

CHAPTER 44

RELOCATING AND STARTING THE NEW JOB

TIPS TO MAKE IT EASIER

Congratulations, you are now ready to make your move to the new company. As shown in Figure 44-1, you are ready to relocate and start the new job. In this chapter, we will share proven tips with you that should make your move easier.

I would like to share some of my experiences that I have learned after six relocations over the years. I have moved from the Midwest to the East and West coast. I have moved my spouse who also had to re-establish her career as well as my children who experienced loss of friends and family and relocation to new schools.

I also know how exciting it can be to obtain positions in different companies and how it enhanced my career. New experiences of moving around the United States proved to be surprisingly wonderful experiences for the entire family.

There are so many things to think about and prepare for when job relocations are necessary. Hopefully you can learn from my experiences and make your move less stressful and easier on your family.

PREPARING, PLANNING, AND MAKING THE MOVE

There are so many things to think about and prepare for when job relocations are necessary. For some, the relocation effort is one that is a career choice and a welcomed position to be in; for others, you may have been faced with a job loss and are possibly moving reluctantly. In either case, it is going to take a significant amount of preparing and planning to have your move come off successfully.

This takes a great deal of careful work and coordination. Possibly the largest of tasks you will take on to coordinate is the move. It's time consuming

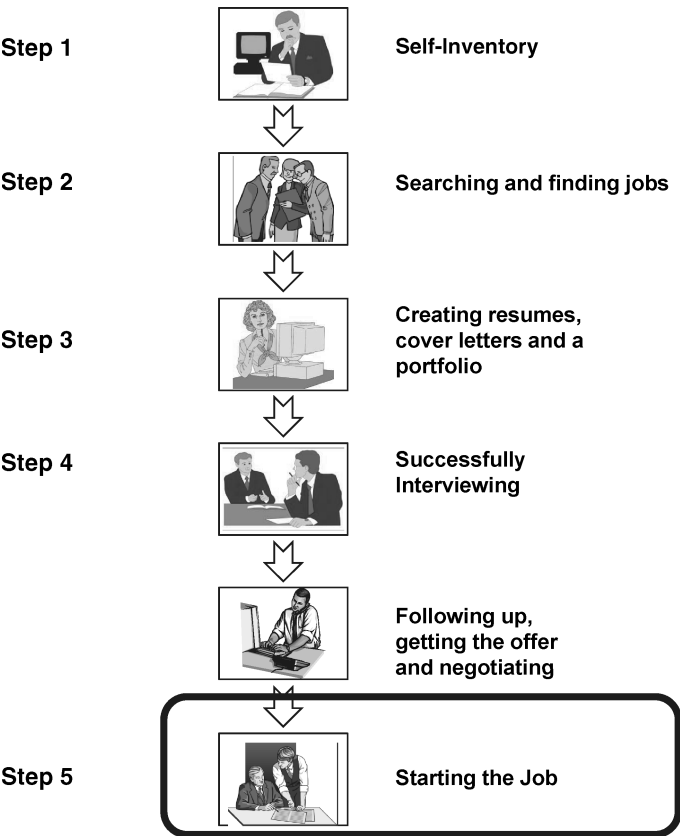


FIGURE 44-1 Job search process step 6—starting the job.

and can be stressful just because of the sheer nature of the multiple items associated with relocation. The first step to planning your move is to understand your relocation package.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RELOCATION PACKAGE

Make sure you understand the terms and conditions of your relocation package from your new employer. Don't be afraid to ask questions and negotiate for what you need. Review your contract with your spouse or partner before you sign-off—make sure you have thought through the details of the contract and identify the impact and limitations to your move. Here are some very important terms and conditions normally contained in the relocation package that you should consider.

1. What is the total budget you have for your move? The budget should include costs for paid trips to find a new home, real estate fees at both

ends, days allowed in a hotel and the daily per diem. It also should include a budget for moving your household goods; often this has a weight limit in conjunction with it. What budget is allowed for your cars to be moved?

2. What is the length of job commitment?
3. Will they pay real estate fees for the sale of your home?
4. Do they plus-up your salary to cover any extra taxes you will incur?
5. How long do you have to purchase a new home?
6. Will the company buy your old home if you cannot sell it?
7. Will the company help your spouse find a new job?
8. Do they have a preferred real estate company to work with?
9. Is car rental part of the relocation package?

If you have any uncertainties contact your Human Resources department immediately. Once you understand the terms and conditions of the relocation package you should be able to generate your plan.

GENERATING A PLAN

Start your plan by preparing a timeline of tasks to accomplish for your relocation. This timeline will keep you focused and will enable you to include others in the planning and provide a good look at the big picture. First, begin by sitting down with a calendar and lay out the events that will occur once you accept the position. Lay in the key activities. Here is a list of activities to help you create your timeline.

