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Graduation Internship Report

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**How should Global Orientations price its relocation services in order to support its U.S. expansion?**

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# Foreword

When I found the Global Orientations’ internship description online, what appealed to me most was what was described as a “well-rounded business experience”; the nature and the size of the company facilitate a versatile internship with exposure to lots of different experiences.

Now that the end of my internship here is approaching I can attest to the truth of that statement. I have been involved in many different activities, from writing business correspondence and sitting in on interviews with prospective employees to assisting in an outsourcing process. Furthermore, I have worked closely with the founder and president of the company and was heavily involved in strategic decision-making. Overall, my internship helped me gain new insights in what the “real-life” business world is like while helping me build my resume. I am very grateful for having had this experience and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues, and Mr. Merriweather in particular, for everything they did for me. From day one I have truly felt part of the team here and I think that has been very important in facilitating the wonderful experience that I had here.

Global Orientations has relatively few clients with whom they do a lot of business. Some of these include Eli Lilly, Volvo, NCAA, educational institutions such as Indiana University and healthcare institutions such as St. Vincent’s hospital. Therefore, the sample size of my interviews is relatively small.

# Executive summary

Pricing is key to the existence and profitability of any business. In the relocation industry, that deals with intangible services with no fixed cost price and various different services, setting the right prices for services can be challenging.

Earlier research has shown that a successful pricing strategy hinges on taking into account such external factors as competitive moves and changing market needs, rather than merely focusing on internal factors. Interviews with clients coupled with post-service feedback gathered by relocation guides provide insights into some external factors by discovering what drives clients’ choices for a particular relocation company. However, interviewees are not always allowed or willing to answer questions about pricing, forcing the interviewer to phrase some questions differently so as to get any response at all.

The corporate relocation industry originates in the United States, where increased mobility and the sheer size of the country created a demand for corporate relocations. The 2008-2009 recession struck a blow to the U.S. housing market - and consequently the real estate industry and the relocation industry. It caused some of the major relocation companies serious financial issues, as a result of which mergers were necessary. Today, there are five major players in the industry that collectively possess about sixty percent of the total U.S. market.

Global Orientations is only a small player on a national level, but a very significant one in the Indianapolis area. It is comprised of three divisions and contrary to many of its competitors its focus is on the relocation division. Besides, the company is unique in that it covers a very wide range of services and provides personalized, objective relocation services. Its pricing strategy is market-based, meaning it is based on precedent, i.e. the average market price. For some of its clients, GO! charges nothing to capture their business in hopes of making money on referral fees – fees charged by one agent or broker to another for a client referred.

Interviews with GO!’s clients and post-service surveys completed by recruits and new hires indicated that its services are highly valued for its professionalism and personalization and reflect on the company image of the recruiter. It gives recruits and new hires an opportunity to orient themselves and get an idea of what Indianapolis and the surrounding area has to offer.

Based on these interviews, it was recommended that Global Orientations either sticks to its current pricing strategy to diversify its client portfolio or slightly raise its prices to capitalize on its unique position in the relocation industry.

# 1. Introduction

Pricing is a key element of a company’s (marketing) strategy. Setting the right price enhances a business’ profitability while satisfying customer demand; a win-win situation. Yet the topic of pricing has not been as vigorously researched as one might expect. Furthermore, most of the existent academic research pertains to the pricing of physical products rather than services (Indounas, 2009). However, the attention of academics and business professionals alike has increasingly shifted towards the pricing of services, which are taking an ever more prominent place in the economies of developed countries (Indounas & Avolinitis, 2011).

One of the findings of this new research has found that managers responsible for setting prices rely mostly on internal information to base their prices upon (Indounas & Avlonitis). Moreover, many companies feel forced to simplify the process by using cost-based formulas when setting prices (Shipley & Jobber, 2001). The three traditional pricing strategies are skimming pricing, penetration pricing and pricing similar to competitors (Monroe, 2003; Nagle & Holden, 1995). The first aims to reap maximum short-term profits by setting a high initial price that is subsequently lowered gradually, which is advisable for a high-quality, differentiated products or service with a strong brand image (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2001; Monroe, 2003; Nagle & Holden, 1995). The second strategy sets a low price upon entering the market in an attempt to try to lure price-sensitive customers away from competitors. This kind of strategy is most common in markets that are composed of homogenous products or services that many consumers use on a daily basis. Finally, pricing similar to competitors is the preferred strategy among companies that have relatively high variable costs per unit, which can be reduced by producing and selling on a mass-scale (Kasper et al., 2000).

A successful pricing strategy is one that anticipates competitive moves, protects a customer or segment from competitive pricing initiatives, responds promptly to customer complaints and adapts pricing decisions to changing market needs. On the contrary, unsuccessful pricing strategies fail mostly due to a lack of attention for the aforementioned aspects of pricing (Tzokas et al, 2000).

GO Company USA, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as Global Orientations or GO!) is a relocation company based in Carmel, Indiana, a suburb of Indianapolis. The company offers personalized and objective area tours, orientations and relocation services for new hires and transferees. The company is currently in the process of expanding nationwide through a franchise-like system. Area Business Managers (ABMs) have been and are being selected in major cities to represent the GO! brand in their respective areas.

