Service quality in convention management: What is the value of the meeting concierge?

Kelly Virginia Phelan

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds

Repository Citation

https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds/1969

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Retrospective Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.
SERVICE QUALITY IN CONVENTION MANAGEMENT: WHAT IS THE VALUE
OF THE MEETING CONCIERGE?

by

Kelly Virginia Phelan

Bachelor of Arts
Johns Hopkins University
2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Science in Hotel Administration
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 2006

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI Microform 1436782
Copyright 2006 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Thesis Approval
The Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

APRIL 3, 2006

The Thesis prepared by

KELLY VIRGINIA PHELAN

Entitled

SERVICE QUALITY IN CONVENTION MANAGEMENT: WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE
MEETING CONCIERGE?

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HOTEL ADMINISTRATION

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

Examination Committee Member

Examination Committee Member

Graduate College Faculty Representative

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
ABSTRACT

Service Quality in Convention Management: What is the Value of the Meeting Concierge?

by

Kelly Virginia Phelan

Dr. Curtis Love, Examination Committee Chair
Assistant Professor of Hotel Management
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The meetings and convention market represents one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry. Due to increased convention business and growing competition, an emphasis on service quality within convention services has recently become more pronounced. However, little research regarding convention services or the quality of service provided has been undertaken to illustrate or investigate this growing trend.

In the early 1990s the position of meeting concierge was created as a way of increasing customer service quality for corporate meeting planners. This position was intended to provide additional personalized assistance to meeting planners while on-site since convention service managers are not always easily accessible. Over the past ten to fifteen years the meeting concierge position has grown exponentially in scope of job description and frequency. Many high-end luxury hotels and resorts such as the Ritz Carlton and Hyatt are using this position extensively throughout their properties as a
method of demonstrating their commitment to a high level of customer service to their convention clients.

Due to the limited literature about convention services and the meeting concierge in particular, this empirical study is designed to provide new data regarding the convention industry. At present the majority of literature on the subject has been overwhelmingly anecdotal or through trade press sources.

This study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigating the value of the meeting concierge with regards to quality of service provided by convention managers. Two self-administered surveys were designed and distributed via email to members of the Professional Convention Management Association. Both convention service managers and corporate meeting planners were the target demographic for the surveys. Convention service managers were questioned about the value of having a meeting concierge on staff, while corporate meeting planners were asked about whether they believed they received better service when there was a meeting concierge available. Data obtained in the surveys were used to analyze the importance of specific attributes simultaneously. The advantage of questions posed to respondents was that it generated data upon which convention service departments could do a self assessment of their service delivery and customer satisfaction as well as have a basis for considering their competition. The perceived value and level of overall performance of convention service staff were the primary focus of the study.

The significance of this study was to demonstrate to convention service directors the importance of the meeting concierge. As of yet, there has been no hard evidence to suggest whether or not employing a meeting concierge is worth the cost for convention
service departments. The data collected in this research project helped to quantify the impact the meeting concierge position has on convention clients. This new found information will aid convention service directors in determining their staffing needs and whether it is advantageous for them to include a meeting concierge position on their team.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT..........................................................................................................................................iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS............................................................................................................viii

CHAPTER 1  INTRODUCTION.....................................................................................................1
Research Question................................................................. 2
Rationale............................................................................................................. 2
Research Implications...................................................................................... 4
Definition of Key Terms..................................................................................... 4

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW ..................................................................................... 6
Meeting Concierge...........................................................................................................................6
Convention Service Quality..........................................................................................................7
The Impact on Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry................................. 9
Gaps in the Literature................................................................................................. 12

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.................................................................................................13
Data Collection................................................................................................................ 13
Participant Selection............................................................................................. 14
Survey and Interview Questions........................................................................ 15
Validity and Reliability Issues........................................................................ 16
Research Hypothesis............................................................................................. 17
Variables................................................................................................................. 17
Limitations............................................................................................................... 18

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS.................................................................................................................19
Pilot Study................................................................................................................. 19
The Sample............................................................................................................. 21
Perception of Convention Facilities and Staff.................................................. 24
Perception of Service Quality........................................................................... 25
Qualitative Results............................................................................................... 29

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION.......................................................................................................31

APPENDIX A HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL FORM......................................................33

APPENDIX B INFORMED CONSENT LETTER.................................................................36

APPENDIX C CONVENTION SERVICE MANAGER SURVEY........................................38
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my committee chair, Dr. Curtis Love for his time and patience during this process. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Robert Woods, Dr. Kathryn LaTour, and Dr. Michael LaTour.

Most especially, I would like to thank Dr. Robert Woods for all his help and guidance throughout my Masters career at UNLV. He has been very supportive and a perfect example of the kind of professor I hope to be when I complete my Ph.D. in a few years.

I am very appreciative to UNLV and the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration for the experiences and education I received. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their unending support.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In general, the conventions industry as a profession is young but constantly growing and developing. The Professional Convention Management Association was created in 1957, the Certified Meeting Planner certification is becoming more commonplace only now, and industry publications are new and growing. Since the field is still in its infancy compared to others in the hospitality industry there has been little research conducted to find out whether what the industry is currently doing is really the best way possible.

A recent development within the conventions and meeting planning profession has been the creation and institution of the meeting concierge position. This position was first developed by Ritz Carlton in 1991 in Boston in an effort to provide more personalized service to meeting planners patronizing the hotel (Sillery, 1991). Initially the position served much the same capacity as the regular hotel concierge by arranging show tickets, late check outs, dinner reservations and limo transportation exclusively for meeting attendees. Since its conception the position has grown in scope of job description and frequency.

Currently the meeting concierge is a full time position at the Ritz Carlton and Hyatt hotels and resorts and other select high-end and luxury properties. While the
The position is believed to be successful, it is still under speculation by many and is often viewed by hotel management as an additional expense which does not necessarily add to service quality.

