



The Baker's Dozen



HRO TODAY'S ANNUAL LOOK AT THE TOP FULL-SERVICE, END-TO-END RELOCATION PROVIDERS

As relocation costs rise, companies are examining policy and seeking advice from outsourced service providers.

Our annual look at the top relocation services providers may be very timely for HR organizations struggling with their relocation program. Even as the need for talent continues to grow everywhere around the world, the cost to fill those positions with existing employees is rising in step with the talent shortage. As the housing market continues to soften, relocation managers more than ever may need the broad experience that third-party providers can lend.

Outsource relocation services seem to be picking up momentum these days, especially as the real estate market sours. With home prices declining and inventory accumulating, many organizations are wrestling with keeping their relocation costs in line. Trying to strike a balance between offering competitive relocation benefits without being overly generous, many employers find that the value of experienced third-party providers is greater than ever, especially as they face tough market conditions.

"We've just all come through one of the greatest times in real estate," remarked George Doyle, president of Jacksonville, FL-based Lexicon Relocation, a full-service provider. "When you look at the average length of tenure of relocation managers at the client level, it's six or seven years. Many relocation managers today have never been through a real

estate downturn."

Doyle noted that this inexperience in some cases has led to more organizations seeking outsourced consultative as well as administrative services. With homes now coming in and staying in inventory longer, many relocation managers accustomed to quick property sales in the early part of this decade find themselves on unfamiliar grounds. "It's been rare that a home came into inventory in the past five years," he added.

Indeed the real estate market is causing new headaches for many relocation managers, and the latest numbers show the worst might not be over. According to the National Association of Realtors, existing home sales in March fell 8.4 percent, the largest decline since 1989. At the same time, home prices also fell 0.9 percent from a year ago to a national median price of \$215,300. Further troubling to relocation specialists is an increase in the amount of time it takes to sell a home; the supply of unsold properties rose from 6.8 months in February to 7.3 months. All of these developments have put relocation programs under pressure.

Don Kelly, corporate director of compensation and development for Cooper-Standard, an automotive parts manufacturer, said the current market has led his organization to reg-



ularly examine relocation policy to make sure the company is offering competitive but not outlandish benefits. Working with the company's outsourced provider and even other consultants, the company is questioning many aspects of its policy. Can guaranteed buyouts, for instance, be made more attractive in this climate?

"We've actually done quite a bit of analysis against the market," he said. "We've had two groups look at it separately. Are we being competitive? Are we being overly generous?"

Kelly is not alone in his approach. According to relocation service providers, many clients today are turning to their vendors to help assess policy as well as reduce costs. Policy assessment is especially critical because

even as the soft real estate market has challenged relocation managers, the need for talent in this time of globalization hasn't ebbed much. Moving pivotal employees is still a strategic tool of the organization.

One of the ways in which companies are trying to minimize the impact of slowing home sales is requiring employees to more closely adhere to policy. This could mean asking them to market their homes using approved brokers, listing the properties at prices that more realistically reflect current market levels, and capping certain costs.

According to a recent survey of 106 U.S. and Canadian employers released by Weichert Relocation, 70 percent of respondents said employees are required to market their homes for a minimum time period; 61 percent must list their homes with a company-approved broker; and 62 percent have price guidelines. It's a direct contrast to the boom times, when employees themselves could easily sell the home on their own.

"Now they (employers) are saying upfront, 'Mr. or Ms. Employee, what you do will directly impact our costs.' They are taking a much more active role in the initial marketing strategy for employees," said Ellie Sullivan, director of marketing and consulting for Weichert.

Changing policies isn't always an easy step, especially because competition for talent remains heated. However, some industry observers point out that escalating costs relat-

ed to the housing market have forced many employers to think twice.

"Our clients are making significant policy changes as it relates to home sales whereas in the past because of talent shortages they've been hesitant to make policy changes that they perceived as restrictive," pointed out Carmelita Brown, a vice president with Prudential.

While some companies point out that a result of a more prescriptive relocation policy is a surge in exception requests, Brown said her clients have been mindful not to allow too many exceptions out of their desire to maintain parity and equity.

