



*We exist to serve others so they may better serve the world.*®

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### ***World-Class Service: What if every employee served like a concierge?***

Employees often feel constrained by their job titles. Doormen should mainly open doors, massage therapists should mainly give massage treatments, and room attendants should mainly clean rooms. This type of constraint can inhibit the potential creativity and zeal that employees experience in their jobs. I've held close to 20 different roles in the hospitality industry, ranging from busboy to corporate training director, but only one role truly allowed me to "break free". In the role, my job description was to move heaven and earth to delight every guest all the time. That role was as a concierge. I loved that job. Being a concierge was purely about anticipating, organizing, and delivering exceptional service. Even after I moved on to other roles, including my current one as a service

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consultant, I approach every customer with the same concierge mindset..."I will do whatever it takes to provide the best service you have ever received".

On a recent trip to Spain, I stayed at the Hotel Puente Romano in Marbella. My interactions with the lobby concierge were exceptionally positive, and I began to wonder, what would happen if every employee in a business developed that same concierge mindset. What if every employee served like a concierge and did not allow their service delivery to be constrained by their job title? If this becomes the case in your business, then here is what each employee, including yourself, needs to do consistently:

- Never say "no". Always give options and alternatives.
- Going above and beyond will be the minimum standard of performance for all customers.
- Feel empowered to create exceptional memories. This assumes that your leader trusts you enough to empower you, coach (not chastise) your efforts and give encouragement regularly.
- Coordinate and work with other departments to surprise and delight customers. It is difficult to go above and beyond by yourself.
- Always follow through on customer requests.

Special Note: If you are a senior leader, please ensure that every employee knows that their primary job is to serve customers. Each employee should know this from the very beginning during the recruitment and interview processes. Even if you are managing a grocery store, your employees who stock shelves should know that their primary role is to help the customer find everything they want and their secondary role is to stock shelves. That message MUST be communicated to all employees at all levels.

When I was a restaurant server, I enjoyed talking with my guests and learning about their preferences. One night I was listening to a vacationing couple tell me about their favorite types of foods. They happened to love fresh mangos. They also wanted to visit a few good local restaurants before their vacation ended. I immediately checked with the hotel kitchen staff to see if there were any fresh mangos in stock, and unfortunately they were all out. Before returning to work the next day, I empowered myself to stop at a local grocery store to pick up a few fresh mangos for the guests. When I got to work, I coordinated with the chef and a room service employee to make a special tray of freshly cut mangos for the guests. This tray was sent to the room via room service, along with a hand-written note from me. The note also contained a list of very good local restaurants. I then followed up with the concierge team, who sent a copy of the local restaurants' menus to the guest's room. The following day I contacted the guest to find out about their restaurant experience and to see if there was anything else I could do to make their stay a memorable one. I was not constrained by my job title. I was fortunate to work in an establishment where the senior leaders expected, encouraged, and rewarded such behavior.

This year, make it a point to encourage yourself and your team to break free. You are more than a job title, you are a service professional. It does not matter what industry you are in; as long as you have customers, you are in the service business. World-class concierges take great pride in orchestrating memorable service experiences for their guests. With a concierge mindset, every employee on your team will surely excel at engaging their customers everyday.

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