



Let's look at America's numbers

I never cease to be amazed at the amount of misinformation that people have about the demographics of America. There are professionals that state that their customers move at an annual rate of less than 5%, because that's the percentage of their names that qualify for NCOA change of address.

The following is a compilation of the core demographic numbers. First is the basic makeup of the people of our society, followed by statistics about their mobility.

Total population: 301,621,000

Housing units: 127,901,934

Percent of total population:

Age less than 5	6.9%
Age less than 18	24.5%
Age over 65	12.6%
Female	50.7%
Male	49.3%
White	66.0%
Hispanic	14.0%
Black	12.8%
Foreign born	11.1%
Language other than English spoken at home	17.9%
High school graduates (% of people age 25+)	80.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher (% of age 25+)	24.4%
Persons with a disability, age 5+	16.5%
Homeowners	66.2%
Owners in single-unit residences	39.8%
Owners in multi-unit residences	26.4%

This is "new move" information, compiled for the years 2006-2007. During that period, 38,700,000 people moved. Of those, 25,200,000 of them stayed within the same county; 7,400,000 moved to a different county within the same state; 4,900,000 moved to a different state; and 1,200,000 moved into the US from abroad.

Of the people who moved within a county, almost half of them moved less than 50 miles from their previous address. Almost a quarter of the moves were more than 500 miles. The Northeast continues to have the lowest rate of moves at 9%, followed by the Midwest at 13%. The South experienced a 14% move rate and the West 15%. Note the significant difference between the Northeast and the West.

Why do people move? 42% of people moved so that they could own a home, or live in a better neighborhood; 30% moved for family issues; 21% moved because of employment. The remaining 7% moved for a wide variety of reasons. Among racial and ethnic groups, blacks had the highest move rate at 17%, followed by Hispanics (16%), Asians (15%) and non-Hispanic whites (12%).

Major cities are losing almost 2,000,000 people a year; with most of them moving to the suburbs. Almost all of the 1,200,000 people moving to the US from abroad settle in the major metropolitan areas - 52% into the major cities and 42% into the suburbs. Relatively few people are moving into rural areas.

The younger people are, the more likely they are to move. 27% of people ages 20-24 moved, as did 26% of those ages 25-29. People who are separated (or have an absent spouse), are twice as likely to move as people who are married and live with their spouse. 20% of renters moved, compared to 7% of people who lived in owner-occupied homes.

By examining these statistics you can readily identify potential markets. There are 54,000,000 people who speak a foreign language at home. That's a market of close to 20 million households. There is a plethora of products that appeal to these people, from foreign language publications to English language courses. Close to 50 million people have some kind of disability. There is a huge market of people over age 65, nearly 38 million people.

I hope this article both expands your thinking about new markets and products, and also clears up some closely held, but mistaken beliefs.

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