



# INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN BUTLERS

Promoting Service Standards through Training  
in Staffed Homes, Luxury Hotels, Resorts and Spas

*The Institute is dedicated to raising service standards in private estates and the hospitality industry by broadly disseminating the mindset and skills of that time-honored quintessential service provider, the British Butler, adapted to the needs of modern employers and guests.*

## THE MODERN BUTLERS' JOURNAL

For Service Professionals Worldwide

Volume 4, Issue 4 - September 2008

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### LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Dear Editor,

*I have enjoyed the June issue (3) of the journal. I was very happy to read that Mr. Arif Asmath has joined (your) great institution in India. Mr. Arif has been a great mentor for me during his assignment in the United States, working in the*

*state of Georgia at the Cloister Resort Hotel. I have also modeled myself after Mrs. Fiona Williams and Mr. David Robinson, both of whom I had the pleasure to be in company with. I am currently the Assistant Manager of Butler Services at the Cloister. We are doing an excellent job in servicing our guest in detailed Butler style. Thanks to you all and thanks to Mr. Ferry for making it all possible.*

*Matthew Pettus Jr., Assistant Manager Butler Services, The Cloister Hotel, Georgia*

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*My name is Kenn Kominski, General Manager of Siloso Beach Resort. We are currently in the process of launching 12 exclusive villas at our seaside resort.*

*We are pleased to offer internships at Siloso Beach Resort for butler graduates. Please direct all enquires to our HR Manager, Mr. Desmond Sim, who will be happy to speak to those interested graduates.*

*With kind regards,  
Kenneth J. Kominski  
General Manager  
<http://www.silosobeachresort.com>*

Note: The Institute does not guarantee these positions and anyone contacting the Silos Beach Resort does so under their own cognizance.

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### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Institute has been working with key members of our profession to create workable and factual definitions of job titles. We are now ready to receive your feedback so we can fine-tune the definitions before releasing them for use in the industry. Would

you be so kind as to contact the Executive Director of the Institute ([enquiries@modernbutlers.com](mailto:enquiries@modernbutlers.com)), who will email you a copy of the definitions in their final draft. Then email me ([stevenferry@modernbutlers.com](mailto:stevenferry@modernbutlers.com)) with either a green light, or specific suggested changes to be made (using the revisions function of the Word program or otherwise making clear what changes you are proposing).

The amount of training being requested by hotels and resorts, as well as private estates, continues to keep the Institute trainers busy: next month, no fewer than eight Institute trainers will be engaged on projects around the world, which represents the highest demand to date. This is particularly encouraging at a time when economies appear to be weakening in many areas. But the fact is, the number of multi-millionaires continues to grow, particularly in China, India and Russia, and these markets are fairly recession proof; and hotels and resorts recognize properly trained butlers do provide the much needed personalized service that discerning travelers are coming to expect.

In pursuit of one of these market segments, the Institute has created an Aviation Division to service private and corporate jet owners and higher-end airlines. We would like to welcome, therefore, Ms. Nuala Galbari, VP Aviation Services, as well as Dr. David Justis as Medical Director. They are both based outside Washington, DC and come with considerable experience and pedigree.

On an equally positive note, Mr. Werner Leutert is leaving his position as President of the Institute to be able to pursue his expanding business in Home Staffing Network (HSN) full time. Mr. Leutert was one of the three founders of the Institute and has been spending a bit more time than he could afford to help run the Institute...all while HSN demanded more and more of his attention. He will continue to assist as an editor and contributor for the MBI, and of course remains a regular member of the Institute. We wish Mr. Leutert continued success with his Home Staffing Network.

Finally, also joining the Institute as a consultant and business development manager is Mr. William F. Bennett in Hawaii; Mr. Erick Herlangge, who joins as Vice President for China, Macau, Taiwan and Hong Kong; and Mr. Arun Raj, who is assisting Mr. Asmath in servicing Indian clients. Welcome aboard to all!



May the last part of 2008 bring you the success you seek.

All the best,  
**Steven Ferry**  
Chairman

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## THE BUTLER DID IT!

