



OfficeMoversExpress



# HOW ARE LAW FIRM MOVES DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MOVES

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# HOW ARE LAW FIRM MOVES DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MOVES

Many moving companies approach moves of all sizes with a similar strategy and while for many industries this can work, law firms are unique for several reasons.

We recently sat down with Jim Durfee, VP & General Manager of Office Movers Express to discuss what makes a law firm move so unique, and why it's important for firms preparing for a move to consider the key differences that a dedicated, experienced moving company can offer.

So what makes a law firm move so unique? Consider that they require:

-  Rapid response to varying and differing needs by the individual partners as opposed to a single customer move coordinator.
-  Extreme flexibility with respect to multiple last-minute changes and unexpected interruptions.
-  The ability to provide skilled white-glove services for high-value furniture, artwork, and other elements.
-  Specialized training and greater expertise in disassembling, packing, moving, and reassembling IT equipment and departments.
-  The ability to provide skilled white-glove services for high-value furniture, artwork, and other elements.

Let's take a closer look at these five key elements of a law firm move and how to ensure the company you work with can meet them effectively.



## What Makes a Law Firm Move Unique

This is where a law firm move gets more complicated and it's important to consider who you work with and the expertise they bring to the project.

Because of the atypical nature of a law firm's management structure when compared to other white-collar firms, there are likely to be more unexpected issues or challenges that arise at the last minute. While a traditional Fortune 500 may have a top-down management structure, meaning there is a chain of command and likely a single person who has been tasked with overseeing the entire move, law firms are more distributed.

The management structure means that the company handling the move needs to be incredibly flexible and capable of addressing the unique needs of several partners at the same time. Moving companies that do not have experience working with law firms may not have the bandwidth or ability to do this, which can result in delays, mistakes, or the inability to meet specific requests.

In a law firm, dozens of individuals work separately but are part of a team that they represent. It's a unique structure in that there is a common purpose to be successful and grow the firm, but attorneys generally represent themselves and have specific expectations that any service provider needs to meet.

Specifically, there are several needs that law firms have that may not come up as often in traditional corporate firms. These include:



## **Hands-on expertise is needed to pack and move things carefully**

Law firms often have a large amount of artwork and personal items owned by the partners that need to be moved carefully. While furniture is essentially the same now, these elements tend to be more pronounced in a law firm than in a traditional company. As a result, the move is more intricate for a law firm than for many other types of organizations.

This means that hands-on expertise is needed to pack and move these things carefully. While most firms have limited artwork and other high-value items that need to be moved, law firms still do. Every law firm is its own headquarters, meaning there may be years of ephemera and personal effects in the building that need to be moved along with the attorneys and their content.



## **Efficiency is more important than ever when the move is 80% boxes and IT**

Because of the “always available” nature of a high-powered law firm, it’s vital that they minimize disruption during a move to the point of almost nothing. That means moves will start on a Thursday or Friday afternoon and must be completed by Monday morning so the firm can open on time. With moves now consisting of almost 80% boxes and IT equipment, the need for efficiency is more important than ever.



Because so much of the move is personal files that need to be in the office of the attorneys and their teams by Monday morning, it's vital that the move be planned down to the minute, with flexibility built in to adjust on the fly if there is a last-minute request, change to the procedure, or an attorney needs a certain file.



## Addressing the separate needs of specific parts of the law firm

Because of the importance of large moves that affect dozens of individuals, and the potential of downtime affecting “billable hours” at a law firm, there are a number of stakeholders who have a strong interest and therefore input into a law firm's move. While the office management team in most other types of firms would handle the move from start to finish, a law firm is likely to have multiple stakeholders involved throughout the process. It's important that the mover has experience with this element and the ability to respond quickly and flexibly.

