



The Ultimate Relocation Guide: The Things Sellers Don't Expect

...And Many Agents Just Don't Think About

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1. Preface

It can be stressful to sell your house when you're just moving across town, but when you're planning to relocate out of the area, it can be even more so.

There are a lot of things to consider beyond what most homeowners have on their mind or have to deal with when they sell a house.

This can lead to some costly mistakes or at least make for a frustrating experience.

Frustration is one thing (although it's ideal if you can avoid that too), but the last thing you want to do is lose money on the sale of your home due to things you just didn't even think would cause any issue.

That's why we created this booklet, and it's specifically for people who are selling their home due to relocating out of the area.

Hopefully your move out of the area is for some exciting reasons, and hopefully this book will help you get there as stress-free as possible.

By the way, we're totally approachable, living, breathing human beings...not just some famous authors (LOL!). So if you have any questions as you read this, feel free to reach out by phone or email!

2. Do You Have A “Relo Package”?

Not everyone selling their home and moving to a new area is doing it due to a career change, but it’s a pretty common reason.

And when they do, there’s always a chance that the company they’re moving for will offer a “relocation package” — AKA “relo package” if you want to sound like this isn’t your first rodeo.

However, a relocation package isn’t offered to *everyone* who is being asked to relocate for a job. So, this might not apply to you at all.

The thing is, in the excitement, some people rush right into the process of getting their home listed for sale before knowing whether or not they *do* have a relo package... only to find out once they’ve already started the process and made some decisions. Doing this can lead to unexpected issues and, perhaps, a loss of the benefits the company is willing to offer.

So, if you’re selling your home in order to move to a new area for a particular company and you don’t know whether or not you’re entitled to a relo package, make sure to ask the company and find out before moving forward any further.

Pro tip: If you do not have a relocation package, or are moving out-of-area for non-work related reasons, feel free to skip right past the next few pages and on to section 5!

3. You Don't Have To Use "Their Agent"

If you are offered a relo package, chances are good that the relocation company (and/or your employer) will more or less lead you to believe that you *have* to use one of their "approved" real estate agents to remain eligible for the benefits of the relocation package.

They'll typically give you three agents, from different companies, to choose from. In this respect, they do give you *some* choice.

They claim the agents are "certified" or trained in relocation practices... but that could simply be a few hours of in-class or online training. While the agents they recommend are "approved" by them, that doesn't necessarily mean that they're the best agents to choose from. (It also doesn't necessarily mean that the agents they refer to you *aren't* great agents.) It mostly just means that the agents they are recommending are in their system and have agreed to pay a referral fee back to the relocation company.

Considering the fact that this is likely your biggest asset, you shouldn't necessarily just go with whomever the relo company refers to you. Our best recommendation is for you to do your research and choose the agent you want to represent you throughout the process.

Pro tip: If the agent you find and choose isn't already approved by the relocation company, they can usually get approved by simply making a phone call or two and filling out some paperwork.

4. Benefits Aren't Always Beneficial

One last segment on relocation packages...

Getting offered a relocation package seems like a pretty sweet deal to most people, and they just sign on the dotted line before truly reading through the entire agreement and understanding exactly what the benefits (and costs) are.

Relocation packages differ. They don't *all* offer extensive benefits. So, sometimes they sound better than what you're getting when considering what you have to give up.

The costs to you can be subtle and only realized once you've already signed the agreement and are in the middle of the process.

Some of the "costs" could very well be financial. In some cases, *you* are basically paying for these benefits since they're often getting paid to you out of your own equity. For example, the relo company requires a hefty referral fee from the real estate company and agent. This fee is then used to provide or subsidize your benefits.

But other "costs" could be in the form of a loss of control over major decisions about the sale of your house. For example, you can find yourself being pressured by the relocation company to sell your house for less than you might have wanted to... just to expedite the sale.

There are a lot of ins and outs with these agreements. More than we can get into in this booklet.

