

The State of Moving

Movement of People in the U.S.

BELLHOPS

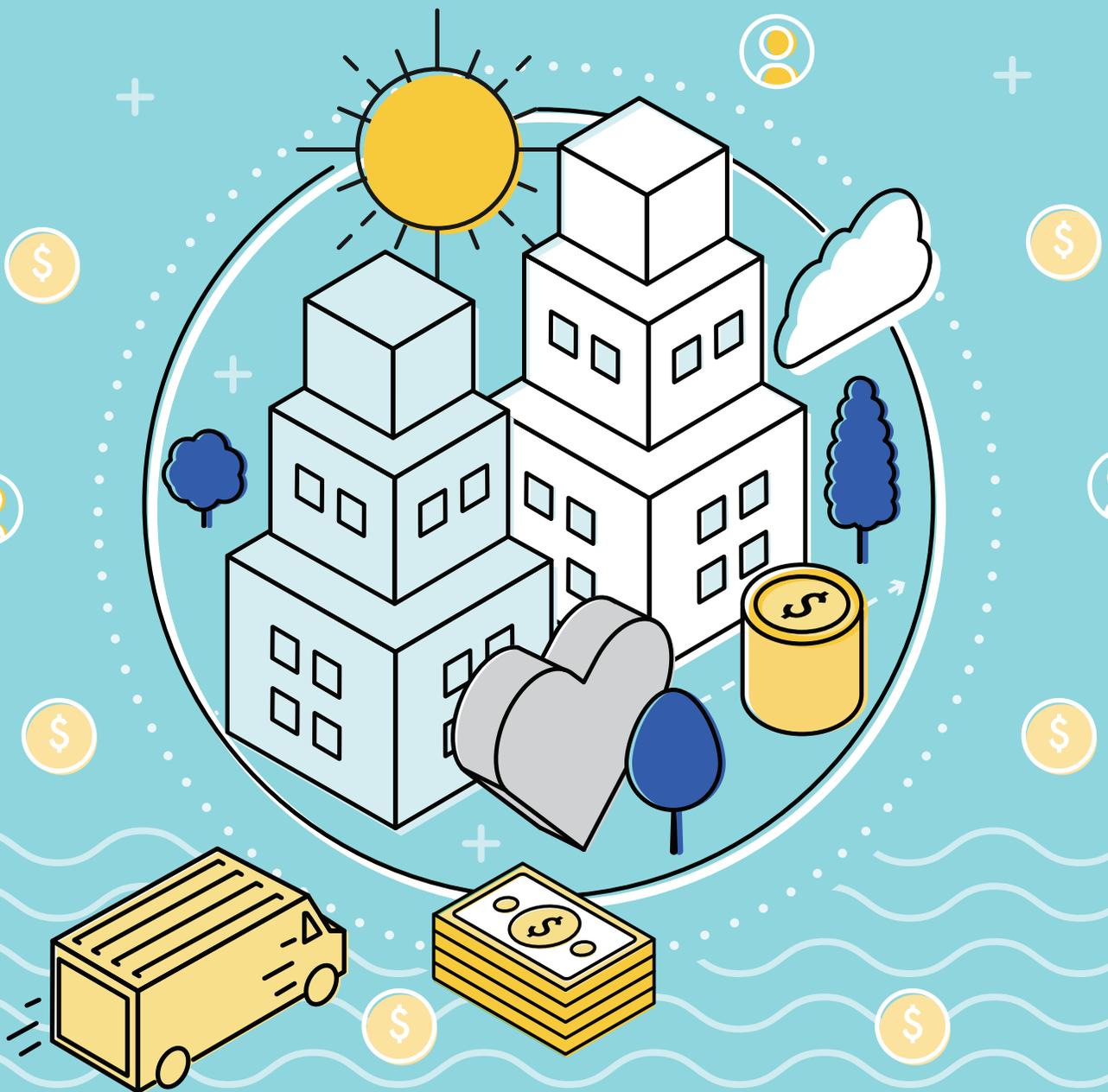


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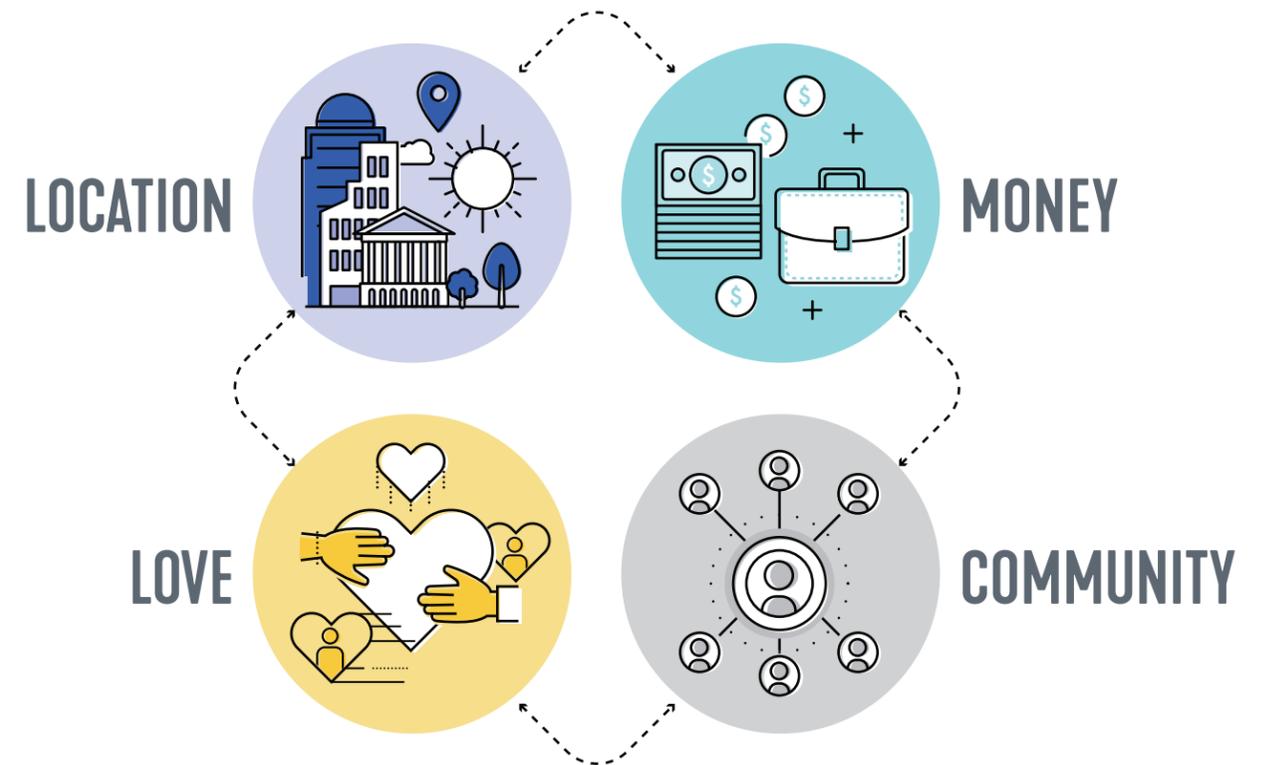
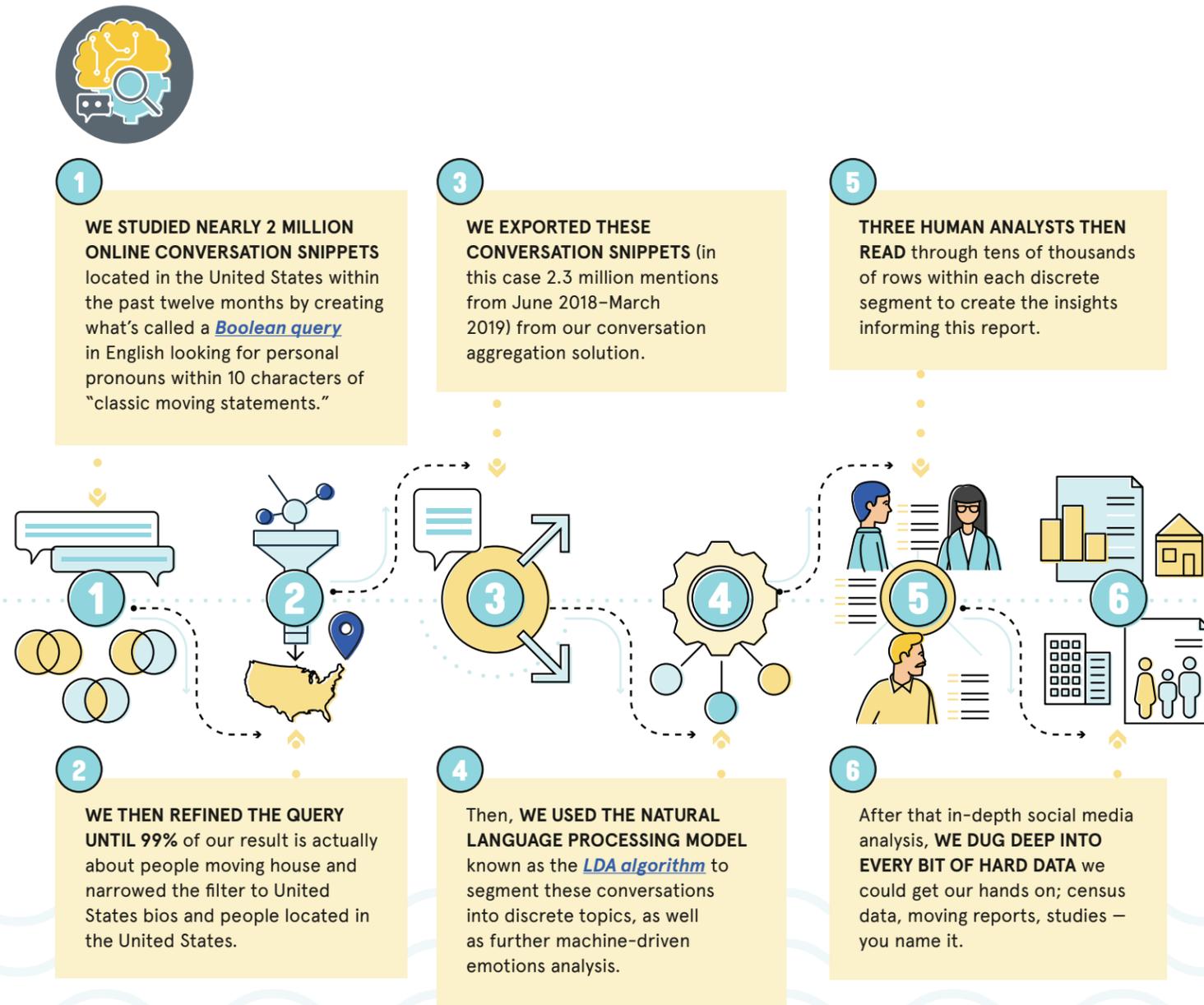
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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The United States is a nation built on movement. From the Pilgrims to Manifest Destiny to #vanlife, the country's citizens do not stay in one place for long. They move for new jobs or the chance at a fresh start. Some pursue love. Others are searching for their own slice of paradise – whether it's the woods, an island, or a big city.

Who are these vagabonds? And what drives them? To answer these questions, and to better solve the problems they face during the process, we conducted a study into not just where people are moving, but why they are moving and how they feel along the way.

