Everything you’ve ever wondered about group moves
How Group Moves Differ from Traditional Relocations

Group moves represent a specialized business challenge for organizations, and while the underlying process of an individual or family employee mobility program is the same, the movement of an entire company or community of people brings about unique aspects to consider:

- What is the impact to the community(s) being vacated?
- Will housing values be compromised?
- Is the new location more expensive, particularly in regards to housing?
- Will salaries need adjusting to compensate for the location?
- What is the employee plan; is there a desire to transition all workers, or eliminate certain positions? Specifically:
  - Do you want employee attrition?
  - Will stay-on bonuses be provided? For how long and how much?
  - Will all employee roles receive the same level of benefits?
  - Should retirement or early retirement options be available?

The impacted employees will also have their own questions and concerns:

- Where is the new office?
- Will my role change?
- Will my co-workers or boss change?
- Is the whole company reorganizing?

Realizing the answers to these important questions is what will set a group move plan and policy on the path toward success.

Planning & Managing Group Moves

To aid in the implementation of such a specialized program without leaving any question unanswered, a group move should be completed in three distinct yet comprehensive phases:

1. Pre-Announcement Phase: Think of this as the discussion phase. Consider what you’ll need to communicate to the employees before the relocation is publicly announced. Communication and being proactive in messaging is critical to eliminate rumors, provide employees with the business rationale, and explain the overarching process and timeline for the relocation.

   Use these discussions as a chance to clearly articulate milestone dates and how the company will address employee questions and concerns as the process moves through its lifecycle. Map out thoughts on retention and/or severance plans, determine appropriate budgets, and—something often overlooked—consider a recruitment plan in the new location if the employees don’t accept their relocations.

2. Post Announcement Phase: This focuses on solidifying the discussed plans and structuring the impending relocation policy. Hold individual employee (and possibly spouse/partner/family) reviews of the proposed policy. Ensure the policy is designed separately from any pre-existing traditional policies.

   Conducting an employee survey to understand who will take the move and desired timing of moves by position is a great way to keep the policy in sync with employees’ needs. While a group move requires a significant deal of investment, the move can only be as successful as the benefits offered to support current employees.

   As a hands-on means for onboarding, plan group destination tours with local area experts to discuss the benefits of the new location. Consider the helpfulness and ef-
fectiveness of providing a resource center—an online or physical location that offers detailed information about the policy, its benefits, the new location, and changes the employee and his or her family can expect. This can mean brochures, location guides, school information, and recreational information.

3. Implementation Phase: Once planning is complete and onboarding efforts have been made, authorize the first waves of employees. Sticking to the developed relocation timeline is crucial to the success of these first moves. If there are unanticipated issues with the timeline or delivery of benefits, then it will be critical to make adjustments before additional waves of relocating employees are impacted with the same issues.

The ongoing measuring and management of the group move process is what will determine its success, both for employees’ work lives and for the business.

Above all else, it is important that you select a relocation provider with thorough group move experience and that can manage employee transitions while simultaneously supporting the business goals and objectives.

The most successful group move policies align the strategic goals with effortless consolidation to the new area, but how is this achieved? As mentioned, group moves differ greatly from traditional moves, as there are more significant investments of time, money, technology, physical assets, real estate, human emotions, and other variables to consider. What procedures help ease the burden of these variables?

> Customizing the policy design based on needs gleaned from a pre-move survey and business objectives
> A mobility process-mapping and flow analysis
> Multi-tiered, assignment-specific policy consulting
> Cost analysis and containment initiatives
> Program and change management
> Process improvements
> Heightened technology support from your relocation provider
> Risk assessment reporting
> A focus on talent retention, productivity

The Ultimate Marker of Success

While companies may believe their group move policies are well defined, there is only one way to know for certain, and it boils down to employees’ transition successes. How can you know for sure that the policy has a winning combination of ease of moving, cost containment, and employee satisfaction? Surveying employees is the easiest route to collect this metric.

> Survey employees’ pre-move needs
> Identify those who will/will not move

> Report on those who are not accepting their moves:
  - Plan to contact these employees
  - Consider additional inducements to promote benefits of the move
  - Start local recruiting efforts to replace employees, if needed
> Implement the relocation policy of those accepting the move
  - Monitor these employees for any policy issues
  - Track home sale successes
  - Track home purchase/rental dates
> Report on go-live date in the new area

The establishment of all metrics is typically done during the implementation phase with key client stakeholders as their input is integral for measuring the elements critical to success reporting.

While a group move program encompasses the same moving parts and same consideration of employee stress and business goals as does a traditional relocation program, WHR Group understands that group moves require a heightened commitment to ROI and establishing the new location as a place to call home.

Above all else, you should work with an experienced provider who understands your business and employee needs, which translates to low cost but high success and will save your employees the undue stress that so often follows large group moves.
LOOKING FOR MORE RELOCATION RESOURCES?

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