

# BALANCING

## *Talent Mobility with Talent Productivity*

BY JILL HEINECK, CRP

In a world where human resource professionals often must “do more with less,” the ability to balance productivity of talent with the cost of a move is a must-have skill. Heineck writes that the household goods move is the most stressful of all mobility processes, and offers guidance for how corporate clients can meet their productivity goals within the limits of their policies.

In an age of conscientious cost containment, the noble idea of staying true to set mobility policies seems just that, noble. With the staggering lull in home-sales, the rising costs of moves, and the demand for talent to be on the job quicker, move professionals are faced with both keeping to the overall budget while addressing individual situations that may require deviation from that budget. How do we balance longer move times with cost containment and talent productivity?

One way to do this is to place heavy emphasis on pre-planning. In addition to getting the full picture of the status of the market in the transferee’s origin city, getting a move contingency plan in place is critical. With the finicky housing market and the delay in moves, companies are best served by preparing for “Plan B.”

Shawn Sweeney, CRP, GMS, vice president of business development for the southeast region of Xonex Relocation, New Castle, DE, agrees. “Many clients are asking us to include additional temporary living and storage charges in the pre-move cost projection so they are aware of the potential added cost.” He adds, “the continued slowed housing market has affected the household goods process. Many transferees have to change pack and load dates multiple times because their [old] home did not sell. This has caused the household goods process to take much longer than it did several years ago. This trend will continue until the housing market improves. Planning is key!”





## On the Web

To learn more about talent management and talent productivity, please visit [www.WorldwideERC.org](http://www.WorldwideERC.org)

Balancing Talent Management and Costs in a New Economy—New Concepts in U.S. Domestic Relocation

[www.WorldwideERC.org/Resources/MOBILITYarticles/Pages/0909-abbey.aspx](http://www.WorldwideERC.org/Resources/MOBILITYarticles/Pages/0909-abbey.aspx)

Architecture of Strategic Talent Management

[www.WorldwideERC.org/Resources/MOBILITYarticles/Pages/1010-Foster-Herring.aspx](http://www.WorldwideERC.org/Resources/MOBILITYarticles/Pages/1010-Foster-Herring.aspx)

The Global Mobility and Talent Management Partnership Opportunity

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## Move-in Services

Another way to assuage the stress of the move and get the transferee on the job quicker is to provide move-in services. “Most of our clients are busy with work and family obligations and want to get their homes up and running as quickly as possible,” said Kathy Householder, chief executive organizer of On the Move & More in Atlanta, GA, whose company will meet the movers, unpack the boxes, and set up “house.” “When our team comes in and gets the family totally out of boxes and has everything put away and organized, it makes all the difference in the world for their stress level and productivity.”

The benefit to the client is that Householder and her team are in constant communication with the mover during a move. “We work in tandem with the moving company and provide our services while the movers are finishing up their responsibilities in the home,” she said. Her team partners with the moving company to make the transferee’s transition as easy as possible while getting the family settled.

## Communication Is Key

Mover communication is a key ingredient to efficient moves and happier employees. “In our office, we have a dispatch department and a customer service department that handle specific areas of our third-party crating services,” said Jennifer

Pedde, community manager for Alliance Relocation, Fayetteville, NY. “They work together to make sure that our technicians are fully informed and that our customers know what to expect. We prize communication to make sure the job is done and done well.... We allow our customers to access information online, which provides a daily listing of [move] jobs and the status of those jobs. We call transferees/employees to confirm that our technicians provided the highest level of service, and ensure that we’re able to meet moving needs. Constant communication is very important.”

## Pre-planning Prevents Poor Performance

Much like pre-decision, pre-planning for multiple setbacks during the moving of household goods can help avoid surprise expenses for the company, as well as the transferee. What may have worked in past markets clearly may not work now, or for every transferee. In some cases, the actual move is not the most stressful part. According to James Kautz, move coordinator QGC Relocation Services, Toronto, Canada, there is more stress over the sale of the old home and the purchase of a new home than any other element of the relocation. “One family lost \$300,000 on the sale of their home because they were leaving a region hit hard by the recession,” said Kautz. “The move itself was a breeze

in comparison.”

Their case is somewhat unique, but the concept is not, he continues. “We have another half-dozen booked moves that are still pending because the homes haven’t sold and they’ve been on the market for five to six months. This is hard on the employee, the family, and the company because the employee’s time, money, and attention is split between the old home and new home. That is infinitely more stressful than the moving process itself. I suspect in these cases seeing the moving truck arrive is more of a relief than anything.”

More often than not, the household goods move is the next most stressful component of relocation. How can the corporate client meet productivity goals while adhering to policy?

Creating a team consisting of both HR and relocation, and real estate and moving professionals can open up dialogue that could help to avoid unnecessary costs and stress while increasing satisfaction and productivity. Combining pre-decision with specialized service offerings to transferees will not only help anticipate what might be, but also will help to manage both client and transferee expectations. Quoting Dr. Michael Leboeuf, “A satisfied customer is the best strategy of all.” ■

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