**NOTE: In this regular column, butlers and hotel butlers around the world share their anecdotes of “wow’ing” their principals or guests. If you would like to submit a story, just email the newsletter editor at [newsletter@modernbutlers.com](mailto:newsletter@modernbutlers.com)!**

### Birthday Serenade

When I received the message from front desk that Mrs. F. had arrived, the receptionist also informed me that it was Mrs. F.’s birthday. As the butler on her floor I decided to surprise her and immediately put my plan in action. I called the housekeepers and the runner on my floor to help me with it. One of them carried a vase with a bunch of red roses, the other a souvenir from the hotel and the runner a bowl with fresh fruit.

Ready for our performance, the four of us stood together outside the door to Mrs. F.’s suite. When she opened the door, our improvised choir started singing the Happy Birthday song, without much tune but with a lot of enthusiasm to make up for it and to make her birthday stay in our hotel memorable. Mrs. F. was happily surprised, and said this was the first time she had ever had a serenade.

Submitted by Mariana Stachuk

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### PROFESSIONALISM IN PRIVATE SERVICE *by Werner Leutert*

Hello MBI Readers! As noted in the Message from Our Chairman above, I am no longer the president of this fine organization. I do continue to support our mission statement and the efforts to promote professionalism in private service.

Like all of us, my available time is finite. I soon will be celebrating 10 years as a staffing consultant in this industry and I delight in the many contacts I have made with persons involved in the course of my activities.

I find myself very busy honoring a commitment made since starting out, which is to value clients and candidates equally as customers. This requires much communication with all contacts and a fair amount of service work providing information and assistance to persons who will never become clients or candidates. I call this my effort to promote good will in and for the private service world. I am not alone in this effort and would like to thank my associate Jennifer Stemes and the other agents and agencies that we

network with. We have great opportunities to be of service.

Sincerely,  
*Werner Leutert*

*Mr. Leutert owns and runs Home Staffing Network (<http://www.homestaffingnetwork.com>) and can be reached via [Werner@homestaffingnetwork.com](mailto:Werner@homestaffingnetwork.com)*

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## NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

*by David Bertnick*

On 28 August 2008, I facilitated a teleconference with ten members of the International Private Service Community to discuss the need for an organized meeting or live trade

conference for our community. The purpose of the teleconference was to solicit ideas, support and commitment for such a conference.

After an open sharing of ideas, goals and a possible direction for a "private service conference," the members attending this call decided against creating an additional entity to administer such an event. Participants further agreed that the obvious governing body for such an event would be the IAPSP and they agreed to commit to support and encourage the growth of its membership. It was felt that, with the IAPSP's increased representation and stature within the community, such a conference would be a natural progression of its growth.

The meeting lasted approximately one hour. Although no further meeting on this topic was scheduled at the time, the participants agreed that this continues to be a topic of interest and concern for the Private Service Community. David Bertnick, President of the IAPSP, will remain the "point person" on this matter and additional planning meetings will be called as he considers necessary.

If you, or somebody you know, would like to get more involved or you have an idea to share to help expedite the formation of a conference development team, please forward your comments and contact information to David Bertnick ([david.bertnick@iapsp.net](mailto:david.bertnick@iapsp.net) or USA (213) 220-3788). It is our hope to assemble a leadership team that truly represents all facets of our community to ensure that everyone is appropriately represented at the event. Working to establish a meaningful, independent conference for the private service community will have a positive and lasting impact for everyone who participates. Careers will get a boost, businesses will be defined and strengthened and, over time, a strong community of true peers will begin to emerge. There is simply no replacement for the rapport that is created by looking someone in the eye, shaking his or her hand

and learning from his or her real-life experiences! I wish to thank everyone who participated in this call and for your efforts and interest in this important matter.

*David Bertnick*

President, IAPSP  
[www.iapsp.net](http://www.iapsp.net)

**Note: We invite your feedback and comments on the above initiative. Please email the editor at [enquiries@modernbutlers.com](mailto:enquiries@modernbutlers.com) or contact Mr. Bertnick directly at [david.bertnick@iapsp.net](mailto:david.bertnick@iapsp.net)**

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## PACKING WITH A PINK TOUCH

*by Mariana Stachuk*

Packing & unpacking suitcases is one of the basic duties of the hotel butler.

