

## The Union – September 2005

### **"Relocate or remodel – Take the quiz and determine what is best for your business."**

by Mimi Zatuchni, The Radiant Group. Marketing and business consultants.

Answer "agree" or "disagree" to the following statements.

1. I don't need more square footage, I just want to make better use of my existing space.
2. My existing location is critical to the success of my business.
3. I have money to invest in a remodel.
4. I can designate a project manager to handle the remodel within my company so that I focus on running the business.
5. The interruption to my business will not greatly impact my bottom line. I can even close for a few weeks, if need be.

**If you disagreed with most of the above statements,** relocating to a bigger space is probably your best choice. If you know you need more room, and like the idea of changing locations, now is the time to start looking for new office space. Develop a list of criteria and begin shopping for the right place for your business. A good way to start is by calling Pacific Land Enterprises, a local leader in commercial real estate. They have a \$2,500 incentive offer to those who move in by the end of the year. "Planning for the future seems to be the one thing that people find the most difficult," says Jeff Johnson of Pacific Land Enterprises. "It is a constant balancing act between having the space your business needs to expand versus carrying more overhead for more square footage." It's best to plan for growth and lease with a firm that can grow with your business by moving you into a larger suite when you need it, or will remodel your space efficiently, professionally and with minimal down time and cost to you.

**If you agreed with most of the above statements,** you are in a strong position to remodel. Your first step is to review your lease to see if it contains terms for a remodel. If not, call your landlord and discuss your options. Let them know what you are thinking and find out if (s)he will allow it. They might even be willing to pay for some or all of it. Or, they may own another building that fits your criteria and can set you up there with minimal down time.

Your landlord may want you to work directly with their property management company. Be sure to enumerate in writing what you expect from the remodel. Consider if you want the remodel done during off-hours or over the week-end to try to minimize the disruption to your employees and inconvenience to your customers. It will most likely cost more, but may very well be worth it.

If you are paying for some of all of the remodel, get a written agreement of how long it's going to take and how much it will cost before moving forward. "It's smart to get a second opinion" says Keoni Allen of Sierra Foothills Construction. "Be sure you're working with professionals who are experienced in office remodels. Adding office space in a warehouse, for example, may sound easy, but it's a bigger job than most people think. A good contractor will scope out the entire job and give you a realistic quote that reflects the work, costs and time needed upfront."

Also of service is a consultation with a commercial architect, one that specializes in interior space planning and can help you remodel or plan new office space. "Basically, I help people figure out what is and isn't working and help them plan for future growth" says Nori Whisenand of Deer Creek Studio.

**If you agreed with half the above statements**, the best advice is to seek council from the professionals listed here and develop your own pros and cons list for remodeling and relocating. Keep in mind that doing the right thing for your business means planning for success and finding a solution for your growing business before you've outgrown it.