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REMOVALS

By Peter Driscoll

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT WAY

Peter Driscoll of European Transport Brokers (www.etbrokers-removals.com) takes you through some of the trials and tribulations associated with moving to Europe and explains away some of the mystery associated with moving. In this article he will go on to some of the pitfalls that can trap the unwary as well as providing a sometimes amusing view of an industry still trying to drag itself into the 21st century.

To steal a catch phrase, as dear old Max Bygraves would say "Let me tell you a story"... Five years ago I was looking to get my own house contents moved to the South of France and received quotes in the region of four to five thousand pounds. It was to be a simple move. No extras at all. No packing, no disconnecting of machines, no disassembling, no plants and no piped music for my furniture whilst "en route". Just a simple move. Two brother in laws and the rest of the family were roped in to help and a 7.5 tonne lorry was acquired. With Air Brakes hissing and "Yorkie" in hand, I promptly banged the rear end of the lorry leaving the depot! My excuse being that I had never before driven a 30 foot long vehicle. That should have been my first clue to see reason, but blinded by the desire to save money I continued! To cut a very long story short, it took us over 22 hours to drive down to the South of France, and I did save some money. But that is not the whole story!

I took time off work. My brothers in law also took five days holidays. If they had been paid, or if I had paid myself for the hours worked then the story would have been different. Then we come to the "invisible" costs. The bruised fingers, the aching backs, the dropped items of furniture, the flaring of tempers, the boredom of driving at 50 mph on a motorway, and finally having no one to blame for the damaged items! True I saved money but at what cost! And it could have been FAR worse, for as I discovered later, my home contents insurance policy did not cover the goods in transit to France. One accident and I would have lost everything. Further, I have a sneaking suspicion that the vehicle may have been a "tad" overweight. Had I been stopped the entire load could have been seized! Never again!

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But DIY can be an option if you have a small load, plenty of time and are not worried about some seriously hard work. To hire a "Luton" size van and move say 15m³ of furniture from Birmingham to Dordogne will cost you about £1100 all in. This includes hire charges, diesel, ferry and motorway tolls and meals, but not any "Tips" for kidnapped family members! To ask a removal company to do the same job will cost anything from £1300 to £2500, depending on who you ask.

Following on from articles 1 and 2 we have received over 300 calls from people wanting to know who we are and what we do. So how can a Brokerage help you? In essence the broker does exactly the same as you, in that he solicits quotes from removal companies. The difference is that whereas you ask maybe ten or twenty companies for quotes, he will ask a few thousand, all over Europe, to quote on your move. Further, the Broker knows when and where companies are going. He is able to approach them directly and suggest that they may like to quote on a job to fill the spare capacity on a

vehicle that is passing your front door! Removal companies, like airlines prefer to travel with full vehicles rather than ones that are half empty! The trick is finding them. This is where the broker can help you to save time, effort and money.

One of the questions that has come up time and again from clients, relates to size. Contrary to public belief size does matter, but it can be terribly confusing. In the UK we traditionally use cubic feet in calculating volume. In Europe (and more and more in the UK) volume is now measured in cubic metres. To get the cubic capacity of anything, you take the height width and depth and multiply the three together. So a standard fridge of 3ft by 3ft by 4 ft measures 36 cubic feet. In cubic metres this would be 0.95m*0.95m*1.3m to give 1.1m³. Simply put 35 cubic feet is roughly equal to one cubic metre! If you have made your inventory on a spread sheet it is fairly straightforward to add in a separate column for the dimensions of each article you intend to move. "Ah" you say "but what of the table, and all that space underneath". Measure the table as a solid! True, items can be packed under the table, and in many instances items can also be packed inside others (clothes in drawers being an example), but whereas you may think you only have 20 or thirty boxes you will find that once everything is packed you have far far more, and this is where the extra space under the table will go. Also bear in mind that if you have 34m³ of goods it will not fit in a vehicle with a capacity of 34m³, as, expert as they are, removal companies can never fill every cubic metre on a van! (Now there is a challenge to some one) !!

Finally, please remember that when packing yourself, there is a possibility that the insurance cover offered will not stretch to "all inclusive". This is because the insurers themselves cannot be certain that the goods were not damaged prior to loading and secondly that they were correctly packed in the first instance. Though we did have a report of one client who had correctly packed each room with twenty or so boxes. None too heavy, none too light. The boxes were all numbered and all sealed. The two removal men lifted a box each and everything in the boxes simply slipped out the bottom of the boxes. The client had made up the boxes, sealed the tops and totally forgotten to seal the bottoms of every single box! Sometimes you just cant win!

Peter Driscoll of European Transport Brokers (www.etbrokers-removals.com) has moved many times in his life and has many tips to offer on how to make the move go smoothly

Student Removals – How to Get the Lowest Quote

By Stephen Willett

Student Removals – How to Get the Lowest Quote by Stephen Willett

The problem with **student** and any **small move** comes when a small load has to be transported a long way:– For the moving company, the mileage and road time costs are not much less than for moving a whole house...So your quote is unacceptably high.

There are two ways to approach a solution to high cost removals: You could **hire a van**, (and there are van hire companies that will rent a small van 21 year olds, sometimes one way), or you could look for a removal company with whom you can part load with someone else going the same way.

One way van hire could be particularly attractive if you could then find a partner to split the cost, and get a one way deal, but the problem of finding a qualifying driver may be insurmountable.

So the problem for most student movers is in finding a company who will **part load** at a good price.

Moving Tips

- 1) Spend some time phoning around: There is an element of luck in finding a van going your way.
- 2) Be as flexible as possible with your date – maybe you can organise someone at your destination to receive your property.
- 3) Try to find your own partner who is also going your way, and approach a removal company with a joint proposition.
- 4) Stop and consider the quantity of your removal:– because removals tend to be arranged before you have packed, peoples own estimates are often hazy, usually under assessed, and sometimes the actual job bears little relation to that described.
- 5) Package and box as much as possible, for speedy loading, protection, easy trolleying, and secure, tidy stacking on the van.
- 6) Consider any likely impediments to access or delivery (like locked barriers on campus)
- 6) Offer all the assurances needed about having your things easily accessible and that you will be ready to go before the van arrives.

You can find sources of low age van hire, specialist part load removers, packaging, message boards and advice at

www.student-movers-forum.com

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The author has spent 25 years in various service industries, including the last 8 in the removals sector. his website www.student-movers-forum is a resource for all small movers.



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