Although it is a task that can be performed by either a male or female butler, there are a few special situations where a butler of the female gender is a plus to this service. Here are some real life examples:

### CASE ONE:

*A businesswoman who had just arrived in the hotel asked for assistance with unpacking. She requested a female butler to help her with this. The guest explained that only another woman could fully understand her needs. When the female butler opened the suitcase she found that all the guest's clothes had been perfectly packed: her underwear had been delicately folded in white tissue paper and placed inside a light fabric bag fastened with a small ribbon so that casual inspection would not reveal that something very intimate was inside. Similarly, her shoes, boots, bags and purses were all wrapped in their respective brand bags. Cosmetics and perfumes were packed separately in a small suitcase with lots of compartments, one for each item, which could only be managed by the slender fingers of a woman. While the butler was unwrapping the clothes, the guest told her that only a woman's hands were delicate enough to handle the tissue paper without tearing it, and that her personal belongings needed that type of delicate care. The conversation between butler and guest included discussions about the most fashionable store in town, which the butler knew had a sale, and the best shop for hand-made shoes, which also carried the most exclusive leather handbags in town.*

Summary: Many women travel with items such as silk blouses, embroidered or sequined, delicate underwear, high-heeled shoes, boots, cosmetics, and so on, which require extremely careful handling. The perfect assistant for such a delicate task is of course a female butler, who can more easily understand and sympathize with another woman's in this regard. Furthermore, butler and guest get a chance to exchange information regarding brands, stores, sales,

and all kinds of useful tips for a female guest visiting a new city.

#### CASE TWO:

*An industrialist on a business trip in a well-known fashion city bought a lot of presents for his wife and daughters while there. He requested a female butler to help him with the packing of these items, as he was not very skilled in dealing with feminine items.*

*The butler went about packing the dresses, jackets, blouses, skirts and bags he had purchased, including some handcrafted jewelry. She also packed the guest's personal belongings. When she had almost finished, she noticed the guest was watching her with admiration while she finished folding the shopping bags and placed them in the outside pocket of his suitcase. He was very impressed and pleased with the female butler's performance and her "unusual" packing skills.*

Summary: Many male travelers buy presents for their wives or daughters. But often they do not know how to handle them so female butlers can be very useful in these situations. Besides, they don't always understand the importance a shopping bag or a name/brand tag can have in the female world.

The examples above represent everyday situations that can occur in the hospitality industry nowadays. As was mentioned in the introduction, both genders can manage the packing of suitcases, but there are some particular occasions where a "pink touch" makes all the difference.

*Ms. Mariana Stachuk works as a Butler at the Alvear Palace Hotel in Buenos Aires, Argentina*

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### CERTIFICATES FOR INSTITUTE MEMBERS

To become a member of the International Institute of Modern Butlers, simply visit our website's membership page to study and pledge your agreement to the Code of Ethics for Household and Hospitality Service Professionals:

<http://www.modernbutlers.com/html/membership-details.html>

As a service to members, the Institute offers an official Certificate of Membership to those IIMB members that wish to display such a Certificate on their wall, or for inclusion in a resume/CV. Please visit the membership pages on our website, and follow the link to purchase a membership certificate. There is a small fee to cover the costs of printing and shipping.

### INTERESTING LINKS

#### Some timely articles worth reading

FORBES - Luxury Travel

**World's Decadent Hotel Amenities**

by Rebecca Ruiz

The hotel industry started more than a century ago when stagecoach outposts gave overland travelers a refuge from the elements--and little else. Nowadays, however, five-star properties offer well-heeled guests spa treatments, personal butlers and even room service for pets. ... Steven Ferry, chairman of the International Institute of Modern Butlers, has noticed a dramatic increase in the number of hotels adding butlers to their staff in the past four years. They are trained to handle even the slightest of needs, from drawing a bath at the perfect temperature, to serving morning tea, to laying out a guest's clothes in the morning. A properly trained butler, says Ferry, will anticipate a guest's needs and address them seamlessly.