Fusing together hard data and conversation analysis, we were able to discover some pretty fascinating things. For starters, people tend to move for one of four reasons:



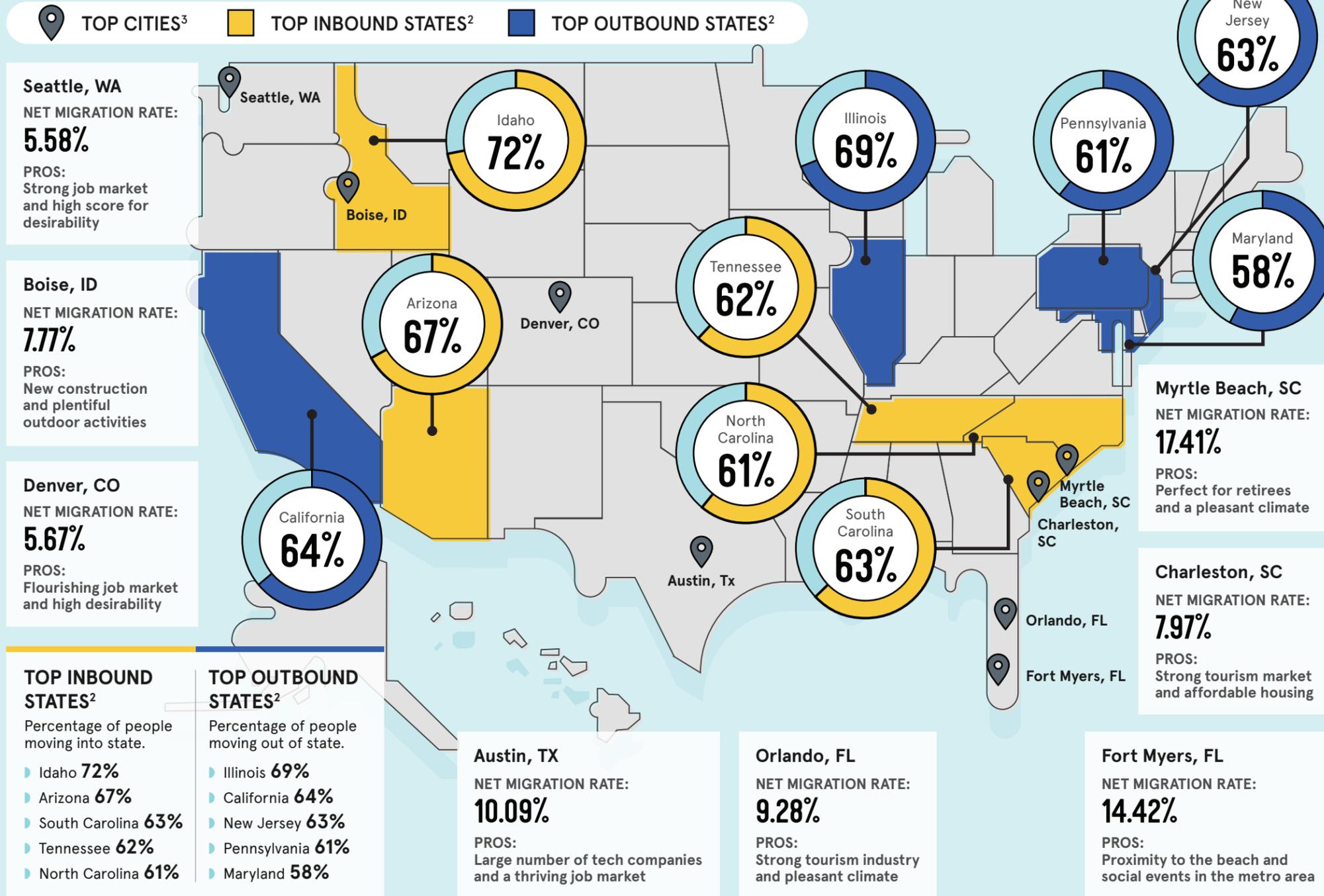
As with any study, a lot of the fun comes from insights we didn't expect. It was pretty amazing to watch these four factors collide and create unintended consequences, showing that nothing in life occurs in a vacuum. This was seen most

prominently in the migration patterns of those leaving their states due to the cost of living—and the reaction of the current residents of those states.

*For more details on how we built this study, check out the [Methodology](#) section in the [Appendix](#).

WHERE PEOPLE ARE MOVING & WHEN

Forbes Magazine, in a look at “American Migration,” cited that around 40 million Americans – roughly 14% of the entire population – move domestically each year.¹ According to the 2018 Migration Report, Idaho is the current leader in inbound moves.² Illinois is the current leader for outbound moves and has topped the outbound move list four times since 2014. The map below shows the highest inbound and outbound states, as well as some of the top cities people are moving to.³

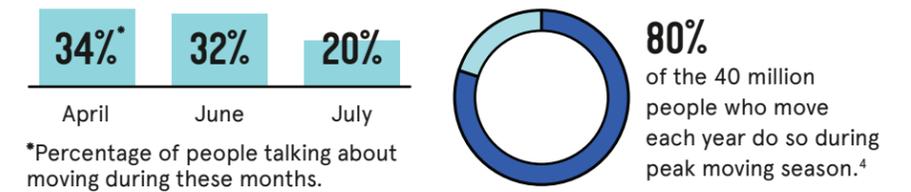


WHAT TIME OF YEAR ARE PEOPLE MOST LIKELY TO MOVE?

And how long does the process take?

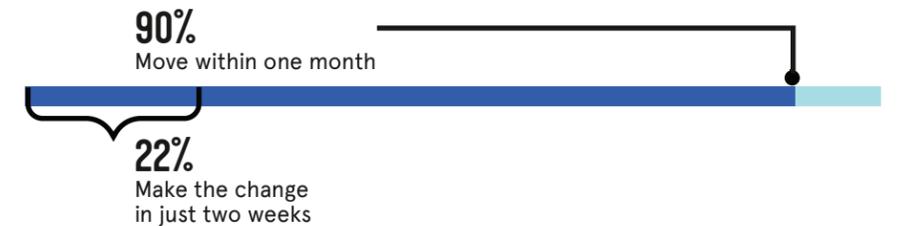
The peak moving season each year is from April to September.⁴

In our social media conversation analysis of the past 12 months, we found 87,933 conversations on Twitter specifically around when people move. We found the top three months to be:⁵

