

# GIANT

## SATISFACTION

### When Delivering A Mini Move

**M**anaging a successful relocation is a big enough challenge for human resource and relocation managers, but providing an appropriate high level of service to transferees and new hires who have only a small amount of goods to move is particularly difficult.

Many of the remedies developed over the years, such as lump-sum payments or reimbursement for a truck rental, might leave a younger employee feeling he or she is not a valued member of the corporate team.

The do-it-yourself options also pose some potentially expensive legal liabilities should injury or even psychological stress occur during the move. Do-it-yourself moves often cost the company more in the long run.

They can leave HR or transportation personnel with the responsibility of overseeing a move's particulars, such as validation of invoices for services.

MiniMoves, a company based in Chicago, IL, has carved a niche between those two alternatives, offering full-service moves with no minimum weight requirements."

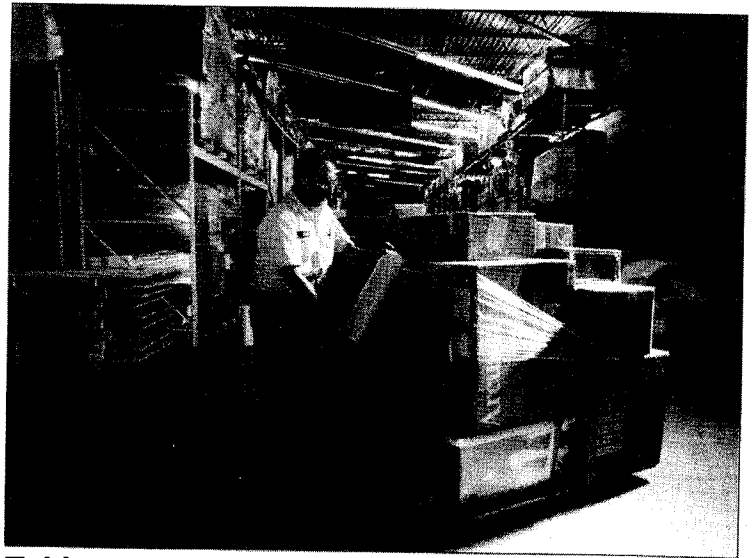
Jack Arslanian, CEO, established MiniMoves in 1992. According to the American Moving and Storage Association (AMSA), MiniMoves is the only national van line dedicated to apartment-size interstate moves.

#### Good Things About Small Packages

Small shipments pose problems for the nation's major van lines. They have never been structured to handle smaller shipments efficiently. This is particularly true during the summer months when the moving industry's resources are stressed to the limit. Smaller shipments have to accept longer delivery times among other service inconveniences.

The only reasonable alternative has been for the employer to pay "expedited" rates; in essence agreeing to be charged as if a small shipment were several times larger. These extra charges elevate the status of the smaller shipment, earning it faster transport to destination.

However, many companies have rejected this option, saying it is too expensive. They have opted instead to give younger couples or singles with little to move a fixed amount to cover all moving expenses. In some companies, any remaining funds must be returned. In others, the transferee is allowed to keep the excess as sort of a solace for their efforts. Another popular option is to pay for origin packing services and truck rental, requiring the employee to load, drive, and unload the truck.



**Taking care of small moves can provide huge headaches for corporate relocation managers. Brown explains an efficient alternative to stowing an apartment-sized load on a commercial truck or a do-it-yourself rental.**

These similar options all fail to address one critical aspect of any relocation: the underlying feeling that the willingness to relocate must be recognized by more than just reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses. The younger employee is no less sensitive to the traumas of moving than his or her counterparts. Maybe even more so, since they lack relocation experience.

#### The Nuances of New Hires

Young and talented employees are increasingly difficult and expensive to recruit and hire. Yet, they are the very ones companies most often need to relocate. Any policy or procedure that fails to reinforce the employer's view of the young employee's value has the potential for generating dissatisfaction and turnover.

In this tight labor market talented employees are difficult to find. Yet, they are the ones many companies often need to relocate.

Dr. Gerald Brown, chief of staff of a large Chicago feline clinic, said, "Many of the veterinary associates I've hired are from out of town. The larger corporate-owned practices pay relocation expenses and I must do so also in order to get the best vets. I think it would be insulting to ask anyone to lift furniture and drive a

truck on the highway. MiniMoves has been a good and affordable solution for my newly hired employees."