SHIFTS IN RELOCATION TRENDS

While housing has emerged as the most important issue of the day for relocation managers, other trends continue to impact employee mobility. For instance, with costs a chronic concern, companies are changing their staffing practices. Although the traditional expat assignment will always be a staple in employee mobility, a shift to less traditional assignments continues, said David Barlow, SVP, client support services at provider SIRVA.

"They are taking a more judicious approach to relocation in general," Barlow said, adding that in both good and bad economic times companies move personnel around. He explained that when companies face a decline in business, they tend to consolidate offices,

which leads to moving workers as well.

One trend he observed is an increase in the use of temporary domestic assignments, which under IRS rules can only last up to a year. He noted that this type of relocation has tax and cost advantages for the employers, so more are drawn to this arrangement. Another shift is the continuing effort to localize and hire local talent—another way to reduce costs. In addition, employees are less receptive to relocating, so organizations must resort to alternatives to traditional assignments, or hire locally.

Furthermore, Barlow pointed out, companies growing in emerging markets, especially those experiencing political upheaval, may look to rotate workers regularly. "Today, there is flexibility in assignments," he added.

As relocation needs shift with the trends, outsourced providers say they often serve as trusted advisors to help clients shape their policies and practices. With costs always top of mind, location managers are turning to third-party providers not only to educate them about best practices but also to take over administrative burdens that would otherwise bog them down. As Cooper-Standard's Kelly noted, the value of outsourcing has always been about easing the transactional demands of relocation.

"I think our biggest advantage of outsourcing is it lessens the administrative burden for the process of payments for those who are relocating," he added. **HRO**

THE BAKER'S DOZEN

Altair Global Relocation

www.altairglobal.com

Cartus

www.cartus.com

Crown Relocations

www.crownrelo.com

Graebel

www.grabel.com

GMAC Global Relocation Services, LLC

www.gmacglobalrelocation.com

Hewitt Associates

www.hewitt.com

TheMIGroup

www.themigroup.com

Paragon Relocation Resources

www.paragonrri.com

Primacy Relocation

www.primacy.com

Prudential Relocation Inc.

www.prudential.com/relocation

Royal LePage Relocation Services

www.rlrs.com

SIRVA Relocation

www.sirva.com

Weichert Relocation

www.wrri.com

Methodology: This list was developed by contacting 22 of the largest relocation providers and requesting the following information: number of full-service relocations that they executed in 2006, and their vote for the top 13 full-service relocation service providers. The top 13 were determined by the number of votes each received from the other 21 competitors. Those with the 13 highest scores were chosen. A ranking was not possible since independent verification of the number of full-service relocation moves each company undertook in 2006 was unavailable. Providers are designated a Buyer's Choice as a result of one or more of its clients agreeing to serve as a reference and participating in HRO Today's Relocation Buyer's survey.

Company

Employees
Transferred in 2006

URL



ALTAIR GLOBAL RELOCATION

15,000

www.altairglobal.com

Offering relocation services worldwide, Altair was incorporated in 1989 as AmeriCorp, Inc. and re-branded in 2005 under its current name. The largest woman-owned, independent full-service relocation management company, it offers a comprehensive selection of domestic and international mobility solutions. Clients achieve their diversity spending goals by classifying relocation costs as Tier One and Tier Two diversity expenses. The company boasts more than 18 years of continuous growth.

Relocation Services: Departure Services—policy counseling, candidate services, relocation and assignment cost estimates, city and country reports, cost-of-living calculations, visa and permit procurement, tax and social security briefings, home sale, property management, inventory management, lease cancellation, pre-assignment coordination, expatriation management, and repatriation management; Destination Services—orientation, home finding and settling-in, home purchase, leasing assistance, host country destination services, mortgage and financial services, spousal career assistance, language training, cultural training, benefit payments in any currency, and dependent care; Logistic Services—household goods move management, travel management, temporary living, expense reimbursement, and pet transportation; Administrative Services—benefit payments, expense tracking and reporting, equity advance, tax assistance, year-end reporting, management reports, group move consulting and management, quality monitoring and reporting, supplier management and reporting, diversity initiatives and reporting, recruiting support, and assignment management; Client Solutions Center—customized consulting services, new client implementations, proactive policy benchmarking, policy creation and design, original industry research, business location decision and event services, and affinity programs.