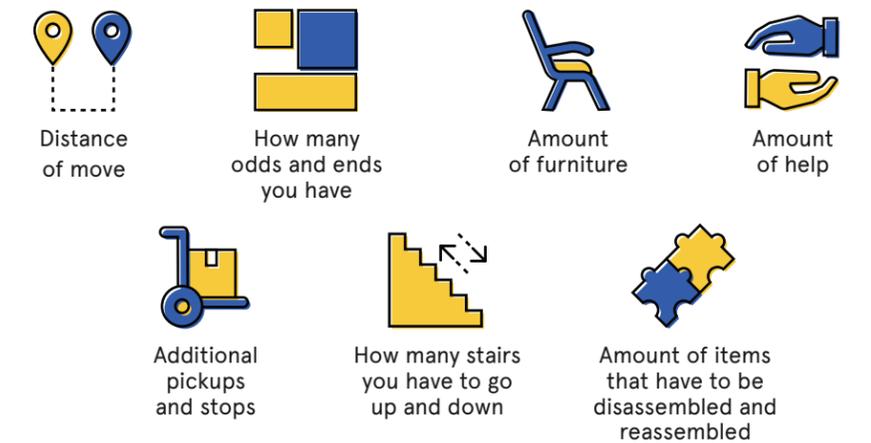


FROM DECISION TO ACTION – THE SPEED OF MOVING⁵

People tend to make this major life decision fairly quickly. From the social conversations we analyzed, we found that:



A number of factors impact how long it takes to complete the physical move itself, including:⁶



On Average, people complete their moves in the following time frames:⁷



LOCATION

People don't just consider their personal connections and professional opportunities when they move, but the location as well. What's the weather like? Is the landscape captivating? Does it inspire an agreeable lifestyle? These factors come together to define the location, one of the biggest reasons why people choose some places over others.

A QUICK LOOK

IN THE 2 MILLION SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATIONS WE ANALYZED:⁵



45,090 mentioned moving to Colorado, with 56% of them being female, making it the most mentioned state to move to



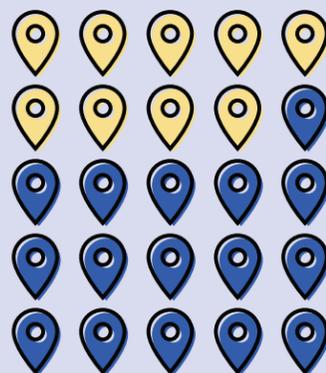
58,332 mentioned wanting to move to a warmer climate



3,422 of the 58,332 who mentioned moving to a warmer climate specifically named Florida as an ideal destination



Colorado ranks in the **TOP 10** healthiest states, thanks to its low obesity rates and its very active culture⁸



9 OUT OF 25 of *U.S. News & World Report's* best places to move are in Florida³



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS: DATA SET DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER

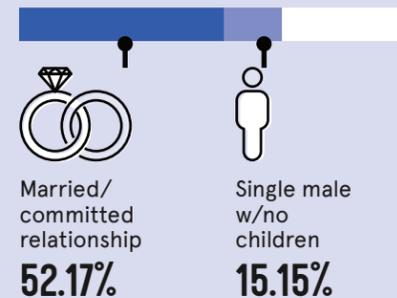


AVERAGE AGE
40

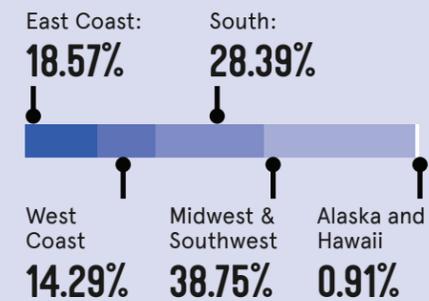


AVERAGE YEARS OF RESIDENCY
8.17

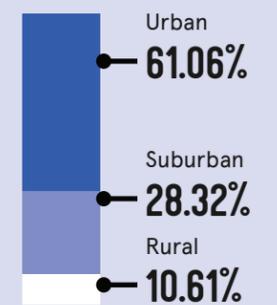
RELATIONSHIP & FAMILY STATUS (TOP TWO)



LOCATION



LOCATION TYPE



"7 years ago we sold our house and everything in it and moved into our boat with two kids in the Florida Keys. I don't regret the move. We live in paradise, and we are just fine. The kids go to a great school, we take trips and do things—just not as much as I'd hoped."
— Posted on Reddit



"Moving to Colorado was the best thing that could've happened to me."
— Posted on Twitter



"I built a house in the mountains during the winter with one other person. It took us six months. We set out on a road trip, but ended up engaged in this insane building project instead... All we wanted was a warm, dry place in the mountains."
— Posted on Reddit



MONEY

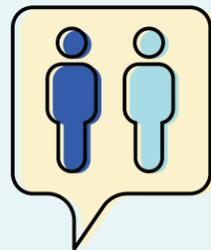
Whether pursuing that new job offer, looking to purchase an affordable home, or retiring somewhere with a lower cost of living, people move for financial reasons throughout their entire lives. With employment, investment, and retirement such huge aspects of modern life, it's not surprising that money so often dictates where people are heading, as well as why. It's not as romantic as following your heart, but sometimes you just need to follow the dollars and cents.

A QUICK LOOK

BASED ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATION ANALYSIS



27% mention "wallet" reasons as a motivating factor for moving from the coasts⁵



Average age of someone wanting to move for money reasons is **41.66** years old⁵



75% of those citing "wallet" reasons for moving are Democrats ([Learn more about this topic in the following section!](#))⁵

\$50K



The majority of these commenters earn more than \$50k a year

\$100K



and have a net worth of more than \$100k

\$500K



with homes worth more than \$500k⁵



2,660 mention differences in living space between locations on either Coast and the Midwest⁵



Those with household incomes above the median **\$50K** are more likely to move for job-related or other "wallet" reasons⁹



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS: DATA SET DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER

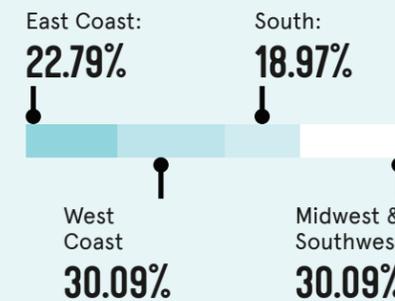


AVERAGE AGE **41.66**

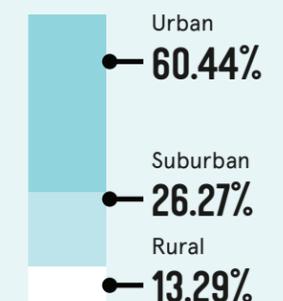
RELATIONSHIP & FAMILY STATUS (TOP TWO)



LOCATION



LOCATION TYPE



"Moved 1.5 years ago: my property taxes are 40% lower, the overall cost of living is lower, and my commute is 30 mins vs. 2 hours to NYC. One of the best decisions of my life. I gave myself a raise just by moving."