Said insurance industry consultant Robert Lenk, "For a person who lacks truck driving experience to take a rental van on the highway is an accident waiting to happen and statistics verify this."

### Devoted to Small Shipments

Like other successful entrepreneurs, Arslanian has identified an under-served market segment and provided it with needed and valuable services.

Said Arslanian, "While MiniMoves' growth the last decade has been impressive, we're just in the first stages of expansion into the corporate moving market. Our near-term objective is to make relocation professionals aware of our many benefits so they can, in turn, make moving a less stressful and more economic experience for those they serve."

What the relocation industry has needed for a long time is a company that operates like a national van line, but is solely devoted to handling smaller shipments—a van line that can provide junior executives with senior management-type service.

The MiniMoves difference can be seen clearly in a comparative profile of its average customer:

"MiniMoves charges \$500 to \$700 less than traditional van lines to handle the move of an entry-level hire," said Patrick Carroll, manager of human resources for A.T. Kearney, Inc. a major national management consulting firm.

But MiniMoves still offers the same services commonly provided with larger moves: origin packing, crating, temporary and permanent storage, and destination services.

Said Arslanian, "We operate as a van line, holding all the same governmental authorities. Chicago is headquarters and we have facilities in New Jersey; Phoenix, AZ; Los Angeles, CA; and Florida. We have our own trucks, driven by our company employees. Our customer service

department handles some 6,000 moves per year.

"There are advantages in using a professional mover that aren't always apparent, especially to someone doing it for the first time. Driving a fully loaded, 16-foot truck across the country can be harrowing if you've never done it. Damage also has to be considered. Younger people may not have a lot to move, but they certainly don't want it broken, which can happen easily if you're inexperienced in packing and loading a truck."

### Damage Control

The moving industry has a damage claims ratio of 24.3 percent, accord-

	MiniMoves	Industry Avg.
Average shipment size	800 lbs.	7,260 lbs.
Average line-haul charges	\$800	\$7,500

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ing to the American Moving and Storage Association.

"I'm proud to say that at Mini-Moves, we have only 3 percent damage ratio...an industry low. This is for two reasons. Small moves are all we handle, so we have to do it better. And, we have some unique ways of preparing shipments for transit," said Arslanian.

MiniMoves pad wraps all furniture inside the residence before it is moved to the truck. Incidental and weather damage is thus eliminated. All pads are shrink-wrapped to the furniture.

It is probably the reason MiniMoves has been asked to move everything from hollow decorated Easter eggs to the White House, an antique chest valued at more than \$1 million, and fragile, priceless dinosaur bones. Also, MiniMoves was just chosen by the City of Chicago to transport fiberglass "critters" from 50 cities nationwide to be displayed at the Lincoln Park Zoo this summer.

### Less Expensive Over the Long Haul

"Moving yourself isn't always as inexpensive as it seems," said Arslanian. "There's more than just the cost of the truck. You've got to add in things like gas, insurance, possible extra equipment, and packing supplies...plus food and lodging during the trip. MiniMoves rates rival the cost of almost any interstate do-it-yourself move, without the shipper having to do all of the work."

In addition to easing packing and shipping worries, MiniMoves also has streamlined the pricing process. "No one has to sit around home all day waiting for the moving salesman...they can simply get a guaranteed quote over the phone," said Leonard.

MiniMoves has invested more than \$250,000 in proprietary pricing software to ease and speed the process. The transferee contacts MiniMoves via an 800 number and lists all items to be moved to a trained move coordinator. The items, origin and destination points, delivery date, and any accessories such as packing, are input. MiniMoves operates on a simplified tariff. The computer provides a total price immediately, a price that is guaranteed by MiniMoves.

"The transferee and his or her company know all they're going to pay before the move starts," said Arslanian. "That's quite unique in the moving industry. It makes pre-approvals by the transferee's company meaningful, and is invaluable to anyone working from a budget."

When the price is accepted, MiniMoves forwards a completed order for service to the transferee, with all the agreed-to services in writing.

After the move is complete, MiniMoves provides all the required paperwork to the transferee's company. "We handle all the move coordination from our offices, relieving the transferee and company personnel of the responsibility," said Leonard. ▀