The focus of this paper is on Global Orientations’ pricing strategy. The company’s current pricing strategy is based on precedent (or market-based). Most customers find the company’s prices reasonable to too low. The current strategy includes high-volume, low-revenue customers such as the University of Indianapolis. Area Business Managers have the freedom to choose how they set their prices – within a certain range, of course – in accordance with regional differences in average income, the business environment, the state of the local economy, and such.

The target audience of this report is the employees and management of Global Orientations as well as people interested in the pricing of services, such as corporate executives and employees working in the service sector. The audience is interested in finding out more about what factors influence the pricing of (relocation) services. Since most research has focused on the pricing of products – which is very different from the pricing of services – there is still much room for expansion of the knowledge about the pricing of services. This research will help the audience better understand how services are priced in the relocation industry and how   
  
This research paper aims to answer the following question: How should Global Orientations price its relocation services in order to support its U.S. expansion? In addition, the following sub-questions have been devised:

1. What is the competitive environment like?

1.1 What is the overall state of the relocation industry?

1.2 Who are the key players in the industry and what are their main markets?

1.3 What is GO!’s position in the U.S. relocation industry?

2. What variance is there between different relocation services in terms of the nature and level of those services?

3. What is GO!’s unique selling proposition (USP)? Does the company have a sustainable competitive advantage?

4. How does Global Orientations currently price its relocation services?

4.1 How do local market conditions impact GO!’s pricing?

4.2. How do the company’s prices and relocation services relate to those of competitors?

5. What is GO!’s customers ‘perception of its services and prices?

5.1 How do GO!’s customers perceive its prices?

5.2 How much would customers be willing to pay for GO!’s services?

# 2. Methodology

In order to better understand clients’ perception of GO!’s relocation services and its clients, interviews were conducted with all main clients, including Eli Lilly, AAR Corp. and Indiana University.

The target population studied consisted of Global Orientations’ main clients and the sample was a non-probability sample. The sample size was limited due to the fact that GO! has relatively few clients with whom they do a lot of business. These high-volume clients have had a lot of experience with Global Orientations’ services and how they affect their recruits, new hires and transferees.

It was determined that the best means of getting a good understanding of clients’ perceptions of GO!’s services and prices would be by holding open interviews. However, prior to doing those interviews, informal interviews with employees were held to determine what questions would be suitable for the interviews. These employees are very familiar with client feedback because they process the post-service feedback forms completed by all clients. These preliminary interviews helped narrow down the topics to be discussed in the client interviews.

As for the client interviews, structured interviews were held in which the same twelve questions were answered by the clients. Nonetheless, since all questions were open questions, interviewees were given plenty of time and opportunity to inject their own comments. The main advantage of doing open interviews is that they yield qualitative rather than quantitative data, which allows for a more complete impression of their perceptions. In addition, the interviewees are more likely to disclose information in interviews than in a questionnaire of survey due to the more personal nature of an interview. Also, interviews are more likely to yield additional (new) comments and information which provide more context. Besides, given the low number of clients, interviewing was the best way of conducting field research as they increase the reliability of the research.

For some of GO!’s clients, several people were interviewed to add credibility to the findings and make them more complete. It was assumed that different people, though employed by the same company, would answer the interview questions differently according to their own experience. Furthermore, it was assumed that not all of Global Orientations’ clients organize elaborate feedback sessions with their recruits, new hires or transferees concerning GO!’s relocation services and even in the event that they do, they might not always relay that feedback to GO!.

It was anticipated that interviewees might feel uncomfortable answering questions about GO!’s pricing as they do not want to speak on behalf of their employer. Therefore, it was decided questions about pricing would be asked toward the end of the interview to ensure respondents would feel more comfortable. Besides, the questions related to pricing were formulated in an indirect way and it was emphasized that the question pertained to personal perception rather than company policy.

The interviews were held over the phone between May 24 and May 29 of 2012. Since the spring and summer are the busiest seasons in the real estate and relocation industries, the companies in question had very recently done business with Global Orientations and experienced its relocation services, increasing the reliability of the research. The interview was comprised of 12 questions pertaining to employee satisfaction, productivity retention, recruitment and GO!’s pricing,(see appendix I).

The main limitation of the interviews was the interviewees’ reluctance or inability to answer specific questions about the pricing of GO!’s services. It was determined after the first interview that the way the main pricing-related question, i.e. “Would your company be willing to pay a higher price for GO!’s services if charged more?” was too direct and made respondents feel uncomfortable. Further issues were anticipated with this question as respondents could feel like they were being asked to speak on behalf of their employer. As a result, the question was modified to prevent uneasiness with the questions, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the interview (see Appendix I).

In addition, there was a time constraint in terms of collecting data from field research; if there would have been time to repeatedly interview clients over a period of time, for instance, a more complete picture - and possibly a trend - of customer satisfaction might have been created.

# 3. Findings

## 3.1 Competitive environment

The corporate relocation industry originates in the United States and emerged after World War II. The increased mobility of the American workforce gave rise to a need to move workforces to different parts of the country, such as from major cities to places where raw materials could be found. Initially these services were mostly of a financial nature, to help firms buy employees’ houses to speed up the relocation process. They also entailed finding proper housing for these employees in their destination city. Consequently, the real estate industry was particularly apt to satisfy customers’ relocation needs (Relocation Industry History, 2012) . This is the main reason why most companies offering relocation services today are in fact real estate firms with a relocation division.