1. Meeting with realtor and listing your home
2. Last day of school for kids; meeting with school counselors
3. Movers and packing up current house
4. Sale and closing on home
5. House hunting at new location
6. Packing and final day at old house
7. Travel to new location—two visits (usually for house hunting and area visits)
8. Visit school and local areas
9. House hunting time at new location
10. First day of new job
11. First two weeks: lodging, meals, car rental, and so on.
12. Purchase and close on new home
13. Moving van arrives at new house
14. Unpacking and first night in new home

Make use of all the resources available to you when generating your plan: company Human Resources representative, babysitters, relatives, realtors, friends, whomever you think will be available when you need help. This will help you to quickly draw upon those resources when you need them. Lining up the resources ahead of time will also provide comfort to you by knowing that you have many people to assist you in your transition. Once you layout all these events on your timeline you will quickly see there is no way you can accomplish all this and be settled in your new job and home all within a few weeks. Here are some tips to help you with this.

- Have your family stay in the old house and live there until you sell it. This will take the pressure off you having to sell it so quickly. Also, the old home will show better for sale purposes with all the furniture in it. Empty homes are harder to sell. Start your new job and live in an apartment until the family arrives. This will save money just in case your old house does not sell immediately and also help if you need the proceeds from the sale of the old house as downpayment for the new house.
- Schedule the house hunting trip after you have your house up for sale or even wait until after you have an offer. Knowing what you can get for your old house will help you determine what you can afford at the new location. Include your kids in the second house hunting and make a mini-vacation out of it. Do something fun for the kids so that they get excited about the new location.
- Set up meetings with realtors at your new job location. Usually realtors are referred through company Human Resource departments that are taking care of your move to your new job. However, you can do a great deal of checking online, or as my wife did, she worked with the realtor we had our existing home for sale with, to refer her to a realtor specialist in the new job location. Allow yourselves at least two house hunting visits. One where you get to shop and then another trip to revisit everything once you have it narrowed down to some must sees and visit homes together. Of course, you have many things to consider: location, price, schools, proximity to new job and spouse's job, as well as medical facilities, airports, and so on. Define your goals for the right area to settle in.
- Once you start work, ask your boss if you can have a little extra time off and you will make up for it later. Explain all you have going on. Normally they understand. This will free up some time for you without having to take unpaid time off since usually your vacation will not start until after you have been at the new company for a minimum of 6 months.

SPOUSE'S CAREER

Often times the company you are working for can provide great information, leads, and direction to the spouse looking for a job too, so seek out advice if the

company you are joining provides such services. Otherwise, help your spouse get an updated resume, find headhunters that will help in the job search, and be supportive. It is a difficult time for the spouse as well.

TIPS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE KIDS

Review area schools and meet with counselors ahead of time to make sure you have all the information you need to share with your children. Pick a time when you can all visit schools. Some say that it is good to move at the end of the school year, but I have found that if they can jump in while school is in session it makes for an easier transition. Moving during the summer makes it hard for kids to meet schoolmates and they start off sometimes missing out on making friends faster. This, of course, does depend on your children's ages. If your children are school-age, you will also need to bring or send a copy of your children's transcript/grades. Remember, you will need to provide proof of your children's medical shots showing they are all up-to-date as part of the school registration.

FAMILY DISCUSSIONS

If your children are old enough, be sure and have family meetings and one-on-ones with your children. Find out what they are thinking and feeling. Perhaps even seek out counseling because it is an emotional time for everyone and lots of new things are taking place. Children lose friends and confidence and can become fearful of the unknown during this time.

CHECKLISTS

The best tip we found was creating a checklist to help us keep everything straight. Here is a sample checklist we created that you can use to get yours started.

1. Generate a contact list for
 - a. Bank accounts
 - b. Medical clinic and doctor
 - c. Drug stores
 - d. Dental offices
 - e. Eye doctors
 - f. Kids' school
 - g. Insurance
 - h. Gas, electric, and water companies
 - i. Cable and television
 - j. Garbage

- k. Realtors
 - l. Real estate closing company
 - m. Old Human Resources
 - n. New Human Resources
 - o. New boss—cell and email
 - p. All relatives
 - q. All neighbors and kids' friends
 - r. Insurance carrier information for car, home, and so on.
 - s. Car rentals
 - t. Moving company
 - u. Driver of moving van (private cell phone)
 - v. Car transport company
 - w. Hotels
 - x. Airlines
 - y. Credit cards (in case you lose one)
2. US Post Office address change
 3. Last day of service for utilities on old home
 4. Closing on old home: date, time, and documents
 5. Copy of kids' medical shots
 6. Copies of last year's tax returns
 7. Copy of kids' school records
 8. Passports
 9. Suitcase of personal items (keep with you during the move)
 10. Prescriptions
 11. Copy of relocation package
 12. Maps
 13. List of key websites and passwords

This is not an all-encompassing list but should be a good start to help you generate your checklists.

THE INFORMATION VAULT

One action we took during the move was to get a large briefcase that could hold a three-ring binder, notebook, and our laptop. We kept all our contact and relocation information in the briefcase. People would call or things would happen and we would need to instantly access information. Without it we would have been lost. Once all your belongings are packed up and on the truck you will have no access to this information. Without it many things will grind to a halt.