Most Important Metric: Transferring employee service satisfaction; corporate client relationship management; supplier quality results; relocation cost management targets; timeliness (billing, payments, reporting); and accuracy (billing, payments, reporting).



CARTUS

More than 130,000

www.cartus.com

With 2,700 employees based in strategic service centers worldwide, Cartus assists more than 100,000 transferees, expatriate assignees, and members each year across 160 countries. The company has more than 50 years of experience in consulting, intercultural training, outsourcing, and mobility management. Cartus is part of Realogy Corporation, the world's largest real estate franchisor with a diversified business model that includes real estate brokerage, relocation, and title services.

Client(s): Agilent Technologies, BearingPoint, Burger King, CVS Pharmacy, GE, Kraft Foods, Shell Oil, the Hershey Company, Home Depot, Toys “R” Us, Tupperware, UPS, Westinghouse Electric, and 20 federal agencies.

Relocation Services: Cartus provides an array of relocation services from home sale and household goods shipment to settling into new communities. The company offers logistical support for employees on both domestic and global assignments, with international assignment services including specialized expertise in cross-cultural and language training and global workforce development. Comprehensive programs cover group-move management, outsourced relocation administration, policy consulting and design, relocation accounting and financial services, international assignment compensation, and global supplier management.

Most Important Metric: Cartus uses “dashboard” metrics to capture speed, accuracy, and productivity of all critical functions, measuring performance against month- and year-to-date targets in critical areas. These areas include customer-service delivery (encompassing such variables as consultant availability, responsiveness, helpfulness, initiative, and problem solving) and supplier performance. Metrics tracked include cycle times, service delivery, accuracy, and cost performance. The most important metrics are client-dependent, which can range from cost control to scalability to the ability to deliver a range of services.



CROWN RELOCATIONS

48,845

www.crownrelo.com

Crown Relocations provides strategic mobility program management and a wide range of relocation services for more than 3,000 diverse organizations and 43,000 transferees and their families each year. Crown's complete selection of services and its “one point of contact” structure work toward ensuring that HR professionals will be informed and transferees will be established and productive in their new working environment.

Relocation Services: Departure services include travel coordination, auto disposition, mail forwarding, lease termination, de-registration, and move-day inspections. Custom-designed repatriation training is also coordinated to ensure transference of acquired

Company

Employees
Transferred in 2006

URL

skills and competencies. Crown owns and operates storage facilities around the world specially designed for the secure handling and storage of household goods. Settling-in support encompasses a broad range of customized services including airport “meet and greet” service, utility and furniture installation, and comprehensive referral information ranging from poison control contacts to child-care and transportation services.

**GRAEBEL**

27,250

www.graebel.com

A full-service company, Graebel owns its own third-party relocation and move management companies, van line, forwarding operation, nationwide moving and storage centers, as well as a workplace services division. The company boasts a single source for all global employee and workplace needs. Privately owned, the company also offers web-based technology that allows clients to access data worldwide.

Relocation Services: Domestic—policy development, consulting, and program management; vendor selection, management, and administration; expense tracking, reimbursement, and management reporting; tax gross-ups; cost-of-living calculations; employee policy counseling and entitlements; marketing, home sale assistance, inventory management, and sales; property management; home finding and purchase assistance; rental and temporary housing assistance; destination services; settling-in services; spousal assistance; and real estate services including tenancy management, property management, and home sale.

International—assignment management including letter, policy counseling/administration, ongoing assignment support, and repatriation; destination services including pre-assignment visit, temporary housing, area overview, home finding, and education search; settling-in services; administration and reporting including cost projections, cost-of-living analysis, expense management, and year-end reporting; and worldwide household goods move management and administration.

Most Important Metric: Measured in every revenue- and non-revenue-producing “subjective” area. Among the major performance indicators: overall transferee satisfaction; overall client satisfaction; customer service; and accounting and billing accuracy.