[http://www.forbes.com/2008/08/19/luxury-hotel-amenities-forbeslife-cx\\_rr\\_0819travel.html](http://www.forbes.com/2008/08/19/luxury-hotel-amenities-forbeslife-cx_rr_0819travel.html)

August 14, 2008

**Chairman IIMB is interviewed on BlogTalkRadio.**

Listen to the interview here:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/SyndicatedNews/page/1>

**Meet the Excellent and Wise Mr. K., Manservant to Lawyer Richard Golub**

by Frank DiGiacomo

The man in the vivid purple turban padded silently down the stairs of the East 64th Street town house. "Most welcome," he said, bowing slightly and smiling toothily through his snowy beard. He wore a tailored black Nehru suit.

<http://www.observer.com/node/42606>

**Preferred Group has inside advantage Private concierge service caters to power players**

by Steffie Nelson

Got your heart set on a Mercedes McLaren or a Birkin bag in ostrich, with gold hardware? How about a last-minute table at Cut, or seats in the Dodger dugout? For far less than a personal assistant's salary (fees range from \$1,250 to \$3,000 per month), the Preferred Group's staff will make the calls necessary to make it happen.

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117987692.html?categoryid=3171&cs=1>

**World now has 10 million millionaires, report says**

by Candice Choi, Associated Press Writer

Add an extra zero to the ranks of the millionaires club. The number of people around the world with at least \$1 million in assets passed 10 million for the first time last year, according to a new report. And their bank accounts are growing even faster.

[http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/080624/world\\_wealth.html](http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/080624/world_wealth.html)

**Butlers & Housekeepers beware: Bedbug Alert!**

National Pest Management Association Claims Bedbug Surge of about 70% in the Past Five Years; Experts Unsure About the Cause, The Six-legged Bloodsuckers Will Infest a One-star or a Five-star Hotel Just as Quickly

[http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2008\\_3rd/Sept08\\_BugSurge.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2008_3rd/Sept08_BugSurge.html)

### **The St. Regis Bali Resort Unveiling English-style Butlers to the Island's Hospitality Industry**

The first St. Regis resort in Asia is unveiling the first English-style butlers to the island's hospitality industry when the The St. Regis Bali Resort opens in September.

[http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2008\\_3rd/Jul08\\_AuthenticButlers.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2008_3rd/Jul08_AuthenticButlers.html)

### **The Active Role of the Butler in Today's Hotel Industry**

by Osvaldo Torres Cruz

Throughout history, the word "butler" has been associated with service. The definition of "service" in the dictionary reads:

[http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2008\\_3rd/Jul08\\_ButlerHotelRole.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2008_3rd/Jul08_ButlerHotelRole.html)

### **A Good Man is Hard to Find**

by Teresa Leigh

A leading family manager outlines strategies to avoid the pitfalls in seeking the perfect residential employee.

<http://www.pw-mag.com/articles/51/1/A-Good-Man-Is-Hard-To-Find/Page1.html>

### **People opt for home delivery service to cut travel cost**

By Oh Ing Yeen

Almost everyone is whining about the high cost of driving now, but one type of business concern is laughing its way to the bank with some windfall from the situation. ... Our delivery guys are called 'butlers' because they not only deliver the food but also serve it and highlight the ingredients and specialties of the dish.

<http://thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?file=/2008/7/15/central/21821984&sec=central>



### **WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?**

*A Book Review by Jim Grise  
Contributing Writer*

Brushing up on management trends a few years back, I studied several writings from the usual roundup of leadership moguls. I was so

impressed with Jack Welsh's book *Winning*, that I even purchased a bright yellow Hermes tie to emulate the magnetism bursting out from his cover photograph – all in preparation for being “in charge” of a large, new property, staff, and operation.

The Hermes tie proved a good investment. The books? Terribly wrong. Yet a recent discovery, *Getting Things Done When You Are Not In Charge* (Geoffrey Bellman), is a breath of fresh air outside the musty catacombs of traditional wisdom. Bellman is a veteran Fortune 500 executive who claims to never have really been in charge of anything. His book gently dismantles the

authoritarian mindset that enables runaway train egos to jump track and wreck havoc inside workplaces, where influence is rarely defined by flow charts.

