

OFFICES

AT YOUR SERVICE

Corporate Concierge



Not too long ago, an office building that offered a small sundries vendor, an on-site deli, and a security guard was considered to be chock full of amenities. Today, of course, most office buildings are expected to have all of the above, plus a health club, an ATM machine, a FedEx drop, and interior landscaping that would make a botanist green with envy. Anything and everything to keep the tenants healthy and happy! And now the newest, and perhaps most valuable amenity to be offered is corporate concierge services.

No longer an exclusive feature of posh hotels, the corporate concierge desk can now be found in the lobbies of many Chicagoland office buildings. The concierge's mission is the same, however, to provide his or her clients, in this case the tenants of the building, with an extraordinary range of services, from the mundane to the seemingly impossible.

What is a concierge? The term itself originated from La Conciergerie, in Paris, France, where Marie Antoinette was imprisoned. While there, she entrusted her palace keys to a "concierge", who arranged to get her letters and messages in and out of the prison.

Today, like back in Paris, the concierge can make an otherwise difficult situation a piece of cake. Today's concierge provides professional expertise in a myriad of services, saving valuable time and meeting tight deadlines. Typical services include appropriate recommendations for dining, gift selection, and special events planning. Need last-minute tickets for a sold-out play? VIP treatment and upgrades for out-of-town visitors? How about hiring a private helicopter? No problem, just call downstairs to the concierge.

Actually, that's the easy stuff. What would you do if you had to arrange the following: A. Secure air and first-class hotel reservations on short notice to Bali and Australia during the holiday season, and arrange for visas with the Australian Consulate within 24 hours; B. Secure VIP tickets to the Tonight Show on one day's notice; C. Obtain a hotel, restaurants, visitors information, and entertainment for 50 international attorneys attending a weekend seminar; and D. Arrange for a photo safari in a private wild game preserve in the Napa Valley! If you had access to a corporate concierge, the answer to all of the above would simply

involve one phone call.

As is obvious, the corporate concierge is part travel agent, part meeting planner, part gopher, and part miracle-worker, with a smidge of diplomat, nanny, and professional shopper thrown in for good measure. And the best part of all this is that the cost of this resource to the tenant is merely the direct cost of the services or goods arranged by the concierge.

Building owners are recognizing that concierge services not only make their existing tenants quite happy (especially around lease renewal time), but can also provide another way to attract new tenants. So when you are next in the market for office space, you might consider adding concierge services to your list of building requirements.

That way, the next time you are faced with entertaining an unruly mob on short notice, you won't lose your head.

Unlike Marie Antoinette. ♦

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