

Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 14, 1987

THE MOVING VAN

VEHICLE TO SUCCESS OR DISASTER FOR THE TWO-GENDER WORK FORCE

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ABSTRACT

Whither thou goest, I will follow becomes a myth of the past as the number of employed women approaches the number of employed men. Corporate transfer has traditionally been a clear route to the top, but the number of managers willing to move more than once has eroded from 84.4% in 1977 to 76.3% in 1983 and is still falling. The executive transfer refusal rate has climbed to over 24% and lack of family adjustment accounts for 80% of failed assignments. Corporations have regarded two careers as an issue for the future until recently. Now 70% believe that a spouse's job will play a role in relocation decisions. These corporations are searching for solutions and developing innovative relocation policy.

The overall goals of this exercise are to:

- increase awareness of the crisis situation that relocation creates in the two-gender work force,
- identify the pressure groups and power groups that affect relocation policy and decisions,
- isolate factors that determine career mobility,
- identify types of spouse employment assistance programs, prepare students and corporate human resources administrators to develop human factor conscious relocation policy.

INTRODUCTION

"It used to be a pleasure to call an employee in to make an offer of relocation," reported the personnel manager, "but now, well, frankly I dread it."

"I feel resentment against a system where making a career choice means ruling out a personal relationship," says Brenda Michael, who gave up her job and followed her husband to Arlington, Texas, "I'm not angry with him; he's as trapped as I am."

Completion of The Moving Van, including relocation scenario development, role play, and discussion requires three to four hours. The session can be extended to a full day if initial development of corporate policy for two-career relocation is the goal of participants.

The game is designed for ten to thirty players who are divided into four groups.

The two-career couple

(one will receive a relocation offer).

The power group making the relocation offer

(executives and superiors of the spouse).

The pressure group

(relatives, children, friends, colleagues, women's groups, unions, real estate agents, third party relocation firms who exert influence on the relocating couple).

The exercise requires a room of adequate size containing moveable seating to accommodate the four groups. Tables around which participants can gather are desirable.

Each participant will need:

- paper and pencil,
- case history "The Relocation that Didn't Happen"
- a colored "moving van" tag designating the participant's group and role, and
- a written description of participant's role.

The relocating power group will need work histories and performance evaluations of possible candidates for promotion (see Appendix 1)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATOR

1. Introduce the exercise and its purpose--**understanding the changing relocation needs of employers and employees and development of a two gender work force relation policy**. Present a three minute lecture on **How Spouse Employment Affects Relocation**. Use transparencies "What Do Two Salaries Buy?" and "What Does the Accompanying Spouse Risk.?" (See Appendix 3, Catalyst, 1985 [1])
2. Show the video film, Your Move, (25 mm.) to set the scene from the perspective of the relocating family [2].
3. Distribute copies of the case history "The Relocation That Didn't Happen" to set the scene from the management perspective. Allow reading time. If group includes human relations professionals, ask for examples from experience or observation. Use the transparency "Circle of Miscommunication." (See Appendix 3, Catalyst, 1985 [1])
4. Explain role play procedure (see Appendix 2 for procedure and roles). Roles are loosely defined to encourage participants to explore real-world roles and develop them as they see fit. Throughout play, participants' actions affect and alter the original scenario.
5. Divide the large group into four small groups in any way that is convenient. Distribute the "moving van" group and role tags and role descriptions. Allow participants a few minutes to read their roles, rearrange seating, and read the role play instructions.
6. Participants in each group are listed below. Roles are listed in priority order. Those lower on each list can be dropped when working with small groups.
 - **The Couple**
Tracy B. Gogetter, Section Head, Engineering Department
Terry M. Upcomin, Supervisor, Quality Control

Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 14, 1987

(The couple's sex ambiguous first names and different surnames are intentional. The managers involved in the relocation must chose from two resumes. They should not know whether they are relocating a man or a woman until the selection is made.)