The lessons are applicable to private service, too: “*Most of us will never be in charge... We must succeed within the roles and rules of other people's organizational game as long as we choose to play on their field... Your power and success will come from understanding how the game is played.*” Incidentally, it's not difficult to research where the real power lies within many staffed homes: Is it the third Estate Manager hired since June? Or rather the Housemaid who has been on duty since 1992? An ability to captivate and inspire those around you is the true key to success, whatever your role or title.

Similar to author Wayne Dyer's infamous: “When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change,” this book will shed soothing light onto your supporting role, and help you discover something new that was—in fact—there all along. Why not wear an influential new supportive attitude at your job...and a nice tie, too? You'll then have the best of both worlds!

*Jim Grise*

*Mr. Grise lives in San Francisco, where he heads **Jim Grise Staffing**, a full-service domestic placement agency located in San Francisco offering “personalized” estate management. Visit his website at <http://www.jimgrisestaffing.com>*

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### **IF YOU CAN'T MAKE IT TO A SCHOOL, TRY STUDYING AT HOME Institute Training & Educational Programs**

Continuing education for those already in service, who may be long on experience but short on formal butler training, is hard to do when one is too busy to take time off work. The same holds true for anyone wanting to move into the service industry. That's when a correspondence course has value. The Institute offers two correspondence courses for butlers, each at the low fee of US \$2,100 (plus materials). The course for butlers in the hospitality industry is based on the best-selling industry text, *Hotel Butlers, The Great Service Differentiators*. The course for those in private service is based on the best-selling industry text, *Butlers and Household Managers, 21st Century Professionals*. Both courses include many other industry reference books and DVD's and numerous practical assignments. Note that the fee is adjustable for those butlers living and working in countries with lower wage scales and where the butler is paying his/her own way. For more information or to enroll, visit the Correspondence Course page of the Institute's website:

<http://www.modernbutlers.com/html/butlercorrespondence-course-1.html>



## TOO BUSY TO NETWORK EFFECTIVELY? Why not interact with your domestic service peers online?

by Clive McGonigal  
Contributing Writer

One of the benefits of running the Butler Bureau web site is that I'm in the fortunate position of being in constant contact with butlers and domestic staff, agency owners and butler schools from all over the world on a daily basis. With only a rare exception, I have never physically met these lovely people and yet I correspond with them regularly and chat over the Internet, using programs like Skype, all the time.

So of what benefit has this been to me? Well, apart from making some good friends and very knowledgeable contacts, I also like to think that I'm 'in the loop' and so know what's going on in the world of domestic service. If I have a question about service or anything remotely related to the domestic staffing world, I have a network of friends and contacts to ask. Chefs, bodyguards, butler trainers - it's like a having my own personal mastermind group.

While networking used to consist of a group of like-minded folk getting together for a drink after work once a month, it is now mostly done online. Some of the busiest web sites of all time are networking sites - think MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn and hundreds more. Often changing ownership for millions or billions of dollars, these sites have tapped into a real need in today's busy world - an easy way to keep in touch with friends or business contacts and make new ones.

Domestic service, by its very nature, can be quite an insular profession. As a working butler, when I take a day off I want to do something a thousand miles away from my day-to-day butling routine. Hence old-fashioned style networking is not really for me. We all know how easy it is to lose touch with others in our profession, especially when you or they are working abroad or far from home. A firm friendship can all too easily turn into a Christmas-card-only relationship owing to geographical separation, unless it is nurtured and worked at.

This was my reasoning and starting point when I recently set up a Social Networking site for domestic staff and anyone interested in finer service: **Butbook!** - <http://www.butbook.co.uk>. Similar to Facebook, it allows members to introduce themselves to other members and so create a group of contacts, or they can invite real-world friends into the network too. Members can set up a group within the site (Cooking tips, wine cellar info...? You decide!). Start a blog, open a discussion, upload a video or images to share with your network of friends or with the whole network. You could even upload your CV and turn your home page into an online advert for future employers.

For example let's say you're a butler and, obviously, you are doing a grand job. Out of the blue, your employer makes an extremely specific request for which you have no immediate answer or solution. In my experience, no matter how good you are or have been on the job, you tend to be judged on your last job interaction - good or bad. It's unfair, I know, but that's the way of the world. So wouldn't it be great to be able to run that request by a few dozen (or hundred) of your peers? The alternative might be to spend hours searching the web, checking your reference library for a bit of information that was common knowledge to one of your networking contacts. We all need job support at times and a good network provides just that.