**“There are multiple partners serving that role of ‘executives’ spread throughout the firm, and the halo effect of the people who work with that partner. These are highly successful, powerful people who have earned their status and have certain expectations for how they do their work. A move shouldn't disrupt those expectations. A law firm moving company needs to not only understand that but have the resources and flexibility to address specific requests from across the distributed senior leadership of the firm.”**

**~Jim Durfee**





## Flexibility to address unexpected issues as they come up during a move.

Last-minute changes, unexpected interruptions, or sudden requests are more likely to happen in a law firm setting. A law firm moving company should have the resources available and time accounted for to quickly respond to these last-minute needs without delaying the move.

**“While performing a move for a law firm, in the middle of the night on the weekend, an attorney contacted us desperate to find specific files for a case on which they were working. It took a bit of time, but we were able to retrieve these files because we had a clear sense of which truck they were on, based on the location of the files before they were packed, the order in which we packed the offices and the time at which they were packed.”**

There may be other instances where an attorney is not ready to move at the time a firm has scheduled the move. The moving company needs to have the flexibility and experience in these situations to adjust on the fly, allowing for last-minute work or urgent issues to take precedence over the logistics of the move. For a traditional moving company with rigid processes, this would likely prove challenging.

Office Movers Express maintains a management structure designed so that decisions can be made quickly by the individuals with which a law firm is communicating. This allows us to react quickly to unexpected changes and be more flexible to address issues in a rapid response way. Where a traditional moving company might refuse to make changes or simply be unable to accommodate a last-minute request, OMX was built from the ground up to ensure the highest possible level of flexibility for all of our customers.





# Moving the IT Department

In addition to the unique nature of the law firm itself, there is also the IT department, which is the modern equivalent of the law library, the beating heart of a law firm, and the single most important thing to move quickly and effectively.

IT typically calls the shots for their own department and equipment, meaning there won't be a single overarching directive in how to move IT or when to proceed with those elements of the move. Coordination with IT and specific expertise in moving a law firm's vital hardware is key. In addition to the unique logistical requirements of moving a law firm, special expertise, tools, and protocols are needed to move IT. Specialized equipment that reduces the need for disassembly of vital hardware, handling instructions to reduce the risk of damage, and direct coordination with IT to streamline setup over the weekend are all vitally important.

Thankfully, IT is easier to move than in the past. The equipment is rugged, designed to be moved, and is generally portable. Risk, however, has increased in turn. That rugged equipment may be more resilient, but it's incredibly expensive and it's vital that the moving company has the experience to know how to pack, handle and move it effectively.

