



An IMPACT Group White Paper

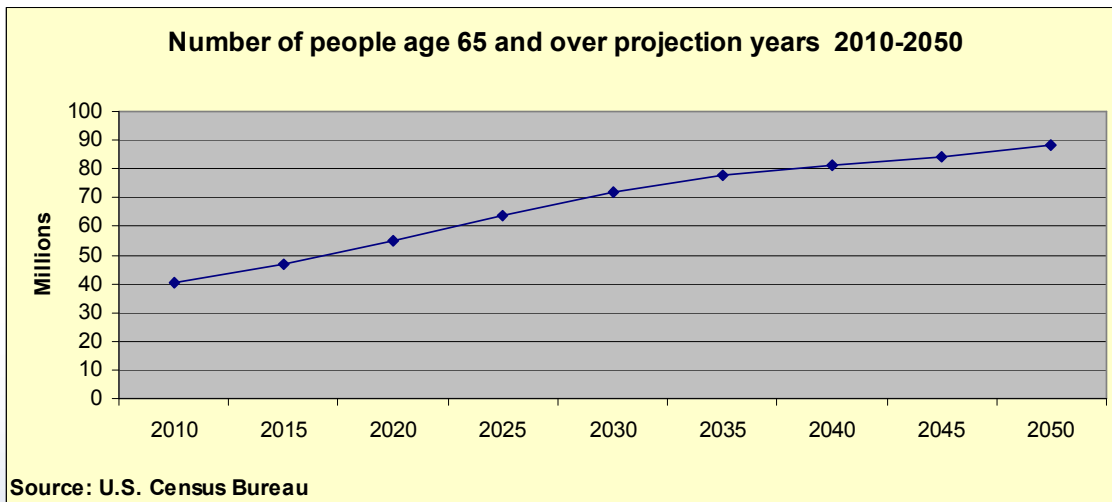
Elder Care and Its Impact on the Relocation Decision

Best practices & practical advice on how to identify and support your relocating workforce with elder care needs.

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Today’s organizations are well-versed in dealing with the relocation needs of dual-career spouses/partners and their families. But longer life spans and the vast number of Baby Boomers quickly approaching old age have created a generation of American workers who find themselves caring for both their children and their aging parents. This “Sandwich Generation” faces unique and difficult challenges that are often not covered in corporate relocation policies.

Serving as a full-time or even part-time caregiver for an aging parent can be a daunting task and members of the “Sandwich Generation” feel the pressure from both sides. This group, consisting of individuals aged 30 to 60, finds itself caring for both children and aging parents at the same time. According to *Caregiving in the U.S.*, a study conducted by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, 35 million adults are providing unpaid care to an adult over 50 years of age, and 44 percent of Americans have both one aging parent/in-law and a child who is younger than age 21. This situation will grow more prevalent in the coming decades. By 2030, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that the 65+ age group will almost double in size, representing 72 million people and 20 percent of the total population. There is also a growing occurrence of a new segment called the “Club Sandwich Generation.” These individuals are providing at least part-time care for three generations at once – grandparents, parents and children. The fact is that the increased responsibilities of these family caregivers will have a tremendous effect on relocation policies. Extending all relocation benefits to an elder parent, in-law or relative is an issue more companies will be facing in the near future.



Sheila was cooking pancakes for her family when her relocation consultant called her for the first time. “It sounded like a party was taking place in the background,” her consultant explained. Sheila was making breakfast for her family, which consisted of her three children, her elderly mother and father who suffered from Alzheimer’s disease. Sheila had numerous concerns about the pending move from South Carolina to New York City. It wasn’t just about the move, selling the house or finding the appropriate school for her children – she was mostly concerned about how the move was going to impact her parents.

Prior to the move, Sheila worked with her consultant and tackled the emotional issues that come with relocation, not only for her, but all her family members. The next step was for Sheila and her consultant to prioritize her needs so the consultant could start conducting research and providing pertinent information that would make the move easier. Sheila decided that if she could get her children settled as quickly as possible, she could then devote more time to her parent’s needs. With that plan in mind, Sheila’s consultant first provided comprehensive information on activities for the children as well as school information in New York City. She then provided information on adult day care and alternative support programs that would meet the needs of both parents and provide Sheila with some in-home support.

“I feel organized and prepared for this next step,” Sheila tells her consultant. “I know this isn’t going to be easy, but I am supported. I have you to help me. You don’t know what kind of relief that is!”

According to the ERC Study, *Family Issues 2008*, 16 percent of organizations have relocated an elderly parent living with the employee and only 3 percent offer to relocate parents or relatives if they move to the same community. Less than one in five U.S. based companies offer any type of elder care relocation assistance, and most do so on a case-by-case basis. According to the *2010 Global Relocation Trends Survey* by Brookfield Global Relocation Services, only 8 percent of responding companies assisted expatriates with elderly family members for a global relocation. As the family definition evolves and responsibility for care expands, employee concerns over elder care will become more prevalent. These concerns need to be identified early so the appropriate support can be offered.