**GMAC GLOBAL
RELOCATION SERVICES, LLC**

17,000

www.gmacglobalrelocation.com

GMAC GRS is a provider of end-to-end global relocation, assignment management, and consulting services to multinational organizations worldwide. GMAC GRS is a rapidly growing company in more than 110 countries and manages more than \$1 billion of relocation expenses for clients. Backed by General Motors, the company offers a combination of business-to-business services.

Relocation Services: Domestic—program administration; policy counseling; home sale programs (guaranteed buy-out (GBO), amended value (AV), and buyer value option (BVO)); closing services; marketing assistance; household goods management; expense administration and tracking; home finding; rental assistance; temporary living assistance; area orientation; mortgage assistance; career and family assistance; property management; cost projections; policy consulting; and group move management.

International—program administration; international assignment compensation administration (including cost projections, balance sheets, tax gross-ups, and year-end compensation accumulation); policy counseling; home finding; rental assistance; household goods management; expense administration and tracking; settling-in services; intercultural services; language training; visa and immigration assistance; temporary living assistance; mortgage assistance; vehicle assistance program; GM credit card; policy consulting; tenancy management; area orientation; cost projections; letters of assignment preparation; ongoing assignment support; repatriation; and pre-hire area orientation.

**HEWITT ASSOCIATES**

13,302

www.hewitt.com

Hewitt's full-service mobility offerings are complemented by technology and reporting capabilities through Relocation Online. An end-to-end HRO vendor, Hewitt also offers HR consulting services to provide in-depth relocation and assignment policy reviews and benchmarks. Hewitt delivers services from locations in the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

Client(s): International Paper, Rockwell Automation, Expedia, Thomson, and United Airlines.

Relocation Services: Domestic—administration of client domestic relocation policies and programs; employee policy counseling;

Company

Employees
Transferred in 2006

URL

relocation expense management and reporting; cost estimates; and budgets. Departure services include household goods and home sale services. Destination services include home finding, mortgage assistance, temporary lodging, and spouse/partner career assistance services.

International services—assignment planning and initiation; candidate assessment; administration of international assignment services, policies, and programs; visa and immigration; household goods; cross-cultural training; language; destination services; temporary accommodations; relocation expense management; tenancy management; and auxiliary financial services. Hewitt provides on-assignment services to support compensation, payroll, and expense management, and repatriation services to increase an assignee’s effectiveness in returning from the assignment.

Most Important Metric: Core metrics include accuracy, timeliness, and customer satisfaction. These categories apply to all phases of service delivery, and metrics are customized according to client objectives. Standard metrics include on-time delivery for all services, invoice accuracy, W2 accuracy, client satisfaction, and home sale timeliness and accuracy.



THEMIGROUP

More than 9,600

www.themigroup.com

TheMIGroup manages a full range of global relocation solutions and offers a wide range of flexibility with all services and engagements. Clients come from a diversified industry base and include segments such as entertainment, financial, healthcare, and bioscience. The company focuses efficiencies in the development of corporate relocation policies, expense administration, group move management, and cost containment initiatives extending into best practices.

Client(s): Chevron Corporation, Fluor Corporation, Baker Hughes Incorporated, Research In Motion, and Cargill Limited.

Relocation Services: Domestic—real estate including home marketing, home sale, closing services, inventory management, home finding assistance, and temporary accommodation; household goods move management; spouse/partner assistance; and expense management including tax gross-up, tracking, auditing, and reporting.

International—assignment management; preview trips; visa and immigration; temporary accommodation; destination services including community orientation, home finding, school search, and local government compliance; cultural and language training; household goods move management; risk management and insurance products; expense management; repatriation services; and automobile and credit card assistance.

Ongoing support includes expense management and assignment payment support; expense tracking, auditing, and reporting; vacant residence insurance; and storage of household goods.

Most Important Metric: Customer satisfaction measured through The MI Quality Service System.



1. Customer service and response time
2. Exception management process
3. Global coverage



**PARAGON
RELOCATION RESOURCES**

10,447

www.paragonrri.com

Independently owned, Paragon works with a wide range of relocation vendors and provides customers with a single point of contact for managing their relocation needs. A single relocation or global assignment consultant is appointed to work with the transferring family throughout the relocation or global assignment process. This approach is to ensure ownership and accountability for the move with one consultant who has the tools and operational latitude to make decisions for the transferring employee. The company boasts end-to-end service, continuity between implementation and support, full ownership and accountability, and 24/7 monitoring.