## 3.1.1 The current state of the relocation industry in the United States

When the economy is suffering, companies postpone investments across the board. It should be no surprise, therefore, that the 2008-2009 recession left its marks on the relocation industry (Business of Relocation, 2010). However, according to the forty-fourth annual corporate relocation survey (2011), optimism in the relocation industry was greater in 2011 than in 2010 and similar to the average range reported in the pre-recessionary period 2002-2007. Nearly one third of companies surveyed expected 2011 volumes to increase while fewer firms expected decreased volumes and budgets compared to 2009 and 2010. Moreover, international volume expectations rose also and half or more of the surveyed firms projected further improvement of the U.S. economy in 2011. This renewed optimism represents a return to pre-2009 levels when the recession hit, relocation volumes and budgets shrank, and confidence sank. Firms in the Midwest are among the most optimistic, which could be due to the fact that the Midwest was the most frequent destination of domestic transfer.   
  
The recession in 2009 severely hurt confidence in the U.S. economy among relocation companies and posed the sole most important external factor affecting relocation volumes across large, medium and small-size firms. As a result of the economic malaise, the continued increase in budget constraints and decrease in company growth constituted key factors in relocation volume.

## 3.1.2 Key players in the U.S. relocation industry

In 2009, the top five relocation companies in the United States were Cartus Corp., SIRVA, Inc., Weichert Relocation Resources, Inc., Prudential Real Estate and Relocation Services, and Graebel. Collectively, they possessed about 60 percent of the U.S. market. The 46 smallest relocation management companies had market shares ranging from less than 0.5 percent to 1.8 percent (Business of Relocation).   
  
The relocation services they offer typically include administration, management and payment of employees’ move-related travel costs and other expenses, and real estate broker and settlement services. Many also offer destination services associated with international or domestic VIP moves, as well as financing (Business of Relocation).   
  
The two biggest players in the industry, Cartus and SIRVA, both experienced serious financial problems in recent years. SIRVA emerged from bankruptcy in 2008 after striking a deal with lenders to cut its debt load by $200 million (Sirva relocation bankruptcy, 2008), whereas the private-equity-owned corporation that owns Cartus also ran into financial problems (Business of Relocation).  
  
Cartus is a subsidiary of Realogy, a global provider of real estate and relocation services out of Danbury, Connecticut with operations in 101 countries (About Realogy, 2012). In 2009, it was the biggest player on the U.S. market, possessing a 28.7 percent market share (Business of relocation). Though Cartus does not have an office in Indiana, its Chicago office is likely to serve the state of Indiana as well (Office locations, 2012). Earnings totaled $112 million in 2010 (Realogy Annual Report, 2011).

SIRVA, Inc. aims to be a one stop shop for all aspects of moving including home purchase and home sale services, household goods moving, mortgage services and home closing and settlement services. The company is based in Westmont, Illinois and its Indiana office is located in Fort Wayne (Global Locations, 2012). Globally, it has a presence in more than 150 countries and provides more than 300,000 services per year to its clients (About SIRVA, 2012). In 2009, it had an 11 percent market share, the second largest in the industry (Business of relocation).

Weichert Relocation Resources, Inc. (WRRI) is one of the leading providers of homeownership services in the United States headquartered in Morris Plains, New Jersey. In Indiana, the company also operates three offices, in Greenwood, South Bend and Indianapolis (Sales Offices Indiana, 2012). It was founded in 1969 as part of the Weichert Family of Companies, comprised of 11 companies specialized in real estate, relocation and mortgage financing. In 2006, WRRI acquired Global Mobility Services, owned by PriceWaterHouseCoopers (WRRI Fast Facts, 2012). Its market share was 9 percent in 2009 (Business of relocation).

Prudential Real Estate and Relocation Services was a division of Prudential Financial, the second biggest U.S. life insurer. It was sold to Canada-based Brookfield Residential Property Services last December (Prudential sells brokerage, 2011). In late 2008, Brookfield acquired GMAC Home Services, highlighting its ambition to enter the U.S. market (Annual Report 2010, 2011). With the recent acquisition of Prudential Real Estate, Brookfield Residential Property Services has become the second- largest global relocation operation and third-largest residential real estate brokerage in North America. Relocation services are now provided by Brookfield Global Relocation Services, a subsidiary of Brookfield Asset Management, Inc (Prudential brokerage unit, 2011). The combined market shares of Prudential (8.8%) and Brookfield (3.3%) totaled 12.1 percent in 2009 (Business of relocation). As for Brookfield Global Relocation Services’ presence in the Midwest, the company is headquartered in Woodridge, Illinois (Company Overview Brookfield, 2012, has an office in Detroit, Michigan (Company Profile Brookfield, 2012) and a subsidiary - Real Living HER Relocation - in Columbus, Ohio (Real Living HER, 2012).   
  
Founded in 1950, Graebel is a private worldwide relocation management company headquartered in Aurora, Colorado. Besides the North American market, it serves markets in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa through a network of partners (Graebel Worldwide Services, 2012). In 2009, Graebel’s market share was 4.2 percent, making it the fifth largest relocation company in the United States (Business of relocation). In the Midwest, the company operates offices in Chicago, Indianapolis and Cincinnati (Ohio), among other places (Graebel Locations, 2012).