— Posted on Twitter



"I can only speak for NY since I live here but that's the reason why a lot of people are moving to Texas/Florida. Cost of living has skyrocketed in NY—dollar doesn't go as far for NY than it would in other states. Big issue for NY now. Mass exodus due to taxing/cost of living."

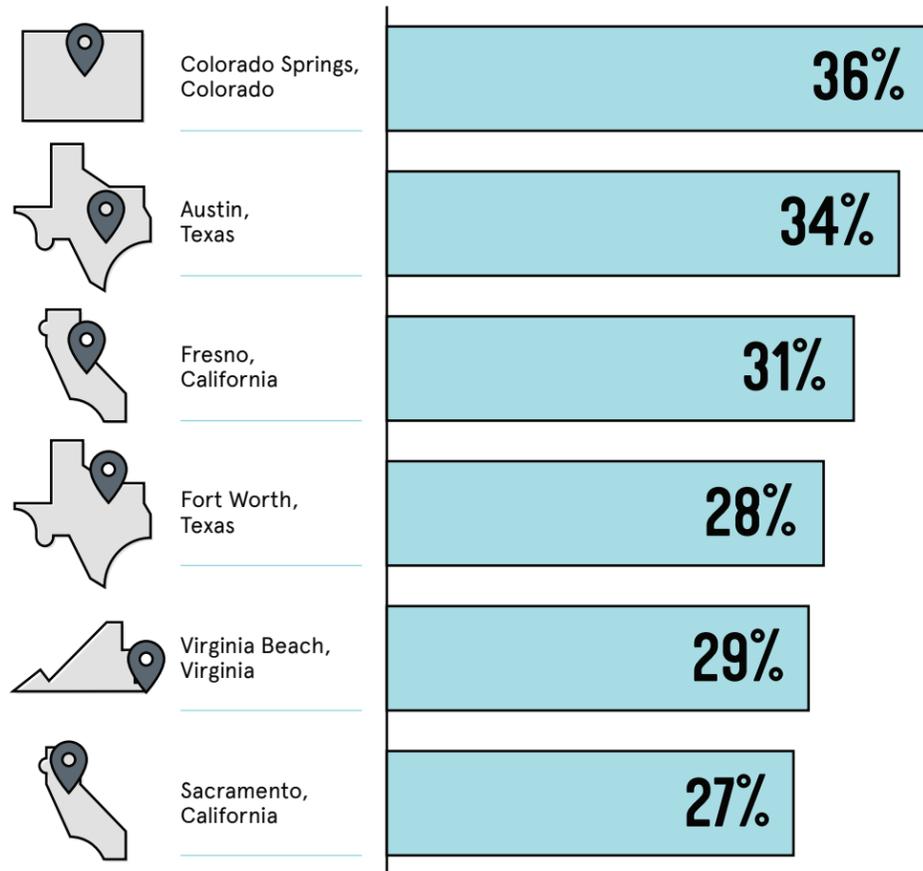
— Posted on Twitter



"Moving from New York to Florida saves much more than just taxes. The Cost Of Living and Quality Of Life is far superior in Florida! I personally made the move back in 1992. I have never looked back."

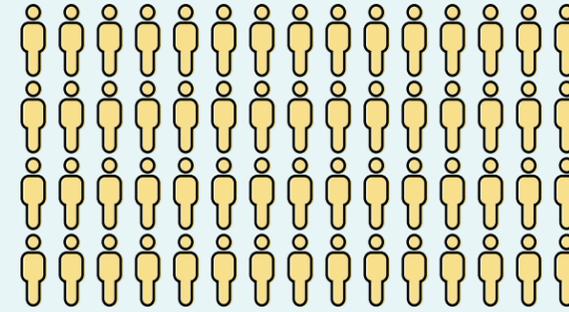
— Posted on Twitter

Unfortunately, moving for your wallet can sometimes bite you in the behind. **People who moved to these cities saw a corresponding increase in cost of living from 2017 to 2018:**¹⁰



60,000 people moved from California to Arizona last year

= 1000



CALIFORNIA'S MILLENNIAL POPULATION LOSS IS ARIZONA'S GAIN

We saw a noticeable trend of millennials moving en masse to Arizona, which makes sense when you see that Arizona is the number two inbound state in terms of population migration.²

The highest percentage of this migration is from nearby California¹¹ due to:¹²

- Cost of living
- Strict regulations on businesses
- High income tax

This is supported by Meyer's Research's *3rd Annual Millennial Study*¹³



Arizona was the second state listed on the Millennial Desirability Index (MDI), behind only Texas.

A study by Edelman Intelligence drives the point home further¹⁰



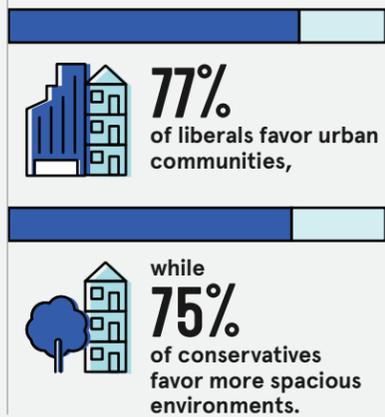
A majority of Californians **(55%)** are considering moving out of the state because of the high cost of living.