- **The Relocating Power Group: Corporation**
Chief Executive Officer
Personnel Administrator
Benefits Administrator
Division Manager
Department Manager
Vice President
Director of Executive Search
 - **Spouse's Power Group: TipTop Corporation**
Spouse's Division Manager
Personnel Administrator
Vice President
Benefits Administrator
Department Manager
Other TipTop Corporation Managers
 - **Pressure Groups**
Morgan, the teenager son
Darci, the 13-year old daughter
Margaret Gogetter, Tracy's mother, age 60
Rudy Gogetter, Tracy's father, age 78, an invalid
Benjamin Upcomin, Terry's father, age 69
Silvie Upcomin, Terry's mother, age 65
Marion Peters, Terry's friend at work
Tonie Adams, Tracy's best friend
Laurel Eden, President of Acme Women Employees
Trojan Jones, Chairman, Union Grievance Committee
Abby VanBuran, a newspaper columnist
Other friends and relatives of the couple
7. Role play will proceed loosely but needs to include the following scenes (see also role descriptions).
1. A meeting of the Acme Company decision makers in which a candidate for promotion is selected, the promotion will entail a transfer to a realworld city or town. Power group decides:
 - a. How the offer will be made,
 - b. Who will notify the candidate,
 - c. How long will the candidate have to make a decision,
 - d. How is this transfer involved in company goals and policy.
 2. The selected candidate is called in by Personnel and notified of the offer including briefing on the new job, salary increase and benefits.
 3. Candidate informs spouse of offer.
 4. Individuals from outside pressure groups have heard about the relocation and respond.
 5. The spouse of the transferee must notify TipTop Corporation of any decision that will affect his/her employment.
 6. The relocating candidate can return to the Acme Corporation power group as many times as necessary to get advice, information, and help. Members of the pressure group can visit the couple repeatedly to offer advice, counseling, or present their viewpoints. The spouse of the relocating

employee can turn to TipTop executives for information, help, and advice.

7. The couple must come to a decision about acceptance or rejection of the offer.

DEBRIEFING

Discussion and analysis are critical to the use of the game. After sufficient sharing, exploration of complex problems of two-gender work force relocation issues, discussion of feelings and reactions, the tension between corporation and families emerges.

Two normers should be appointed. A **corporate normer** to figure out the consequences of different options on the corporation, and a **family normer** to determine the consequences of different options on the family.

Using a felt board, transparencies, or flip chart, a relocation decision tree from a two-career perspective can be constructed. Risk points can be marked. Following this decision tree, a human resources action chart can be constructed looking at spouse employment assistance from an employer perspective. (See sample tree and chart in Appendix 3, Catalyst, 1985 [1])

The exercise can be concluded here with a short discussion of the rationale behind the growing number of spouse employment assistance programs and the types of programs now being offered by corporations.

If the exercise is designed as an introduction to the development of corporate relocation policy, the group can now proceed to considering corporate needs, costs, and available resources for implementation.

APPENDIX I WORK HISTORY AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS OF EMPLOYEES

TRACY B. GOGETTER

EDUCATION
M.S., Mechanical Engineering, Ohio State University
B.S., Engineering, University of Michigan

WORK EXPERIENCE
3 years, section head of Engineering Dept.
Responsibilities include: supervision of 3 junior designers, draftspersons, and 2 clerks.
2 years, assistant section head, Engineering
Supervision of draftspersons, interpretation of designers' output to floor supervisors, design of parts for government contract
7 years, Engineer designer, programs development.
5 years, Draftsperson, engineering and design.

SUPERVISOR EVALUATION
Tracy Gogetter is creative and an ambitious employee that has an excellent future with this company. Put Tracy on the "fast-track," we need to encourage this kind of talent. Employees report that Gogetter is one of the best bosses they have worked under. Gets along well with union leaders. Could be an excellent negotiator. Likes fishing, basketball. A family person.