Research Question

The primary question investigated in this study is the perceived value of the meeting concierge position. The meeting concierge was created for the purpose of providing an additional service to convention guests, therefore increasing the quality of their visit. This study employs a research method to investigate the meeting concierge position and the perceived value of the position by hotel convention managers and independent meeting planners.

Rationale

This research project explores the development of the meeting concierge in hotel convention services. This is particularly important to me because I have been in the conventions industry for nearly seven years in various different capacities and have watched the meeting concierge grow and expand. I also served as a meeting concierge for two corporations and therefore understand the position thoroughly.

Based on my own experience as a meeting concierge and a conventions manager I have witnessed mixed feelings regarding the meeting concierge position. Some independent meeting planners utilize the concierge tremendously, sometimes even more
than their convention service managers. By contrast other planners are more hesitant possibly due to their unfamiliarity and lack of experience with the position. Similar sentiments are demonstrated by hotel and convention staff. Often the meeting concierge knows the most up-to-date information regarding a group and while this is helpful to other departments, management is frequently apprehensive about incorporating the position because of the additional cost. This cost can be viewed as an unnecessary expense or a way of increasing the level of quality service provided by the hotel.

The research method used in this study involves a number of components. Interviews were conducted initially in order to investigate interest in the subject. Information obtained from the interviews were used to formulate questions for surveys and as an effort to obtain qualitative data. Then two different surveys were distributed to industry professionals. One survey was completed by convention managers who work for hotels, while the second survey was completed by independent meeting planners.

Surveys provided primarily quantitative data which was valuable in the analysis for the purposes of categorizing demographics, experience, and familiarity. The main source of qualitative material was also obtained through this method in addition to in-depth interviews. The purpose of this study is to gain a thorough description and understanding of the meeting concierge and the implications this position has on the future of the convention industry.
Research Implications

This study describes the meeting concierge position and the impact it has on the service quality provided in the convention industry. This study seeks to establish a baseline of information for future research that seeks to quantify, theorize, or hypothesize about the growth and necessity of this position. This study is important in the industry because currently there exists very little research in the conventions industry and essentially no examination of this particular position. The results of this study will provide valuable insights at the industry level regarding service quality and the experience of guests. An understanding of this information is also relevant to other industries such as the hotel and food and beverage industries. Understanding the experiences of convention industry professionals is relevant for purposes of training and human resource development in other similar industries, as well as testing and improving service and quality standards.

Definition of Key Terms

- Convention: a meeting of people for a common purpose.
- Convention Service Manager: a person who coordinates and services a convention at the location which the convention is held.
- Convention Services: services provided by in-house or external suppliers for conventions.
• Meeting Concierge: a person who works on the same staff as the convention service manager who acts as a liaison between the convention service manager and meeting planner during a convention.

• Meeting Planner: a person who plans a meeting or convention on behalf of a group.

• Professional Convention Management Association: a nonprofit organization of meeting planning and convention industry professionals.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on the meeting concierge position is limited. There was no
literature available regarding the value of the position or how it has benefited the industry
since its creation. The only literature relevant to the position itself was in trade press and
explained when it was introduced and the history behind its creation. No empirical
research based information was found. Additionally, literature regarding the convention
industry itself is also lacking. However, there were some articles related to service
quality in convention management that can be related to the meeting concierge.

Since the convention industry is still very young it is not surprising that finding
good research and literature on the topic is few and far between. However, since
conventions are frequently viewed as part of the hotel and tourism business there were a
number of articles about service, quality, and customer satisfaction which were useful.
As a result these articles are the main core discussed in this paper.

Meeting Concierge

The first meeting concierge was introduced at the Boston Ritz Carlton in 1991 as
a response to the need for increased service quality (Sillery, 1991). Since Ritz Carlton is
so well-known for the service quality they provide their customers, it is not surprising that such a prestigious company developed this service based position. Teitler (1999) discussed the development of the concierge in the meeting and convention industry as a way of differentiating a hotel from other competitors and increasing quality. According to Teitler, the presence of a meeting concierge gave meeting planners the feeling that they have more support from hotel staff and that difficulties and challenges are less likely to occur. Teitler and Sillery's articles both focus on the concept of the meeting concierge and the expectation that it will take a number of years before the position becomes more extensive and is seen in hotels besides the top luxury hotels. However, the position has been given a number of years to grow and mature and is now included in numerous luxury and high-end hotel organizations. While the position has been viewed as primarily positive, no research has been conducted as of yet to see whether this trend will or should continue.

Convention Service Quality

The literature and theory regarding service quality in convention management was well-put by Hauck (2001) who observed that there is a difference between needs and expectations. Hauck differentiated the two terms by saying that needs are something that is required, but expectations are presumed and believed to be probable. The article also mentioned that how needs and expectations are fulfilled can make a significant impact on how pleased a customer is with the quality of service they receive. While customers essentially know on some level that their needs will be met, they also have expectations.
However, when both needs and expectations are met and exceeded is when a customer is truly satisfied. This relates well to this study because while the meeting concierge position ensures that needs are met they are also there to find out their clients’ expectations and then try to exceed those.

Weber and Ladkin (2003) investigated the convention industry in Australia and the United Kingdom with the intention of discovering what particular characteristics in the two regions set them apart from competitors. Issues related to service quality received the highest ranking from respondents in both countries. Training, skill development, and educational opportunities were identified as the main areas of improvement which would drive service quality. A lack of service quality was recognized as the greatest factor which could hinder the growth and development of the convention industry in both countries.

Meeting planners’ perceptions of the quality they receive must be managed by convention managers providing the service according to Weber (2000). In her article Weber explains that when expectations are exceeded then the perception of quality is high. However, the perception of quality is much lower when expectations are not met appropriately. This gap is something that needs to be brought closer together and hopefully eliminated as much as possible in order to ensure satisfied customers. This article is of particular interest to the proposed research project because it is possible that the meeting concierge position may be one way of bridging this gap and the research to follow could prove that this is indeed the case.