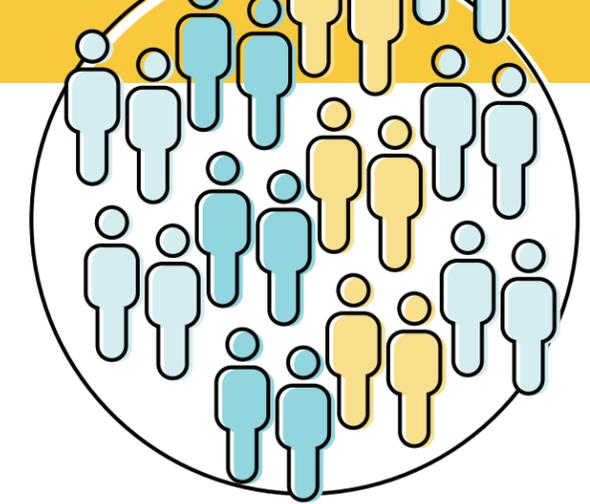
Millennials are even more likely to flee California – **63%** say they want to.

COMMUNITY

With politics defining not only a person's beliefs but often their lifestyle as well, trends have emerged in relation to where people choose to live. For instance, people with liberal beliefs are gravitating to urban centers, while people with conservative views tend to prefer the suburbs or rural areas.



At a time in our history with so much political divide, the added force of migration patterns is upping the tension.



TOP 5 INBOUND STATES

- 1 Idaho – Republican
- 2 Arizona – Republican
- 3 South Carolina – Republican
- 4 Tennessee – Republican
- 5 North Carolina – Republican

TOP 5 OUTBOUND STATES

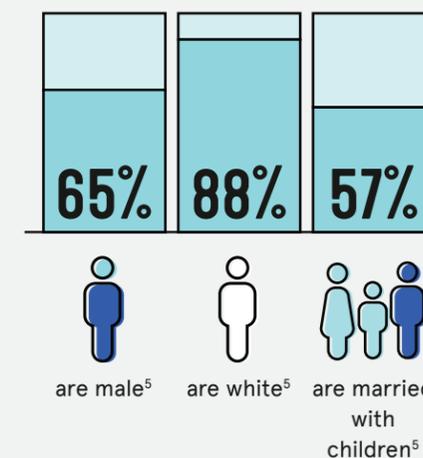
- 1 Illinois – Democrat
- 2 California – Democrat
- 3 New Jersey – Democrat
- 4 Pennsylvania – Republican
(first time since 1988 Republicans have won)
- 5 Maryland – Democrat

LET'S PUT IT TOGETHER

- 1 In analyzed social conversations, the overwhelming majority of people who cited cost of living as a reason for moving were Democrats.
- 2 Census data shows four of the five states with the highest outbound migration numbers are Democratic states – and the fifth was only *narrowly* won by Republicans – the first time in 28 years.
- 3 Both social conversation and hard data show people are predominantly moving to Republican states.
- 4 Census data shows ALL FIVE of the top inbound migration states are Republican.
- 5 Social conversation shows A LOT of grumbling and unhappiness over the influx of liberals in those Republican states.

A QUICK LOOK

BASED ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATION ANALYSIS:



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS: DATA SET DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER



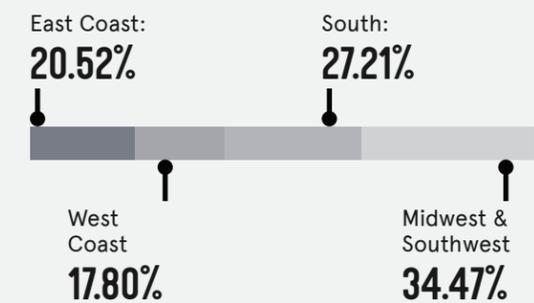
AVERAGE AGE



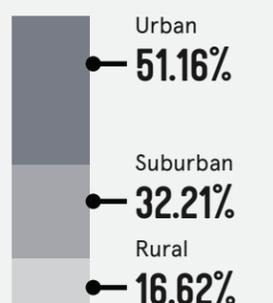
RELATIONSHIP & FAMILY STATUS (TOP TWO)



LOCATION



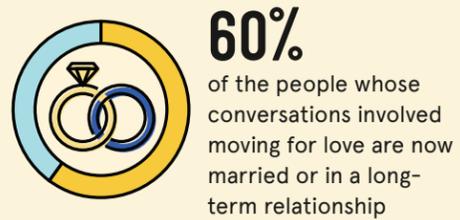
LOCATION TYPE



LOVE

Next time you walk down the street, take a look at the first five people you see. Chances are at least one of them has moved for love and there's also a good chance they would do it all over again.⁹ Perhaps even more surprising, there's a fairly good chance that person moved more than 500 miles to be with their significant other. Talk about moving for reasons of the heart!

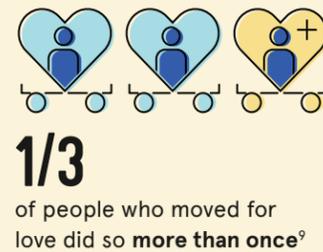
What's more interesting is that across multiple analysis routes, we found that moving for love has proven to be much more successful than not.



