

## Spouse and Partner Relocation

### **Spouse and Partner Relocation Relocating with your spouse may bring new career opportunities.**

*As seen on careerjournal.com*

John Agoglia was managing editor for a trade publication in New York City when his wife decided to attend graduate school in Massachusetts. Agoglia promptly polished up his resume and began a new job search. "I went in to see my boss in and told him that I was moving—of course I had already sent out a number of resumes—and would have to quit."

Trailing spouses aren't a new phenomenon, just a growing one. Nearly 76 percent of those who transfer are married, according to the Employee Relocation Council (ERC), and more than half of these have working spouses. Roughly 17 percent of all transferees are female—and that number is also growing. In a recent study conducted by the ERC, 53 percent of the companies responding cited the reluctance of a spouse to leave his or her job as a reason for an employee's reluctance to transfer. But career paths of trailing spouses need not dead end.

On the contrary: The period of reassessment that often follows a move can jumpstart new endeavors and re-energize current pursuits. The period of reassessment that often follows a move can jumpstart new endeavors and re-energize current pursuits. Business as Usual Agoglia didn't actually resign his post at the magazine when he and his wife moved to Massachusetts. His editor came up with a better idea: telecommuting, with an occasional trip to New York. "My [then] editor-in-chief was a big believer that technology makes coming into the office almost obsolete," he said. "The company was very supportive. They gave me a laptop, bought my office furniture, and paid for my phone service." His ability to excel at his job from a remote location is evident—Agoglia himself was recently promoted to editor-in-chief.

The Road Almost Not Taken Freelance writer Ian Plenderleith left his full-time job as an editor at a news agency in Germany to be with his future wife in Switzerland. His decision was a logical one because her job paid more. His wife is now a press officer for the International Monetary Fund and Plenderleith writes from their Washington, DC home--while caring for their two children. When friends commend him for the selfless act of leaving full-time employment, he is quick to point out that he benefits from the arrangement, too. "Friends tell me 'It's so noble of you to stay home with the children,'" Plenderleith said. "But I'm doing it in my own interest as well. I'd always wanted to try my hand at writing fiction, but after a full day of work, I didn't have the energy." And the change of pace has really paid off: His first book of short stories is being published later this year.

Flexibility Eases Transition Sherri Maleki's focus recently shifted from managing an engineering team to managing a household. In the fall of 2000, after her husband accepted a new position in North Carolina, the couple left the Ohio technology company where they both worked. "I planned to take two months to unpack, find doctors, find daycare for our son, and

work with the builder in completing our house," Maleki said. But the Malekis left family and friends behind—and soon realized that the adjustment period would take longer than they had anticipated. She had to shelve her career plans for the time being. "We didn't realize how hard it would be to have no support network. We decided the best thing for our family was to put my career on hold for a year or two. I hope to return to work someday. I have always wanted to be a director of an engineering/research and development team, working on the cutting edge of technology." Maleki and other trailing spouses note that the key to a successful transition is flexibility. If you remain open to new opportunities, you may find that your spouse's move signaled a new start for you as well.

One global relocation company, Forward Mobility, offers trailing spouses the following tips for making the most of any change:

- \* Take stock of your life. Use this as a time to explore other opportunities.
- \* Reassess your goals. Go back to school, acquire a new skill, take up another hobby.
- \* Embark on a new career. Earn a degree in an area you've always wanted to study.
- \* Start fresh. Get out of the same old rut.
- \* Take advantage of all resources that your new location has to offer. Visit cultural events and museums.
- \* Become involved in social or professional groups. Network and meet new people. The local library or the Internet can offer information on local groups.
- \* Remember old friends. Invite them for a visit. It will help you adjust to the new situation.
- \* Prioritize. Prioritize. Prioritize.
- \* Keep a sense of humor!