## 3.1.3 GO!’s position in the U.S. relocation industry

As mentioned before and contrary to many companies providing relocation services, Global Orientations is a relocation company that also operates a real estate division. Besides the aforementioned relocation companies, Global Orientations competes with realtors. However, realtors nowadays constitute less serious competition than before the 2008-2009 recession. In fact, the recession drove many realtors out of business while forcing others to start charging for their services, a highly uncommon practice prior to the recession. In addition, the services offered by relocation companies such as Global Orientations cover a much wider range of needs than do the services of realtors; they will help people find (temporary) housing in the right neighborhood, the right schools for their children, attractions and social activities in their new cities, recreation and outdoor activities, etcetera. In contrast, realtors depend on the sale of homes for their living and consequently are most interested in selling whatever home they have on offer. In other words, realtors will not come close to going to the same length to make new hires and transferees feel at home in their new city; their interest lies solely in selling people homes.

## 3.2 GO!’s relocation services

Global Orientations offers the following relocation services:

* Tours and orientations;
* Apartment locating;
* Relocation management ;
* Real estate services (through CityWise Real Estate)

The company helps recruits, new hires and transferees explore areas of a city that are important to them and their families. Personalized and objective information on everything from schools to neighborhoods is provided as well as area tours to provide clients with a comprehensive overview of the city that helps them to quickly and confidently make informed decisions despite being unfamiliar with the city they will be calling their home.   
  
Global Orientations provides clients with customized information including but not limited to real estate and housing (purchase or lease), temporary housing, schools, neighborhoods, main attractions, entertainment, social activities, cost of living, religion, childcare, banking, cultural and ethnic diversity, shopping, nightlife, recreation and outdoor activities. These services help clients settle down in their new city and save time by having one point of contact for all their relocation needs.

## 3.3 GO!’s Unique Selling Proposition

What really sets Global Orientations apart from other companies that provide similar services is personalization and objectivity. As there is no room for a one-size-fits-all approach to relocation management, personalization is paramount to providing the best relocation experience possible. In addition to housing needs, some people relocating to a new city may need information about the right schools, churches, sports clubs, and social activities for them and their children. Other people may require information about cultural activities, recreational activities, dining, shopping and entertainment. Besides, GO! can connect clients to banks, libraries and the local community. As such, the company acts as one point of contact for all relocation needs, saving its clients time and money.

Objectivity comes into play when a client is looking for (temporary or permanent) housing in a given area. While a real estate broker might provide similar services - i.e. showing houses, providing information about the neighborhood – his or her advice may be skewed towards a particular area or particular areas. Indeed, it is in the realtors’ interest that the person moving into the area purchases one of the homes offered by the realtor. Therefore, the information provided by him or her may be incomplete and subjective.

GO!’s city guides, on the other hand, are able to give objective information about different cities, neighborhoods and houses without a hidden agenda as they have no conflicting interests. The sole purpose of the company and its relocation services is to provide the client with the type of housing that he or she wants depending on the area, price, size, style and other criteria.

The fact that realtors and real estate companies now, too, charge for their services has made it easier for Global Orientations to compete in the industry. In addition, the company’s services have other advantages:

* Its employees, though many of them have real estate experience, can provide objective information about a given city, area or neighborhood. There are no conflicting interests as the employee’s income does not depend on the decision of the home buyer;
* The service includes a Personalized Information Kit (PIK), a binder full of important information about the city tailored to the interests of the relocating employee. The PIK typically includes such information as main attractions, recreation, shopping, sports, schools, dining and nightlife, and more. The PIK is compiled based on a personal assessment completed by the relocating employee prior to the area tour;
* Based on the same personal assessment, GO! provides clients with a personalized area tour to familiarize the transferee with the city and surrounding areas. This usually includes showing homes and/or apartments. Over time, GO! has done business with a wide variety of real estate companies and apartment complexes, enabling the company to provide a high level of service in this area.

## 3.4 GO!’s pricing strategy

Global Orientations’ current pricing strategy is market-based. Most customers find the company’s prices reasonable to too low. The current strategy includes high-volume, low-revenue customers such as the University of Indianapolis and Indiana University. Area Business Managers (ABMs) have the freedom to choose how they set their prices – within a certain range, of course – in accordance with regional differences in average income, demand for relocation services, etcetera.

## Clients’ value perception

Global Orientations’ clients include large companies operating both nationally and internationally, such as Eli Lilly, Volvo and major hospitals and educational institutions such as St. Vincent’s Hospital and Indiana University.   
  
Recruits and new hires rate the relocation services provided by Global Orientations very high, even among the best in the industry. Objectivity and personalization are often mentioned as the main strengths of the services. Due to the extensive personalization of the services, preparation can be quite time- and labor-intensive. In addition, experience with GO!’s services shows that potential new hires are much more likely to be recruited as a result of the relocation services. Besides, the services lead to a smoother relocation and a higher retention rate for the company on behalf of which GO! provides its services. The quality of the services further reflects on the image of the company in question, enhancing the new hire’s image of his potential future employer.   
  
