequate supervision or poor coordination is usually the result of the sixth deadly mistake that of insufficient staffing, or the inability (or unwillingness) to delegate tasks. **If you have no help, you can't possibly manage the entire move.**

You need an orderly approach to managing the relocation.

First, recognize that you need help. You will have to recruit employees from within your organization who can carry part of the load. You will be the big cheese, or move director.

Select the members of your team based on their area of expertise. These need not be department heads. In fact, most middle and upper management types are not good choices. They are unaccustomed to taking direction, and tend to argue with you about your decisions.

Specialized knowledge is the key. You want team members who have good working knowledge on their particular area of expertise, and access to certain corporate records.



If you found this guide useful, check out the other four in the series
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