TERRY M. UPCOMIN

EDUCATION
M.S., Electrical Engineering, University of Michigan
B.S., Engineering, University of Arizona

WORK EXPERIENCE
One year, Supervisor of Quality Control
Responsibilities include: Maintaining productivity goals, supervising & quality control inspectors, coordinating objectives with line and production management. Supervision of clerical staff.
5 years, Assistant Supervisor Quality Control
7 years, Engineering supervisor
2 years, Engineering line coordination
2 years, Production and training

SUPERVISOR EVALUATION
Terry M. Upcomin has instituted changes that have increased production by almost 40%. Our overall acceptance has improved by more than 70%. This is definitely one of our "high flyer" employees that should be a top manager within a year. Able to maintain high motivation level with both staff and line personnel. Upcomin is creative and intelligent. Likes skiing and basketball. A family advocate.

Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 14, 1987

APPENDIX 2 Roles and Role Playing

I • How to Role Play

Everyone is a good actor when they make up their own lines. In this experience you can merely behave in the situation described. If you are placed in the role of a corporate president, you should consider yourself to be the president of the company and not act the way you “think” a president behaves. Adopt any facts about family ties, friends, previous experience, priorities for your job, but let your own feelings and attitudes change as the events seem to require.

Your role playing instructions describe the setting in which a particular frame of mind will be formulated. Because they set up a state of mind that serves as a point of departure, the roles should not be reexamined once the interaction has begun. Subsequent events or experiences may alter initial attitudes and create pleasant or unpleasant feelings. As a result, you may have some of the same promotional experiences that occur in real-life situations. The fact that role playing can simulate real-life situations makes it possible for you to try new ways of handling problems without suffering serious consequences if methods fail.

When questions arise during the interaction that are not covered in the instructions, feel free to make up facts or experiences that are appropriate to the circumstances.

II. Description of Roles

Tracy B. Goetter

Three junior designers, six draftspeople, and two clerks report to you. You feel you get along fine in your job as section head in the Engineering Department. You have been with your corporation for three years, and you’re looking forward to another big promotion soon. You’re married and have two children. Your spouse is also an engineer. Morgan, your son, a junior in High School, has finally made the varsity basketball team and is looking forward to an exciting season. He has a little trouble in some academic areas--mostly English. Darci, your daughter, recently won a blue ribbon in the regional horse show. Darci is almost 13 and is in the 7th Grade. You own your home--well, you’re paying for it anyway. In the last five years your career has truly “taken-off.” You had not realized how ambitious you were until you began supervising other employees in your organization. Tonie Adams, one of your designers, said you’re the best boss in the company. On weekends you sometimes go with Trojan Jones, who’s a union leader, to trout fish on the excellent lake nearby. Your dad, Rudy Goetter, was in an accident three years ago. He’s not doing so well at age 78. The doctor believes that spending all his time in a wheel chair has caused heart problems.

Terry M. Upcomin

A year ago you were promoted to supervisor of all Quality Control operations of your company. Since that time, you have instituted some changes that have

increased productivity by almost 40%. You are proud of your record. Everyone in the organization, and especially your best friend, Marion Peters, says that you are on the “fast track.” You are married and have a wonderful family. A boy--well, he’s almost a man--aged 17, who is the star of the basketball team, and a girl, blond--with blue eyes--aged 13 and in the grip of typical teeny bopper values--lipstick one minute and sweaty horses the next. You have an M.S. degree in engineering. You worked while you went to school, but it paid off. Now you’re getting all the real “plum” assignments. Your mom and dad live in the same city. They like to have you, Tracy and the kids over at least once a week for your favorite dinner of steak and kidney pie. Several years ago you took out a huge mortgage and bought a larger home in a school district that was more desirable for the kids. When you have a chance, your favorite activity is skiing on nearby Mt. Humphrey.

