

Marketing for Rural Communities

Initial Focus Groups

Considering a Move

“Considering a Move” are the causal conditions or pre-existing situations that influenced individuals to begin looking for another location to live. These conditions alone do not determine whether an individual will move; however, they do suggest that an individual will consider a potential opportunity. The three causal conditions identified in this study were: life cycle changes, healthier quality of life and being pushed away. Examples of life cycle changes identified in the interviews include marriage, starting a family, aging parents, retirement, a death, divorce and attending or graduating from college. One retiree from a southern state acknowledged, “the pull was retirement.” Another man originally from the East Coast said he was ending his career in the military service.

A healthier quality of life is a broad causal condition that includes factors such as safety, quality time for family, simpler life, healthier climate and dreams for a better life. A new mover from a northwestern state said, “I’ve got the four kids. And the town that I lived in was gettin’ a little gang heavy.” Climate was a pull for others as this individual shared, “my wife and daughter both suffer from allergies – mold and mildew are some of them and [previous area] is a high humid area.” A number of participants expressed the desire to improve their quality of life by moving to a smaller community. For example, “40,000 miles on a car in one year ... and my husband worked at the other end of [the city], so he would commute ... he was gone from 6:00 in the morning until 7:30 at night. Our lifestyle was not...it wasn’t family.”

Being pushed away from their previous community is the third causal condition that emerged. Some individuals first moved to their previous community when it was outside a metro region. As the metro area expanded, the new residents were asked to sell their properties. Others expressed dissatisfaction with congestion and long commutes. The category of being pushed away is similar to the previous category (a healthier quality of life) as focus group participants appeared to desire something more in their lives. This specific aspect was separated out due to the number of participants who identified being pushed away.