

# **Concierge Nightmare**

## Case Study Narrative

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## **Case Narrative**

### **Concierge Nightmare**

The Ritz-Carlton Resort at Bachelor's Gulch is settled in a mountain valley exclusive to guests and very few property owners. There are eleven floors in the resort, but the greatest of all floors is the eighth. This floor is reserved for club-level guests. Accessibility is via elevator key only. Very few traditional rooms are on the eighth floor; most rooms are suites, with only one presidential suite. Five daily culinary and beverage presentations are served, including continental breakfast, lunch, mid-day snack, hors d'oeuvres, desserts and cordials. An open bar is available with aged scotch, whiskey, red wine, white wine, and varieties of beer. The club-level lounge includes the highest level of attention and dedicated concierge service. It also includes a fireplace, a panoramic view of the Rocky Mountains, and executive business services. A club-level guest receives special attention from other hotel guests. From the front drive of the hotel the guest is personally escorted by the resorts head bellman. Check-in is made personal by a warm welcome to the eighth floor by the concierge specialists. The guest is presented with a personal itinerary describing personalized transportation, requested dinner arrangements, and any other activity desired throughout the stay. Club-level guests are then escorted to their rooms with an explanation of all the accessories available to them throughout their stay.

Being a club-level concierge is an honorable position in the hospitality industry. The interaction between the concierge and the guest is a personal experience. An expectation of a Club-Level concierge is to meet and exceed the expressed and unexpressed needs and desire of the guests. The majority of the guests include doctors, lawyers, writers, politicians, professional athletes, and business executives. The club-level is designed to be completely separate from the hotel and is known to be a "hotel within a hotel." The food is extremely extravagant and the environment is social.

The club-level team of concierges consists of eight of the hotels best personalized servers. Duties and skills include personalized check-ins, billing expertise, dining expertise, problem-solving skills for unpredictable circumstances, and creativity to meet

the needs of guests. The team of concierges communicates with daily meetings called "line-up". During line-up the concierges discuss current guests, arriving guests, departing guests, logistics information, and company goals. The concierges are also connected to a radio system so all employees in guest relation positions can communicate with one another. After every evening one of the two concierges on the floor would write a nightly recap of the happenings of that evening and would also relay all expected duties for the concierges the following day. Team coherence is crucial because a lack of communication between concierges can lead to a disastrous stay for guest paying anywhere from \$1,000, \$2,000, and sometimes up to \$3,000 a night.

From the first week of Tom's concierge position, he was completely impressed with the guests he was serving. The first week Tom started as a club-level concierge he was introduced and assigned to serve a family of a top Fortune 500 CEO. The family embraced Tom and Tom sought out anything the family needed. After the week's end Tom felt confident in his position. Tom's guest list after several weeks of work included politicians, actors, CEO's, professional athletes, and many other respectable guests with outstanding resumes.

"Front Drive to club-level?" said Steve, the head bellman.

"Go ahead to the front drive," replied Tom.

"We have the Thomas family here to check-in."

"10-4. Notify the Thomas family that their presidential suite is ready, also tell Mr. Thomas that his four other rooms for his family are ready too," said Tom.

Tom greeted the Thomas family with a warm greeting. The Thomas family is staying on the club-level for their third consecutive year. This year they have five rooms in total, the presidential suite, and four other suites. The reservation is made for 8 days, and 7 nights. The cost of the presidential suite is over \$2,000 a night, and the other suites

cost nearly \$1,800 a night. The Thomas family is expected to pay nearly \$70,000 in room costs throughout their stay. Tom escorted all the members of the Thomas party to their individual rooms, and it went smooth. Tom did make a note that several members of the Thomas party were in their mid 20's. Tom enjoyed guests in this age range, not only because he found them much easier to please, but also because he enjoyed talking to them.

The team of concierges met before the afternoon shift and discussed the regular duties of the day. Tom made mention of the Thomas family and other concierges made no real sign of interest in serving them. Tom decided then that he would personally see that the Thomas family would always remember the Ritz-Carlton experience. Tom made personal relationships with the Thomas's and they turned to Tom for their needs. Tom arranged a special dinner at the most exclusive restaurant in the mountain valley. That night, the club-level lounge was a bit slow because guests had made reservations at local restaurants. Tom was serving the young Thomas party drinks and having a great time with them. They loved Tom and he enjoyed working with them.

As Tom went about his business that night, he noticed that the party had walked out to the balcony. Tom noticed a cigarette of some sort being passed between members of the group. Tom knew the entire complex was a non-smoking facility and the guests learned at check-in that the resort was non-smoking. In fact, all guests sign an agreement not to smoke. Smoking is illegal in the entire forest surrounding the hotel, due to history with wildfires. Tom knew all this but struggled with telling the Thomas group about the policy. As Tom walked impatiently across the lounge he worried other guests would be concerned, but he waited it out and let the Thomas party finish their session. When the Thomas party came inside Tom noticed the smell of marijuana. Tom was now worried because this was a bit deeper. Tom knew that it was company policy to notify the manager and confront the guests; however, Tom decided not to say anything to the Thomas party. Tom finished the night by writing the nightly recap, he didn't make mention of the smoking incident, but he did tell his boss Victoria he needed to meet with her.

The following morning Tom sent an e-mail to Victoria explaining the sticky situation. In the e-mail, he asked Victoria for direction on the actions he should take. Victoria responded promptly, telling Tom to do nothing. The Thomas' business is important to Ritz-Carlton.

What should Tom do?

Exhibit 1



Deborah Whitiker  
Regional Director  
United States Forest Service  
310 Piney Road  
Avon, CO 81620

Victoria Smith  
Manager  
Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch  
420 Snowy Timber Lane  
Avon, CO 81620

Ms. Smith:

As you know, the United States forest service is charged with the maintenance and preservation of America's most beautiful wilderness areas. In order to fulfill this mandate, the forest service has adopted strict policies regarding the use of open fires and the practice of smoking within the areas under our watch care.