Finally, McDonald (1999) explains how customers can be given a “red carpet treatment” by providing quality service. He mentions that pursuing stronger, more
extensive relationships with customers can provide an additional sense of service, giving customers a better perception of their experience. Again this theory supports the need for further research regarding the meeting concierge. While the primary duties of the meeting concierge is to provide assistance to meeting planner clients and ensure that events run smoothly, often the concierge fulfills the role of a friend or confidant for a meeting planner while they are away from home. This is not necessary to get the job done properly, but this familiar relationship often provides a comfort to meeting planners which cannot easily be replaced by another hotel staff member.

The Impact on Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry

There have been a number of interesting studies conducted regarding service quality in the hospitality industry. Considering the fact that conventions is typically considered part of the hospitality industry, many of these studies are relevant to this research project. Additionally, conventions are frequently held in hotels, so in many cases convention staff members are actually hotel employees, therefore many of the same policies and expectations regarding service are the same.

Increasingly it is becoming more difficult for organizations, especially those in the hospitality industry, to gain a competitive advantage. People tend to view different companies as essentially offering the same products. For instance, a person visiting Las Vegas who is looking for a hotel may arbitrarily pick any hotel on the Strip because they know most hotels offer a private room with a bed and a bathroom. Using only this criteria the person would likely chose the hotel on the Strip with the least expensive
price-tag because they perceive the product to be equivalent. However, the same person may choose a hotel three times the price of another hotel if they know the more expensive hotel has superior employees who provide impeccable service to guests. According to Kandampully and Duddy (2001) this is the best way to gain an advantage over competitors. They researched service quality and the impact on competitive advantage and found that the two were dependent upon one another. Employee empowerment, service guarantees, and service recovery each increased the potential competitive advantage for hotels and tourism businesses.

Similar to the Hauck and Weber articles, Yuskel and Rimmington (1998) studied customer perceived satisfaction in the hospitality industry. According to their research, discovering customers’ perceived satisfaction can enable managers to make decisions which support competitive advantage. For instance, if a hotel manager finds that customers are particularly satisfied with the level of service the front desk workers provide, then that manager will be sure they continue investing in good training as well as making sure human resources hires the correct people for those positions because they provide an advantage over competitors in their customers’ eyes.

One of the most interesting studies found was about service quality consciousness (Taner, 2001). Service quality consciousness refers to the awareness of employees of the level of service quality they are providing and the level of service quality they are expected to provide. According to Taner most hospitality organizations had an existing culture which encourages quality consciousness, but most are not as effective as they should be. This is something which will be addressed in the proposed research project since the meeting concierge is a service position meant to provide quality.
A study of Singapore Airlines in 2003 focused on identifying and understanding customer needs as the key to successful service (Wirtz and Johnson, 2003). In this study which consisted of interviews with senior Singapore Airlines executives, respondents consistently mentioned the necessity of the “wow effect.” The “wow effect” refers to regularly surprising customers by meeting their needs, but at the same time also exceeding their expectations. One executive mentioned the fact that industry executives need to observe customers and recognize growing trends (Wirtz and Johnson, 2003). By using observation, new services can be created and provided which customers never imagined but appreciate and are “wowed” by.

*Be Our Guest: Perfecting the Art of Customer Service* by the Disney Institute (2001) also addresses the concept of exceeding guest expectations in order to achieve a “wow” effect. In addition, the need for a company-wide service theme is also necessary according to the Disney Institute. A service theme consists of a single statement which encompasses the motto a company wishes to fulfill through its service practices. For instance, at Disney the service theme is: *To create happiness for all people of all ages everywhere* (Disney Institute, 2001).

Successful customer service starts with hiring the right people according to Mayer (2002). Delivery of high service quality depends upon choosing employees who are willing to adopt the company’s customer service strategy and can be trained to do so. The four principals of the human resources strategy wheel consist of: 1. hiring the right people, 2. developing people to deliver service quality, 3. providing needed support systems, and 4. retaining the best people (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000).
Service quality is frequently measured by customer perceptions. According to Gronroos, author of *Service Management and Marketing*, quality improvement is often mentioned as an internal firm goal, however, defined steps toward achieving this goal are frequently lacking (Gronroos, 2000). In order to provide the best possible service to customers a firm must decide what they are going to offer customers and specifically how they are going to do it. If the service delivery, the how, is sub-par, the actual service itself, the what, will be judged more critically by customers (Gronroos, 2000).

Gaps in the Literature

There exists a gap in the literature regarding the service quality value of the meeting concierge and the impact it has on the conventions department. Most of the available literature focuses on customer perceived service quality and competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. Service quality and competitive advantage in conventions has not been measured in previous studies which is why the proposed research project will be advantageous and provide new information to interested parties.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

During this study, series of interviews with select professionals in the conventions and meeting planning industries were conducted. Surveys were distributed via email to a larger random sample of industry executives. There were several stipulations for participation in the study which will be discussed in the participant selection section below. The following discussion details specifics regarding data collection, participant selection, survey and interview questions, validity and reliability issues, research hypothesis, and limitations.

Data Collection

The initial pilot study consisted of interviews with twelve industry professionals. Six convention service managers and six meeting planners were chosen to participate in one-on-one interviews. This was a sample of convenience consisting of colleagues of the author. Interviews were conducted to determine whether the topic would be of interest to industry professionals. Questions asked targeted the meeting concierge position, service quality provided to meeting planners and convention attendees, and perceived value of
various convention positions. After the pilot study was completed a survey was created for distribution to a larger, random sample of respondents.

The majority of data were collected through surveys completed by convention managers and meeting planners. Emails were sent to members of the Professional Convention Management Association, the largest association of convention managers and meeting planners in the United States. In the email members were asked to click on a link which connected them directly to a website on which the surveys were posted. The first question of the survey asked participants whether they were a conventions manager or a meeting planner. Based on the participants' answer he or she would be given a survey appropriate to their job classification.

Participants were guaranteed anonymity if they completed the survey. Though the interviews took place in person names will not be revealed. The report published will protect the individual identity of each participant and the informed consent did acknowledge the risk associated with participating in this study.

Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling was utilized to develop the overall sample. Survey participants were random since it was the responsibility and choice of the email recipients whether or not to participate. By contrast, interviewees were chosen partly by convenience and partly because they represent particular groups of industry members.

Survey respondents were either convention service managers or meeting planners. Convention managers were necessary to interview because they work for the hotel or
convention center just as the meeting concierge does and so it was useful to see what
convention managers believe is the value of the meeting concierge from an in-house
perspective. Meeting planners were also important to question because they are coming
from outside and the meeting concierge is one of their main contacts once they are on-
site. Since meeting planners do not know everything there is to know about different
hotels it was deemed important to get their perspective of the meeting concierge as well.
In order to ensure respondents have adequate experience working with meeting
concierges there were some stipulations in selection criteria. For example, convention
managers and meeting planners were both asked about their past experience working with
a meeting concierge and information collected from any respondents who did not have
familiarity with the position was disregarded.

Survey and Interview Questions

The survey and interview questions seek to explore the following four
dimensions: classification, emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal (Zikmund, 2003).
Some of these dimensions were already intrinsic to the meeting concierge position,
however others developed during the literature review. The following explanations will
clarify the meaning and focus of each dimension.

Classification refers to the identifying characteristics of the respondents such as
industry experience, location, and the amount of meetings planned each month. The
emotional dimension seeks to discover whether the meeting concierge provides a certain
level of comfort to managers and lessens stress due to the knowledge that there is
someone there to fight fires if necessary. The behavioral dimension will ask respondents about their ability to communicate with clients and whether this is affected by the presence of a meeting concierge. Finally, the interpersonal dimension explores whether additional confidence is instilled due to the concierge presence.

Interview questions were entirely open-ended and qualitative in nature. Nominal scale survey questions were dichotomous in order to determine certain characteristics and classifications of professional experience. A Semantic differential was employed to measure levels of importance of the meeting concierge and other aspects of convention management. Additional qualitative questions were also asked in the surveys.

Validity and Reliability Issues

Since both quantitative and qualitative methods of questioning were utilized results are considered to be valid and reliable. The surveys are considered reliable because most of the questions use scales and are quantitative questions. As a result it is expected that the survey questions would be relatively easy to duplicate and achieve similar results. Since the reliability of surveys tend to be somewhat difficult to guarantee, personal interviews were also used. By conducting interviews and asking qualitative questions of respondents there is a greater chance that the answers will be more valid and actually measure what they are intended to measure.
Research Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that this study will find that indeed the meeting concierge position does enhance the service quality and perceptions of quality. It is anticipated that meeting planners will report they find the meeting concierge very valuable. It is expected that results from convention service managers will also rate the meeting concierge as being important, but meeting planners will find them to be more valuable than convention managers do.

\[ H_0 = \text{The service quality perceived by meeting planners will be the same when there is a meeting concierge available as when there is no meeting concierge available.} \]

\[ H_{a1} = \text{The service quality perceived by meeting planners will be different when there is a meeting concierge available from when there is no meeting concierge available.} \]

\[ H_0 = \text{The service quality perceived by convention service managers will be the same when there is a meeting concierge available as when there is no meeting concierge available.} \]

\[ H_{a2} = \text{The service quality perceived by convention service managers will be different when there is a meeting concierge available from when there is no meeting concierge available.} \]

Variables

A number of different variables were examined, but most were independent of one another. First and foremost the familiarity of meeting planners with the meeting concierge position was tested as well as the perceived service quality provided by the concierge. Additionally, service quality in general as well as the service quality provided by the concierge was researched in relation to competitive advantage.
Limitations

There were some limitations to this research project which did prove challenging in terms of collecting data. The initial pilot study involved personal interviews which did yield good data, however, the fact that the sample was a convenience sample more so than a random sample could render the results as slightly less representative.

Since the main method of collecting data was through voluntary emails it was up to the initiative of email recipients to take the initiative to find the website and answer questions. This sample selection technique was not perfect, but did yield useful data. Overall, there was a high level of responses collected via email. Also, all email recipients were part of the same professional organization, the Professional Convention Management. Not all meeting planners and convention service managers are part of this organization, therefore there were many people who could have responded but were not targeted because they were not PCMA members.

Another important limitation is that since the meeting concierge position is still so new not everyone is familiar with it. This means that it was difficult to find respondents who had worked with concierges frequently enough to give knowledgeable opinions.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents results obtained from the pilot study interviews and online survey completed by the random sample of convention service managers and meeting planners. The results analyze the relationship between perception of service quality provided by convention centers and hotels with regard to the meeting concierge position. The descriptive characteristics of respondents are presented as well.

Pilot Study

The pilot study consisted of interviews of twelve convention industry professionals. The sample of convenience consisted of six convention service managers and six meeting planners. All twelve respondents were asked about their experience with the meeting concierge position. Most of the questions were qualitative in nature and some selected responses will follow. Overall, all interviewees stated they considered the meeting concierge a valuable position and necessary for them to make their events successful.

One convention service manager respondent stated, “Having worked at a hotel where we did not have the position prior to working at my current property which does
have a meeting concierge I couldn’t appreciate this position more. If I were to leave for a job at another property I would be sure to find out if there was a meeting concierge on staff because I couldn’t perform my job nearly as well without one.”

A meeting planner echoed the above manager’s feelings, “The meeting concierge position is important to me because convention service managers are often working with multiple groups and hard to get hold of when we are on-site. If I have a meeting concierge that I can contact it cuts down on my having to track down my CSM and then tell them what I need. Often the meeting concierge is much easier to work with on-site because they are always on the convention floor, whereas CSMs are often in their offices.”

