

The Commercial Moving Group (CMG) is the UK's leading quality assured network of independent commercial movers.

Interview with new CMG Chairman, Sarah Cole

As she prepares to take over the chairmanship of the Commercial Moving Group this month, Sarah Cole of Universal Commercial Relocation looks at how the CMG can raise the profile and awareness of professional office moving in the wider business world.

R&S: How long have you been working in the industry and what are your impressions?

Sarah Cole: I came to the industry in 2002 when I joined our family business Universal Commercial Relocation as the Legal & Quality Manager before becoming Managing Director last year. Prior to joining Universal, I was a commercial property solicitor in the City of London for 10 years. I went from drafting legal paperwork, to moving and storing it!

It was an exciting move from the legal world to the business world. I was impressed from the start at the expertise, meticulous planning, technical skills and high customer service that are required to deliver office moves which are complex, high business risk and time critical. One of my main aims behind our on-going work at CMG is to raise the profile and awareness of professional office movers in the wider business world and the value, knowledge and professionalism they bring to a workplace project. My perception is that they are often undervalued alongside other professional service providers, and focus is accordingly more on cost than value.

R&S: What do you feel are the key challenges for commercial movers in today's market?

Sarah Cole: The workplace is constantly evolving to reflect the innovation in work technology and new ways of working. This is reflected in the trends towards hot desking, an emphasis on space utilisation and property rationalisation. Many organisations are shifting away from moving or storing existing furniture, but refurbishing existing systems or upgrading when they relocate. In large business, the change to hot desking means there will possibly be less internal churn work for movers. It will be a challenge to keep up, adapt and continue to innovate given the changing workplace's requirements. The other challenge is companies outside of the moving world offering move services as part of a range of workplace solutions. Large TFM business, facility management, interior fit out and space planning companies are all moving into the relocation arena. This is why it is so important to continually highlight commercial movers' experience, industry specific accreditation and expertise in both planning and operations that set us apart.



R&S: Can membership of the CMG address any of these challenges?

Sarah Cole: CMG is striving to raise the profile of its membership as the experts in office moving. This is backed up by members holding the BS 8522 accreditation in commercial moving. Our marketing initiatives this year will offer the Group opportunities to engage and network with potential clients. CMG want to ensure that the marketplace is more aware of the existence and value of the standard. CMG should be the starting point for finding a professional commercial mover, and our initiatives this year are geared towards this.

R&S: What will be your priorities as CMG Chairman?

Sarah Cole: I would like CMG to engage more with both its existing and potential members, and its client base. The Group has now set up a Linked In Group, Facebook and Twitter accounts to encourage debate and discussion around innovation and best practice, and

demonstrate to the wider world that our members are at the forefront of office moving. The social media will also help improve our rankings on the internet, so that when a company searches for a mover, they find CMG.

Participation in marketing events such as at the Facilities Show in London in June, and future events with organisations with large memberships who are involved with moving such as BIFM and the Building Futures Group will raise awareness and give CMG a platform to promote our Group.

R&S: What would be your main messages to non-CMG BAR Members?

Sarah Cole: Please join and participate in the social media initiatives to learn more about the Group, share ideas and help us raise our profile.

We would like knowledge of our Group and BS 8522 to increase, so that when planning an office move large or small, a client will automatically look to the CMG membership to select a relocation company.



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