This is reinforced by *Homes.com's Moving for Love Survey*:



A QUICK LOOK



44% of those who move for love move 500 miles or more⁹



NEARLY 1 IN 5

Number of survey respondents who have moved for love, according to *Homes.com's 2017 Moving for Love Survey*.¹⁶



WOMEN

are more likely to move for love than men⁵



57% of people who move for love say they would do it again⁹



The majority of people who move for love rent an apartment, while

25%

are so confident in their choice, they skip renting and **buy a home in their new location**⁹



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS: DATA SET DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER

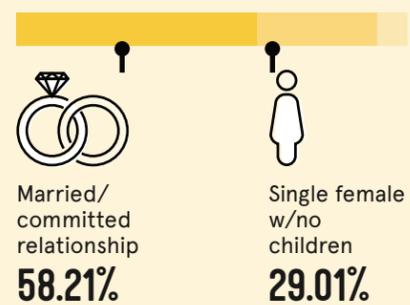


AVERAGE AGE
36.56

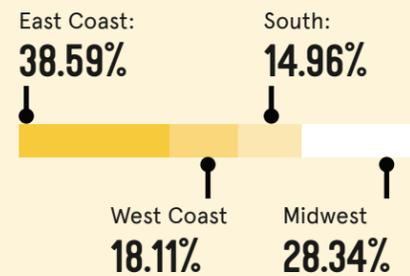


AVERAGE YEARS OF RESIDENCY
7.47

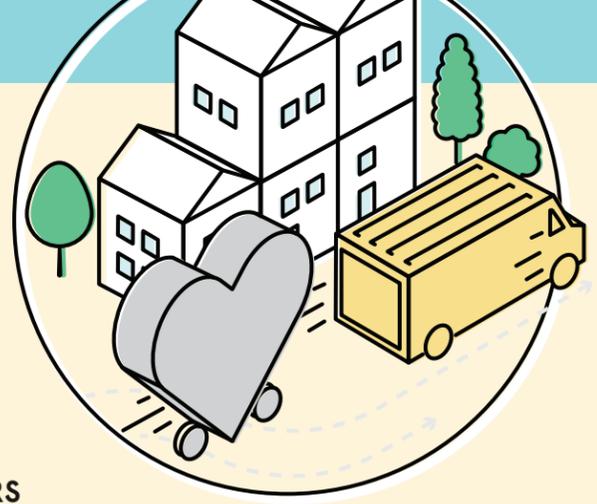
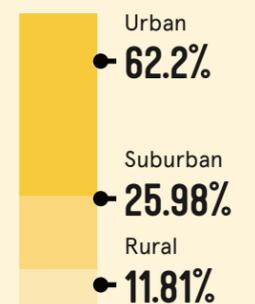
RELATIONSHIP & FAMILY STATUS (TOP TWO)



LOCATION



LOCATION TYPE



"Moved continents for someone I met online. Would recommend, A+, five stars, would move again,"
— Posted on Reddit



"I moved across the country from New York to Washington. My SO and I had been long distance for two years (we met online), and we had talked about who was going to move for a while...I really love living in Washington, and being able to live with my partner is amazing. I don't regret the move."
— Posted on Reddit



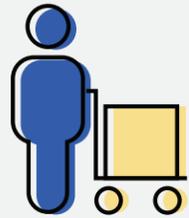
"I quit my job of 4.5 years and moved to another country to be with my LD boyfriend. At the time I was convinced it was the right thing to do, but I took a number of precautions regardless - getting a solid job offer before moving, savings, back-up plans. The relationship itself didn't work out (in a rather spectacular manner), but everything else did. The new country, new job, new house, new boyfriend are all improvements over the old stuff. I've been here for almost 3.5 years now, and it's great."
— Posted on Reddit



"When I was 22 in 2004, I moved across the country from the SF Bay Area to the Boston area. I had met a guy who was relocating in 2 months, and I decided to go with him on a total whim... we had some pretty major adjustments to make. But we still live in Boston, we've been married for over 11 years, we have a 9-year-old son, jobs we like and a robust group of friends... There are things we miss, and it certainly wasn't easy at first, but this was very much the right choice for me, and I'm grateful that I did it."
— Posted on Reddit

WAYS PEOPLE MOVE — DIY VS. HIRING A PRO

According to AMSA data, out of 3 million interstate moves, 650,000 people took advantage of professional moving services. One million of them rented a moving truck to make the move easier, while 1.35 million did a DIY move without the assistance of professional movers or a moving truck.¹⁷



“Professional movers offer high-quality services and quality comes at a price. The price, however, is not as high as it may seem and movers are not as expensive as you may think. In fact, hiring movers is worth every penny you spend.”

— Posted on mymovingreviews.com

DEFINITELY A PASSIONATELY DIVIDED ISSUE, THE COST OF MOVING IS A MAJOR CONCERN FOR PEOPLE, AS IS THE PERCEIVED VALUE AT TIMES:



“I have gotten quotes from moving companies (space in semis) anywhere from \$1100-1700 for the same inventory of my one bedroom apartment. I’ve asked so many questions trying to figure out hidden costs and to be best prepared for the day of the move, but I can’t find a single company I believe to be trustworthy so far.”

— Posted on Reddit



“The cost of the move is really dependent on how much weight you are moving. If you have a lot of weight it will cost more, if you don’t, it will cost less. With that in mind, though, the people I saw who have the most problems were those with moves under \$3000. Under \$3000 is extremely cheap for most moves.”

— Posted on Reddit



“Paying professional movers rather than relying on people you don’t know well is worth the money.”

— Posted on Twitter



“Paying movers sounds expensive and not worth it until you get to sit back while they do all the work 😊 but seriously, moving sucks so kudos to them.”

— Posted on Twitter

While people complain about cost, they are often happy with their decision:

SOURCES

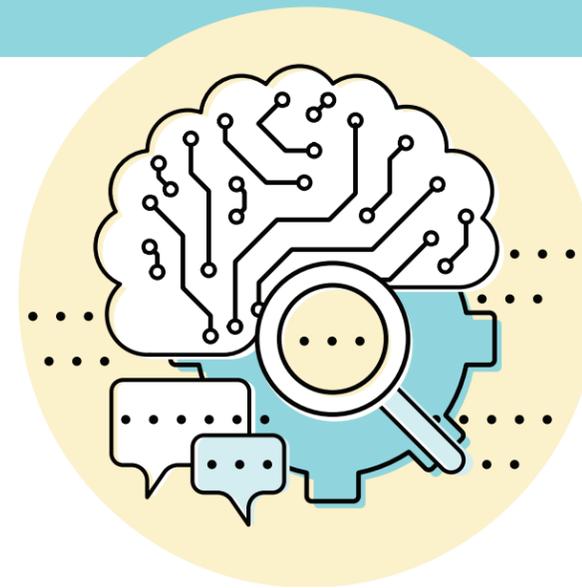
- forbes.com
- northamerican.com
- realestate.usnews.com
- help.movinglabor.com
- The State of Moving Conversation Analysis: Section Breakdown PDF
- apartmentguide.com
- mymovingreviews.com
- grandparkco.com
- livability.com
- cnbc.com
- kgun9.com
- aei.org
- azbigmedia.com
- washingtonpost.com
- sciencing.com
- homes.com
- moving.org

