



The Golden Concierge!

Over the past few weeks, I have written extensively on hotel housekeepers, their importance to guests' comfort and how the Hotel Industry is experiencing serious staff shortages. Today, I'm turning to another category of employees that is essential to your comfort: CONCIERGES.

The concierges

Over 6,400 hotel concierges are currently employed in the United States¹.

- 60% are women (interestingly, in Europe, most of them are men)
- 48 years old on average
- Caucasian (53%), Hispanic or Latino (21%), African American (12%), Asian (8%)
- Most common foreign languages spoken: Spanish (41%), French (12%), Portuguese (9!!!!).

¹ <https://www.zippia.com/hotel-concierge-jobs/demographics/>

- 58% hold a Bachelors' degree
- Average earnings: \$44,803 for males, \$40,815 for females!

The origin of the word concierge

The latin root for concierges is 'conservus' or 'slave peer'. However, according to *Les Clefs d'Or* (more on this later) the word concierge would come from 'le comte des cierges' (or guardian of candles), the individual responsible for responding to the whims of aristocrats visiting friends or family in castles².

Tasks of hotel concierges

Hotel concierges are responsible for receiving guests and responding to their needs. A good hotel concierge will act as the friendly face of the business and is often the first point of contact³.

Some of the tasks that concierges do include arranging taxis for guests; providing information and recommendations on local features, attractions, shopping, restaurants, dining, entertainment, nightlife, and recreation; managing reservations for hotel facilities, etc. A concierge may also need to obtain tickets for events, run errands to assist guests, make reservations for guests, arrange tours and activities, etc.

Les Clefs d'Or

The concierges' elite are members of a select not-for-profit organisation called 'Les Clefs d'Or' (the golden keys). Founded in France in 1952 (with roots dating back to 1929), les Clefs d'Or is based on two pillars: service and friendship. Before earning the right to wear the golden keys, those that aspire to become a member must have several years of experience as a hotel concierge, pass comprehensive testing and prove, beyond doubt, their ability to deliver the highest quality of service⁴.

Nowadays, Les Clefs d'Or has over 4000 members working in more than 80 countries and 530 destinations, in literally every corner of the world⁵.

² <https://advice.hosco.com/fr/concierges-de-legende-ouvrir-les-portes-des-clefs-dor/>

³ <https://www.revfine.com/hotel-concierge/>

⁴ [About | Les Clefs d'Or \(lesclefsdor.org\)](https://www.lesclefsdor.org/)

⁵ <https://www.lesclefsdor.org/about/>



Alain Ethier, Concierge Clefs d'Or with Sofitel Montréal Le Carré Doré said : *When we are a Member of Les Clefs d'Or, we are recognized by our guests as a professional and an expert who is always trying to provide exceptional service. We attend monthly meetings where local providers present their products, services or events. We gain insider connections with these providers and many others in the city, always expanding our network of contacts for the benefit of our clients. We get to attend annual National, Panamerican and/or International Congresses where we get to listen to guest speakers who are experts in customer service, tourism, hotel business and more. We receive specific training, tailor made for the profession of concierge. For example, I attended a very instructive congress in Istanbul last March where I met 500 concierges from all parts of the world, and one of the speakers was Hermann Elger, CEO of Forbes Travel Guide, how cool is that? My colleague, Claude, is currently on his way to Las Vegas for a National Congress, thanks to the great support we receive from we receive from the Sofitel Montréal management.*

Fun facts about hotel concierges

Some of the requests made by VIP Hotel Guests to concierges are outrageous. For instance:

- to fly away in a private jet to a Paris 5-star Michelin restaurant
- to be flown by helicopter to a chartered luxury yacht for a day trip to Catalina Island with a private tour guide
- to have a private magic show in one's suite with David Copperfield
- If you want tickets for the opening show of the summer Olympics or for the Super Bowl, on the event's eve, just ask your clef d'or concierge. He will be able to find some, thanks to his organization's network, but at what price!!

- *One time, a foreign diplomat stayed one night at our hotel, he was on his way to New York City to give a speech at the United Nations the next morning. He had forgotten his passport at his previous hotel in Toronto and needed it to fly to NYC. A major courier company (Fedex) had promised to rush the passport to the hotel but it never arrived. The diplomat's flight was at 7:30 in the morning. The good news was that the Fedex warehouse is right next to the airport and that they opened at 6:00 am! So, I drove to the warehouse at a quarter to six, convinced the manager to help me look for the envelope in the huge warehouse (Talk about a needle in a haystack!), luckily, it was on top of the first bin we checked! I signed the release, drove to the terminal, double parked, and ran in just in time to meet the diplomat's assistant and hand over the passport, said Mr Ethier.*

Electronic tipping

Like other hotel workers, concierges depend on tips to increase their earnings. However, while guests used to carry cash around, this is less and less true. As a result, concierges have seen their tips decline.

If hotels want to keep their staff and offer clients the opportunity to show their appreciation then it only makes sense to implement an electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go**, which is easy to use and raises tips by up to 30%.

Francis Léonard, CEO