When asked about any negative implications of having a meeting concierge multiple interview respondents stated that the meeting concierge was not always given the necessary information from the convention service manager. Speculation about the reason for this was articulated by one meeting planner, “Meeting Concierges are great, but sometimes the CSM doesn’t always give them all the necessary information. It would really be helpful if the concierge was involved in the pre-planning process more, but since the meeting concierge is always working with groups back to back to back, they don’t always have time to fully prepare until the group is on-site. This makes sense because the CSM often has weeks between groups when they have no meetings in-house and therefore can devote all their attention to planning for an upcoming group. Meeting concierges, however, seldom have that luxury.”

During the interviews respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the meeting concierge position. The only true negative mentioned about the position was
about the fact that the concierge is not always given adequate information by the
convention service manager prior to the start of the meeting. However, numerous
respondents did mention that even though the meeting concierge was not always fully
prepared at the start of the meeting, they were typically the most helpful and up-to-date
with goings on during the meeting. One meeting planner went so far as to say, “Since I
normally see my meeting concierge more often then my convention service manager the
concierge normally knows more about my event then my manager.”

All interview respondents considered the meeting concierge position particularly
valuable and stated that the service provided to meeting planners as a whole is often
much better when there is a meeting concierge present because “there is always an extra
set of eyes on-hand to fight fires when needed and make those last-minute changes which
are always bound to happen.”

The Sample

Respondents for the online survey were randomly and purposefully chosen. All
respondents were members of the Professional Convention Management Association and
classified themselves as either convention service managers or meeting planners. A total
of 211 emails were sent out to PCMA members with a letter of explanation about the
study and link to the survey website. Of the 211 emails sent, 107 people answered the
survey questions, yielding a response rate of 50.71%. Most respondents were meeting
planners (57.9%) and the remaining respondents were convention service managers
(42.1%).
Females were the overwhelming respondents. Ninety-two point five percent of meeting planner respondents were female while 65.7% of convention service manager respondents were female. Although the age range of respondents covered 24 to over 55, most respondents were between 35 and 42 years of age. Age, gender, and job classification descriptive statistics can be found in Table 1.

The online survey administered to meeting planners consisted of 34 questions while 33 questions were asked of convention service managers. Many of the questions asked were the same in both surveys, though there were some questions which were unique to each survey. Both groups of respondents were asked about their experience and familiarity with the meeting concierge position. Ninety percent of meeting planner respondents said they were familiar with the meeting concierge position, and 82.6% said the meeting concierge position was at least somewhat helpful in making their meeting a success.

Convention service managers showed similar familiarity patterns as meeting planners. The majority of convention service managers were familiar with the meeting concierge position (92.1%) and all (100%) respondents familiar with the position said the meeting concierge was at least somewhat helpful in assisting managers service meetings.

The amount of career experience convention service managers and meeting planners claimed varied greatly, though there were particular amounts which stood out. The majority of convention managers who answered the survey had 5 to 8 years experience, making up 48.3% of the sample. In general, the amount of experience of convention service managers ranged from one year to 26 years. The experience of
Table 1

Survey Participants' Job Classification, Age, Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Convention Service Manager</th>
<th>Meeting Planner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23 years old</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>00.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-29 years old</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35 years old</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-41 years old</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-47 years old</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-53 years old</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 years or older</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>02.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 years experience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8 years experience</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12 years experience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16 years experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>03.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-20 years experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>03.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ years experience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
meeting planners answering the survey was more varied. Meeting planner experience ranged from 2 to 31 years. The two largest groups were those meeting planners with one to four years experience (27.5%) and with 9 to 12 years (22.5%).

Perception of Convention Facilities and Staff

Meeting Planners were asked about their interaction with their convention service manager, as well as other convention staff. Questions about meeting facilities themselves were also presented to respondents. Convention Service Managers were asked the same questions in terms of what they believed was most important to their meeting planner clients.

A Chi-square test was used to analyze the importance of the interaction between meeting planners and convention service managers. According to the data collected and considering a 95% confidence level (alpha= 0.05) both meeting planners and convention service managers chose “attention given by the convention service manager prior to the planner arriving on-site” as the most important interaction between meeting planners and convention service managers. Regarding “attention given by the convention service manager prior to the planner arriving on site” Chi² (2)= 48.2, p<0.05. “Attention by CSM while on-site” yielded Chi² (2)= 22.414, p<0.05. The variable “availability of CSM to planner while on-site” resulted in Chi² (2)= 6.225, p<0.05. Given that all three variables had alpha levels below 0.05 we conclude there is a significant difference between the means of the three variables.
Chi-square was also used to analyze the importance of customer service to the meeting planner. "Level of customer service provided by staff" was considered the most important variable by respondents, followed closely by "accessibility of service staff while on-site." The "level of customer service provided by staff" variable provided \( \chi^2 (2) = 20.052, p<0.05 \). "Accessibility of service staff" resulted in \( \chi^2 (2) = 16.127, p<0.05 \). Finally, "attention from other service staff" yielded \( \chi^2 (1) = 17.329, p<0.05 \). Again, we conclude there is a significant difference between the mean values of the three variables.

Perception of Service Quality

In order to assess the perception of service quality provided by the meeting concierge, the survey contained twelve questions regarding the feelings of meeting planners and convention service managers during meetings and conventions. The twelve questions were divided into six pairs and asked in the form of a five point Semantic differential scale and then compared to one another. The questions asked about the feelings of the meeting planner or service manager when the meeting concierge was present and when the meeting concierge was absent. The six pairs tested level of relaxation, rest, comfort, confidence, stress, and time management.

The null hypothesis stated that the mean scores of question pairs would be the same. The alternative hypothesis states that the mean scores of pairs would be different. As can be seen in Table 2, all question pairs asked of convention service managers had a significance level of 0.000. Since significance is .000 we reject the null hypothesis.
Also, by looking at the $\eta^2$ values we see that the values are all very large, therefore signifying that there is a large difference between the means. Overall, we find there is a significant difference between the feelings experienced by convention service managers when a meeting concierge is present and when the concierge is absent.

