

TAKE THE SUBWAY

By James Collins

When Kollsman was moving from New York to Merrimack, New Hampshire, the company had difficulty convincing the native New Yorkers to relocate. To them New Hampshire was the end of the world, the frontier, uncharted territory, a veritable no man's land.

Igor Popoff was a Polish American young adult who lived in Brooklyn. Unmarried, Igor still lived with his mother and had been with the company for approximately 15 years. He was recognized as an expert in the area of production control. The company needed that discipline desperately. Igor initially indicated that he was not willing to transfer to New Hampshire. He assumed that was the end of the matter. However, upper management decided that so few key people had accepted relocation that they had to put a full - court press on each of those individuals with unique disciplines that might be difficult to acquire in the New Hampshire area.

Management tasked a Director and two managers to convincing Igor, among others, to relocate. They brought Igor up to Nashua and placed him in a first-class hotel. They introduced Igor to real estate personnel who then took him to various housing developments and numerous apartment complexes to see which would be to his liking. Igor decided to take the apartment and relocate to the Nashua area. He figured it was time for him to go out on his own and he could always talk to his mother on the phone on a daily basis. It was better, in these hard times, to keep a job with people who respected and admired him. The alternative was to go out into the crushing job- limited economy that existed in those days.

To reinforce Igor's decision to relocate to the Nashua area. They decided that they would introduce him to members of the large Polish community that existed in Nashua. Mr. Popoff loved this and felt he fit in like a glove. The other New Yorkers who were committed to the move now became a new group of friends who began to interact more positively now that they were a common band of brothers.

Management and directors had daily meetings with the personnel relocating because they had specific problems with respect to banking, doctors, dentists, schools, and a panoply of need for both themselves and their families. Igor, because he was single and unmarried, did not have quite so many of the support requirements but still attended all the meetings.

Management reviewed the meetings and the comments raised and realize from one of the discussions that Igor did not have a car or a driver's license. They decided they would talk to him about this on a face-to-face basis. Since he was the only one who had this

unique set of problems, they set up a specific meaning for him with members of two driving schools in attendance. I was lucky enough to be a part of this meeting.

The Director of Engineering opened the conversation in a non-threatening manner. Igor wondered why he was the only one in attendance who was not a manager.

"Igor we are so proud of you, having made the decision to go out on your own and to come up with the company to help us succeed in New Hampshire. We arranged to pack all of your things and to have them moved by professional mover on the date you determine after you have signed the lease for the apartment. We know you now have a doctor and a dentist ,and three other Kollman personnel will be living in the same apartment complex, so you will have an immediate group of friends. It has been brought to my attention that you do not have a car and you do not have a driver's license."

"That's right, but nobody in my family has a driver's license and none of us own a car."

"Well this is New Hampshire and up here you will need a car to get around."

"I've never owned a car and I don't intend to get one now."

"How do you plan to get to work each day?"

"Well, I'll just go by subway."

"Where did you ever see a subway in Nashua, New Hampshire?"

"Well, I didn't see one on my corner but I figure it's only a block to the next station."

"Igor, there are no subways in New Hampshire. This is not Brooklyn."

"Oh my God, you mean there are no subways up here?" If that's true, I can't live here. I'm a Brooklyn boy and I have to use the subway to get all around the city. If they don't have a subway, I am not coming here."

To the best of my knowledge, Igor still lives in the center of Brooklyn. He probably does not have a car; never will have one. I know he was never planning to get a driver's license. He liked to follow the NYC Transit motto, 'leave the driving to us'.

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