Furthermore, it helps improve the company’s bottom line as everything related to relocation is outsourced to Global Orientations, reducing labor hours spent on helping a new hire find his way around to a minimum while cutting costs and boosting productivity since new hires are able to focus on their job rather than having to worry about issues not related to their new job (Relocation cost savings, 2003). .

## 3.4.2 Pricing in the relocation industry

The relocation industry is based on referral fees - fees charged by one agent or broker to another for a client referred. Therefore, referrals are the main source of revenue for Global Orientations. When people decide to rent a home, which has become increasingly more common due to the ailing economy, GO!’s only source of revenue is the referral fee, if applicable. In case of a “non-referral”, the company either just breaks even or loses money on the service. In the long run, however, the company could still hope to generate some revenue should those clients choose to buy a home late. In addition, a positive response to GO!’s services and the resulting word of mouth could result in revenue for the company through other people that make use of the service and subsequently decide to purchase a house. As such, the apparently illogical decision for the company to provide its services free of charge (the so-called no-cost structure) starts to make more business sense (J. Merriweather, personal communication).

With the onset of the financial crisis in 2008 and the ongoing economic downturn, the number of real estate agents has decreased, as more people started renting homes rather than buying them. As a result, competition in the relocation industry has declined. Furthermore, realtors are now forced to charge for the same services that they used to offer free of charge, prior to the financial crisis. Given the current state of the housing market, with falling home prices (Falling home prices, 2012), realtors can no longer afford to offer their services for free. Needless to say, real estate companies with relocation divisions, another player in the relocation industry, are struggling with the same problem.

## 3.5 Client perception

All of the respondents indicated that their employers are happy or very happy with GO!’s services. The relocation services allow their recruits, new hires and transferees to orient themselves in Indianapolis and – in case of recruitment - focus on their job. Besides, many of them are very impressed by the wide range of services that Global Orientations offers.

## 3.5.1 Client perception of GO!’s services

A recurring theme in the interviews was Global Orientations’ professionalism in providing area tours and relocation services. As such, GO!’s services are an integral part and extension of its clients’ recruitment strategy and enhance their appeal to recruits as an employer. Other key words that clients associate with GO! include integrity, excellence, invaluable, respect for people,

## 3.5.2 Client price perception

Given the fact that all respondents answered positively or very positively to the question of whether they think Global Orientations’ services are a good investment, it can be concluded that the company’s clients think they get good value for their money.

Nonetheless, respondents also said that they were unsure what would happen in the event of a price increase. The majority of interviewees stated that it would depend on the increase; a slight increase would probably not have a big effect due to GO!’s high service level and high client satisfaction. A significant price increase might have a more profound effect.

# 4. Discussion

The most important findings of this research paper include the high customer satisfaction among interviewees; the far-reaching effects of GO!’s relocation services on such things as employee satisfaction and productivity; the impact of the services on the recruiters’ corporate image and recruitment strategy and effectiveness; and the importance of pricing for Global Orientations as well as in the relocation industry in general.

Notably, objectivity and personalization did not come up as much as one might have expected. However, one must also bear in mind that the interviewees were not the people who actually took the area tour or otherwise had any direct experience with GO’s relocation services. Company records (2012) show that these aspects are often mentioned in post-service feedback surveys by those who directly benefit from the relocation services. Therefore, a combination of both the interviews with employers and the employees’ direct feedback provides a far more thorough analysis of the true impact and effectiveness of GO!’s relocation services.

Analyzing the post-service feedback, a clear pattern can be discovered between the level of personalization and the rating of the services. The pre-service personal assessment that (potential) employees of GO!’s clients are asked to complete allows the company to present to the recruit a Personalized Information Kit, or PIK, containing information about Indianapolis regarding main attractions, entertainment, recreational activities, shopping, educational institutions and so forth. Moreover, the recruit may be contacted by GO!’s relocation specialists at the office to provide further information, if necessary. The relocation guide in question is then apprised of this personal information and given the PIK when s/he takes the recruit on the area tour. This highly personalized approach leads recruits to feel comfortable in the knowledge that they will be taken care of, thereby reducing their stress load and creating the right conditions for an optimum relocation experience.

Another important factor in creating a satisfying relocation experience is the objectivity of the relocation guides. Though seldom mentioned in post-survey feedback and perhaps less obvious than the aforementioned personal touch, it is this objectivity that is of paramount importance to the personalization of GO!’s services and, consequently, to its competitive edge. Indeed, biased information may lead to bad decisions and unhappy employees, reducing the effectiveness of employers’ recruitment strategy and retention. As Global Orientations pays its relocation guides an hourly wage and do not rely on selling homes for their income, the guides have no conflicting interests when showing people different homes, neighborhoods or towns and providing information about them.

In providing the best possible relocation experience in a professional and well-organized manner, GO! acts as an extension of the recruiter, reflecting on its corporate image in a positive way. As such, the added benefit for the recruiter is that recruits and new hires will get excited about moving to Indianapolis when they see what the city and the area has to offer. The area tour gives them the opportunity to see the community and orient themselves.

The last three questions of the interview all pertained specifically to GO!’s pricing, though somewhat indirectly phrased. As mentioned before, all interviewees answered very positively when asked if they thought GO!’s services are a good investment. Based on this answer, it is not a stretch to conclude that these clients feel like GO! has set fair prices for its services.