Identifying and Supporting the Needs of an Elder Family Member

Pre-decision and acclimation support have always been a great way to ensure that the right relocation candidate is identified, their specific needs are recognized and that support is provided to ensure a successful move. This best practice will also help to surface all of the employee's elder care needs, which can often be fairly extensive and include both physical and emotional aspects. Companies will need to consider how much of their pre-decision and acclimation programs will also include the elder parent.

Benefits of Pre-decision and Acclimation Support

- Helps ensure that the employee is the “best fit” for the relocation.
- Identifies and addresses the specific needs of the employee and his/her family
- Decreases employee lost productivity time by providing comprehensive research and information on the new location.
- Increases the probability of top talent accepting the offer to relocate.
- Saves time and reduces stress for both the employee and family.
- Increases the probability for a successful relocation.
- Identifies the specific needs of the employee and his/her family

There are many areas to consider during the relocation of an elder parent. For instance, family members will have many questions about nursing homes, assisted living centers or independent living communities. Questions may include reputation, cost and proximity to suitable family housing in the new location. Employers may choose to address such questions in orientation trips, through an employee assistance program or through customized relocation support. Employer support may include relocation expenses for the elderly family member and research and guidance on elder care resources. Some of the areas that will need to be investigated include the following:

- Senior centers and elder care living facilities in the desired areas of the relocating employee and his/her family
- Prescription transfers, pharmacy locations and physician referral services
- Local activities geared towards seniors
- Cultural education in the case of global relocation
- At home/live-in services
- Transportation services
- The proximity of shopping centers and grocery stores to housing
- Allowance of time to the employee for long distance care giving
- Providing counseling for the employee and elder on long-term care insurance
- Providing resources to the employee/recipient on managing the stress of caregiving
- Helping the elder to physically make the move by providing service such as in-home nursing assistance

In addition to the logistical areas listed above, relocation can also be challenging emotionally for an elder parent. These individuals may have lived in the same home for 50+ years. Their memories, feelings and emotions are tied to the town where they got married, raised their family and grew old. Now, they are asked to move to a new city, a new home and even a new culture. That is a serious emotional adjustment that may require counseling support.

These issues can turn into insurmountable concerns if they are not addressed quickly with pertinent information to give the relocating employee and his/her family the confidence to

make the correct decision. Relocation programs must be overhauled to account for these concerns if employers want to overcome employee reluctance to relocate because of extended family responsibilities. According to the *2008 Emerging Trends in Global Mobility*, 90 percent of relocation refusals are due to family or personal concerns and 70 percent of relocation failures result from lack of family adjustment. The reality is that organizations will see higher acceptance rates, assignment completion and employee productivity if they identify and provide support addressing the critical decision factors that affect the acceptance to relocate.

The ROI of Transition Support

Providing flexibility and support for the three generations impacted by relocation can prove to be a win-win solution for both the employer and employee. A successfully relocated employee represents a substantial cost savings through assignment completion and increased productivity. Based on general industry research, the cost of a failed domestic relocation could be as much as \$200,000 and up to \$1 million for an international relocation. The support and acclimation of an extended family member will continue to grow in importance regarding the success of relocation; however, the assistance currently offered by companies for elder care is minimal.

Including some type of elder care support in the company relocation policy isn't just good business, it is insurance for the prolonged success of the move. According to the *MetLife Caregiving Cost Study*, the cost to U.S. business from the lost productivity of working caregivers is more than \$33 billion per year. It is reported that employees with eldercare responsibilities missed more days of work than non-caregivers, have more unplanned absences and show a lack of focus in their work due to distractions. **Bottom line – If employers can help reduce the stressors related to a move, they will ultimately lower their costs as well as see a more productive, focused employee.**

By reducing the stress for your employees with support and research services before, during and after the move, employers will see higher acceptance rates, lower productivity loss and more assignment completions. Just as the definition of family has evolved during the past three decades, so has the definition of family within mobility policies, and so should the services being offered to the “Sandwich Generation.”

IMPACT Group

As The Transition Expert, IMPACT Group has over two decades of expertise and experience to help organizations manage every phase of the employee lifecycle. IMPACT Group specializes in providing superior career management support solutions for employees transitioning in, within and out of the organization. Our services include Outplacement, Relocation, Talent Development and Retirement assistance. IMPACT Group combines one-on-one professional consulting with leading-edge proprietary technology to provide innovative, results-oriented programs, ranking it among Inc. Magazines Top 500 Fastest Growing Companies. Our personalized approach to career management and superior customer satisfaction ratings are just a couple of reasons why Fortune 1,000 companies trust their employee transitioning needs to Impact Group. Visit IMPACT Group online at: www.impactgrouphr.com.