The results of the questions asked of meeting planners yielded similar results. Again, using an alpha level of 0.05 we see that all significance levels are below this value, causing the null hypothesis to again be rejected. Upon examination of the $\eta^2$ values we see that the values are all well above the 0.14 level, which Cohen (1998) uses to state there is a noteworthy magnitude of difference between the means.

Interestingly, when the $\eta^2$ values of the meeting planners are compared to those of convention service managers, some values are similar. For instance, among convention service managers, regarding “frustration” $\eta^2 = .834$, $p<0.05$ and “comfort” $\eta^2 = .812$, $p<0.05$. In the data obtained from meeting planners, “comfort” $\eta^2 = .41$, $p<0.05$ and “exhaustion” $\eta^2 = .333$, $p<0.05$. Judging from this we conclude that the meeting concierge has the most impact on the comfort level of both convention service managers and meeting planners.

Tables 2 and 3 provide the values of interest obtained from the paired sample t-test questions for both the convention service managers and meeting planners.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair #</th>
<th>With/ Without Concierge</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>eta^2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>0.57899</td>
<td>1.9091</td>
<td>-12.688</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.72822</td>
<td>4.0303</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>0.70844</td>
<td>1.7576</td>
<td>-10.546</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.777</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.82228</td>
<td>3.6264</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>0.78093</td>
<td>1.8788</td>
<td>-11.744</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.87581</td>
<td>4.2727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>1.06155</td>
<td>2.2424</td>
<td>-08.585</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.63514</td>
<td>4.1818</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>0.69270</td>
<td>1.6875</td>
<td>-10.499</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.78030</td>
<td>3.6875</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.80951</td>
<td>2.0303</td>
<td>-10.138</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.89294</td>
<td>4.2121</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair #</th>
<th>With/ Without Concierge</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>eta²</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>0.80623</td>
<td>2.7500</td>
<td>-3.766</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.73463</td>
<td>3.5556</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>0.78306</td>
<td>2.5882</td>
<td>-3.993</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.90552</td>
<td>3.2941</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>0.93272</td>
<td>2.9688</td>
<td>-4.563</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.89296</td>
<td>3.9063</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>1.17341</td>
<td>3.2424</td>
<td>-3.231</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.86603</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>0.73780</td>
<td>2.6875</td>
<td>-3.667</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.310</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.70711</td>
<td>3.3750</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Without MC</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>-3.370</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With MC</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.88976</td>
<td>3.6667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Results

The online survey contained multiple open-ended, qualitative questions similar to those asked in the interviews. As in the interviews, those respondents who added comments about the meeting concierge were tremendously positive about the position. Respondents stated the meeting concierge was an additional service which ensured their meetings would be conducted properly. A meeting planner respondent stated, “Reflecting back on this, I do view a meeting concierge as an ‘added value.’ I definitely prefer to work with a hotel that has meeting concierges; they are insurance.”

Some meeting planners mentioned the meeting concierge during site selection and signing contracts for conventions. One meeting planner went so far as to say, “The meeting concierge is WONDERFUL and I definitely give preference during site selection to properties that offer this service.”

Convention service managers frequently stated the advantage of having a meeting concierge that prevented service managers from being constantly contacted by meeting planners for small changes. One convention service manager stated, “If the meeting concierge is good, they can take a huge load off of the CSM. Having a meeting concierge around means they do a lot of the footwork, which means the CSM doesn’t have to be called for mundane things.”

Since planning for an event takes up so much time for a convention service manager, often allowing the meeting concierge to “run the show” while a group is on-site is most beneficial for the service manager. One service manager mentioned, “The meeting concierge allows the CSM to focus on the pre-planning part of the convention. When there is someone competent watching the meeting rooms CSMs can be in their
offices planning for the next meeting and upselling future groups. I know some properties say that a meeting concierge is an additional expense, but the in the time they are on the floor I can be on the phone with a client coming in next year and upselling rooms, events, or food which will cover the cost of the concierge’s salary.”
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results mentioned above the meeting concierge is considered a significant value to both convention service managers and meeting planners. Both groups of respondents repeatedly mentioned the fact that the meeting concierge provides a higher level of customer service to clients and allow events to run more smoothly. From the survey data analysis, it is apparent that there is a significant difference between the attitudes and feelings expressed by meeting planners and convention service managers when there is a meeting concierge on staff compared to when a concierge is absent.

As stated above, the qualitative information obtained from respondents was exceedingly positive in favor of the meeting concierge position. Numerous convention service managers stated they could not imagine performing their jobs without the meeting concierge, while at the same time several meeting planners voiced their preference in site selection for properties with a concierge on staff.

Overall, based on the quantitative results and qualitative remarks there is a consensus that the meeting concierge is a valuable position to those working in the convention and meeting industry. Given this new found information convention professionals and staff members can make intelligent decisions about potentially adding
this position to their convention service staffs and evaluate their ability to provide a higher level of service to their meeting planning clients.

There were limitations to the research conducted such as a limited number of possible respondents with the correct amount of experience working with meeting concierges. The fact that interview respondents was a sample of convenience rather than a truly random sample is also a limitation. Additionally, since the survey was distributed online that was also considered a limitation because online distribution naturally limited the amount of people surveyed. Finally, since surveys were distributed only to members of the Professional Convention Management Association that was a limitation because there are many meeting planners and convention service managers who are not members of that organization.

This research project has the potential to lay a good foundation for future research regarding the convention industry, meeting concierges, and service quality. Additional research could be conducted using a larger sample size of meeting and convention professionals from organizations other than PCMA and utilizing interviews from a larger, more random sample. Also, using the survey method of research could be further employed, but in a different capacity, such as mailing surveys or doing in-person surveys, as opposed to limiting a future study to only online surveys. By doing this results from a more diverse population could be obtained. Other future research projects could test different areas of the conventions industry and the service quality provided. Also, meeting concierges could be further researched to see whether or not they may influence clients to become repeat or loyal customers due to the service they provide.
APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL FORM
UNLV
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

Social/Behavioral IRB – Expedited Review Approval Notice

NOTICE TO ALL RESEARCHERS:
Please be aware that a protocol violation (e.g., failure to submit a modification for any change) of an IRB approved protocol may result in mandatory remedial education, additional audits, re-consenting subjects, researcher probation suspension of any research protocol at issue, suspension of additional existing research protocols, invalidation of all research conducted under the research protocol at issue, and further appropriate consequences as determined by the IRB and the Institutional Officer.