But one of the most interesting (if not concerning) requirements of many relo packages is that you're not supposed to discuss the terms or benefits of the package with anyone — including your real estate professional. And, in turn, the "approved" agents the relocation company refers to you aren't allowed to discuss the terms or benefits of

their agreement with the relo company.

So, it's kind of on you to analyze whether or not the package being offered is worth the costs. Just make sure to do so before you sign on the dotted line because once you do you're at their mercy.

5. If You Don't Have A "Relo Package"...

Don't be upset if you *don't* have a relo package. If you even skimmed through the sections above that covered relo packages, you probably see they're not always as great as they seem on the surface.

On the contrary, you might actually be better off since you have total control over your decisions throughout the process and have more say on how your home equity is spent.

While you will certainly have *lots* of things on your mind, **the most important thing you should focus on is hiring an agent who truly understands how to handle a sale due to relocation.** That'll help take your mind off of all real estate related issues and even some that aren't directly real estate related.

Plenty of real estate agents can list and sell a house under "normal" conditions, but handling the sale of a home for someone who is relocating out of the area is a bit trickier. There's simply more to know, think about, and advise clients on. While this booklet covers a sampling of *some* of these things, please don't take this as an entire list.

OK, let's get into some of them...

6. "All Aboard?!"

No matter what your reason is for relocating, and no matter how excited you are, not everyone involved in the move may be excited and happy about it.

If you're single, and your move doesn't involve anyone else, then this isn't much of a concern. But many times a relocation involves a spouse, significant other, and/or children... and even pets.

Moving is stressful no matter the circumstance. Just moving within the same general area can change someone's life. New neighbors. New schools. New routines. But if you move to an entirely new area, it can be even tougher.

Hopefully everyone involved in your move is on the same page and supportive of each other. But sometimes appearances can be deceiving. So even if it seems like everyone is fine and dandy, you may want to make sure. And if you're the one who's not entirely happy, make sure you say something. The move may not be avoidable, but at least be open about how you're feeling.

Sometimes pent-up feelings and anxieties can cause the sale of your home to take longer than it should, or even prevent it from happening, because someone in the family is causing issues. It may not even be obvious; it can be quite subtle. And since you (and even many real estate agents) don't deal with this on a regular basis, it can be hard to pinpoint what exactly is causing the issues.

Some of the issues could be:

- ▶ Making it difficult for buyers to see the home
- ▶ Being disagreeable about accepting a solid offer on the house
- ▶ Illness and/or depression
- ▶ Arguments and fighting (outside of the norm for the family)

You can do a lot of damage control by just having open conversation with everyone involved and letting them feel how they feel. And to be heard. A little love, compassion, and understanding can go a long way.

7. Pricing Your Home When Relocating

Whenever you're selling a home, pricing it appropriately is critical... yet it's something many homeowners don't do.

When you're not moving out of the area, and you have the option of taking your house off the market and deciding not to sell, that's not the worst thing. (Although it does have some lasting effects on the saleability and value of the house.) But when you have to sell because you need to move out of the area, pricing is even more critical.

As a homeowner, your primary concern when talking about pricing is probably that you don't want to price it too low. That's natural. Everyone wants to sell their home for as much as possible. But *underpricing* your house is highly unlikely. The most common mistake homeowners make is to *overprice* their house.

Overpricing your house almost always leads to:

- ▶ **Your house not selling quickly (or at all)**
- ▶ **Several price reductions**
- ▶ **Eventually selling for less than you would've gotten if you priced it correctly up front**

But when you add moving out of the area into the mix, you can end up losing even more money. That's because time is of the essence, and you simply need the house sold. This could be due to the move date or the need to line up a house or rental in the new area. Or it could be simply out of frustration after too much time has passed, leading you to lower your price or accept a lower offer than you should.

Just make sure you are objective and careful when pricing your home right from the start. As long as you have a thorough and thoughtful market analysis done by a real estate agent, you should be fine as long as you heed the advice of the agent.