Chief Executive Officer: Corporation

Henry C. Woods, Jr. is a founder of Acme Corporation. You worked formerly for DuPont but quit and with only \$2,000 started your own business in the basement of your home. Your company has grown to \$125 million. Your wife helped you during the hard days as secretary, bookkeeper, and general supportive helper. She now is active in national charity work, numerous foundations, and in the anti-drug movement. At age 68, you are active and athletic, playing tennis three times a week at the country club with your male friends. Expansion to a new area has motivated you to call a meeting of your top executives to search for a plant manager to head the new division that will be located in _____, a city of _____ people. The advantages of this site include: low labor costs, low cost of land, abundant labor supply. You bring other demographic details to the meeting.

Personnel Administrator: Corporation

Whitney Wabash has been with Acme for only two years, but has 15 years experience in personnel administration. You have been notified of the meeting to select a new plant manager and have searched for suitable candidates. Only two have met the rigid criteria. These will be presented at the meeting. However, you fear that the vice-president, Norman Rock, has been placing undo influence on Woods, the CEO, in favor of an outsider--one of Norman’s many protégés--a handsome 30 year old that Norman plays golf with. “I’m not looking forward to the meeting, nor to talking with anyone else about relocating,” you confided to your wife last night. “People are turning me down--promoting someone isn’t much fun anymore.”

Benefits Administrator: Acme Corporation

Cary David is worried. Costs of relocating employees have skyrocketed in the past two years. Nevertheless, employees seem to be demanding more and more. Day care, flex-time, job sharing, reimbursement for losses on housing when moved, MIDA--the list goes on and on. And now, another new plant! Probably lots of people will be moved around. This is only the beginning. Just last week the Finance Department sent that memo report around--cut costs, cut

Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 14, 1987

costs, cut costs-and it always seems your responsibility.

Division Manager: Acme Corporation

Jay Wilson has things running smoothly in the Division. Even time now for a few leisure activities. Training is working well. At last everyone seems to know exactly how to run their sections. Now this, a new division could mean changes.

Develop other. Corporation roles along these same lines

Spouse's Division Manager: TipTop Corporation

Teddy Drake, age 57, is like a parental figure to the employees in the division. Always trying to work things out, and successful in doing so. Morale is high. In fact, you have been cited frequently by TipTop Corporation for the ability to motivate and develop creative approaches. You love to go home at night and talk to your wife, Cindy, about the days activities--both triumphs and troubles. Cindy has always been very supportive. When she knows you're having a difficult time, she does special things to make you feel better--cooking your favorite corned beef and cabbage, having a drink ready for you at the door, keeping the bad news about the kids to herself. The Drake family is an example of the ideal American home--a true Norman Rockwell portrait.

Personnel Administrator: TipTop Corporation

TipTop Corporation's engineering was in rotten shape when you, Robbie Gibson, took over personnel. You have worked diligently to recruit talented engineers and develop a training program. Unfortunately, sometimes the job seems to have been done too well--other corporations seem to be increasing their raiding, and lately Tiptop has lost three good engineers.

Other roles in Tiptop Corporation are developed along the same lines

Morgan, 17 year old son of the couple

You have finally made it! Star of the basketball team, passing all your classes, and now, in spite of your skin problems, Becky, the best looking cheerleader, has been looking at you with doe-eyes and has accepted your invitation to the Junior Prom next month. The outlook for next year is even better. Secretly, you believe you will be selected as "king" for the homecoming and maybe most valuable athlete of the year. "Everything's calling up roses" could be your their song, but you prefer "heavy metal."

Darci, 13 year old daughter of the couple

"I wish I had brown eyes," you murmur as you dash by the hall mirror giving yourself only a passing glance. "I'm too tall too," you whisper shaking your long, pale blonde hair. You're off to ride and groan "Prince," your bay gelding. Every free moment is spent at the stables. Your school is quite special. Classes are very small, under 10 usually, and the Junior High age students are allowed great freedom to chose special areas of interest in which they can do their required work in mathematics and English. You are writing a book about a horse named "Awesome"

whose owner must move to a foreign country. The book is very sad.