As ever, the Forest Service is grateful for the partnership we have established with Ritz-Carlton Bachelor's Gulch in your efforts to educate guests at your facilities and enforce policies supporting these protective measures. Your success in this endeavor and prominence in your business have made you the leaders in the hospitality industry that our workers have come to respect.

As we approach this holiday season, we wish to remind your hotel of some of the precautions we are taking. Federal law prohibits smoking by any guest at your establishment. This law is enforceable by a fine of not more than \$5,000, and imprisonment for no longer than 6 months, or both. Additionally, your hotel may be fined up to \$10,000 dollars for each occurrence.

Thank you again for your cooperation as we work together to preserve our nation's natural beauty.

Deborah Whitiker  
Regional Director  
United States Forest Service

## Exhibit 2

To...VictoriaManager@yahoo.com

Cc...

Subject: Customer compliance issue

Hello, Victoria:

Last night I saw one of our young customers smoking marijuana on the balcony of their suite. I didn't say anything to the family and I want your opinion on the issue. The issue is with the Thomas family, some of our best guests. They stay here every year on the 8th floor. They generate a great deal of income for us, so I was hesitant to say anything to them. I know it is against company policy and against the law to smoke marijuana. They are very good customers and we don't want to lose their business, so I decided it was best to wait and ask you what to do. Please tell me the proper course of action dealing with their noncompliance to policy.

Thanks,

Tom Baker

To...TomBaker@yahoo.com

Cc...

Subject: Re:Customer compliance issue

Hello, Tom:

I understand your concern. Although the guests violated company policy, it doesn't affect anyone else. In the future, when you see something like that happen, I wouldn't worry too much about it. We wouldn't want to lose such great customers.

Thanks,

Victoria Smith

Exhibit 3



**NON-SMOKING RULE:**

We do not accept smoking in the building or on the resort's property at any time. Nor do we allow any member of the guest's party to smoke in or around the premises. **Note: Smoking is not only prohibited by Ritz-Carlton, but it is a crime to smoke in this federally-protected forest.** Non-compliance to this rule could result in heavy fines and/or jail time. You will also be held liable to Ritz-Carlton for any damage done to the resort's property due to smoking. The damages assessed will be charged to the guest's credit card, from which information was given at the beginning of the guest's stay. You hereby agree not to violate this non-smoking rule. If you do violate this rule, you do hereby agree to be held liable for any damages resulting.

I have read this rental agreement and do hereby agree to all the terms and conditions herein stated. All members of my party also understand the terms and conditions herein stated. If any member of my party violates these terms and conditions, I understand that I will be held liable for their actions.

Please print name Jason Thomas

Please sign your name Jason Thomas Date June 30, 2008



Exhibit 4

**RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDEMENT OF THE RITZ CARLTON EMPLOYEE MANUAL**

(Please read the following statements, sign below, and return to the personnel manager.)

**Understanding and acknowledging receipt of The Ritz Carlton Employee Manual**

I have received and have been given an opportunity to read a copy of the Ritz Carlton Employee Manual, and I understand that it is my obligation to be aware of the policies contained within. I understand that the policies and benefits described in it are subject to change. I understand and agree that nothing in the Employee Manual is intended to serve as any form of contract with regard to my employment.

**DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY**

It is the intention of The Ritz Carlton to help provide a safe and drug-free work environment for our clients and our employees.

The Company plainly prohibits:

- The use or possession of narcotics or other illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription medication without a prescription on Company or customer premises.
- If the employee comes on Company premises impaired or under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, The Ritz Carlton holds the right to terminate employment on the spot.
- The presence of any detectable amount of prohibited substances possessed by a customer must be reported and dealt with appropriately. The Ritz Carlton does not permit the use or possession of illegal substances on the premises. If this is the case for a customer they will be asked to leave and will be reported to the proper authorities. "Prohibited substances" include illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs not taken in accordance with a prescription given to the customer.

I have read, understand, and will comply with the statements written above.

Tom Baker

Employee's Signature

January 7, 2008

Date

Victoria Smith

Manager's Signature

01/07/08

Date

Exhibit 5

**Thomas Bill**

**Room Rates**

Normal Suites	\$1,800.00
1 Presidential Suite	\$2,000.00
1 Suite for 7 nights	\$12,600.00
4 Normal Suites for 7 nights	\$50,400.00
1 Presidential Suite for 7 nights	\$14,000.00
total Suite price for 7 nights	\$64,400.00

**Parking**

\$35 for valet parking fee per day	\$35.00
7 night parking fee	\$245.00
Parking 7 nights for 3 cars	\$735.00

**Dining**

Continental Breakfast	
per meal	\$55.00
for total party	\$1,650.00
for 7 nights	\$11,550.00
Restaurant Lunch	
per meal	\$75.00
for total party	\$2,250.00
for 7 nights	\$15,750.00
Restaurant Dinners	
per meal	\$100.00
for total party	\$3,000.00
for 7 nights	\$21,000.00

### Spa

The mountain wellness package	\$575.00
for 10 people	\$5,750.00

The Romance Package	\$560.00
for 2 couples	\$1,120.00

### Fitness Center

Group snowshoe adventure	\$452.00
for 30 people	\$13,560.00

### Golf

Swing into Summer Golf Vacation	\$295
for 10 people	\$2,950

### Ski

Lift Ticket	\$92.00
for 2 nights	\$184.00
for 10 people	\$1,840.00

Total overall cost for the week	\$138,655.00
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Approximate cost for twice a year	\$277,310.00
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Approximate cost for 3 years (twice a year)	\$831,930.00
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