Relocation Services: Domestic—recruitment support services; short-term assignment coordination; relocation benefits counseling; expense audit, processing, payment, and reporting; home marketing assistance; home sale services; property management services; home finding services; mortgage services; rental assistance; temporary accommodation services; transportation of household goods and coordination; employee and family transition and spousal assistance; travel management; and tax employee assistance program.

International—global move cost analysis; global assignment policy counseling and administration; visa and immigration coordination; expense audit, processing, payment, and reporting; home sale services; property management services; worldwide home finding and settling-in services; language and cross-cultural training; shipment or storage of household goods; dual-career

Company

Employees
Transferred in 2006

URL

assistance; international banking services; security services; global employee assistance program; tax preparation assistance; and travel management.

Most Important Metric: Service metrics include expense processing time; household goods claims rates (on-time delivery rates and insurance claim ratios); direct home sale cost; transferee service ratings; and client service ratings.



PRIMACY RELOCATION

39,872

www.primacy.com

Primacy Relocation provides third-party employee relocation services around the world and is one of the largest to focus all technology and resources solely on relocation and global assignment (expatriate) management. Primacy administers programs for employers throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), and Asia regions. In addition to its Memphis headquarters, Primacy has offices in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Omaha, Sacramento, and Washington, D.C. (government services), as well as Amsterdam, Basel, Geneva, Hong Kong, Lausanne, London, Montréal, Munich, Paris, Shanghai, and Zurich. Primacy is online in nine languages at primacy.com.

Client(s): Dow, Freddie Mac, Sodexo, Carlson Companies.

Relocation Services: Corporate program—policy counseling, development and review, expense administration (includes audit/reimbursement), compensation/tax/payroll management, lump-sum debit Visa cards, and group moves; Transportation—household goods move management and travel services; Destination—orientation, temporary living, home finding, rental assistance, school search, rental assistance, and spousal assistance; Real Estate—home sales, home marketing, and lease breaking. Domestic—mortgage assistance, cost-of-living (COLA/MIDA) adjustments, and intern relocation programs. International—assignment cost projections, expatriate candidate assessment, work authorization/visa management, benefit planning (medical, dental, pension, Social Security), letter of assignment, cross-cultural training, host-country formalities, language lessons, departure services, property management, personal vehicle programs, storage management, and repatriation.

Most Important Metric: Customer satisfaction ratings from corporate clients and transferees are Primacy's most important metric. Satisfaction levels are monitored, measured, and addressed in both groups.



PRUDENTIAL RELOCATION INC.

44,800

www.prudential.com/relocation

Prudential Relocation is a full-service global mobility management firm with an established client base ranging from global Fortune 500 companies to U.S. government agencies. Operating as Pricoa Relocation in Europe and Asia, the company's operations are in Canada, France, Hong Kong, Mexico, China, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, the U.K., and the U.S.

Relocation Services: Home sale assistance, amended value sale, buyer value option, guaranteed home sale, marketing assistance, mortgage solutions, home management, destination services, rental assistance, tenancy management, global transportation services, repatriation and reassignment support, and Prudential Home Connections (an array of home-related services and cash-back incentives on real estate transactions); Financial Management—cost management, cost projections, lump sum/S.M.A.R.T. Sum program; Program Administrative Services—program management, policy counseling, global immigration services, ongoing assignment support, compensation administration, and spouse/partner assistance; Consulting and Training Services—policy consulting, global consulting, group move consulting, intercultural training, web-based cultural training tools, candidate assessment, and language training.

Most Important Metric: : Key metrics are client and relocating employee satisfaction, cost savings, SLA performance, supplier performance, and risk mitigation.



**ROYAL LEPAGE
RELOCATION SERVICES**

22,000

www.rlrs.com

Royal LePage Relocation Services has been offering international global work mobility programs to corporations, government agencies, and individuals for more than 40 years. It offers a full range of global mobility services to companies and their relocating

Company

Employees
Transferred in 2006

URL

employees. These services are divided into six distinct lines, including corporate, government, assignment, consulting, financial, and individual. Each one is structured to uniquely meet the needs of the specific group.

