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It is all in the Details

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Companies need to know the most important mile markers on the road to relocation success.

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A company that has been around for nearly a century is bound to observe countless changes in customers, products, services, policies, and other elements of conducting and growing a business. However, the Meyer Rigging division of a company such as William B. Meyer Inc. must often rely on skills and attributes that have not changed much in the 96 years they have been in existence. Moving an industrial client from one location to another is in many ways a function that has not altered a great deal since 1915, when the Stratford, CT-based rigging company was formed. The fact remains that industrial relocation requires meticulous planning and formidable teamwork.

Holo-Krome, the leading domestic manufacturer of socket head fasteners and screws, recently found out that those are two solid corporate strengths at Meyers Rigging, and have been for more than nine decades. The how-to checklist for industrial relocation that resulted from the collaboration between the two companies (see sidebar) is an effective primer for companies of all sizes and in all industries.

In March of 2011, Meyer Rigging relocated Holo-Krome from a plant in W. Hartford, CT, to a new 187,000ft² facility in Wallingford, CT, about 19 miles away. Approximately five million pounds of equipment were moved, requiring 120 truckloads, in addition to another 50 truckloads of raw material and finished goods.

The physical move took just more than two months to complete. Not a single piece of industrial hardware, office equipment, furniture, or any other items from the original site was lost or damaged. What is more, Holo-Krome and its parent company anticipate a strong performance in the next several quarters, and their resourceful, well-organized new facility plays a significant role in that conviction.

Move sequence is based heavily on equipment layout in the old facility, taking into area spatial considerations such as door sizes and access to loading areas.

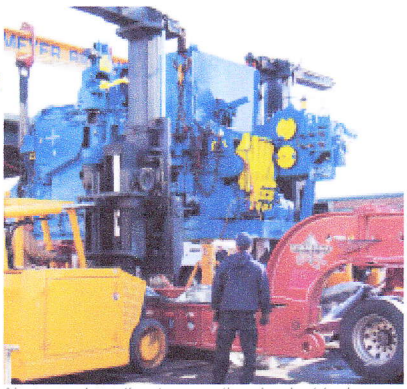
According to Meyer Rigging representatives, the way to move any department in any company, efficiently – whether you are talking about huge furnaces and laser equipment or office desks and copy

machines – is through precise, detailed planning and open-door solidarity between the company moving and the company doing the moving.

Fastenel, Holo-Krome's parent since 2009, announced in June 2010 that it was relocating its new division from the site in W. Hartford that had been its home since 1929. Fastenal and Holo-Krome worked in conjunction with both the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and the Town of Wallingford to keep the manufacturing operations, along with roughly 100 jobs, inside the state. Management considered more than 20 new sites before deciding on the one in Wallingford, noting that its physical footprint could be doubled in the future if necessary, thanks to the 51 acres on which it sits.

Once the site had been formally selected, a team from Richard Muther and Associates was retained to conduct systematic layout planning for the new building. Teamwork, already a strong corporate initiative at Holo-Krome, extended to its partnership with the consultant group as plans developed for a new facility that would befit a manufacturer of Holo-Krome's stature. Holo-Krome's heritage is one of innovation – beginning with the trend they pioneered to manufacture socket screws by metalforming or heading rather than machining, to their subsequent invention of the cold-forged process, in which the metal is pre-warmed to improve its plasticity for forming.

When the layout plans were nearing completion, Holo-Krome interviewed five top-rated rigging companies, taking into account experience, communication routines, accessibility, price, and all other components that would make for a successful relocation partner. Meyer Rigging, according to Holo-Krome, came out on top mostly because of their proven dependability, the excellent reputation of its personnel, and price.



Never underestimate even the simplest tasks. Everything is connected in one way or another. A seemingly simple miscalculation can have disastrous effects.

Holo-Krome put together a team comprised of 25 employees, divided into sub-groups covering preparation, support, receiving, and other vital corporate functions. Along with dozens of professionals at Meyer Rigging, the move, which began on January 3, 2011, was complete by March 8 – just slightly more than two months. Five workdays were lost due to the substantial snowstorms that defined the winter of 2011.

