

Case Study in Reuse National Business Services Firm



Situation: A Fortune 500 business services firm, replacing or disposing of systems and other furnishings at nationwide locations.

Material Composition: Steelcase Context offices including desks, file cabinets, overhead storage cabinets, task and side chairs. Other office furnishings including seating, conference and work tables, etc.

Quantity: Ongoing, to date including 46 individual projects handling from ~100 to ~3,000 pieces.

Setting: Suburban corporate campus; Urban high-rise; Suburban office park.

Overview

This Fortune 500 client is one of the best known environmental and business services firms in the U.S. In 2010 the firm initiated a program to reduce their environmental and real estate footprint by moving toward a hotelling office environment. The firm requested assistance from their longtime Steelcase dealer, Arbee Associates. With dozens of offices and thousands of items ultimately to be disposed of, Arbee identified IRN's Surplus Management Program as the environmentally and socially best disposition option.

Through mid-2014 the initiative has encompassed more than 46 locations in 15 states across the country, including the corporate headquarters campus, owned and leased space in urban and suburban locations. Individual projects have varied in size from just a few offices containing fewer than 100 pieces, to multiple stories covering tens of thousands of square feet, with more than 3,000 pieces to be removed.

Outside its own service area, Arbee has secured labor from local Steelcase dealers, and has sent an onsite manager to larger projects. IRN has provided onsite supervision of loading and packing, identified recipients for the surplus, coordinated trucking, and provided Arbee with detailed reporting on where surplus has been sent.

Composition & Quantity

About 60% of the surplus has consisted of Steelcase Context office sets, including free-standing desk units, under-desk file cabinets, overhead storage cabinets, task and side chairs. The balance has included executive offices, conference and training rooms, seating, file cabinets, bookcases, mail racks, work tables, reception and lounge furnishings, lamps, and other related items.

Through mid-2014 the total quantity handled has been over 41,000 pieces and 1,159 tons.

Dates	N of Projects	Locations	Total Pieces	Total Quantity (Tons)
7/11 – 6/12	19	CA, FL, GA, DC, VA	13,514	293
7/12 – 6/13	16	MD, CA, GA, VA, NC, SC, TX, HI	15,838	504
7/13 – 6/14	11	IL, CA, TX, UT, CO, AL, DC, VA	11,742	362

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Challenges

Weekend Schedule: To avoid interference with daily operations, nearly all moves have been completed on weekends. In some instances, the moving crew gained access to the buildings at 7:00 or 7:30 AM and trailers were scheduled to arrive an hour later, giving the crew time to begin to break down the offices and stage for loading. In others, the crew has broken down the furnishings during the week (generally post-business hours) and IRN has scheduled trailers to be loaded over the weekend.

Security: The firm handles sensitive information, so most projects had to comply with site-specific security requirements. On some projects this entailed badging all workers on the site; on others the crew was divided between badged workers inside, and others outside to load trailers; on most a security detail was retained to prevent any unauthorized access to the project premises.

Protection of Architectural Features: Both owned and leased spaces have contained high-quality flooring, wall finishes, and architectural features. Most projects have required padding, temporary floor coverings, and other precautions to protect these features.

Site and Schedule Constraints: Many sites have been difficult: no loading docks; long carries; difficult truck access. With the high cost of weekend labor and trucking, careful crew and logistics planning and coordination have been critical to keep each project on time and budget.

Destination

Sixteen different charities have received shipments from this series of projects. Through these IRN partnerships, furnishings have been provided to needy communities in 16 countries in the Caribbean, Central America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, and in six U.S. states. In addition, a fraction of the surplus has been recycled for its metal value.