Relocation Services: expense management; guaranteed home sale; international services; policy consulting; lease management; legal services; lump-sum management; marketing assistance; marketing management; move management; property management; relocation purchase card; temporary accommodations; visa and immigration; coaching; cross cultural; eldercare; home search; rental search; school search; settling-in support; comparable homeowner and rental studies; cost-of-living study; market differential study; rental subsidy program; mortgage penalty program; mortgage penalty savings program; mortgage subsidy program; and mortgage rate buy-down program.

Most Important Metric: Royal LePage employs a Six Sigma discipline to identify critical deliverables for each client and continuously improve processes by eliminating defects. These metrics include client and transferee satisfaction, client retention, supplier performance, and financial performance.



SIRVA, INC.

More than 30,000

www.sirva.com

SIRVA provides relocation solutions to a well-established and diverse customer base around the world. The company is a global provider that can handle all aspects of relocation end to end within its own network, including home purchase and home sale services, household goods moving, mortgage services, and settlement services. SIRVA conducts more than 300,000 relocations per year, transferring corporate and government employees and moving individual customers. SIRVA operates in more than 40 countries with more than 4,000 employees and an extensive network of agents and service providers.

Client(s): Dell, 3M, Johnson & Johnson, SYSCO & KPMGI

Relocation Services: Global program management, global program management consulting, pre-move services, destination services, moving, mortgage, and settlement.

Most Important Metric: Client and transferee satisfaction, cost savings, and risk avoidance. For home sale—days on market, list-to-sale price, and initiation volume.



**WEICHERT RELOCATION
RESOURCES INC. (WRRRI)**


28,650

www.wrri.com

Weichert Relocation Resources Inc. (WRRRI) is a global relocation and assignment management firm delivering turnkey workforce mobility solutions that enhance employee satisfaction and productivity while supporting stringent risk management and cost control. Weichert offers a broad portfolio of services, enterprise-wide capabilities, and a team of global mobility specialists. With relocation and assignment management solutions ranging from cost projections and compensation planning to home search and settling-in services to global expense management and payroll reporting, Weichert transfers thousands of employees globally each year.

Relocation Services: Consulting services include policy design and development, tax consulting, benchmarking, and policy counseling; Departure Services include home marketing assistance, home sale services, and household goods management; Destination services include home search, rental finding, and temporary living; inventory management; group move management; mortgage services; financial services including cost-of-living analyses, lump-sum administration, expense management, gross-up processing, payroll and tax services, and management reporting; property management, supplier management, and tenancy management.

International—program management; pre-assignment services; destination management; on-assignment services; financial management; regulatory compliance; and repatriation/post-repatriation services.

Most Important Metric: Customer satisfaction (clients and relocating employees), and year-to-year client cost reduction. WRRRI practices Balanced Leadership, a proprietary planning and performance measurement initiative that puts strategic planning, performance measurement, and continuous improvement at the nerve center of its organization. 

Buyers Fret Over Real Estate

WE SURVEYED BUYERS OF RELOCATION SERVICES ABOUT THE HOT TRENDS THEY SEE IN THE MARKET AND OTHER TIPS FOR GIVING THEIR EMPLOYEES THE BEST RELOCATION EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE. HERE ARE THEIR INSIGHTS.

Top Three Trends in Recruitment:

1 Softening of Real Estate Market (55%)

With the real estate market softening for the first time in six years, many companies are reexamining or putting in tighter controls on real estate transactions.

2 Rising Cost of Relocation (22%)

Some buyers are expressing concerns about relocating employees to high-cost areas.

3 An Increase in the Number of Expats (22%)

International moves continue to take place despite efforts to rein in costs, especially to hot economies such as China.