Also, the fact that many respondents did not expect small price increases to have a major affect on the relationship between Global Orientations and their employer serves as further validation of that conclusion. In that light, it was also mentioned during the interviews that recruiters decided to outsource relocation services as the companies themselves lack the ability and expertise to give its employees a good relocation experience. The fact that Global Orientations has a real estate division in the form of CityWise helps with the decision to outsource the relocation services. Outsourcing its relocation services allows GO!’s clients to focus on the job and the interviewing process while their recruits get a better picture of what Indianapolis and the surrounding area has to offer.

Additional research on the prices of competitors and their level of services might be helpful for GO! to decide on a pricing strategy. Considering that there is relatively little competition that covers the same broad range of services that Global Orientations does, one might argue that raising its prices would not turn away many customers. However, the practical implications are harder to predict and an increase in prices might cause clients to reevaluate their relationship with Global Orientations.

Though large multinational corporations such as Eli Lilly would likely be less affected by price hikes, educational and health care institutions that serve a smaller market and work with smaller budgets are more likely to be sensitive to changing prices.

# 5. Recommendations

The responses to the interview questions suggest that GO!’s clients are very satisfied with its relocation services and the pricing thereof. In terms of pricing, the most common statement during the interviews was that a slight increase would probably not have a big effect on the clients’ relationship with Global Orientations. From that perspective, the company might want to consider raising its prices. In the best-case scenario, this strategy would increase the company’s revenues while maintaining its customer base. In the worst-case scenario it would lose clients that decide to turn to a competitor. In other words, should GO! seriously consider a price hike, it would be wise to attempt to predict the exact consequences of raising its prices before making a decision.

Considering that GO! has several clients in the healthcare and education industry, the company should be cautious with price increases as these companies will be relatively sensitive to price changes. The company currently relies on Eli Lilly for the majority of its revenue and thus its existence, which might prove to be a risky strategy. Though it has built a long-term relationship with the pharmaceutical giant that is mutually beneficial, from a business perspective it would make sense to attempt to diversify its source of revenue to reduce its dependence - and consequently its risk.

With that in mind, the company might be better off sticking to its current market-based strategy of pricing its services, especially since its smaller clients expressed more concern at potential price increases than bigger clients. That way, the company does not risk losing some of its smaller customers to the competition. For a small company like Global Orientations, it would not be a good idea to pursue a strategy that might end up making it more dependent on one client.

In the best-case scenario, this strategy of maintaining current prices would result in continued business with existing clients or potentially more business due to growth. Besides, should the housing market recover, more new hires and recruits might decide to buy a home rather than rent it, resulting in higher revenue for GO! in the form of referral fees. In the worst-case scenario - all other things equal - this strategy would maintain customer base and revenue at the current level.

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# 7. Appendices

## Appendix I: Interview questions

1) How do your employees rate GO!'s services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?

2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?

3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?

4) How do our services affect your retention?

5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?

6) How do our services affect productivity?

7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO! appeal to recruits?

8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?

9) Do our services help the recruitment process?

10) Does your company regard GO!'s relocation services as a good investment?

11) From your personal perspective, how would your company’s relationship with Global Orientations be affected if GO!’s prices would increase due to rising gas prices or other causes?

12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?

## Appendix II: Interview details

The interviews were held on the following dates, at the following times, with the following people:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Company | Date and time |
| Ms Collier | Eli Lilly & Company | May 24, 12:30 PM |
| Ms Bland | Eli Lilly & Company | May 24, 1:30 PM |
| Ms Oaldon | IU Health | May 24, 3:30 PM |
| Ms van Gorp | AAR Corp | May 24, 3:45 PM |
| Mr Chin | IU Health | May 25, 9:30 AM |
| Ms Conroe | IU Health | May 25, 9:45 AM |
| Ms Galm | IU Health | May 29, 10:00 AM |
| Mr Delaney | Children’s Hospital St Vincent | May 29, 12:30 PM |
| Ms Kistler | Hard Dollar Corporation | May 29, 1:00 PM |
| Ms Sinclair | St Francis Medical Group | May 29, 2:00 PM |
| Ms Lewis | NCAA | May 30, 10:00 AM |

## Appendix III: Interview notes

**Thursday 5/24, 12:30 PM - Ms Collier of Eli Lilly & Company**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*The last couple of candidates had positive feedback. Very impressed.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*Very beneficial, many had never been to Indianapolis before, some were foreign. They get to sit back and listen and ask questions. Invaluable service.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*Yes, very professional and well organized. Integrity, excellence, respect for people. GO is an extension of that.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*Helpful, gives them a better opportunity to see what the city looks like. They will know what the city has to offer.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*Comfortability, entertainment and social perspective. Happy at home and comfortable reflects in their satisfaction.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*They’re not worried about anything so they’re more focused.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal* *to recruits?*It’s a big bonus, a big benefit to them. A lot of companies offer it but Lilly’s benefits offer more.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so,* how?  
Once we get to the point that we have a candidate we really like. They know relocation is part of the benefit but Global Orientations is not specifically mentioned until later in the process.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*Tremendously, they know they’ll be taken care of and that makes them feel more comfortable.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*Definitely, even if the candidate is not sure if s/he’ll accept the position. People get excited about moving here after the city tour.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*I’m not allowed to answer that question.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*We are happy with the service so we’ll continue using it.

