

CANADIAN RELOCATION SYSTEMS, "MOVING TIMES" MAY 2005

MOVING CAN BE STRESSFULL!

Watch for effects on family members and pets so you can give comfort and a helping hand.

Your children resent the move. Many people wait until the summer to move so their children can finish the school year. This can be a mistake, children generally are happier if they can start immediately in school, where it's easier to meet friends, even if it means picking up mid-year. Otherwise, they could spend the summer months isolated in their new home, moping and resenting the move.

Teenagers are not real enthralled about moving. It's not so hard on younger kids. Teenagers' budding social lives are just beginning to become all-important, he explains. Expect to suffer heavy damages on your phone bills.

Getting the kids involved in the move will also help smooth the adjustment, . Explain why you're making the change, why it's important and what it will mean. Let the children help plan some aspects of the move and make them feel part of the process early on.

Your spouse can't find work. As more women build careers and more households depend on two incomes, many relocating couples struggle with this issue. Additionally, more men are finding themselves in the position of being the trailing spouse as their wives pursue high-powered jobs that require them to relocate.

Some companies offer career counseling and job placement for the trailing spouse. However, few have policies in place across the board. If you want assistance, you may want to negotiate a package before accepting an offer, he adds.

The need for such support can vary according to where you live and what kind of position you're taking. Some employers are less likely to offer help if couples depend on two incomes. A second paycheck also can be less important to senior-level executives who are more likely to earn higher incomes.

You get slammed by hidden costs. Again, this problem is less likely to be a concern to senior managers at large companies, who typically can expect to have all their expenses paid when they move. But less-senior professionals should manage expenses carefully. Review your company's relocation policies to make sure you know what will and won't be covered.

Employees should keep in mind most packages are intended as an assistance program. Don't expect to be reimbursed for every dime. If you receive a lump-sum payment package, wait before you rush out and buy a new computer with the cash. Contrary to what many expect, employees rarely make money or break even on such deals.

Further, many moving van lines have complicated fee structures and few transferees understand all the charges on their invoice. You could run up additional expenses for

services you thought would be part of the standard package, such as assembling beds, bringing boxes down from the attic, using special crates for fragile possessions, disconnecting gas and electric appliances or even shuttling your possessions to a trailer farther than 25 meters from your front door.

Additionally, timing is critical. If things go wrong with your closing or some other aspect of your move that requires you to put your possessions in storage, be prepared for sticker shock. The first day of storage can be expensive and the total cost could make up 20% to 30% of your overall van-line bill.

You don't like the new community. Often transferees move into a new area without knowing enough about it and discover later -- whether because of the schools, housing, commute or culture -- it's not right for them. To ensure a good match, employees may want to consider renting for six months before deciding to purchase a new home there.

You're shocked by the cost of living. Many companies will offer cost of living adjustments or mortgage financing to ease the financial pain. But most transferees want to replicate their lives and housing situation as quickly and as easily as possible. When they discover they can't, they view whatever happens to them as a negative.

BUYING A HOUSE?

These eight tips can help make your house-hunting experience positive and rewarding.

1. Location counts. You've probably heard the old real estate joke about "location, location, location," but the point still bears repeating. Location is crucial. How far are you really willing to commute to your place of employment? How good are the local schools, shopping centers, public transportation, seniors services and other public amenities? Will your new home be next to a vacant lot or a commercial property? Even a picture-perfect dream home can be a mistake if it's in an undesirable location, and a poor-location home can be a particularly bad choice if you anticipate reselling the home within a few years.

2. Make a list. Do you (and your spouse, if you're married) really know what you need and want in your home? You'll save yourself many hours of shopping (and potentially arguing) if you make a list ahead of time. Zero in on the features you must have, would like to have, definitely don't want and would prefer not to have. Your goal is to find the right home for your family without falling in love with one that doesn't suit your needs. Tip: Start compiling your wish list by thinking about what you like and dislike about your current home.

3. Do your homework. Not long ago, consumers had very little access to information about recent home sales prices, market trends, homes on the market, neighborhood statistics and the home-buying process. Today, all this information and more is available on the Web. Go surfing. Get educated. Become empowered.

4. Get preapproved for a mortgage.

(<http://relocatecanada.com/easymortgage.html>)Your top-dollar home price is a function of your household income, your creditworthiness, interest rates, the type of loan you select and how much ready cash you have for the down payment and closing costs, among other factors. Rather than guessing or estimating how much you

can afford to spend, ask a lender or mortgage broker to give you a full assessment and a letter stating how much you're qualified to borrow. The true amount may be much more or much less than you think.

5. Use a checklist. Touring multiple homes is a confusing experience for most people. Rather than relying on memory, make notes about the homes you visit. Turn your priorities into a personalized home-shopping checklist and use it to track the features of each home. <http://www.relocatecanada.com/housematch.html>

6. Wear comfortable clothing and sturdy shoes. House-hunting can be tiring, especially if you're relocating to a distant community and want to see a dozen homes in one day. There's no sense in torturing your feet unnecessarily.

7. Be prepared to make an offer. House-hunting can also be frustrating, especially if you know in your heart you're not really emotionally or financially ready to buy a home. If you're not ready, don't put yourself through the exercise. If you are ready, go through a blank purchase contract ahead of time so you'll know what decisions you'll face when you make an offer.

8. Relax. Granted, buying a home is a major life-altering event. But it's not worth making yourself insanely crazy or super-duper stressed. Save time at the end of your house-hunting expedition to unwind, calm your thoughts and emotions and keep the whole experience in perspective.

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