APPENDIX

OVERALL SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATION METHODOLOGY

We create a Boolean query in English looking for personal pronouns within 10 characters of “classic moving statements.” We find these “classic moving statements” by running multiple test queries so that we weed out other ways the word “moving,” “moved,” “move,” as well as other words used for moving house, are used in non-moving contexts. We refine the query until 99% of our result is actually about people moving house. We narrow the filter to United States bios and

people located in the United States. We then export these conversation snippets (in this case 2.3 million mentions from June 2018–March 2019) from our conversation aggregation solution. We then use the LDA algorithm to segment these conversations into discrete topics, as well as further machine-driven emotions analysis. Three human analysts then read through tens of thousands of rows within each discrete segment to create the insights informing this report.



METHODOLOGY FOR SPECIFIC SECTIONS

GOING WITH THE PROS

Collecting additional social media anecdotes and comments about moving companies is important because it allows us to construct a stronger narrative based on shared experience. This collection of shared experiences, in turn, will enable us to draw more comprehensive conclusions about how moving companies are perceived in a broader context, and what solutions can be taken to encourage positive outcomes and mitigate challenges.

In order to access relevant comments and content, we searched for comments about moving companies on both Twitter and Reddit. Twitter provides us with more immediacy and allows us to build a “snapshot” of the social media landscape. Our research on Twitter included, but was not limited to, surveying specific accounts related to moving (i.e., <https://twitter.com/themovingcost>), searching for specific hashtags (i.e., #moving, #relocation, #movingsucks, etc.), and reviewed tweets, likes and comments of various Twitter commentators both private and corporate (i.e., U-Haul).

Reddit allows us to map out the development of more profound discussions about a particular topic. As part of our search on Reddit, we used some of the following phrases, “Why did you move?,” “Do Your Regret Moving?” “How much does it cost to move?” etc. We also delved into a series of IAmA to uncover discussions about moving (i.e., https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/trzvi/i_am_a_professional_mover_ama_about_moving_tips/).

THE DIY APPROACH

Collecting additional social media anecdotes and comments about moving companies is important because we wanted to understand “the story about moving” that commentators are telling. Plotting out “the story of moving” being played out on social media lets us craft a business narrative that speaks to the issues and concerns of commentators and potential customers.

In order to access relevant comments and content, we searched for comments about DIY moving on both Twitter and Reddit. Twitter provides us with more immediacy and allows us to build a “snapshot” of the social media landscape. We ran queries on specific hashtags like #movinginjuries, #UhaulSucks, and #helpme move.

A sample of the search results we were able to pull from Twitter include:

- ▶ DIY Moving
▶ <https://twitter.com/search?q=diy%20moving&src=typd>
- ▶ Moving by Myself
▶ <https://twitter.com/search?q=moving%20by%20myself&src=typd>
- ▶ Moving Alone
▶ <https://twitter.com/search?q=%22moving%20alone%22&src=typd>

Reddit allows us to map out the development of more in-depth discussions about a particular topic. As part of our search on Reddit, we looked at SubReddits focused on lifehacks, how-tos, AskReddit, and IAmA.

A sampling of the Reddit threads we surveyed include:

- ▶ Hacks for Moving
▶ https://www.reddit.com/r/lifehacks/comments/1vp1rc/req_hacks_for_moving/
- ▶ How to Move Long Distance Cheaply
▶ https://www.reddit.com/r/howto/comments/4huyvl/how_to_move_long_distance_cheaply
- ▶ Moving Hacks?
▶ https://www.reddit.com/r/lifehacks/comments/2ycwh2/moving_hacks/
- ▶ What are Tips/Tricks for Making Moving Easier?
▶ https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/45fq71/reddit_what_are_tipstricks_for_making_moving/

We also included social media content from the truck rental companies, especially specific responses to customers, to add context and add depth to the story. This is important because we want to shed light on how truck rental companies interact with their customers so that we can tell a more vibrant story about what it is like to move using a rented truck vs. hiring a moving company.

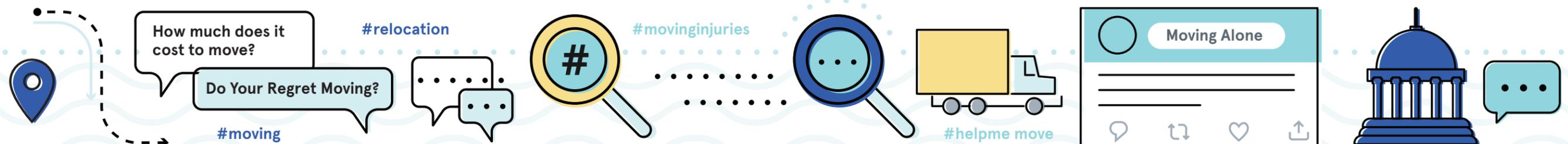
Some Twitter examples include:

- ▶ Twitter Search
▶ <https://twitter.com/search?f=images&q=uhaul&src=typd>
- ▶ Uhaul Interacting With a Customer
▶ <https://twitter.com/RachelMcK17/status/1121867903962427394>
- ▶ Another Sample of Twitter Moving Truck Comments
▶ <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23movingtruck&src=typd>

POLITICS IS PERSONAL

We researched social media commentary related to recent political news to drill down deep into the idea that people might take action and relocate based on political views. Assessing these social media comments is important because it provides context and establishes how much of an impact politics has on migration from an aspirational standpoint.

As part of our search, we used a series of terms using words associated with politics, including Trump, Bernie, Democrats, Republican, and Government.



A decorative pattern of light blue wavy lines runs horizontally across the bottom of the page, creating a water-like or oceanic effect.

BELLHOPS