Other Trends Include:


- Adjusting policy to reflect the cost of living in high-cost areas
- Pushing more cost onto the employee
- A move away from guaranteed buyouts
- Modifying stop loss policy on home sales
- Resistance from employee because of higher relocation costs
- An increase in relocations because of tight labor market
- Growing anxiety because of homes not selling
- More moves to Asia

Most Important Qualities in a Relocation Services Provider:

- Good customer service with continuous program improvement
- Global coverage
- Good use of third-party vendors, e.g., AirInc, Runzheimers, and Fragomen
- A fit with your company's culture
- Appropriate firm size
- Someone who cares as much about the welfare of the employee and his/her family as the company does
- Cost-effectiveness
- Best-in-class services
- Timely support
- Having an overall program that includes customer service, ability to provide the service, and low costs
- Ability to manage vendor
- Low rates
- Has network of realtors
- Good communication skills

Biggest Challenges Associated With Relocation According to Buyers:

- Being fair to employee who is relocating without disrupting local employees not given cost-of-living stipends
- An increase in inventory homes
- Having consistency in the policy
- Not letting cost be the sole driver of the relocation program. It's about getting the new employee up to speed and productive, not how much the company can save in each move

- Cost and compensation
- Tax implications
- Selling the home in a timely manner so the employee is settled quickly in the new location
- Exception requests
- Keeping the employees whole and getting them up and running straight away 

Ciba Specialty Chemicals Looks Outside for Best Practices Guidance

AIRES PLAYS PIVOTAL ROLE IN HELPING CLIENT SHAPE RELOCATION POLICY TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE IN TALENT MARKETPLACE. BY SUSAN VITTORIO, CIBA SPECIALTY CHEMICALS, AND JOLEEN LAUFFER, CRP, AIRES

When Ciba Specialty Chemicals Corporation recently awarded AIReS a contract for domestic and international relocation services, its goal was to not only streamline relocation service delivery but also accomplish the following as part of a program redesign:

- Benchmark relocation policy provisions (11 policies) against national and like-industry best practices;
- Revise relocation policies to be more in line with company goals and objectives;
- Change U.S. domestic practices to accommodate all the requirements of NAFTA;
- Consolidate services that were performed by multiple vendors to one;
- Maintain some vendor relationships that existed in various regions throughout the world;
- Re-evaluate methods and responsibilities of Ciba employees throughout the region relating to relocation;
- Shift designated relocation service responsibilities from Ciba HR to AIReS; and
- Re-develop the entire end-to-end process flow for domestic and international relocation.

To achieve these goals, AIReS adopted the process in Fig. 1; definitions are as follows:

■ Policy Review and Benchmark Analysis. AIReS' consulting division completed a thor-

ough review of Ciba's relocation policies. Each element is individually benchmarked against industry best practices, as well as against other companies of like industry to the client. The analysis also categorizes the client's current practice as one of the following:

- Generous
- Conservative
- Best practice currently in place
- New trend

Based on the categories above, AIReS makes specific recommendations for changes.

■ Policy Session and Revisions. AIReS reviewed the analysis with the client on-site and completed those it approved. Additional updates were received within two weeks of the meeting, leading to more revisions. Several drafts were sent for review and approval, including layout and graphic design approval, before reaching a final version.

■ Implementation Guide Completion. The AIReS Implementation Guide is a tool that has been developed and refined over many years, and it is used as a starting point, with the remainder of the information gathered through on-site meetings with clients.

■ On-site Evaluation of Current Process. An evaluation of the current roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in Ciba's

current process was taken. Information was gathered from every regional HR generalist. Under the previous internal model, local HR generalists were significantly involved in the relocation process for individuals moving into their area. This required the generalist to find time to provide high-touch services that incoming transferees required. The process was standardized and transitioned to AIReS.

■ Process Mapping Session. The companies worked together to determine the most efficient and effective way for each relocation to flow. In the end, the final products were two swim-lane process maps; one each for international and domestic relocation. Many steps on the high-level process had corresponding subprocesses. The results were multi-layered processes with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities.

■ Regional Kick-Off Meetings/Calls. Ciba held regional meetings and calls to confirm the new procedures and policy provisions and to answer any questions from the regional HR generalists.


■ Ongoing Evaluation and Refining. AIReS continues to monitor the changes. A number of minor adjustments have been made to the process and technology used to manage various aspects of the program to best suit the client. 

FIG. 1: REDESIGNED WORKFLOW FOR CIBA'S RELOCATION PROCESS

