



Article

Real estate change is a team sport. Here's why and how to treat it like one

If your organization is considering making changes to your corporate real estate portfolio to optimize your space or better meet the changing needs of your workforce, you aren't alone. A recent [survey](#) by CBRE found that over 70% of US and European companies plan to make changes to their real estate portfolios over the next three years, with over half planning to reduce office space.

In a world being transformed by remote and hybrid work strategies, simply "lifting and shifting" existing assets to a new location fails to take advantage of the dividends that can be realized from a reimagined office. Evolving the workplace is a task that is typically led by a real estate team, however, the involvement of additional key stakeholders, both internal and external, is critical to drive true organizational change.

Legacy burden

Any organization that has occupied a space for even a short period of time has probably stockpiled a trove of out-of-date files and legacy IT equipment. There also may be empty file cabinets, storage closets filled with holiday decorations or other items, and employee workstations cluttered with a mix of business and personal assets.

A real estate change is an ideal opportunity to clean up or eliminate these risk-creating and space-wasting items, while better matching the workplace to the needs of the people who occupy it.

Real estate changes can be a win for everyone, as long as everyone affected is involved. While it's tempting to leave the decision-making and project execution solely to the corporate real estate and facilities team, it's difficult for this team alone to anticipate the needs and requirements of every department and job function. Much has changed in just the last three years. Employees who used to work from the office now come in just a few days a week or are fully remote. Job functions that once relied on assigned spaces and desks now prefer collaboration zones with open, shared working areas. Employees are generating and sharing information differently than before. A task that used to be accomplished using paper that was later stored in a file cabinet may now leverage a digital workflow, allowing members of the organization to share and store information with the click of a button.

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Corporate real estate professionals must learn the nuances of each department to make effective changes across the organization. Space and workflow requirements will continue to evolve and differ on a department-by-department basis. The legal team may identify an



opportunity to move files from the office to offsite storage. The records management team may be working on a project to securely dispose of records past their retention date. If members of these teams aren't directly involved in the planning and execution of the real estate change, it can be difficult to ensure everyone's needs are met.

Drive collaboration with early engagement

While real estate projects can be a catalyst for change, true success is only possible if there is ample time to collaborate, plan, and implement. Taking time to plan projects in advance can ensure that key stakeholders are involved from the start and can help to drive cost savings and other efficiencies.

Internal stakeholders such as department heads (leaders from finance, HR, legal, marketing, etc.), records and information management (RIM), risk and compliance, information technology (IT), and sustainability should all be involved early and often.

Input from department heads can shape specific employee needs and space requirements. RIM and risk and compliance can support the cleanup of dated information assets and implementation of new information workflows. And IT leaders can ensure processes are in place to manage active and obsolete IT assets so that they don't waste space and become a future liability.

External stakeholders are just as important. Project management, facilities management, interior design, and/or workplace strategy partners can leverage input from internal stakeholders to develop an optimized space that is built around the true needs of the organization. And this collaboration goes well beyond project planning. Both internal and external stakeholders are critical to ensure seamless, productive, and risk-free project execution.

Teamwork makes change possible

Whatever your organization's goals are for the workplace, a collaborative approach can help make it possible. If you're looking for a catalyst to help make real estate changes a team sport within your organization, Iron Mountain's **Clean Start** solution can help. Whether you are downsizing, restacking, leaving a space, or making portfolio-wide changes, Clean Start helps drive collaboration between key internal and external stakeholders and address resources and expertise that will help you declutter, optimize, repurpose, or decommission your space. Connect with a Clean Start expert today to receive a free on-site assessment and recommendation report.



+65 6262 5622 | ironmountain.com/sg

+63 2 8628 4939 | ironmountain.com/ph

+603 5123 7688 | ironmountain.com/my

+62 21 3973 9999 | ironmountain.com/en-id

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