

Exploring a Career as a Concierge

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The role of Concierge can be part of most any sector within the hospitality industry. Hotels, theme parks, and restaurants all can contain a person performs the job's essential tasks, namely to "ensure that guests or customers have a pleasant experience as well as access to any information or service they might need." (Kurtz, n.d.) A concierge can go by other names: "Guest Experience Manager", "Guest Services Manager" and so on. No matter the title, the job is the same: work with guests and allow them to have a great time while eating, drinking, participating in, or sleeping in the establishment.

There is great need in this industry for people to fill this role. Guests are expecting more for their hard-earned dollar. This trend is happening for, as we would expect, high-end guests, but also for guests across all spending levels (Airguide Business, 2023). As every level of spending opens up for a concierge role, so too do the openings. Right now, within 25 miles of Orlando, FL, there are 83 job openings, according to [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com). With new hotels, resorts, and even a new theme park being added even now, there is a lot more opportunity right here to perform this role.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022), the estimated mean wage is around \$40,000. Our state of Florida has over 3,000 people in just that role, making our state number 3 in employment level. This number could be lower than the reality; the US bureau doesn't seem to consider those people in the "Guest Experience Manager" at the theme parks across our state. Florida seems to not pay their concierges well. New York, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Colorado, and Illinois all rank far above us in wages (we

are at 33-36K while the states mentioned are above \$42,000). Many of these roles are part time and hourly.

A concierge is a person who deals with guests, knows the resort or park very well, can manage a large number of tasks, and knows computer systems. Though they usually have a degree in hospitality of some sort, they do not usually start off with this role. Rather they work their way up to this role in the span of a few years, starting from any hotel or theme park front office and guest-facing role (Zippa, 2024). This role is usually in the middle of an employee's career path, the next steps being in some managerial role such as Team Leader. The employee seeking a concierge role should work her way through the various other positions and understand how to work those.

This role is what I want to do, despite seeing the average pay level. Working with guests is my primary passion. I am interested in helping them have the best guest experience possible in their time with my place of employment. Marjorie Silverman, as described in her obituary (Kates, J. G. 2015), is an inspiration. She looked for ways to improve upon the accessibility she could be to the guests at her hotel. She devoted her life to this role despite its low-paying status and achieved great things with her time.

While I am interested in doing great things, I also want to reach guests better and more thoroughly. I have a teaching and software development background, and I have served people in church, summer camp, in schools, and everywhere else I can be of service. So this role would be perfect for me.

Indeed, I can see myself being part of a change in how the whole role happens. While guests expect more service, they also expect pitch-perfect service. Often there's a disconnect between what is needed and what is delivered. Technology can help reconnect the two sides. A recent study found that well-balanced use of technology increases the pleasant experience for the guests (Forman, et al) . The authors of the paper didn't note this, but I assume the employees also had a better experience. So I can help with this; I can find ways to bring technology to help other concierges better and more accurately meet their guests needs.

Whatever I do in this area, I want to stay with the guests. Technology can give me a good footing, but I will keep focus on those for whom I am making their experience happy. I have had good practice at it as a teacher and servant in other areas. I get to do this at a small scale every shift I work at Walt Disney World. Though the pay is lower than I would like, I hope to be in a more formal role within the next few years.

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