

THE ABC'S OF RELOCATION AND CORPORATE HOUSING

Relocations are fueling the rental market right now. At D.J. Knight & Company, the relocation process also begins before clients come to New York with an Intake Analysis, an in-depth profile of their wishes and needs. Corinne Pulitzer, director of brokerage services, uses the analysis to match up the client with an agent. "This is relationship brokerage," she says. "A relocation broker must be a good listener, because very often, there is a short window of time in which to work." The client receives a 30-page welcome package that familiarizes them with neighborhoods and the New York housing market. The broker then refines the search as she or he spends time with the client.

"At this time of year, many of the people we are working with have a real need to move because of their jobs," says Ruth McCoy of Feathered Nest. Her corporate clients from business centers in Europe, Asia and California have taken to using the Internet to do their prep work. "They can log on in their time zone and check out various properties on our Web site," she says. "They then approach our agents with a wish list. If there is a particular property that they want to know more about, our broker will go to the location

with a digital camera, and e-mail detailed photos to the client." McCoy finds that the Internet has produced a more informed clientele. "Because of the Web, they can suffer their sticker shock at home. They know that an \$800 two-bedroom apartment is just not feasible."

Stress Busters

Coldwell Banker Hunt Kennedy offers a Concierge Service that puts new residents in touch with local service providers. "Its business is hand-holding, before, during and after the move," says Michael Pacca. "It's like having three really good friends who know everything about New York," he adds. The service offers advice on everything from closing attorneys and moving companies to the best schools, health clubs, veterinarians, housekeepers, even local feng shui experts.

Thirteen years ago, Karen Dillinger was a pioneer in the area of corporate relocation at William B. May. "Now almost every firm offers some kind of relocation service," she says. Dillinger, CRP, vice-president and director of corporate relocation services, believes it's a "true value" that can make all the difference for the customer. "If you've ever relocated without a relocation service, you'll never do it again," she

says. "We help however we can to make relocating as stressless as possible."

Corporate Style

Corporate homes away from home are the other large part of the relocation story. D.J. Knight manages blocks of corporate housing all over the city, attending to everything from furnishings, housewares and maid service to seeing to it that move-ins and move-outs run smoothly. "The day of arrival is crucial," says corporate housing director James Conigliaro. "Corporate housing is the out-of-towner's first touchdown into the city," he adds. "We try to make it as user-friendly as possible."

Corporate apartments, which are usually occupied for up to six months at a time, are rarely empty. Seventy-five percent are filled by relocating employees looking for permanent residences. The remainder of the occupants are in Manhattan on short-term business trips and temporary assignments. Last summer, D.J. Knight placed up to 3,000 trainees from its banking clients. "A firm called at the end of June and said they were expecting 200 people in New York at the end of July. You have to be flexible," says Conigliaro. "Relocation is really a service industry."