FINAL GOODBYES

A group party for you and your friends and family is good and I encourage some type of party for your children if they are of an age where they understand. This not only lets everyone put some closure on the move, but also make sure that the friends you have made over the years get a chance to say goodbye. It also makes a wonderful opportunity to invite people for future visits and express how welcomed and desired they would be.

You can always stay in touch via emails, phone calls and now, of course, we have such great programs such as SKYPE that allows you to see and talk to one another live on your computer. My wife and I have cultivated many friends from living in different states throughout my career, our children also remain friends to this day with out-of-state friends.

We recently just threw a surprise birthday party for our son and invited his high school and college buddies from other states where we lived; it was amazing how their friendships sustained also. Pictures are a wonderful way of remembering everyone. Finally, don't forget to send thank you notes to those special friends and coworkers who have helped you with all your transition preparations, and for those who have been there to support you.

GETTING SETTLED AT THE OTHER END

Your biggest decision once you arrive at the new location is finding a place to live. Your relocation coordinator should have a real estate agent all set up to help you. The first big decision is finding the best communities to live. Our priorities for selecting communities were school district rating, housing quality, and commute to work. If you have your priorities established your real estate agent can quickly narrow down the number of communities to start looking for a home.

After you have narrowed down your final choices, one excellent thing to do is drive to the community early in morning and try the commute during the morning rush hour, and again during the afternoon rush hour. See if it's doable.

On your house hunting visits, if you have time, visit the area visitors bureau or go online and get information so that you can be prepared and know about the different resources you may need, such as the library, churches, sporting arenas, and favorite stores. This will help your family get a quicker feeling of being connected with family interests. This will also assist in furthering your feelings of getting established in a new area more confidently. Knowing perhaps the same stores are available for shopping, add to comfort of the move.

Also, my wife spent some time making a visit to the health clinic my company offered for healthcare, mainly because we had children of school-

age for whom she felt it was important to get established and find out their services right away.

Make the effort to visit the schools with your kids. Take them to school personally if necessary, and encourage the kids to invite classmates to your house so that you can meet the students and keep your children moving in the right direction of making new friends.

Take up the offers from your new coworkers who invite you over for dinners so you can begin to make your spouse and children feel comfortable in their new city. Ask for your spouse to meet you for lunches, if possible; it will help them to get out and visit restaurants and have special time devoted to the marriage.

Work with your spouse and be encouraging if they want to find employment. Help with contacts, preparing resumes, or anything else for your individual situation. Perhaps it is just putting them in contact with someone who would be helpful to know in the area, or a possible volunteer opportunity you heard about at work.

Finally, have family meetings as often as needed to see how each member of the family is doing with the transition. Let everyone share about their day. Some may adjust better than others. Find out who needs help. Family discussions are absolutely necessary.

If necessary, I highly recommend seeking counsel to facilitate more difficult problems. Our daughter found she had a hard time adjusting to her new school and was more comfortable in a private school. Once we listened to her needs and made the change, she was on the “A” honor roll! Our son wanted to play a major sport and with our support, ended up on a varsity team in school; not an easy task when changing mid-year during high school. Listening, working with school counselors and staff, made it possible. Making appropriate changes to meet the needs of your family is very key.

STARTING THE NEW JOB

Starting a new job is going to require building a new network of business contacts and learning all the new company rules and regulations. To help build your network spend a few extra minutes socializing with people and let them know you are new to the company. It is amazing how this little fact can open people up and make quite a world of difference. Another good tip is to ask your boss who you should call on when you have simple questions about the company and its rules and regulations. Ask for a “buddy” who is a person you can go to when you have questions. A good buddy can save you hours of work and frustration. Finally, try socializing with your coworkers after-hours. You will be surprised at the number of people who have also relocated for their job and have gone through this experience. They understand what you are going through and often are willing to socialize after work and share all they have learned about the area.

SUMMARY

There are so many things to think about and prepare for when job relocations are necessary. There is a great deal of careful work and coordination; possibly the largest of tasks you will take on to coordinate. It's time consuming and can be stressful just because of the sheer nature of the multiple items associated with relocation. The first step to planning your move is to understand your relocation package. If you have any uncertainties contact your Human Resources department immediately.

Start your relocation plan by preparing a timeline on tasks to accomplish for your relocation. This timeline will keep you focused and will enable you to include others in the planning. Make use of all the resources available to you when generating your plan. Consider the impact on your spouse's career and be sensitive to your children's feelings. Make use of checklists and assemble your information vault. Use a calendar and develop a timeline for all the key events.

It is going to take time to get settled and feel comfortable in your new home and job. You can reduce the amount of time by planning family events and getting involved in your kids' school activities. Keep in touch with old friends and make new ones. The move to a new job can be positive for both you and your family, but is going to take work, understanding, and time.

Have you identified any career actions you want to take as a result of reading this chapter? If so, please make sure to capture these ideas before you forget by recording them in the notes section at the back of the book.

ASSIGNMENTS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

- 1 Why are preparing and making a plan so important?
- 2 Do you think checklists are important?
- 3 Who should you contact when you have questions about your relocation package?
- 4 What does it mean to plus-up your salary to cover any additional taxes?