

when employees were eager to move and cash out on their appreciating home values.

Forty-six percent of companies say recruiting employees is becoming more difficult as the housing market turns tepid, according to a 2006 survey by Prudential Relocation.

Three in 10 of those who turned down a relocation id so because of housing and mortgage concerns, according to a 2006 survey by Atlas World Group. That decision can come at a price: More than hald of companies that must move employees because of corporate growth or local talent shortages. At Petco's corporate headquarters in San Diego, candidates today want to know about relocating. The company is also doing more to supplement temporary housing costs for employees who are transferring.

"It's becoming more and more of an issue. They don't want to sell their homes at a loss," says Mardi Montague, director of talent acquisition at pet store Petco Animal Supplies. "It's (a) huge (cost) for us to supplement this for them, and savvy candidates are asking about (relocation benefits) on the front end. That hasn't been a questions before."

Montague says she has run into all sorts of unusual situations. She recalls that one relocating employee has had a home on the market for a year, she says, and another spent seven months in temporary housing while waiting for a property to sell, traveling back and forth between the temporary living quarters and home every three weeks.