Margaret Gogetter

Three years ago you had to give up most of the volunteer work that had sustained you during your long marriage. Your husband, Rudy, was in an accident that left him partially paralyzed. He's been in a wheel chair ever since, and now the doctor reports that Rudy's condition may be deteriorating. Only encouragement from Tracy and Terry have given you the courage and energy to survive without losing hope. You and Rudy bought the bay gelding for your 13-year-old granddaughter, Darci. --Darci, the delight of your life.

Rudy Gogetter

Sometimes you get to be very irritable--even angry. A tragic accident in which a drunken driver hit your auto three years ago put you in a wheel chair. Now your health is worsening. The doctor is always warning you about "your heart." At age 78, this doesn't make you too happy. Many of your closest friends survived only a short while after retirement. You and your wife, Margaret, have lived in the same home since shortly after you were married. When you first retired you talked of traveling, but never did any. You say, "Well, it was Margaret that wanted to stay home. She likes to have things ship shape and secure."

Benjamin Upcomin

You and Silvie married during World War II. While you were serving in the Army, Silvie took a job in a defense plant, but she was dismissed as soon as the war was over. You had only one child, Terry, who has always been your pride and joy. You are especially proud that Terry received an M.A. degree in engineering. Terry is well on the way up the ladder to corporate success. You didn't do so badly yourself considering that you had only a high school education. You were general manager of a refrigeration supply company before your retirement four years ago. "Terry's goin' even higher," you say.

Silvie Upcomin

You love to eat--and you love to cook. Each Tuesday Terry, Tracy and the kids come over for dinner. You make it a special occasion and plan for days ahead. On weekends you go to several garage sales and usually come home with sane real bargains. Your husband, Benjamin, teases that you'll either have to move out to make roan for the stuff or start an antique store. You thought it would be a good idea--the store that is--you imagine that you'd do a darned good job of running it, but you never pursued the idea. You're very proud of your grandson, Morgan. You even talk Benjamin into going to sane of the High School basketball games to watch him perform.

Marion Peters

You were divorced two years ago. Since then, life has become both better and worse. Better career wise, but socially there seems to be no place for a middle-aged single. Career conflict was a major part of the problem. You're a confirmed workaholic and you love it.

Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 14, 1987

Tonie Adams

Tracy has been a mentor for you though Tracy is only five years older. The two of you have developed a close working relationship and share many of the same outside interests. Tracy has seen to it that you receive recognition for creative contributions to the section. You're unmarried and very career conscious.

Laurel Eden

Four years ago, you were responsible for organizing the female employees of Acme Corporation. At the time, many wanted to consider issues such as day care facilities, parental leave, maternity leave, flex-time, and other concerns that were unique to the growing number of women working at Acme. Some progress has been made although initially the company was dead-set against it. The union refused to help the concerned female employees stating that it wasn't an issue they wanted to get "mixed-up in." Trojan Jones was particularly opposed to promoting any new policy for women only. He said, "that'll discriminate against men." But at last Acme has a flex-time policy and some maternity leave. No one else wanted to be president of the women's organization so you've continued in the job. You're a financial analyst, a middle management position, and you haven't had a promotion in five years.

Trojan Jones

Union membership is declining. You have been head of the grievance committee for a number of years. Since you became involved in the union, you've seen many changes in the company. All the women for example. There used to be only a few. Now there are probably more than 50%. You just can't joke around with the guys like you used to. "I even have to watch my language."

Abby VanBuran

Writing an advice to the lovelorn column isn't what it used to be. Now people keep talking about everything but love. And they all want answers to career problems and work situation dilemmas.

APPENDIX 3

Case I

The Relocation That Didn't Hurt: Part I

Pete Walters is frustrated, confused, and more than a little angry Carol Grant, one of the most promising young engineers in the department, has just turned down a transfer to the Dayton plant. It is the third transfer turndown in the department in the last three months, but this one is especially frustrating because Pete had taken a personal interest in Carl and had gone out of his way to recommend her for the Dayton job. Having coffee in the cafeteria with a friend, Pete is venting his frustration.

