



THE ULTIMATE OFFICE REFURBISHMENT GUIDE

- A STEP BY STEP CHECKLIST

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INTRODUCTION

An office refurbishment is likely to be one of the biggest projects undertaken by your business. It requires a great deal of planning to ensure it runs smoothly and to deliver results for your business into the future. Therefore, getting it right first time is of paramount importance.

IIS Space has over 15 years' experience in the Ireland and the UK markets, across a range of exciting projects. We have used our knowledge and expertise to develop this step-by-step guide to lead you through the process to ensure a seamless refurbishment.

This guide will outline;

- The key factors to consider before commencing
- The importance of appointing the right internal project team and fit out contractor
- Obligations and responsibilities
- The design process
- Health & Safety considerations
- Maintaining productivity and communications during the refurbishment
- The logistics
- When the project is over

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Before you begin the process there are some key areas that need to be examined to gain an understanding of;

- **Why** your office needs refurbishing?
- **What** are the key issues you need to address?
- **Who** will lead the project internally?
- **When** is the right time for refurbishment?

Here are some important questions to help you define your project scope, purpose, goals etc.

Driver for Change

- Facilities in need of upgrading?
- Health & safety concerns?
- Lack of storage?
- Growth in the size of the workforce?
- Is the workplace cost efficient?

Business Goals

- What are your business goals for growth over the next 5-10 years?
- What does this mean in terms of staff numbers?
- Will the refurbishment coincide with a company rebrand?

The Working Environment

- How do you want employees to work? Do you want a collaborative working environment?
- Do employees avail of flexible working arrangements such as home working?
- Have you considered technology? Both existing architecture and future requirements.

Stakeholders

- Who is the project sponsor?
- Who will lead the project internally? The ideal candidate should be someone senior enough to make decisions, know the business well and is experienced in leading demanding projects.
- Create 'buy-in' across the business by putting together a cross-functional project team
- Key stakeholders to consider are Senior Management, Finance, Human Resources, Procurement, IT, Facilities, Marketing and external stakeholders such as Unions may need to be consulted.
- Develop a communications plan at the outset for keeping stakeholders informed as the project progresses

Logistics

- Consider holidays and other commitments of the key stakeholders
- Develop a high-level programme at the outset
- Will a swing space be required while works are in progress?

APPOINTING THE FIT OUT SPECIALIST

Engaging a fit out company that offers a design and build solution will pay dividends at many stages throughout the project lifecycle; such as; budgeting, managing risk, programming, health & safety and maintaining productivity during the refurbishment. A fit out specialist that provides a full turnkey solution will result in a project that is delivered faster with lower costs.

Reputation

- Are references available?
- Have they managed projects of a similar size?
- Demonstrated experience in your sector?
- How long have they been in business?
- Do they have case studies for you to read?

Finances

- Will they guarantee to deliver within budget?
- Do they have the purchasing power to negotiate for materials, furniture etc?
- Are they financially stable?
- Can they provide evidence of insurances cover?

Services

- Project Management
- Cost Estimating
- Workspace Audits
- Space planning and design
- Fit out and construction
- Furniture Procurement
- Mechanical & Electrical, HVAC (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning) and plumbing
- IT and telephony cabling, moving and installation
- Move Management

Credentials

- What is the company Quality Management Policy?
- What is the company Environmental Policy and management system?
- What is the company Health & Safety Policy and management system?
- Credentials of management and team members

BUDGETING

Once you have a clear idea of what you want to achieve; it is time to put a realistic budget in place. Many items will be relatively easy to budget for but don't forget to allow for less obvious costs.

This is an area where engaging a company who provides a design and build solution will prove beneficial. You will be provided with full cost estimates – ranging from space planning, office design, on site construction and furniture installation. They will also be able to advise on what are the key drivers in the overall cost. Additionally, having end-to-end project management responsibility assigned to one contractor means that it is their responsibility to deliver the project within budget, on time and to a very high standard.

Fees

- Planning permission fees
- Professional fees
- Insurance Cost
- Health & Safety assessments
- Construction costs
- Legal fees

Design and Fit out

- IT and telecoms (cabling, equipment and installation)
- Furniture
- Mechanical & Electrical and HVAC
- Dilapidations

Temporary Space and Storage

- Temporary storage costs during the fit out
- Swing space costs during the fit out
- Mail redirection

Other Costs

- Increased energy and utilities
- Increased maintenance costs
- Contingencies

OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Now that the big questions have been considered, a fit out contractor has been appointed and a budget has been set, it is time to get into the finer details. A good place to start is to ensure all legal, financial and regulatory responsibilities and obligations are in order.

Legal

- Landlord permission
- Planning permission
- Lease amendments

Financial

- Public Liability Insurance
- Employers Liability Insurance
- Contractors insurances

Regulatory

- Health & Safety regulations
- It is your responsibility to ensure the safety of all employees, contractors, visitors and anyone likely to come into contact with the site.
- Environmental responsibilities and regulations

Other

- Engage with the building or facilities manager where your office is in a multi-tenanted building

THE DESIGN

The design stage is a key part of the process where stakeholders need to be involved.

Consulting areas of the business such as Health & Safety, Procurement, Finance and the people who work in the space etc will help you refine the deliverables but also avoid/highlight any potential pitfalls.

Remember your office often gives potential clients the first impression of your business and can also be a key factor in attracting and retaining staff, so it is critical to ensure that the look and feel represent your brand and company culture.

