

Enterprise

making it

A commitment to quality

Alliance Relocation Services strives to perfect customer satisfaction

The logistics of moving to a new city can be daunting, but one company strives to put your mind at ease - Chicago-based Alliance Relocation Services L.L.C.

Through existing contracts with clients such as McDonald's, Federal Express, UPS and Coca-Cola Co., Alliance Relocation Services handles all aspects of a move.

"We specialize in relocation, domestic and international moves," says CEO Herb Stokes, 48. "We provide pre-marketing [of clients homes], home sale/purchasing, home closing and renter's assistance. There's also the relocation service.

Stokes, a former vice president of quality management for Allied Van Lines, realized he had reached his professional peak at the company after 23 years and decided it was time to move on. He used his experience to launch Alliance, and saw his company grow from \$130,500 in revenues in 1995 to \$5.8 million in 1998. Alliance expects to earn over \$6.6 million this year and \$10 million in 2000.

"I love the industry," says Stokes, who secured a \$250,000 loan from his former employer to launch his business. "I have a commitment to the industry despite the lack of diversity. I also want to change its image to a more professional one."

Alliance Relocation Services uses its knowledge of local markets to select the region's best van line agents to facilitate the most cost effective move for the customer while providing top-of-the-line service.

"Many other firms provide a lot of volume. We decided to niche ourselves the line of quality," says Stokes. "Other companies may have reputations in the relocation business, but they didn't have a niche in the moving aspect. These two sides played against the mover, and the mover couldn't perform a



BRENT JONES

Stokes has all the right moves

Often Alliance consultants work with the employees of its clients on various elements of their relocations. Alliance has also implemented total quality management programs and its own Gallup survey, on which it bases final pricing packages.

"Companies have contractually agreed to pay us for this type of program," says Stokes. "There is an incentive for the individuals involved in the process to do a good job. Clients are able to measure our employees based upon merit regardless of their type of job. If they do well, then they receive the benefits."

Stokes attributes his company's success to his commitment to quality customer service and diversity in his own company and industrywide. Additionally, the company operates Alliance Training and Development, a two-month training program operated in conjunction with DePaul University's Office of Applied Innovations that accepts Welfare to Work participants and trains them in every aspect of the relocation business.

-- Jayne Cubbage

Alliance Relocation Services L.L.C.,
1327 W. Washington, Suite 106,
Chicago, IL 60607; 312-491-9970