



# The Office Building Link

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## At Your Service: Tips for Hiring A Concierge

The LINK sat down recently with Ms. Olga S. Pierce, president and founder, Concierge Unlimited International (CUI), one of the country's leading full-service concierge companies, to discuss what building owners and managers need to know before hiring a concierge service.

**The LINK:** How do you know the time is right for a concierge service?

**Olga Pierce:** When competition for tenants is high, such as in the current high vacancy market, management companies are focusing on tenant retention and seeking additional ways to attract new tenants. Property management firms must come up with more creative marketing plans as today's busy professionals demand and appreciate upgraded service-based amenities. Providing a professional concierge service gives a property a competitive edge, differentiating it from the competition by adding a visible first-image impression and an added service value.

**The LINK:** What are some of the pros and cons to hiring an outside concierge company versus hiring an in-house concierge?

**Pierce:** A credible, full-service concierge company can offer numerous advantages. At CUI, for example, we strictly adhere to an enforced code of ethics. All of our professional concierges act with the utmost integrity, accountability and professional competence. A full-service concierge company can also offer broader reach than an in-house concierge. For example, CUI operates internationally. We have 30 years of experience in helping our clients strengthen the value of their networking capabilities and intensifying their tenant retention and new business acquisition strategies.

Sometimes, budget becomes an issue with hiring a concierge service. Most reputable concierge services will work with clients up-front to identify their goals and objectives and match service levels to them – from a full-time physical concierge service, with the most marketing and tenant retention impact, to a variety of service levels that will meet the client's needs.

**The LINK:** What should building owners and managers ask of a prospective concierge service during the selection process?

**Pierce:** First, ask about their scope of service and their industry experience. Are they a member in good standing of any national or international concierge associations? How long have they been in business? Do they have the proven local, national and international resources to handle even the most difficult task? Find out what types of assignments the company has previously handled and if you can speak with references from individual and corporate clients. You'll want to look for a concierge service that has had significant experience in the corporate market as opposed to hotel or residential experience. Next, try to assess how the company is run. How efficient is the management of the staff? What kinds of support systems are in place? Here's where client testimonials and references will come into play. Finally, determine what kind of added-value contributions and strategic counsel the concierge service company can bring to the table. A credible concierge firm with extensive experience in the corporate market should be able to offer consultation on all operational aspects of the service based upon the needs of tenants, management and owners.

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### ARCHIVES

**The LINK:** How can a building owner or manager decide what type of concierge services to offer?

**Pierce:** It's primarily dependent on the size, occupancy, quality (Class A, B, or C) and compatibility of the property with each type of service. An on-site concierge – ideally located in the lobby of the building – offers additional value as an ambassador of the building, setting and reflecting the professional image of your corporate property. The physical presence of the concierge allows for greater recognition and visibility of this signature amenity, further enhancing your leasing, marketing and management teams.

**The LINK:** How can return on investment be evaluated?

**Pierce:** Look at tenant retention, tenant comfort, and marketing and leasing to prospective tenants. A quality concierge service can be a key factor influencing tenant decisions to renew a lease or move into a new space. For potential tenants, the concierge amenity is no longer an unknown commodity, but is now commonly requested and is the influential marketing factor in distinguishing the already prestigious image of a property. A concierge service that offers the resource and service scope to ease both business and personal demands leads to high productivity and increased job satisfaction, transforming each property into a “professional home.” As building owners and managers continue to enhance their tenant amenities and bring a higher level of service to all aspects of their tenant relations, they realize a greater level of tenant retention and satisfaction.

*Established in 1982, Concierge Unlimited International (CUI) is a WBE-certified firm specializing in a full range of private and corporate concierge services in all major U.S. cities and abroad. For more information on CUI's services, visit [www.conciergeunlimited.com](http://www.conciergeunlimited.com).*

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