Like every other social network site on the web, what you get out of it is in direct relation to what you put in. For example, I recently saw a comment from a butler working in China who knew of another job up for grabs in Peking. No agency had this job on their books; the potential employer had sensibly asked our chap if he knew of anyone suitable. Wouldn't you agree that if you applied for this job using that butler as your reference, that your chances of getting the job would increase? I certainly do!

Click the link below for my personal invitation to join this site. I look forward to networking with you, for our mutual benefit, very soon.

<http://thebutlerbureau.ning.com/?xgi=25EUBQV>

Clive McGonigal

Mr. McGonigal is the owner of The Butler Bureau web site: <http://thebutlerbureau.com>. Since 1999, the Butler Bureau has been the leading free resource for domestic staff and their employers on the web.



## IMPORTANT INDUSTRY SALARY SURVEY

Dear Readers,

The Home Staffing Network salary survey is still in progress. We invite all private service professionals (Estate Managers, Butlers, Personal Assistant, Couples, Valets, Housemen, Housekeepers, Nannies and so forth) to take part in this important data collection. The form for submitting your input, together with the raw survey results to date, may be found at this url:

[http://www.homestaffingnetwork.com/tools\\_tips.php?id=17&category=5](http://www.homestaffingnetwork.com/tools_tips.php?id=17&category=5)

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### YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

by Jennifer Lordly Stemes

This is not a new subject, I am sure, but does it ever really get old?

There must be a time in every person's career when he or she finds him/herself standing in front of a potential employer trying to "wow" this person to secure that perfect job.

So what if the boss is dressed down or casual? Does that entitle the candidate to do the same? Sage advice given to me once was, "Don't out-dress the boss, but don't be too laid back either."

If you're utilizing the services of an agency, which is highly recommended, then inquire of them what the tone of the manor may be. If going it alone, perhaps a pre-interview checkup would be in order – are you meeting at the home; is the meeting scheduled in the afternoon by the pool, or in the evening just before dinner? This could help with an educated guess of the dress code. Or perhaps you're meeting at the office where clothing might be more business attire. Either way, do your homework.

So many times I receive photos for presentations from seemingly professional individuals who have poor taste in what is appropriate for making that first impression. As an example, I've received photos from a Nanny candidate that featured the current employer's kids in the foreground (a big no-no!) or of the Nanny in what could only be called "date night" attire. As a general rule, the photographic image of a Nanny should be friendly and demure, not one of the Nanny showing off her latest risqué tattoo and no, I have nothing against tattoos but perhaps a first look at the art work shouldn't be THE first look. Another less-than perfect look is that of a Chef candidate with long flowing locks with some of these unruly manes hanging in the eyes. Clean and tidy is the rule of the day.

Another potential deal breaker regarding first impressions doesn't have anything to do with clothing. It has to do with instructions. Are you a Nervous Nellie who interrupts at each step? Or perhaps a Misguided Murphy who doesn't carefully read and follow the instructions which clearly state to "please submit your

resume for consideration" or "no phone calls please" and plunges in with HIS or HER idea of how it should be handled.

Does the job posting contain conditions of employment such as "Must have own car and clean driving record?" The astute job applicant will recognize this employer wants someone who drives, so don't respond with: "I just lost my license due to some tickets but I was a good driver." You're not gonna get that one! How about the caveat, "Minimum requirement Bachelor's Degree" or "Must have at least 15 years experience." Why waste everyone's valuable time, not to mention making a very negative impression, by replying without the clearly required qualifications?

We cannot say this often enough: Look, Listen, and Respond as Asked. Nothing will turn off that potential employer faster than the candidate who decides the interview and conditions will surely be his or her way. For, as it was said by the late and great Will Rogers (among others): "You Never Get a Second Chance to Make a First Impression."

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### ASK MR. ROBINSON



Dear Mr. Robinson,

I would like to ask you if there is such a thing as an all-purpose suit for men? Some of my friends say there is, and others say there is not. Please advise.

