



## 2022 ATLAS FORUM RECAPS

### GENERAL SESSIONS

#### CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME WITH JACK GRIFFIN

Forum's call to order started with Atlas Chairman & CEO Jack Griffin welcoming participants back to the conference for the first time in-person since 2019. He introduced this year's "kinetic" theme, focused on partnership, connectivity, and energy in motion as the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on the pandemic's overall impact, including its toll on human life, businesses, work-from-home and more, he also highlighted the impact on the industry: expatriate assignments were eliminated, corporate domestic relocation volumes shrank significantly, and uncertainty ruled the day. Now that COVID restrictions have been largely lifted, relocation volumes have returned to pre-COVID levels, and the country is seeing new shifts including strong GDP growth, shrinking unemployment, rising inflation and lending rates, global supply chain disruption, international conflict, and more. In this informative welcome, Jack provided a reflection of the last two years with an overview of where the industry is today and set the stage for the audience to reconnect and put energy in motion.

#### JASON DORSEY

Atlas Forum's first speaker, Jason Dorsey, drew the audience in right away with his high energy and clever humor about generational stereotypes. Everyone in the audience works with different generations, and as a generational researcher, his goal was to separate myth from truth about the different generations in the workforce. Dorsey helped the audience understand that it is important to understand different generational behaviors because it gives us clues to connect, build trust, and drive influence. By digging into the different factors that shape generations, such as parenting, major historical events, and technology, Jason walked through some of the key insights and data that define Gen-Z, Millennials, Gen-X, and Baby Boomers. Armed with these powerful, predictive clues, attendees can unlock the full potential of their workforces.

#### CHRIS RIDDELL

During the second group session, guests learned why the future is more exciting than ever from Chris Riddell. Riddell is an award-winning and industry-recognized human futurist, forensic optimist, and energizing catalyst. His obsession with data, detail, and unlocking new perspectives forms a compelling case for a future that will be better than today. As we move further from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Riddell cited that we are entering a great

wave of change and innovation. Technological advances like liquid experiences and hyper automation have proven our obsession with technology. The global pandemic accelerated these shifts as the world looked for ways to connect remotely and more efficiently. We've entered a period of rapid innovation. Riddell believes the new wave of technology is an emphasis on simplicity and reducing how many steps are required in day-to-day processes. He challenges companies to ask themselves, "Do we fit in?" Leaders should feel encouraged to reimagine the future and persevere through these incoming waves of change, because the future is not daunting—it is full of opportunity.

## **INKY JOHNSON**

If Inky Johnson taught us anything, it is to embrace life's inevitable challenges and adversities and always rise to conquer them. The former college football star and NFL hopeful discussed how he did this when his life changed forever in September 2006. After a football play gone wrong, Johnson suffered severe internal injuries and permanent right-arm paralysis. Instead of giving up on all his passions and ending his college career to return to his hometown, he remained a student at the University of Tennessee to continue to support his teammates in all practices, games, and elsewhere. While his future looked different than planned, Inky has had no problem adjusting, living his life in support of others, and setting impressive goals that are never guaranteed. There's no doubt the audience was inspired by his positive, no-quit attitude and left Atlas Forum asking, "Why do I do what I do?" and "Who am I when faced with opposition?"

## **LEARNING SESSIONS**

### **Professional Van Operators: Driving Business Success on 18 Wheels**

#### ***Moderator***

*Jeff Schimmel - Vice President Transportation Services, Atlas Van Lines*

#### ***Panelists***

*Chesney Humlick - Professional Van Operator, Ace Relocation Systems*

*Corey Fore - Professional Van Operator, Nelson Westerberg*

*Shannon Enright - Professional Van Operator, Alexander's Mobility Services*

Professional Van Operators (PVOs) are at the core of relocation services. We spoke to three PVOs to learn about how they approach each project, how the industry's challenges affect their businesses, and how they experience life on the road.

Like all industries, COVID-19 created disruptions for relocation services and PVOs especially. While working 11-hour days on the road and fully operating their businesses from their trucks,

creature comforts were especially hard to find in 2020, and inadequate parking continues to plague the trucking industry.

Hiring good labor for moves is also becoming more challenging. The best crews have narrow availability, and as the labor market continues to shift, making those connections is more difficult. At the same time, PVOs have less control over what is charged by the local labor pools, while reliable crews with limited availability can charge more than ever. Having as much time as possible to prepare for a job is key to hiring good, reliable crews. Adequate time to prepare also helps ensure there is fluid and complete communication between all parties involved.