Pro tip: We mentioned it earlier, but if you have a relocation package, the relo company may pressure you to lower your price more quickly than you may want to or need to in order to expedite the sale. And if you have a “buyout,” which is when they buy the house from you if it doesn’t sell quickly enough, they may cause you to accept a lower amount than you could or should get. This is all the more reason to price it appropriately from the start. This is an extremely deep topic, and we encourage you to discuss this further with a real estate agent who is knowledgeable about these issues.

8. Get Packin'

This might sound a bit over the top, but you should start packing up your house as soon as you commit to relocating.

Time flies, and as we've mentioned, you'll have a lot of things to think about and do between now and when you move. One of those things is literally moving, which entails packing up everything you own. Too many homeowners underestimate how much they own and have to pack. Therefore, they often wait until the very last minute to do it. (OK, maybe the last day or two...but that might as well be minutes in the grand scheme of things.)

Starting the process of packing up now will do a few things for you:

- ▶ Save you a lot of stress in the final weeks, days, and hours.
- ▶ Give you a chance to assess what you can get rid of. (There's probably lots of stuff you never realized you had and don't really need.)
- ▶ The ability to be more organized. (Rather than just cramming as many things in whatever box happens to have room, you can put things that belong together in the same box.)
- ▶ It will help your house show better when buyers come look. (Picture uncluttered closets and drawers...)
- ▶ Allow you to pack over time instead of leaving it as one big, long task. (Do a room per day, for instance.)

This doesn't mean to literally pack *everything* you own right now! You (probably) still need to live in the house, so hold off on the big stuff and the things you use every day, like furniture, kitchenware, clothes, toiletries, etc.

Pro tip: By the way, this is all good advice even *if* you are hiring a moving company to literally pack all of your belongings. Don't skip this step just because you'll have a crew swarm your house and pack everything up right before you move. An uncluttered house shows better and can help you get a better offer...or an offer at all.

Speaking of moving companies...

9. Movers (And “Shakers”?)

When you’re moving locally, there’s always the possibility of just renting a truck, enlisting a few friends and family, and moving yourself from one house to another.

But when you’re moving entirely out of the area, it becomes more difficult to do it yourself. So, there’s a good chance you’re going to be dealing with movers.

You may have already heard some horror stories about moving companies. But just in case you haven’t, you should prepare yourself for a potential shock...

Their fees can be hard to pin down and have a tendency to be *wayyyy above their initial quote.*

If you read the fine print on their quote, contract, or website, you’ll probably notice they give themselves a lot of wiggle room on the price. But it seems that a lot of people are taken by surprise when it happens. That’s when the horror stories come out of the woodwork. It seems like everyone who has moved has gone through this, regardless of which company they used.

A lot of times, the hidden or unexpected costs are brought up once they already have your belongings in their possession. It can feel like they have your stuff held hostage and they’re shaking you down...

No matter how careful or aware you are, there’s always a chance you’ll go through this. So, our best advice is to expect it and plan on the cost being more than quoted. But hopefully knowing this will help you avoid it altogether by being vigilant, asking the right questions, and getting as firm of a quote as possible from any moving company you hire.

10. All The World's A Stage

As Shakespeare once wrote...

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

When it comes to selling your house, your *house* is the stage, and all the *furnishings* become the players.

"Staging" has become a common buzzword in real estate, so you're probably somewhat familiar with it. But in case you're not, it basically boils down to furnishing and decorating the house as nicely as possible to create a feel buyers can't resist.

The extent to which someone stages a home varies considerably.

- ▶ Some will hire professionals and bring in rented furnishings and decor.
- ▶ Others will go out and buy some new stuff to create the feel.
- ▶ Many people will just use what they've got as best as they can.
- ▶ Others don't believe it matters at all, and they don't even do any staging.
- ▶ Some folks take it to the opposite end of the spectrum and leave the house cluttered and unclean. (Don't be "some folks"...)