#### Mr. Robinson Writes:

Many people seem to think that the all-purpose suit is no longer in fashion, and that it has run its cycle. I could not disagree more and I will go one step further and proclaim that every man should have at least one all-purpose suit in his wardrobe. This is the type of suit one would use for work, weddings, funerals, parties, and everything in between.

These are the items to look for when purchasing an all purpose suit:

- The color is of vital importance. Select a deep navy blue cloth. It is dark enough to appear professional, but at the same time lighter and classier than the rather dour black.
- Consider a suit with a notched lapel. A small, high notch right on the collarbone is the mark of a classy suit.
- The cloth one selects should be lightweight wool. This material will stand up to repeated wearing, and can be worn year round.

- The suit coat should always have some fit to it in the waist area. This will give your body a more dynamic shape.
- Simplicity is the key when selecting an all-purpose suit. The more streamlined the details, the more widely you will be able to wear it. Avoid extra pockets and flamboyant stitch detailing. As the actor Mr. Cary Grant once said, "All it takes are a few simple outfits, and there's one secret, the simpler the better."
- The trousers should be a personal choice but consider this: flat front trousers are considered more modern, but pleats will be a touch more forgiving should your waistline expand over time.

When wearing a three-button coat, always have the top two buttons fastened; and with a two-button suit, always have the top button fastened.

In closing I make the following observation. I have a number of suits and mix and match jackets and trousers. However, it is my suits, worn with a nice crisp shirt and classy tie, that cause Mrs. Robinson to say, even after all these years, "Oh, now, that looks very nice." As soon as I hear those words, I know the extra effort required in selecting the suit was all worth it.

Until next time, keep your questions coming to [davidrobinson@modernbutlers.com](mailto:davidrobinson@modernbutlers.com)



**David Robinson**  
Rutherfordton, NC, USA

*Mr. Robinson is an English Butler who now lives in North Carolina. He enjoys commenting on topics of interest to both the private service and the hospitality industry.*

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## PROVIDING LUXURY SERVICES IN TODAY'S HOSPITALITY MARKET

*by Osvaldo Torres*  
*Contributing Writer*



Luxury travel is growing worldwide. According to a report from International Luxury Travel Market, the current growth rate amounts to 10%. Figures speak for themselves: 25 million tourists a year, 116 billion Euros spent—with an average expenditure of almost 13,000 Euros per trip,

representing 25% of the tourism industry. New luxury destinations have been introduced and new luxury tourists have appeared, combined with an increasing number of offers of luxury experiences, generating the need for distinctive luxury services. Therefore, the following question must be asked:

### What is luxury service?

In connection with this question, several parameters must be identified when faced with the need to generate services for guests looking for a luxury experience, namely:

- What does Luxury refer to with regards to service?
- At what point do guests start to feel that they are being provided a luxury service?
- Do guests perceive luxury services in the same way? Such perception may vary for a single guest?

Luxury in service is no more than refinement: the capacity to discern and differentiate a global service, i.e. to customize it. By adapting a service to the specific expectations of a guest, it is not only provided as requested but with a bonus: exclusiveness.

Luxury services are perceived in different ways by different guests. Thus, it is important to determine their individual needs and expectations regarding specific services. Different factors must be taken into consideration: education, age, purpose of the trip, previous experiences in connection with the services, and so on. For example:

Younger luxury travelers probably expect access to state-of-the-art technology that allows them to check their e-mails and listen to the music on their Ipods in the room.

Businessmen expect to find secretarial assistance and technical devices that make their job easier, such as the possibility to connect their laptops to LCD screens to show their presentations or high speed internet access. In the case of women, luxury service may mean the assistance of personal shoppers who provide information on the best stores, quality and prices.

The individual needs of the guests, as well as their criteria regarding luxury, vary considerably. Increased competition within the industry regarding the quality of the services provided implies that the definition of luxury is constantly changing. Therefore, attention must be paid to the evolution of services in the global market.

A guest who has been provided with luxury services at a hotel will incorporate them as a need to be satisfied at a future stay. Therefore, new ways of maintaining the feeling of luxury surrounding the services offered must be found at each stay.