The group also shared that labor and fuel are the biggest expenses and barriers to profitability. More communication helps PVOs control the cost of the crew because they can hire the right amount of help without going over or under the need.

The full panel shared their advice to customers as well. Maximum communication was a common thread, noting the experience is always best when PVOs and customers are consistently in touch and on the same page throughout the process. More communication leaves less room for items to go missing, allows for a more efficient move, and can ultimately help all parties save time and money.

Throughout the session, it was abundantly clear these dedicated professionals are driven to deliver exceptional customer experiences—no matter the move or its challenges. They deeply value positive customer interactions and are committed to maintaining those relationships, understanding the critical role they play in the industry.

## **Accountable Sustainability for a Brighter Future**

### ***Moderator***

*William Taylor - Head of Partnerships, Relocity*

### **Panelists**

*Deb Convery - Director Global Mobility & Immigration, Stripe*

*Tanya Mariottini - Director Global Mobility, Twilio, Inc.*

*Vini Valverde - Director Global Mobility, UPS*

Sustainability is an increasingly important and interconnected issue in mobility and beyond. The learning session kicked off with a game of “Kahoot!”, in an interactive presentation to quiz the audience on sustainability goals and principles, including an overview of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the meaning and importance of Environmental Social Governance (ESGs).

Each panelist’s company is in a different phase of its sustainability journey and supplied the audience with a glimpse of their internal goals, efforts, and progress—especially in relation to

relocation services. For example, UPS is aiming to be carbon neutral by 2050 and has already spent over \$1 billion on alternative fuel. Twilio recently released its environmental footprint to the public for consistent measurement and customer transparency. Stripe has established partnerships with Alphabet, Google, and other major tech companies to launch an advance market commitment to buy \$925 million of carbon removal to demonstrate its market value.

During the panel discussion, participants also mentioned how ESG efforts can be reflected in mobility strategy, programs, and policy initiatives, and ultimately, the impact of moving people and goods. Key takeaways included working with suppliers who are culturally aligned and value ESG, showcasing ESG efforts of mobility departments throughout the year, giving employees the opportunity to participate and engage in ESG opportunities, and connecting with other departments so they understand the connection between ESG and mobility.

## 6 in 60

### **Moderator**

*Mary Legate - Senior Vice President Global Operations, Cornerstone Relocation Group*

### **Panelists**

*Johnny Haines - Senior Manager Relocation Services, Deloitte*

*Larry Brouder - Senior Vice President Global Business Expansion, Cornerstone Relocation Group*

*Sue Carey - Corporate Mobility Strategist, Baird & Warner Real Estate*

*Susanne Swayhoover - Head of HR Services, Sanofi*

A panel of mobility professionals weighed in on the latest trends and how they have impacted their relocation programs, policies, and service delivery. They discussed current implications, how they may affect the industry's future, and how professionals can act.

The current national talent shortage touches every industry, but these professionals highlighted its effect on relocation specifically. Managers are working to set expectations for in-office versus remote work, but relocation decisions are largely being affected by company flexibility. With that, talent retention is key. To retain talent, the panel urged companies to prioritize discussing and strategizing where people will work, and even said it's possible people will look for a return to in-office work in the next few years.

Duty of care was also a highlight as it remains a high priority across the industry. The stress of relocation is high, and we are living in a very reactive, ever-changing environment. The panelists placed an importance on overall flexibility and having patience for how the employee being relocated may feel. It is the company and vendor's responsibility to be extremely transparent when changes arise, especially as more family units are relocating compared to individuals.

The real estate market is especially volatile right now, which places even more emotional and financial strain on the relocation process. The panelists noted this market is the most challenging ever between a shortage of corporate housing, more difficult contracts, and housing appreciation in general. Overall, proactivity, empathy, and patience will lead to more success in relocations as these challenges are confronted.

## **Almost perfect, but then...!**

### **Moderator**

*Heather Sheira - Senior Global Mobility Professional, Edwards Lifesciences*

### **Panelists**

*Jonique Colbert - NAM Relocation Manager, Schlumberger*

*Ray Kirby - Head of Global Mobility, Coinbase*

*Sandy Beyer - Senior Manager Global Mobility, Salesforce*

Attendees were able to apply their vast mobility experience and collaborate with others in this interactive session focused on last-minute issues impacting near-perfect relocations. Whether it's natural disasters, storage issues, or challenging transferees, the unexpected does arise, and mobility experts and their suppliers must be thorough and move quickly to ensure smooth and pleasant transitions for employees. Our panelists presented challenging, real-world scenarios each had encountered during a relocation, and it was up to the audience groups to work together to formulate recommended solutions for the unforeseen circumstances that made a major impact on relocation experiences and timelines. Keeping their unique scenario in mind, teams discussed the issue from all sides and compiled fitting solutions for a larger group discussion.