"It is in the planning and the details," says Tim Thompson, director of operations at Holo-Krome. "That is how it all begins. Also, we never underestimate the simplest of tasks, we always follow through on due diligence every step of the way, and we are always willing to be flexible when we need to be. This extended to the team from Meyer Rigging who essentially became part of the fabric of our organization during the whole process, it would have been impossible to successfully complete a project of this magnitude without their level of skill and leadership as our move partner."

Every conceivable industry needs the kinds of products that Holo-Krome produces, from consumer goods and communications to agriculture and mining – anything where one part must hold firm against another with absolutely no chance of displacement. Holo-Krome's cold-forging techniques result in socket screws that are more precise, offer greater strength, and afford higher fatigue resistance, which is why the forging, measuring, and quality control equipment moved from West Hartford to Wallingford had to be disassembled, transported, and reassembled with incomparable care and precision. Forging or measuring equipment improperly transported and re-launched in a new setting would potentially compromise the quality of thousands of fasteners and screws on which many other companies depend for their own commercial and economic success.

Everything from manufacturing to shipping must meet stringent criteria to abide by the various industry standards and certifications required. Therefore, dismantling, moving, and reassembly had to be precise and exact in every conceivable way to maintain those standards.

One of the most important parts of the Holo-Krome relocation plan was the development and relocation of a pre-build inventory to keep the plant's distribution running during the move. This was a decisive step.

1. An effective checklist of essential ingredients for successful corporate and industrial relocation was the result of a strong alliance between Holo-Krome and William B. Meyer/Meyer Rigging, the company that movin their entire operation 19 miles, from W. Hartford to Wallingford, CT. Conduct a systematic layout map for the new building. That is the only way to know the right things to look for, ask for, and plan for when developing the actual moving plans with your rigging company. Often this step requires the participation of independent experts in

Holo-Krome and Meyer Rigging worked together to develop a logistically and technologically sound sequence of events to move the 60 manufacturing cells they had in operation at the W. Hartford plant. Considerations in designing this sequence included the effects of equipment layout on removal from the W. Hartford site, as well as intended layout and reinstallation at the new facility. Door sizes and access to loading areas all became major factors, especially when moving the bigger machines, some of which weigh more than 150,000 lb.

According to Meyer Rigging representatives, the way to move any department in any company, efficiently, is through precise, detailed planning and open-door solidarity between the company being moving and the company doing the moving.

As each new day began during the actual move, the combined Holo-Krome and Meyer Rigging teams reviewed the entire plan from top to bottom and made any modifications that were deemed necessary based on the experiences of the day before and any additional observations made by team members.

In addition to the physical moving of material items from West Hartford to Wallingford, all of the industrial equipment was cleaned, inspected, and painted prior to reassembly. That, too, was an effective measure.

"Like Holo-Krome, we at William B. Meyer cannot say it enough: it is all in the planning and the details," says Kevin Sullivan of the operations department. "When you have the talent diversification that we have, planning the details becomes second nature – although we never become complacent about that, and never will. Our foremen and project managers have a combined total of more than a century of experience in this business. We know what we are doing. And our best barometer is customer satisfaction."

industrial architecture and design.

2. When **interviewing rigging companies** to manage the actual move, put among your top priorities their experience with similar relocations, their position on continuous consultation and interaction, the accessibility of executives and foremen, and price.

3. Put together a team that can divide, effectively, into sub-groups with expertise in logistics, regulations, quality control, shipping and receiving, inventory, personnel, and all other corporate functions pertinent to the move.

4. Develop a full and **complete pre-build inventory** so that the plant's distribution capabilities can continue unabated during the relocation.

5. Outline a comprehensive sequence of events that can support the logistical and technological relocation of all of the company's manufacturing processes.

6. Never underestimate even the simplest tasks. Everything connects in one way or another; a seemingly simple miscalculation can have disastrous effects.

7. Review the entire relocation plan as often as possible, with team members from your company and the rigging company. Immediately make any modifications deemed necessary and communicate the modifications immediately to the entire team. Be flexible. View major alterations to the plan not as headaches, but as physically and fiscally sound maneuvers.