



From SF to DFW: Graebel Strategy Encourages Group Move to New Dallas, Texas Campus

Leaving friends, family and perceptions behind

A large pharmaceutical company in the San Francisco Bay Area was preparing to move an entire business unit to a new campus in Dallas, Texas. Relocating a business function to another region is a major undertaking, and recruiting an entire new local team would have been an added complication. The company made the strategic decision to encourage current members of the affected Bay Area team to move to Dallas to continue to support the business unit. Its goal was to convince at least 10 percent of the affected workforce to relocate and accept the new assignment to help maintain business continuity.

**A better
uptake than
expected**



Customer goal was for a
10% uptake



34%
of employees chose to
relocate to Dallas

Most of the 233 employees were longtime Bay Area residents with friends and family in the region. It's no surprise that the company's offer of relocation initially was met with skepticism. The company heard employee concerns about real estate markets, schools, neighborhoods and culture.

Company decision-makers were well-prepared for this reaction and resistance. For months preceding the relocation announcement, key Mobility staff members worked with our team to address this challenge. We engaged three of our preferred Texas partners with ties to realtors, mortgage lenders and destination services in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to prepare information about the region.

Accurate Information, Shifting Perceptions

After the employees were notified of the business unit move at a town-hall-style meeting, we stepped in to implement the uptake program.

Along with information about the lucrative relocation benefits package, every employee was given details about the supportive relocation experience they could expect, including realty and mortgage assistance, spousal career support and more. We worked with the Mobility team to build a website to support the employees' decision-making process and ultimately their relocation. The site included information about key contacts, housing tips, schools and other important local details.

In conjunction with company leaders and our service partners, we conducted an informational session at the California office for the employees. During that meeting, attendees were able to meet one-on-one with these experts to ask detailed questions about living in the Dallas area – topics that ended up ranging from taxes to diversity.

Challenge:

- > Business unit moving from Bay Area to Dallas
- > At least 10% of current employees need to accept reassignment to the new location
- > Key employees must overcome their resistance to leaving California

Solution:

- > Partner with local service providers to showcase benefits of living in Dallas
- > Devise comprehensive presentation and information session for employees
- > Conduct employee tours of Dallas and the new headquarters

According to Wallethub.com, Dallas is the fifth most diverse city in America, and Forbes Magazine ranked it the third fastest growing city in the U.S. in 2018.

However, seeing is believing. We helped coordinate six group tours of the Dallas metropolitan area highlighted by a visit to the new headquarters. Employees again had the opportunity to meet with local realtors and also tour the neighborhoods they had only read or had been told about.

"We chose our partners carefully," said Marta Schilling-Gogain, Director of Account Management at Graebel. "They were our secret sauce in organizing and preparing for the informational sessions. We relied on their expertise to know what types of information employees would want even before meeting with them."

Many employees were intrigued by the lower cost of living in Dallas compared to San Francisco. Most were renters in the Bay Area and came to realize through their meetings with the realtors and mortgage lenders just how feasible it was to purchase a home in Dallas.

Along with our partners, we knew it would be important to counter possible perceptions that Dallas was less diverse, progressive and dynamic than San Francisco. To address those concerns, we shared data and information about Dallas' growing number of transplants, its place as one of the most diverse cities in America and specific details about ethnically diverse neighborhoods.

Turning a fresh start into new opportunities

The extensive preparation paid off for the company. Uptake was more than 300 percent higher than expected, with 80 employees accepting the offer to relocate to the Dallas metropolitan area.

" We were worried about how much the transition would disrupt our business. With Graebel's help, a lot more experienced, knowledgeable employees made the move with us than expected, so we've been able to keep operations running smoothly. "

- Senior Manager of Global Mobility

As they expand or relocate into other areas of the country, we will be prepared to work with them to replicate the successful Dallas relocation project using many of the same research, tools, partners and strategies.

Results:

- > Employees had an accurate and more positive perception of working and living in Dallas
- > 80 out of 233 employees accepted the offer to relocate (a 34% uptake)
- > Company will use this same strategy for future relocations and expansions

Feel right at home

Everybody wants to feel "at home" in the city they choose to work and live. As a result, many employees are hesitant to transfer — especially when it means leaving a highly desirable location or heading someplace entirely unknown. Graebel partnered with a Fortune 500 company to provide a wealth of information about the new city so employees could make informed decisions about the pros and cons of making the move with the company.

" We couldn't inform employees on the unknown. That's why we conducted exhaustive research into what they wanted, and what Dallas could offer. We piqued their interest and gave them the details, so they could make a more informed, more confident decision. "

**- Graebel Director of Account Management
Marta Schilling-Gogain**