The groups analyzed many factors key to relocations: housing challenges, relocation policy updates, household goods storage liability, cost coverage and increases, the offering of medical services, and more. The collective participation from the session's audience members led to meaningful discussion and outlooks that will undoubtedly be considered as they continue to navigate unforeseen challenges in mobility.

# LIGHTNING TALKS

## Understanding the Road Ahead

### **Speaker**

*Rebecca Brewster - President & COO, American Trucking Research Institute*

The American Trucking Research Institute (ATRI) is a critical link to today's truck drivers, and the organization's transportation studies help identify the challenges Professional Van Operators (PVOs) are facing on a daily basis. According to ATRI's latest research, the trucking industry's biggest challenges in 2021 are the driver shortage, driver retention, and driver compensation. With these findings, Brewster encouraged the audience to focus on listening to truck drivers to create real change. The relocation industry, among others, must focus on retaining experienced drivers in the field while finding impactful ways to recruit new drivers between the ages of 20-24. It is no secret that global supply chains across industries will suffer if driver pay, recruitment, and retention are not addressed by employers. Costs are also escalating rapidly for those who work on the road between fuel, insurance, maintenance, and more, meaning time is of the essence.

While working to fix the industry challenges of today, Brewster encouraged companies to also look to the future and start thinking about the next big challenges, including topics like autonomous vehicles, recruitment programs targeted to 18–20-year-olds, and the use of driver-facing cameras for safety and litigation purposes. It is up to van lines to work alongside valued PVOs to ensure they can be productive and profitable while helping others go new places.

## US Immigration and Global Migration in a Disruptive World

### **Speaker**

*Mercedes Badia-Tavas - Partner, Barnes & Thornburg*

It is widely understood that immigration law and global mobility is complicated and ever-changing, especially for those managing international corporate relocations. We live in a time when there are countless disruptions in immigration, including elections, economic factors, COVID-19, travel restrictions, national interest exceptions, and individual requirements for visas and travel. Badia-Tavas emphasized planning is key, but flexibility and backups are always necessary. In her lightning talk, she detailed many of the various immigration options currently offered by the U.S. government including humanitarian, business, family, and student visas. Work visas, including H-1B specialty occupation, L-1 intracompany transferee, O-1 extraordinary ability, E-2 investor, and TN, E-3, and H1-B1 are also options for international corporate relocations to the U.S.

The global economy and politics significantly influence policy, priorities, and processing, with government operations proceeding at a much slower pace than the private sector. Additionally,

immigration law has not been updated in “real time” to reflect 21st century needs. It was concluded that the U.S. Congress has a duty and obligation to correct these issues through legislation reform to benefit the economic future and moral authority of our country.

## The Bucket List

### **Speaker**

*Lynn Shotwell - President & CEO, Worldwide ERC*

Our final speaker organized everything currently happening in our world into three buckets: the workforce, the supply chain, and the rules of the road moving forward. We are witnessing a great resignation with more than 10 million job openings and a growing skills gap. As a result, Shotwell stressed the importance of supporting apprenticeships and global immigration reform, providing new job candidates introduction and access and to these unfilled positions.

Additionally, the pandemic exposed the weak links in our infrastructure, many of which are wreaking havoc on the supply chain and impacting everyone’s professional and personal lives. As leaders in mobility, it is critical to lend support to infrastructure legislation that will help ease these strains and interruptions. When confronting these challenges, it is important organizations detail exactly what they are experiencing within the supply chain as it relates to customers, employees, and other stakeholders to always prioritize transparency.

When discussing the rules of the road, Shotwell identified how the global community can work together to support each other and shape the future of relocation. First, companies and government offices should prioritize technological upgrades to make systems more efficient. However, with increased technology, it also becomes critical for these parties to place the proper emphasis on data security to understand potential vulnerabilities and keep employee and customer privacy top of mind. With aligned efforts and support, these shifts can help our industry and society begin to overcome the “big three” challenges of today.

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