



Five Factors to Consider Before Relocating

By Selena Dehne, JIST Publishing

In an ideal job market, you would find the job of your dreams right under your nose. You'd get a hefty paycheck, great benefits, flexibility, and you'd wake up every day loving the work you do.



The reality, though, is that you'll probably spend several weeks — or even months — scouring the Internet and chasing job leads just to find a few openings worth pursuing. And even after all of your efforts, the jobs you find may well fall short of meeting all of the criteria to be the right opportunity for you.

People in such situations may never come across their dream job because they've limited themselves in the job market. They've narrowed their search to local job openings, for example, and have no idea that their dream job is actually in another city or state.

Many people, however, would be willing to pursue those opportunities if they were aware of them. According to a study conducted by Harris Interactive for CareerBuilder.com and Apartments.com, 59 percent of employees say they'd be willing to relocate to another city for a new job, and 44 percent say they'd be willing to relocate to another state, province, or region for a new job.

"Depending on your career goals and where you live now, your best chance of finding work and achieving a rewarding career may be in another city or town," say Michael Farr and Laurence Shatkin, co-authors of *Today's Hot Job Targets* (JIST Publishing, 2007).

They warn, however, that relocating for a job isn't the best option for everyone. In their book, they encourage people to consider the following five factors before making the decision to relocate.

Continued Growth

There are no guarantees in today's ever-changing job market. An occupation may experience booming growth one year and then come to a stand-still or decline a few years later. For example, jobs in the finance, insurance, and human service clusters are now expected to grow significantly faster than

previously expected, according to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook 2008-2009*. However, job projections are less optimistic than they were two years ago for occupations in the manufacturing, retail and wholesale sales, and service clusters.

To help determine whether relocating is really worth the effort, Farr and Shatkin suggest researching a particular occupation and its field or industry first: "Before moving to another area, investigate whether local economic trends are expected to remain favorable. You may be able to find projections of job openings at the website of the state department of labor or office of employment security."

Opportunities in Your Field

Many occupations flourish in some locations, but are rarely offered in others. For example, job seekers interested in the public relations field would have much more luck landing a job in a densely populated area like New York City than in areas populated by only a few thousand people.

Farr and Shatkin recommend visiting www.acinet.org to compare job opportunities in various cities. This resource shows people the state-specific economic trends for each occupation and includes links that let them compare wages in different regions of a given state, compare wages across states, or compare employment trends across states.

Networking

Having an intricate network of contacts is one of the biggest advantages a person can have during job search and throughout their careers. These contacts are excellent sources of job-search advice, job leads, and referrals. In most cases, a person's network is usually made up of contacts living in the same area. Although a change in location doesn't mean that such contacts are no longer useful, it does mean that the person relocating will need to work hard to develop new contacts who can support them in their new location.



Career Tips

Farr and Shatkin suggest that you “investigate whether your targeted area offers opportunities for you to network quickly. Perhaps there are local branches of social, religious, or hobby-centered organizations to which you now belong or where you would fit in readily.”

Your Resume

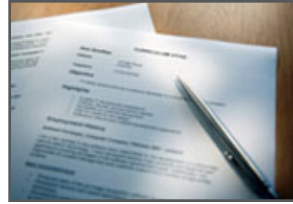
Farr and Shatkin also warn that a person’s resume may not be as impressive in one location as in another: “Employers in many regions may not be as familiar with your previous employers or the school or college you attended.”

They recommend that job seekers contact the job-placement office of their school or college to find out whether or not other people have found employment in their target area. This strategy isn’t as necessary for job seekers from schools with a national reputation or for those seeking jobs where on-the-job training is all that’s required.

Culture Shock

Before moving to a new location, people should be aware that there’s a good chance that the culture will be different than the culture in which they currently live and work. It’s

important for people to visit their target area before actually moving there to see if they feel comfortable there.



Farr and Shatkin remind job seekers that “given these concerns, the ideal strategy for relocating is to get hired for a job in the new location before you move — but this can be very difficult to do. A compromise

strategy would be to set up temporary, bare-bones living quarters in the new location, find employment there, and then settle into your new location.”

About the Author

Selena Dehne is a career writer for JIST Publishing who shares the latest occupational, career, and job-search information available with job seekers and career changers. Her articles help people find meaningful work, develop their career and life plans, and carry out effective job-search campaigns.

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