

Ask the Career Coach: Relocation or Not?

You've been offered a new opportunity outside your daily commute area. Now what?

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I have just received a job offer from a firm that I would love to join. The issue is the company is located in Philadelphia, making the commute on a daily basis challenging to near impossible. When I first accepted the interview, my wife agreed to consider a potential relocation if I was offered the position. Now, she is outright refusing to move as she tells me she doesn't want to change the children's schools. What do I do?

ED
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Congratulations on receiving the offer! This is an issue many couples are facing. With the economy the way it is, many individuals are seeking opportunities beyond their typical acceptable daily commute. Another issue that many people face is dual career relocations. If your wife works, this may add additional complexity to the situation.

Let's review the opportunity itself. What does the opportunity provide for you? Is it a needed pay check, an opportunity to build additional skills in a new industry or a new career, does it offer you management experience? Identify why this opportunity appeals to you.

Has the company offered relocation assistance? If the answer is no, a careful review of risks and rewards should be considered. If you choose to move and it does not work out, consider what other job possibilities exist in this new geographical location and whether the move makes sense even if the initial job does not work out. Changes in the cost of living in the new location may help make the decision clearer.

If the company offers a relocation package, you can speak with the relocation vendor to review the relocation package. Is there a restricted timeframe after which the relocation package will expire? Many couples delay relocating until after their children's school year ends. Most companies follow the IRS Guidelines regarding relocation matters.

Another reason many new hires delay their relocation is to get acclimated to their new job, the environment and the new geographic location to determine if it is a good fit and the right choice for them. Although this may be a challenging time for the family, it can help make the ultimate transition a smooth one. If you are on the road, traveling constantly, there may not be a need to relocate. If you have a student going off to college, this may be the perfect time to change your residence based on the lifestyle you and your wife desire. If your children are younger, this maybe the time to consider new schools with specializations matching your children's passions and abilities. In regards to schools, ask the relocation company to assist you in providing a review of the school districts around the office and its suburbs that would be comparable to your current children's education.

When you initially spoke with your spouse, what was the selling proposition of relocation that potentially appealed to her? Does this potential move shift you closer or further from family and friends? Have you discussed the pros and cons of relocating? Understanding her feelings, concerns and fears will help you find solutions that are mutually agreeable. It will also help you identify targeted questions when speaking with the relocation company.

Companies that do not have a formal relocation program may be receptive to the idea of negotiating for a sign on bonus or a guaranteed first year bonus to compensate for additional expenses that you will incur during this transition. Many professionals are choosing to commute the distance on a weekly basis, renting a room or taking extended stay hotels until an appropriate transition can be managed by the family. Speak with the firm about your options, either relocation or expense offset and express your strong interest and agree to a reasonable timeframe to accept or decline the offer.

About this column: "Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com. Lisa Chenofsky Singer is a Millburn-Short Hills resident and the founder of Chenofsky Singer & Associates LLC. She offers Executive and Career Management Coaching and Human Resources Consulting, writes and speaks on job search and career-related topics. Her web site is www.ChenofskySinger.com.