Look and Feel

- The new design should represent your brand. It is key to involve Marketing at this stage, so they can ensure your brand is represented.
- If you are planning a rebrand, your new workspace should reflect your new brand identity
- How do you want the look and feel to represent the corporate culture?

Storage

- Carry out a detailed storage audit
- What do you need to store on site? e.g. office stationary, Accounts information, marketing collateral?
- What can be stored off site? Have a company Archiving Policy in place
- Personal storage e.g. in desks or lockers
- How might these requirements change into the future?

Furniture

- Do you need to purchase new furniture?
- Is it of good quality? Does it come with a warranty?
- Consider ergonomics
- Is it sustainable?
- Do you need desk privacy screens?
- Is a reception desk and seating area required?

IT and Telephony

- Is your current system in need of upgrading?
- Are there enough power and data points?
- Decide on the number and location of printer stations
- Are works required to the comms room
- Is there an opportunity to go wireless?
- Are changes to the telephony set up required?

Acoustics

- Reduce ambient noise levels to maintain privacy and maximise productivity
- Ask your contractor to recommend floor, ceiling and furniture options that will help manage noise levels in the office

Staff Morale

- What are the key facilities that need to be upgraded
- Provide a chill out area
- Canteen area
- Consider adding an element of fun to the design

Agile Working

Support agile working to increase productivity. Different tasks throughout the working day will require different spaces and facilities. Consider some of the following;

- Town Hall area
- Formal Meeting rooms
- Informal meeting rooms
- Breakout areas
- Privacy pods/spaces
- Acoustic pods
- Sit-stand desks
- Training rooms

Going Green

The environment and sustainability are high on the agenda for many businesses today and it is not surprising, given the results it delivers – increased productivity, decreased absenteeism and reduced energy bills. Achieving this may seem daunting but it doesn't need to be complicated or add to your budget.

- Make energy efficiency a requirement when replacing lighting, heating and ventilation systems
- Maximise natural light in the design
- Allow for recycling stations
- Choose products made from recycled materials
- Upcycle existing joinery where possible
- Don't forget the culture; employees need to be encouraged to conserve, recycle and power down devices at the end of the day.

DURING THE REFURBISHMENT

During the refurbishment there are key areas that need a lot of planning to make sure the process runs smoothly.

Engaging a contractor with experience in projects in occupied premises will be key. Their expertise will be invaluable, not only during the fitout phase but also in the planning phase e.g. they can advise on swing space solutions. An experienced contractor will be able to advise and deliver on a schedule that will minimise disruption to all concerned.

Considerable planning should go in to the Health & Safety plan, especially when refurbishment is taking place in an occupied space. This type of project presents challenges and it is important to ensure staff, clients and other building occupants are protected.

Health & Safety

- Discuss the Health & Safety plan with your fit out contractor. A good Health & Safety plan will cover the design (ergonomics, furniture), the move (office removal, waste disposal) and most importantly, the renovation.
- Is the work being carried out in an occupied space?
- Ensure environmental compliance (including noise levels) at all times

Communications

- Weekly site meetings and progress reports (including pictures) from your contractor
- Keep everyone informed of how the fit out is going. A good comms plan will include staff briefings, so everyone knows what changes are happening, when it's happening and what they can expect during the renovation. This can be done via staff newsletters, team meetings, Townhalls etc.

Maintaining Productivity

- Talk to your fit out contract about how they can minimise disruption during the refurbishment. Key considerations during the works are access and egress, noise and dust control and disruption to other tenants.
- When the work is complete plan for staff orientation and/or welcome packs to the new workspace.

THE LOGISTICS

The movement of your staff and business operations to a new space can be a daunting undertaking. The following points should be taken into consideration for a smooth transition for both moving into a swing space and for moving back into the newly refurbished space.

- Declutter in advance of the move taking place. All unnecessary paperwork, equipment etc should be disposed of.
- Ensure the safeguarding of critical files
- Move or set up temporary IT and telecommunications equipment and don't forget the test plan to check all phones, computers, networks, printers etc are working.
- Provide crates for staff to move belongings
- Plan for who goes where
- Consider off site storage and archiving requirements
- Redirect mail if necessary
- Update stationary, website, marketing location with new location
- Develop a comms plan for staff, customers, suppliers and service providers
- Distribute access cards and/or keys to staff
- Plan for staff orientation and/or welcome packs
- Develop guides for any new office processes e.g. booking of meeting rooms

CLOSING THE PROJECT

Project Close Out

- Arrange for staff training for any new equipment
- Inspect the work space with contractor and highlight any snags
- Agree completion date for snagging with contractor
- Agree any additional works
- Receive O+M Manual

When the Project is Over

When everyone is settled into the refurbished workplace it is important to take a step back and review the project success.

Set up a meeting with the internal project team to;

- Assess if the original goals of the project have been delivered?
- Consider if there are aspects of the design that need tweaking?
- Discuss feedback from staff
- Provide feedback to your fit out contractor
- Document lessons learned

For more help and advice please contact us at;

Website: www.iisspace.com

Email: info@iisspace.com

IIS Space - Ireland

Unit A3, Celbridge M4 Business Park, Maynooth Road,
Celbridge,
County Kildare,
Ireland.

T: 00 353 1 6274222

IIS Space - UK

Metal Box Factory
30 Great Guildford Street
Unit GG, 510, Borough,
London
SE1 OHS

T: 0044 20 7544 1031