



Building global scale

The acquisition of Sterling Mobility has transformed Lexicon Relocation from a primarily US-based operator into a global player. *FIDI Focus* got the story behind the transition



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teamwork, innovation, trust, flexibility, finding smart ways to do business and caring for others,’ he says.

‘We’ve worked with Sterling Mobility over the years. It was owned by UniGroup, parent company of United Van Lines and Mayflower Van Lines, of which Suddath is the largest booker of US-domestic moving business. That made it a pretty straightforward deal to complete.’

From a service perspective, Burchell expects to see an expansion of destination service provider (DSP) management and immigration/compliance offerings. He also predicts fresh opportunities for business partners of Suddath Global Moving Services, adding: ‘Most of the partners we deal with see this as an opportunity for increased business in terms of Suddath’s accelerated organic growth in global moving services, and expanded DSP opportunities for those partners that offer this combined service capability.’

Ultimately, it’s the increasingly globalised and technology-driven marketplace that pushes deals such as this. As Burchell notes: ‘It is important that we expand our global footprint in a controlled and managed manner. We don’t think the single-ownership global networks are agile enough to compete in today’s very fluid marketplace. We needed to have regional centres, or hubs, that can manage our clients on a regional or global basis.’

‘We are seeing different types of policies driving relocations; different types of people taking assignments – and all under a geopolitical landscape that is moving at an ever faster pace. For me, the watchword for all service providers is agile. We constantly ask how can we be more agile to take advantage of these very fluid market conditions? The old adage that if you are standing still, you are, in fact, going backwards couldn’t be truer in today’s market.’

With that in mind, what comes next for Suddath Global Moving Services? Burchell says the immediate priorities are two-fold. ‘First, the busy summer period is upon us, and our number one focus is to continue to take great care of our clients and deliver the very best service value available in the market today.’

‘Second, we want to dedicate the right amount of time and energy to welcome our new Sterling colleagues into the company. It is a coming together of equals and we are looking forward to sharing best practices across the whole enterprise as we continue to grow our move management business.’

‘Mid- to long-term, who knows? But what is certain is that you should never say never in this business’ **FF**



Mark Burchell

For Mark Burchell, CCO of Lexicon Relocation and Suddath International, combining Lexicon and Sterling Mobility makes good sense as client needs evolve. He explains: ‘We had continued to recognise a trend with our corporate clients, many of whom were shrinking their mobility and human resources relocation service departments and, instead, looking to their partners, such as Lexicon Relocation, to do more. As our clients’ global needs were expanding, we needed to be able to support their growing business demands.’

‘Before the acquisition of Sterling, Lexicon had, primarily, been a US-based company, supporting US-based clients who were sending out or bringing back employees from overseas. We had offices in London and Shanghai, but, together, this only equated to about a dozen employees outside the US.’

Post-acquisition, the combined business has 15 regional offices and more than 1,500 supply chain partners, serving 180 countries across the world. It doubles the size of Lexicon from around 160 employees to more than 320, based in locations including London, Madrid, Paris, Geneva, Frankfurt, Cape Town, Singapore, Hong Kong and New Delhi, as well as the US. (*Editor’s note:* the purchase did not include any of the moving and storage operations in Asia; these remain with UniGroup).

Alongside their complementary geographies, Burchell points to cultural synergies that should help the acquisition bed in. ‘Both organisations have extremely similar cultures and standards for quality. We come from very similar core values of commitment,