

Hospitality Re-Defined

Concierges – The Ambassadors of Exceptional Guest Service

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Is there anything more fabulous than arriving at a hotel and looking across the lobby and spotting the concierge, or better yet, checking in on the exclusive club floor and finding yourself in concierge heaven? A great concierge is worth their weight in gold, and I have had the pleasure of working with some great concierges, but I have my favourites, it's just true. I think they know who they are but nonetheless I'll tell you who they are; Alison, Anita, Tracy, Matt, Rick and Stacey. I'm skipping the last names and locations because I don't know how they feel about being listed on my *greatest concierges of all time honour roll*, but I want them to know how much I think of them when they read this post, because they were my inspiration for this post.

Truth is, someone else also provided inspiration for this post as well – Cinderella. Yup, I said Cinderella, or more specifically, her “fairy godmother,” who clearly was, a concierge.

Think about it, who else is going to be able to hook you up with a ball gown, hair and make-up, the perfect shoes and a horse and carriage, with less than 24 hours notice? Clearly, the woman was a concierge, and like so many other concierges she had spent the time to get to know her city inside and out, and she had built relationships with the many business people in her community so that when the occasion called for it, she could reach out and find everything that Cinderella needed, and make it appear like magic, and, as so many concierges do, without it appearing to require any effort whatsoever. I'm telling you, the woman was a concierge.

I love watching the greats do their thing, and what I loved about all of the people on my *greatest concierges of all time honour roll* was the genuine joy and enthusiasm that they brought to their work, each and every day. These people really embodied what it means to be a concierge – there was no challenge too great, and no task so small as not to warrant their full effort and attention. If we could clone them, we would have the first hotel with a 100% satisfaction rating, and likely, the highest level of repeat guests, ever.

It's one of the many reasons that I have been a long time supporter of [Les Clefs d'Or](#) here in Canada, an International society of hotel concierges whose aim as an organization is to facilitate the exchange of ideas between their members and to provide mutual assistance in order to better serve our valued guests.

Members of [Les Clefs d'Or](#) are easily recognized by the gold keys that they wear. The golden keys worn by concierges signify their membership in [Les Clefs d'Or](#) and are granted exclusively to those who have not

only consistently demonstrated an unsurpassed knowledge of their respective communities, but by those who demand excellence of themselves when meeting the needs of their guests.

And while I respect that there are many ways to provide service, and that there are many stand-outs, regardless of the fact that they may not be concierges, what I love about the concierge position, as such, is that the position is solely and exclusively there to provide guest service. They are not there to check people in and out, or to otherwise be distracted from their mission – to provide individual, personalized and genuine guest service, and in so doing, to build guest loyalty – and do they ever build guest loyalty.

The stars that I referenced above, on my *greatest concierges of all time honour roll*, generated the highest volume of positive guest comment cards on an ongoing basis, and repeatedly, the theme was often the same – they had made such a positive impression on the guest that they simply could not imagine staying anywhere else ever again – gold, pure gold.

It will be interesting to see what the future holds for these ambassadors of exceptional guest service.

Certainly, the luxury hotels will continue to embrace the use of concierges as they look to stand out among their competitors, and arguably, those hotels should be generating a sufficiently robust ADR to offset the cost of providing this level of exclusive service, but what about the mid to upper level hotels, where we see concierges now, but where we are also seeing a steady migration toward technology and to “folding in” concierge duties into existing front office positions, assuming that bellmen and GSA’s can provide the same service as a concierge, while saving the cost of having dedicated concierges?

I guess we’ll have to wait and see, but I know, for me, and regardless of any additional star performers in a hotel, I will always be happy to walk into the front doors of a hotel, look across the lobby, and see the warm and inviting smile of the concierge, the ambassadors of exceptional guest service, as they look to ensure that each guests’ stay is truly exceptional.

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