"I don't understand. I'm sure the college recruiter told her that the training program involved rotation at different plants. Now she says no. And the Dayton job isn't your average assignment. She would have been noticed there and it would have done her career a lot of good. What kind of a future does she think she has in this company if she won't do her training rotation? "Moreover, it makes me look bad. I assured Dayton that Carol was the one for them. Now they're stuck with finding someone else for that position.

"It's such a waste. And to think of all the training she's had-- at company expense. And you know what she said? She said, 'Pete, I hope you won't take this personally, but my husband and I just bought a house, and we don't think we could get our investment back at this point.'"

"I've had it with these trainees. You bring them along and then they drop the ball. Where's their career commitment? I guess they just aren't willing to make the sacrifices we did. I hate to say this.. -but I don't think a man would have turned down an opportunity like this." (Catalyst, 1985)

APPENDIX 4 Transparencies

WHAT DO TWO SALARIES BUY ?

- HOUSE
- HOLIDAYS
- SAVINGS
- SECOND CAR

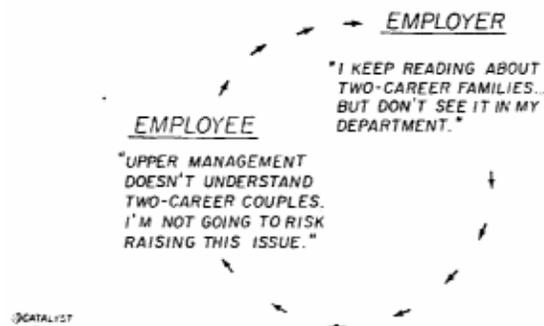
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WHAT DOES THE ACCOMPANYING SPOUSE RISK ?

- DOLLARS
- STATUS
- JOB IDENTITY
- CAREER MOMENTUM
- CONTACTS

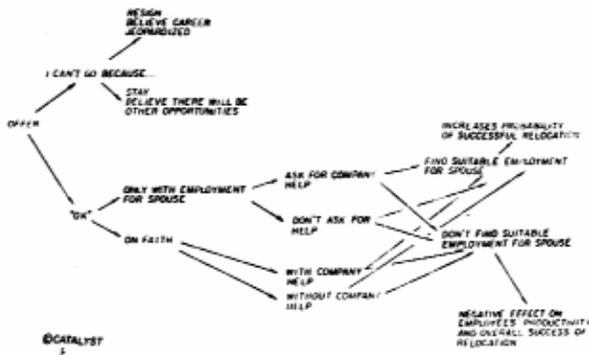
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CIRCLE OF MISCOMMUNICATION: TWO-CAREER CONCERNS

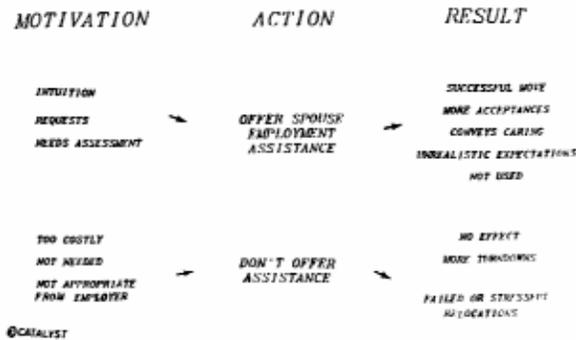


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RELOCATION DECISION TREE
FROM A TWO-CAREER PERSPECTIVE



SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE
FROM AN EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE



REFERENCES

- [1] Catalyst, Moving People, 1985. Catalyst materials were researched and developed by Catalyst, the national non-for-profit organization that works with corporations and individuals to develop career and family options. Special funding for the Catalyst project was provided by Bekins Van Lines. Additional transparencies, bibliography and exercises are available through the author.
- [2] "Your Move", Hal Marilyn Weiner. Distributed by University of California, Extension Media Center, 2223 Fulton Street, Berkeley, CA 94720, (415) 642-0460.