It's up to you how far you want to take it, of course, but putting in at least a little bit of effort is probably a good idea.

But here's why we really bring it up...

When people are relocating out of area, quite often they have to move out of their home and to the new area before the house is sold. So, they end up having to take all of their belongings, leaving a vacant house.

Is it the worst thing in the world? No. But it isn't ideal either. In the least, make sure you have your house "staged" to some degree at the time all of the pictures are taken that'll be used online and in print. That will help buyers envision how it *did* look, even if you end up having to leave it vacant during the time it's up for sale.

11. Just Checkin'...

Piggybacking off of that last topic... If you do find yourself moving out of the house before it's sold, and you've relocated out of the area, make sure you have someone responsible for checking on the house regularly.

Most likely (and hopefully) nothing bad will happen to your house, but you never know.

In the least, you want to make sure that the house is temperate... not too hot and not too cold. People coming to see your home will be affected by having to deal with a stuffy or freezing home. It can make an otherwise perfect home feel like something isn't quite right.

You also want to make sure nothing has been taken or broken or left messy. (Buyers and their agents should leave it in perfect condition, of course, but there can always be that one bad apple.)

And of course, you want to make sure that if something really bad happens, it's found as soon as possible so that further damage can be avoided and so that the problem is fixed before another buyer comes to see the house.

So, who should be responsible? A local friend, family member, or neighbor is always a good idea. But you can also possibly rely on your real estate agent. But that's not necessarily to be expected. It's not something that's always offered as part of their responsibilities and services. So, if you want or expect whomever you hire to check on the house, make sure to ask him or her to do so up front, and make sure you are all on the same page as to how often he or she will go check on the house.

This might sound pretty basic, but you'd be amazed at how easily this falls through the cracks and the topic only comes up once something happens to the house.

12. Timing Your Sale (as perfectly as possible)

As long as you price your house appropriately, it should sell as quickly as possible. Just how long “possible” is depends upon a lot of factors however...

There’s no hard and fast answer to how long it will take your house to sell, regardless of whether you and your real estate agent do everything perfectly. It really depends on a few market conditions, such as:

- ▶ What price range your house is in
- ▶ The time of year, at least to some degree
- ▶ The current amount of buyers looking for homes
- ▶ The current pace of homes going under contract

So, to get a fairly decent idea as to how long it will take to sell your home, the first thing you need to do is have a local real estate agent do a thorough market analysis. From this you’ll gain insight into how long it will take to sell your house, given the current conditions in your particular price range.

Once you have a handle on that, you can start to make decisions on how soon to put your house on the market before your planned (or ideal) move date.

It’s almost impossible to perfectly time the sale of your house, so you’re better off erring on the side of caution and giving yourself more time, rather than less. You can always try and negotiate a closing date further out or find alternate short-term housing if you get a solid enough deal.

Pro tip: If you will be buying a home in the area you are relocating to, you may want a copy of our relocation booklet for buyers. Just ask us for a copy, and we’ll get one to you. We get into how to time your purchase in that one.

13. Selling Your Home As Quickly As Possible... And For As Much As Possible

"I'd like to give buyers a great deal on my house!" and "I really hope my house takes at least a year to sell!" are things no homeowner in the world has probably ever said.

Every homeowner wants to sell their house for as much as possible and do it as *quickly* as possible.

Ironically, very few people do. They make some pretty common mistakes.

This booklet was created to give you some insights into typical issues and topics that affect people selling their house in order to relocate to a new area. But it doesn't get into the more universal topics and issues that affect being able to get your house sold as quickly as possible and for as much as possible.

We have another booklet that helps with that...

Our Ultimate Seller's Guide is a bit longer and more in depth than this one. But it's worth your time and effort to read.

It's free, and there's no obligation. All you have to do is let us know you want a copy, and we'll get it right to you. We can send it as a PDF by email and/or a print copy if you'd like.

And if we don't hear from you, good luck with the sale of your home and your move! But we do hope to hear from you!

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