DATE: February 3, 2006
TO: Dr. Kathryn LaTour, Hotel Administration
FROM: Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
RE: Notification of IRB Action by Dr. Michael Stitt, Chair
Protocol Title: What is the Value of the Meeting Concierge?
Protocol #: 0601-1855

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45 CFR 46. The protocol has been reviewed and approved.

The protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of IRB approval. The expiration date of this protocol is February 3, 2007. Work on the project may begin as soon as you receive written notification from the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS).
PLEASE NOTE:
Attached to this approval notice is the official Informed Consent/Assent (IC/IA) Form for this study. The IC/IA contains an official approval stamp. Only copies of this official IC/IA form may be used when obtaining consent. Please keep the original for your records.

Should there be any change to the protocol, it will be necessary to submit a Modification Form through OPRS. No changes may be made to the existing protocol until modifications have been approved by the IRB.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond February 3, 2007, it would be necessary to submit a Continuing Review Request Form 60 days before the expiration date.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at OPRSHumanSubjects@ccmail.nevada.edu or call 895-2794.
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear Participant:

Hello! I am a graduate student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and a fellow meeting professional. In an effort to learn more about the meeting and convention industry, I am conducting a survey to better understand the importance and the perception of the position with regard to service quality in convention management. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a meeting planning/convention professional and can add.

If volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a short survey about conventions and the meeting concierge position. There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn about your perceptions of the meeting concierge.

There are risks involved in all research studies; this study may include only minimal risks. You may become uncomfortable when answering some questions, however, the survey was written to be as minimally invasive as possible and you may skip questions you are uncomfortable answering. The study will take no more than ten minutes of your time and you will not be compensated for your time.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Kathy LaTour, Ph.D. at 702-895-1794. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 702-895-2794.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study. All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. If you choose to answer the last question on the survey and provide your email address this will breach your anonymity; however the researchers will do everything possible in the handling of this information to maintain confidentiality. All data records will be stored in a locked
facility at UNLV for at least 3 years after completion of this study at which time the data will be destroyed.

Participant Consent:
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. By clicking on the link below you also agree to waive a request for signature since this survey is administered electronically.

Thank you for your participation,

Kelly Virginia Phelan
APPENDIX C

CONVENTION SERVICE MANAGER SURVEY

Dear Convention Service Manager,

Thank you for taking the first step to contributing to this study. For my masters thesis I am interested in investigating the importance of customer service provided by convention service managers and staff. Of particular interest is:

- whether you feel you provide a high level of service to meeting planners,
- whether having a meeting concierge on staff enables you to provide better service to meeting planners, and
- your comfort level and feelings about having a meeting concierge on your staff.

Every effort has been made to keep this survey as brief and user-friendly as possible. It should take no more than ten minutes of your time to complete. If you are interested in seeing the results of the survey I am happy to forward the results to you FREE OF CHARGE. At the end of the survey please indicate the email address to which you would like the summary of results sent.

All information will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you very much for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kelly Virginia Phelan
Graduate Student
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
**Importance of Convention Service Facilities and Staff**

Please rate the level of importance of each attribute based on your perception of what YOU BELIEVE TO BE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUR MEETING PLANNER CLIENTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attention given by CSM prior to arriving on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. CSM attention given to Planner while on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accessibility of CSM to Meeting Planner while on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of customer service provided by staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attention of other service Staff to planner while on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accessibility of service staff other than the CSM to Planner on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Capacity of meeting space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quality of meeting facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Safety and security of meeting space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you familiar with the Meeting Concierge position?
- Yes
- No
- N/A

Is there a Meeting Concierge on your staff currently, or have you worked somewhere in the past that had a Meeting Concierge on staff?
- Yes
- No
- N/A
Do you feel that properties which offer a Meeting Concierge provide a higher level of customer service to Meeting Planners than properties without a Meeting Concierge?
- Yes
- No
- N/A

Has the Meeting Concierge position made your job as a Convention Service Manager easier?
- Yes
- No
- N/A

How helpful do you find the Meeting Concierge position to you in helping your Meeting Planners on-site?
- Very Helpful
- Somewhat Helpful
- Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful
- Somewhat Helpful
- Not Helpful at All

How often do you utilize a meeting concierge when it is offered? (Please check one.)
- All the time (every meeting where a Meeting Concierge is offered)
- Frequently (almost every meeting)
- Occasionally (one time in every five meetings)
- Infrequently (one time in every ten meetings)
- N/A

Please list any hotels where you have held meetings or conventions that have had a Meeting Concierge on-staff.
______________________________________________________________

Please describe a situation where you had a Meeting Concierge on hand and they were particularly useful.
______________________________________________________________

Please describe a situation in which you wish you had a Meeting Concierge available.
______________________________________________________________

Please add any additional comments about the Meeting Concierge position.
______________________________________________________________
### Your Feelings: Without a Meeting Concierge

Below is a list of scales that can be used to describe your feelings while serving as a Convention Service Manager with groups in-house without a Meeting Concierge on the staff. Please evaluate each description on each word set by checking the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Relaxed</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Confident</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Stress-free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Frustrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Frustrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhausted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Exhausted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Exhausted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Well Rested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well Rested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Overwhelmed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Overwhelmed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Worried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Worried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Stressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Stressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stress-free</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress-free</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Your Feelings: With the Assistance of a Meeting Concierge

Below is a list of scales that can be used to describe your feelings while serving as a Convention Service Manager with groups in-house with the assistance of a Meeting Concierge. Please evaluate each description on each word set by checking the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Relaxed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Nor Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhausted</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Exhausted</td>
<td>Nor Well Rested</td>
<td>Rested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Well Rested</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Nor Comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>Nor Confident</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Confident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Nor Stress-free</td>
<td>Stress-free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stress-free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About You
Age (please check one):
• 18-23 years
• 24-29 years
• 30-35 years
• 36-41 years
• 42-47 years
• 48-53 years
• 54 years or older

Gender (please check one):
• Female
• Male

Years of experience as a Convention Service Manager: _____

Years of experience in the convention industry (other than as a CSM, such as working as a Meeting Planner): _____

Number of meetings (under 500 people) planned per year: _____

Number of conventions (500 people or more) planned in the last 5 years: _____

Location of your current property: _____

YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS SURVEY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

If you would like to receive a summary of the final results, please provide your email address below.