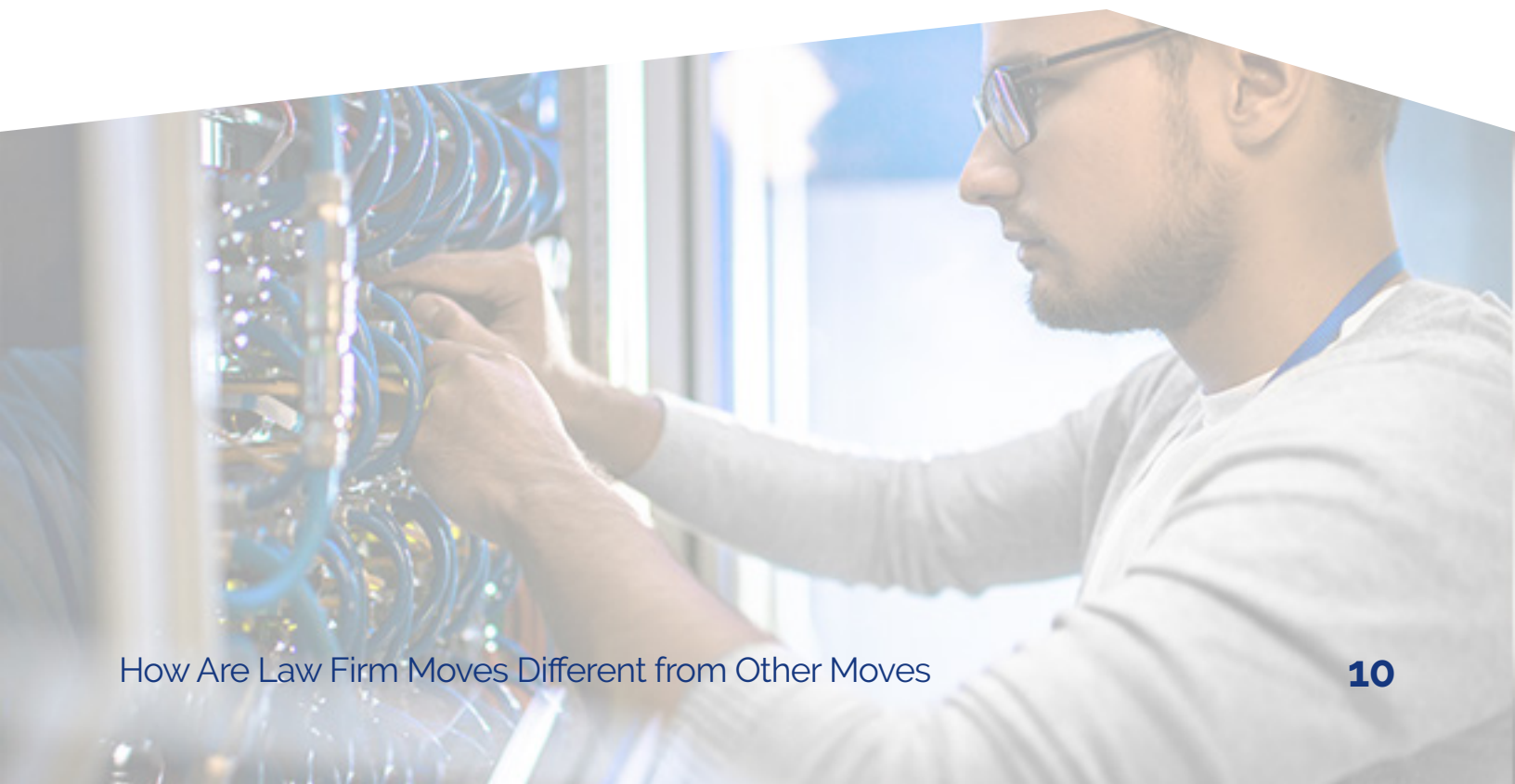


More important than the financial risk of damage to IT equipment, however, is the astronomical cost of taking the law firm offline even for a small amount of time. Law firms live and breathe by their ability to work 24/7/365 when needed. If IT equipment is all offline at the same time or stays offline longer than expected on the Monday after a move, it can have a significant impact on the business, potentially costing clients and businesses in the future.



## Facilitating Seamless Transition of IT into a New Building

OMX works closely with all of our customers to reduce the likelihood of IT disruption. In a recent move of a 100 person law firm, OMX took receipt of computer and phone system components into one of our warehouses, setting up a staging area for the firm's IT team so they could custom program the system for the new space before the move occurred. This allowed the IT team to ensure that the new system was essentially plug-and-play on moving day so that the firm could open normally Monday morning at 9am, eliminating the risk of downtime affecting anyone in the firm.





## Working with a Trusted Law Firm Moving Expert

Led by Jim Durfee and his 30 years of experience working with law firms on logistically challenging moves, Office Movers Express has cultivated a culture of excellence designed to meet the exacting needs of the law firm industry.

Two-thirds of our moves are for law firms, including 90% of the largest 100 law firms in the area. Our movers are experts in the industry and understand the culture, infrastructure, chain of command, and idiosyncrasies of moving law firms, making both the planning of and communication during the move more efficient, resulting in fewer un-foreseen problems. We will work with you every step of the way to ensure an efficient, precise move that minimizes disruption and addresses specific needs and concerns from your team.

Learn more about OMX and our commitment to excellence in law firms moves. Contact us today to learn more or reach out to Jim directly to discuss our approach to the process.

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