**Thursday 5/24, 1:30 PM - Ms Bland of Eli Lilly & Company**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*Scheduling is good, high-quality service.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*It’s very important for them to decide if they want to accept the job.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*Eli has very high standards and GO’s services reflect on that and complement that.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*It does affect them because they have all the information they needed. They’ll be happier.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*See previous.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*Happy people are more productive, when they can do their hobbies and so forth.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal* to recruits?  
They think it was really great, especially because it’s personalized: and very time-effective.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*No, unless they pass the first interview.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*Yes, they have the information they require.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*Yes, for the reasons mentioned previously.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*I don’t expect it to change a lot.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*We would continue because it’s an important part of services that we want to outsource.

**Thursday 5/24, 3:30 PM - Ms Oaldon of IU Health**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*All feedback is very positive and I only hear good things.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*Helps put them at ease. GO does a good job to help them out, help them move and adjust as things happen.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*It’s good for the company to be able to say that we are working with a professional corporate relocation company.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*I’m not sure they affect retention.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*See answer to question 2.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*Positive effect, more focused.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal* *to recruits?*I don’t know.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*I’m not sure that GO is mentioned but we do mention that we offer relocation services.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*Yes, it is a positive aspect of the process.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*Yes, it puts them at ease. They’re taken care of and it takes a burden off of them.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*Everything is about the bottom line, so we’d have to reconsider.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*It’s likely we’ll continue using your services.

**Thursday 5/24, 3:45 PM – Ms van Gorp of AAR Corp.**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*I haven’t heard anything negative though we’ve only had about 10 people use your services.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*I’d think the service shows them the area they want to live in. They get an idea of the Indianapolis area.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*I would think so, maybe not directly but if the service is really good or poor that’ll reflect on us.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*If people are happy with where they live they will be less likely to move.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*Initially, they have a positive effect. Long-term it’s our job to maintain employee satisfaction.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*Initially it has an impact because everything’s taken care of at home and it takes some of that burden off of them. Again, longer term is our job.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal to recruits?*It’s appealing because GO! can give them sound advice, especially if they’re looking for something for their families.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*For some of the higher level positions we do. For entry-level we don’t.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*I think they do, because our recruits get a better picture of Indianapolis.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*Yes, because it’s not something we can do in-house. GO is a one-stop-shop because of City Wise Real Estate and GO combination. More than we could ever hope to offer.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*It would depend on the increase.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*Very likely, because the relationship is good.

**Friday 5/25, 9:30 AM – Mr Chin of IU Health**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*Very good things, GO! is very good at what it does. You are very good with keeping my people informed and they’re very happy.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*Since we’re recruiting and employing and relocating employees it’s important to have a good customer-focused vendor.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*Yes, because if our vendors are good we also look good. If you don’t do a good job, recruits and new hires will wonder: “What kind of company am I joining?”

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*I don’t think there’s any effect.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*In the initial move, it probably has a significant effect. After that, it’s up to us. It rates high as a first impression to IU health and Indiana.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*It’s hard to rate that. Some are coming from medical schools, others are established physicians.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal to recruits?*I think they expect it. They want to know we have a package for them, a program and vendors.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*We don’t specifically mention GO! but we do advertise the fact that we have a plan for relocation, a plan for their home search.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*If we didn’t have the tours, it would be a huge kink in the process for recruitment. It’s major.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*Yes, the service is good from start to finish. GO works very hard and our physicians are satisfied.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*Pricing can always be prohibitive. We changed vendors once because they kept changing their price. We evaluate that regularly. GO would have to be careful not to price itself out of the market.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*

Very likely.

**Friday 5/25, 9:45 AM – Ms Conroe of IU Health**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*All positive feedback, they like the fact that they talk on the phone prior to the service.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*Positively, they get a PIK and they talk about specifics. Helps them feel more acquainted.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*Yes, if they have a good experience in the community that reflects on our image, too.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*A little, we have lots of new people that GO! helps feel oriented. So I would think there is some effect on retention..

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*Not a huge impact besides the fact that the area tour is a good way to get oriented. It has an effect on overall satisfaction but it’s more on the personal side.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*If you do a good job with your tours, they can be less stressed about relocating and more focused on the work

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal* *to recruits?*It appeals greatly as they come here to see the city. It shows them that IU Health will go above and beyond to provide them with a good experience.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*Yes we do, we let them know that we prefer/suggest they go on a community tour. That informs them of what’s available, what kind of housing is available. Extra added bonus.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*Yeah.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*Yes, we don’t have time for that ourselves; to understand their needs and what they’re looking for. They’re more focused on the job and the interview process. Personal touch.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*It may affect our department. I’m not sure because I don’t deal with the Finance part. I don’t think it’d have a huge effect. It may be something we’d have to work into our budget. We have a high volume of relocations and need the personal touch that Global Orientations provides.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*Likely; good feedback, good client of ours, all relocating physicians benefit greatly from GO!’s services.

