Full Service Residential Real Estate Sales

Move Management & Liquidation Support

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Downsizing support may make relocating less overwhelming

By the time you are ready to retire, downsize, and enjoy a simpler life, chances are you have accumulated a lot of stuff. Regardless of your reason for relocating, getting rid of the extra stuff can be a chore.

Having lived 46 years in the same home, Stan and Elisabeth Alexander recently moved to a two-bedroom apartment in a nearby retirement community. They managed to downsize from over 2,000 square feet into a comfortable 900 square foot unit with a little help from professionals.

“At our age, we are 84, and having lived on the same street for over 50 years, it would have been impossible to do on our own,” Elisabeth said.

The Alexanders elected to hire professional move managers who worked with them every step of the way. They even helped them dispose of the remaining household items and get their home sold.

“I would still be downsizing had I not gotten help. I thought I would do it piece by piece, an hour per evening over time,” Elisabeth said. “It was great to have somebody who knew how to go about it and who literally guided us through each step."

According to downsizing coach and Co-founder of Seniors Real Estate Institute, Dr. Nikki Buckelew, downsizing from a large residence, especially one that has been called home for several decades, can be a big undertaking.

“Liquidating lifelong collections, extra furniture and other belongings is physically and emotionally tough for many downsizers. Those having done it, however, often tell us they have no regrets," said Buckelew. "It can be a freeing experience."

Move management

To help navigate challenges associated with late life moves, professional move management services have become more common in many larger cities. Real estate professionals are also adding move management services to their offerings to help clients who may be struggling to navigate the larger downsizing process.

"Move managers are not only pros at helping with space planning, sorting and organizing, as well as packing and unpacking, but they often assist with locating, coordinating, and overseeing the liquidation of excess household items following a move,” Buckelew said.

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Planning and logistics of household liquidation

While some people may think of an estate sale as being similar to an old fashioned garage sale, selling household items has become more complicated overall.

"People don't realize that liquidation of extra household items can be the hardest part of a move. Just finding liquidators for small sales and getting them scheduled can be a real challenge. Making donations isn't as easy as you might think either," said professional move manager, Lori Knighton.

Finding the right liquidator, a reliable and trustworthy firm to put on the sale, is the first step. Then there is the issue of timing. It needs to be scheduled to be convenient, often in conjunction with a home sale. The best liquidators are busy certain times of the year and not available to schedule a sale for several months.

Becky Bailey, a recent downsizer we spoke with shared her challenge with emptying her home.

"I chose to handle things myself until I ran into some problems. The first estate liquidator backed out and the next one couldn't schedule the sale for several months. I eventually secured someone to hold the sale, but only after days of making calls and trying to schedule appointments," said Bailey.

"I wanted to save some money and it didn't seem that it should be that difficult," she said.

"Ultimately the delay caused my home sale to be postponed and cost me more money in the end."

"I am just glad it is all done and I don't have to worry about it," Bailey added. "If I had it to do over, I would have taken advantage of the turn-key move management services offered by my real estate agent earlier in the process. It was a lesson learned."

The relocation process has changed

When I meet with people who haven't sold a home or moved in over two decades, it makes me nervous when they elect to handle everything themselves, without move management support," said Buckelew.

"I know they are smart capable people and may have navigated the task before, but the terrain is often much different than what they remember. Things have changed drastically in recent years."

The goal of professional move managers is to make the relocation process easier and less stressful.

"Working together with clients throughout their move, it is my job to guide them on ways to reduce stress and hassle. Ultimately they are the decision makers and I am like the general contractor," said Knighton.

The Alexanders admit that having had support made all the difference.

"I was very proud of myself," Elisabeth said with a smile. "I even had time to pray and meditate every day during the process because my real estate team had it all covered."

While move management as a service is a relatively new concept, it will undoubtedly become more popular as retirees look for ways to simplify their lifestyles and downsizing becomes even more commonplace.

For more information about move management support available in your local area, contact your local real estate professional specializing in mature moves .

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