Email address: ____________________________________________
APPENDIX D

MEETING PLANNER SURVEY

Dear Meeting Planner,

Thank you for taking the first step to contributing to this study. For my Masters Thesis I am interested in investigating the importance of customer service to Meeting Planners.

Of particular interest is:

- Whether you feel you are provided with a high level of service by Convention Service Managers
- Your level of usage of convention service staff members other than your primary Convention Service Manager, and
- Your comfort level and feelings and utilizing a Meeting Concierge.

Every effort has been made to keep this survey as brief and user-friendly as possible. It should take no more than ten minutes to complete. If you are interested in the results of the survey I am happy to forward them to you FREE OF CHARGE. At the end of the survey please indicate the email address to which you would like the summary of results sent.

All information will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you very much for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kelly Virginia Phelan
Graduate Student
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
**Importance of Convention Service Facilities and Staff**

Please rate the level of importance of each attribute when you are serving as the meeting planner for a convention group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attention given by CSM prior to arriving on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. CSM attention given to Planner while on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accessibility of CSM to Meeting Planner while on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of customer service provided by staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attention of other service Staff to planner while on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accessibility of service staff other than the CSM to Planner on-site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Capacity of meeting space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quality of meeting facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Safety and security of meeting space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Meeting Concierge Experience**

The following questions are asked regarding you experience in dealing with meeting concierge at your conventions.

How helpful do you find the meeting concierge position to you in making your meeting successful once you are on-site?

- Very Helpful
- Somewhat Helpful
- Neither Helpful or Unhelpful
- Somewhat Helpful
- Not Helpful at all
- N/A
How often do you utilize a meeting concierge when it is offered? (Please check one.)

- All the time (every meeting where a Meeting Concierge is offered)
- Frequently (almost every meeting)
- Occasionally (one time in every five meetings)
- Infrequently (one time in every ten meetings)
- N/A

Do you feel that the meeting concierge offers a higher level of customer service to meeting planners?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Would you encourage hotels which currently do not employ meeting concierges to add the meeting concierge position to their staff?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Has the meeting concierge position made your job as a meeting planner easier?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Please list any hotels where you have held meetings or conventions that have had a Meeting Concierge on-staff.

________________________________________

Please describe a situation where you had a Meeting Concierge on hand and they were particularly useful.

________________________________________

Please describe a situation in which you wish you had a Meeting Concierge available.

________________________________________

Please add any additional comments about the Meeting Concierge position.
Familiarity with Convention Staff
Please indicate your level of familiarity with the following convention service staff positions:

- Slightly Familiar
- Very Familiar
- Moderately Familiar
- Extremely Familiar

1. Convention Service Manager
2. Meeting Concierge (Floor Manager)
3. Convention Operations (Room Set-up) Manager

Your Feelings: Without a Meeting Concierge
Below is a list of scales that can be used to describe your feelings while serving as an on-site meeting planner without a Meeting Concierge on the staff of the meeting facility you are visiting. Please evaluate each description on each word set by checking the appropriate box.

- Frustrated
  - Somewhat Frustrated
  - Neither Frustrated Nor Relaxed
  - Somewhat Relaxed
  - Relaxed

- Exhausted
  - Somewhat Exhausted
  - Neither Exhausted Nor Well Rested
  - Somewhat Well Rested
  - Rested
### Your Feelings: With the Assistance of a Meeting Concierge

Below is a list of scales that can be used to describe your feelings while serving as an on-site meeting planner with the assistance of a Meeting Concierge. Please evaluate each description on each word set by checking the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overwhelmed</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Neither Overwhelmed</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Neither Worried</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td></td>
<td>Confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Neither Stressed</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Stress-free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stress-free</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frustrated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frustrated</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Neither Frustrated</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Relaxed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exhausted**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhausted</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Neither Exhausted</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Rested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhausted</td>
<td></td>
<td>Well Rested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Somewhat Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Neither Overwhelmed Nor Comfortable</td>
<td>Somewhat Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>Somewhat Worried</td>
<td>Neither Worried Nor Confident</td>
<td>Somewhat Confident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Somewhat Stressed</td>
<td>Neither Stressed Nor Stress-free</td>
<td>Somewhat Stress-free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About You
Age (please check one):
• 18-23 years
• 24-29 years
• 30-35 years
• 36-41 years
• 42-47 years
• 48-53 years
• 54 years or older

Gender (please check one):
• Female
• Male

Years of experience as a meeting planner: ______

Years of experience in the convention industry (other than meeting planning, such as working as a convention service manager): ______

Number of meetings (under 500 people) planned per year: ______

Number of conventions (500 people or more) planned in the last 5 years: ______

Location of your corporate offices: ______

YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS SURVEY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

If you would like to receive a summary of the final results, please provide your email address below.

Email address: ________________________________
REFERENCES


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Kelly Virginia Phelan

Home Address:
6480 Annie Oakley Dr. #614
Las Vegas, NV 89120

Degree:
Bachelor of Art, International Studies, 2002
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD

Thesis Title: Service Quality in Convention Management: What is the Value of the Meeting Concierge?

Thesis Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Curtis Love, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Robert Woods, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Kathryn LaTour, Ph.D.
Graduate College Faculty Representative, Dr. Michael LaTour, Ph.D.