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Relocation Took Time but Led to Great Relationships

Thinking about relocating your business? There's more to it than just hiring the right mover. For PATLive, a Tallahassee-based provider of hosted IVR and telephone-answering services, it took twice as long as they initially thought but led to a lot of great new relationships.

It all started in 2006 after 50 percent growth in PATLive's headcount. Parking space was rented from a nearby apartment complex and employee seating was maxed out. They considered additional space at the complex where they already leased three buildings but that idea didn't account for the longer term growth potential.

During that summer, PATLive was introduced to Beth Kirkland, Executive Director of the EDC. Excitement started to build when she suggested the Cedars Executive Center, a three-building complex on North Monroe. It was a distressed property at that time but the location and other key attributes made it an appealing possibility.

When the property was purchased that same week in 2006 by Steve Allen's Tallahassee partnership, PATLive saw Monty Python's animated index finger hung in the sky pointing down at the Cedars. Steve had a vision for the property and he said it included PATLive as a tenant.

Conn and Associates drew up an initial floor plan for PATLive's review in November. Four months later, after a dozen iterations of the floor plan, PATLive's chairman and owner, Glen Davidson, signed a lease contingent on some building specs that still needed to be evaluated and agreed on. PATLive set a move date of October 2007.

A weekly meeting was established for hashing out the remaining specs. But, according to PATLive's project managers, Ken Devivo and Dave May, "a funny thing happened after those meetings started. The list of questions that needed to be researched and answered got longer each week instead of shorter."

How much weight would be in the second floor computer room and would the room need to be structurally reinforced? What kind of air and humidification control was needed in the computer room? What size generator was needed? What was the total electrical load required by PATLive and was the current electrical service sufficient? Who was going to pay for hands-free bathroom fixtures and acoustically rated ceiling tiles?

As the meetings wore on, PATLive changed the move date to February 2008. But the date would need to be delayed further because it wasn't until December 2007 that all the questions got answered and financial terms could be worked out.

Meanwhile, general contractor Ken Silvestri of O'Brien Silvestri Construction was gutting the building PATLive would move in to. After reviewing the final plans, he told PATLive the building would be ready for them in June 2008.

And it was. "Ken was great to work with and he delivered on all his milestones," said Ken Devivo, PATLive's VP of Development & IT. Other vendors delivered too, including DOCS, who supplied cubicles and furniture, and Embarq. "Embarq's role was crucial to our success. Our representative, Danny Adams, worked extremely hard behind the scenes to manage the complexity and meet our schedule."

When moving day arrived, A Man With a Truck movers took over. They filled six trucks and just beat the rain that arrived at day's end. Another three trucks-worth was hauled away by 1-800-GOT-JUNK.

According to all involved, the new space is first-class. In addition to state-of-the-art computer facilities, a lot of attention was paid to energy efficiency, indoor air quality, diffusion of natural light, management of sound and employee comfort. PATLive employees are very excited about their modern office environment.

"If we had been working with any other potential landlord, I doubt we would have found a way to make this work," said Glen Davidson. "Steve's patience and creativity made it a success. His vision was aligned with ours and he has done a wonderful job with the property." That sounds like the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

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