**Tuesday 5/29, 10:00 AM – Ms Galm of IU Health**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*

They seem happy, not a lot of feedback positive or negative.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*Very important, one of the first phases they see with their employment with us.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*Absolutely, GO! is one of the first contacts. Good experience means good start of their employment. They will be happier with a good experience.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*There is a small effect, because you’re the first part of it. Retention is based more on their actual employment. Nonetheless the relocation is part of the whole package; it’s a first impression.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*Huge positive effect on satisfaction.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*If they are relaxed when they get here they’re able to focus. When they have issues they are unable to concentrate.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal to recruits?*

I think GO!’s services are instrumental in providing for the relocation part, it’s a very positive aspect. There is no out of pocket expense. It makes for a smoother relocation.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*

I don’t know.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*

Absolutely, anything we take off their plate helps our recruits.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*

Absolutely, see answer to question 7.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*We get several quotes, if you’re more expensive than the competitor we’ll go with the competitor so GO! will have to stay competitive. But at the moment you are in line with competitors.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*

Very likely due to good service. You make it as easy as possible for the physician.

**Tuesday 5/29, 12:30 PM – Mr. Delaney, Children’s Hospital of St Vincent**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*Generally positive. We do this as a part of our recruitment process so sometimes we don’t get any feedback if they’re not hired. Those that do really appreciate the opportunity to see the community.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*They become familiar with the community. The benefit is to us too as we sell the city and the community.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*Yes to a degree you are an extension of us. There seems to be a like-mindedness to provide a quality service.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*

I don’t think it affects retention.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*I don’t think it affects employee satisfaction.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*I don’t see that, though I suppose it’s possible. Then again we don’t necessarily use all your services.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal to recruits?*It appeals to them because they’re able to see the community and make a better decision of whether or not they want to move in to this area as they see schools, churches, and organizations in the area.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*To my knowledge we don’t.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*

Yes, absolutely, for the reasons mentioned previously.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*

Yes, for the same reasons.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*I really don’t know.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*Likely to very likely. You continue to provide a great service so there’s no reason for us to switch.

**Tuesday 5/29, 1:00 PM – Ms Kistler of Hard Dollar Corporation**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*

Actually, Hard Dollar Corporation is not a client of GO! yet. My previous employer used your services and I am trying to convince my current employer of the importance of GO!;s services.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*

I think it would make a classy and more professional relocation.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*

It would improve it, that’s why I want to do it. It makes for a better representation of our company.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*

Not applicable.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*

I definitely believe it would help. My supervisors thought it was an awesome transition.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*

I think they would help a lot.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal to recruits?*

It is an added benefit.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*

Yes we do, we mention it prior to them coming to Indianapolis.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*

I think it would. My former employer loved it and they were very pleased.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*

I personally do but my employer doesn’t since it has had no experience with GO! ‘s services.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*My current employer is unsure because of GO!’s prices.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*It’s about 50-50. I really do want to do it. My employer would prefer a local provider of relocation services with lower prices though.

**Tuesday 5/29, 2:00 PM – Ms Sinclair of St. Francis Medical Group**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*They rate it very highly.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*They have more knowledge about the Indianapolis area so it’s beneficial. I don’t think it necessarily throws them over because there are so many factors.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*Yes because GO is an extension of our company.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*I don’t think it has anything to do with retention, it has to do with initial impressions.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*Overall satisfaction to move to Indianapolis there is probably a strong correlation.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*I don’t think there’s any effect.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal to recruits?*

I think they appreciate that we cooperate with a company that can show them the city, so positive effect.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*There is a generic statement that “we are able to help with your relocation”.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*Oh yes I do think so. It familiarizes them with the area. Global Orientations does a good job with that.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*Yes we do. See previous.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*I guess it depends on how much it goes up. Right now it’s $150 for a couple of hours and if it would go to $500 we would obviously look for other options.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*I can only speak for the physician part but we will continue to use your services.

**Wednesday 5/30, 10:00 AM – Ms Lewis of the NCAA**

*1) How do your employees rate GO's services?/What is the most commonly heard feedback?*They are satisfied with GO!’s services.

*2) How do our services affect your new hires and transferees?*It varies from each individual, diverse needs. Some find the service of value, others do not. It depends on how familiar they are with the city.

*3) Do our services reflect on your company's image and if so, to what extent?*Yes, absolutely. Because you are a partner of ours so they will have their thoughts about the on-boarding process.

*4) How do our services affect your retention?*I don’t think there’s an effect.

*5) How do our services affect employee satisfaction?*It certainly affects their on-boarding experience overall.

*6) How do our services affect productivity?*Not necessarily; it depends on each individuals’ needs.

*7) How does the fact that your company is able to offer relocation services through GO appeal to recruits?*

It’s an attractive benefit for some who are not familiar with the city and find the service of value.

*8) Does your company advertise our services as part of your recruitment strategy and if so, how?*It is included in our relocation benefits along with some other vendors that we work with.

*9) Do our services help the recruitment process?*Yes.

*10) Does your company regard GO's relocation services as a good investment?*Yes, I think it’s helpful depending on the individual. If they need the service it’s something less they have to figure out.

*11) If GO’s prices would go up – as a result of rising gas prices, for instance – how do you think that would affect your company’s relationship with GO?*It would depend on the increase.

*12) How likely is your company to continue using GO!'s relocation services?*I think it’s likely we’ll use your services in the future.