The best way to achieve the required degree of luxury in connection with the services provided is a firm commitment to surprising guests regarding all of their requirements and it could be only possible through a customized service.

*Osvaldo Torres*

*Mr. Torres is a hotel Butler currently employed in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He can be contacted at [hotelps@gmail.com](mailto:hotelps@gmail.com)*

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## A BUTLER'S SUMMER IN SEAVIEW

by Cullen Oliver Johnson

My summer as a butler in the beautiful Fire Island community of Seaview, Long Island came about as a result of an idea conceived while attending the International Butler Academy, where I decided to create my own "butler by the day" service, *Innovative Butler Service*.

It was through mutual friends that in April 2008 I was introduced to an elegant older lady, who reminded me of the great American stage actresses Helen Hayes and Rosemary Harris. This lady—I'll call her Mrs. K—became intrigued by my recent experiences as a butler in *Innovative Butler Service*. She had owned a beach house in Seaview for years and after some discussions back and forth, she said she would like to try out my services that summer while in Seaview.

My Bernese mountain dog Oliver and I made our first visit to the beach house in Seaview in May. We returned there regularly that summer. One thing that stands out about this remarkable summer is how things were always changing from one moment to the next. T Now all of a sudden it's September and we will soon be closing the Seaview house for the season. The sunsets and the amazing night skies with thousands of stars and planets will soon have to wait for next May, when it will be time once again to open up the house in Seaview. It has been a most remarkable experience to have this opportunity, to work for the remarkable Mrs. K., to meet her amazing friends and relatives and to share the joy Oliver has brought into her life. This butler's summer in Seaview has come to an end and now moves back to the other island, that of Manhattan. On to the next adventure and challenge in this most intriguing world of butling.

Cullen Johnson

*Mr. Johnson resides in New York City, where he works as a butler and runs Innovative Butler Services.*

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### CADBURY – ADVICE FROM A BUTLER

*Dear Cadbury,  
I am the Head Housekeeper in a staffed residence in Chicago. One of the nannies was let go recently due to an incident she was involved in*

*with the House Manager. I never was part of this incident nor did I talk to anybody about it, but unfortunately, I now find myself in the middle of something I never said or did. A lot of talk is going on among the staff. Now the ex-nanny has called me wanting information. How do I address this issue? Should I just leave it as it is? Or should I start a discussion with the House Manager? I am really just trying to do my job and don't care for all the drama going on in this household, but I am very frustrated when I find my name mixed up in something that I want to stay so far away from.  
Jolie*

Dear Jolie,

The general point you make is that there is a current issue that has you and the rest of the staff upset. The role of a professional House Manager is to work closely with the staff team and try to minimize problems and help all the staff members be the best that they can be. My comment above assumes that the House Manager is professional.

I think that you need to be careful not to fall into a trap. If you are the one trying to fix things, the House Manager may say you are butting in and interfering. You might need to relax a bit, hold your tongue and just see what happens. Do your job and be professional.

Tell the ex-Nanny that you can understand her situation and that you are sympathetic, but you really are not in a position to say or do anything. She must go directly to the House Manager.

Avoid direct involvement in staff battles as much as you can. The House Manager should be dealing with these issues. Do your job and give everyone an extra smile, be patient and give staff a "thank you" and you will be rewarded. This is my prediction.

Cadbury

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*Dear Cadbury,*

*My new employer (5 months) has OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). It is a difficult problem to deal with, at best. He refuses to throw out bad or outdated food even though the Mrs. complains to me that it's my job to keep the inventory updated. I am caught in the middle. This is just one example. Who do I take direction from?  
Jack*

Dear Jack,

I think that you should take the approach of being the professional. Your thoughts with regard to the employer are: "You hired me to do a professional job for you. I am trained to be professional. I have policed the refrigerator so that the food is safe to consume. I personally would not want to contribute to the possibility of you getting food poisoning. That would be unethical and unprofessional of me." Then toss the old stuff, keeping the thoughts I mentioned above in mind. Also tell him that you plan to keep inventories lower and more focused on what they are currently using. The underlying principal here is to be self-assertive in these "caught in the middle" scenarios.

Cadbury

## RECENT GRADUATES



ABOVE: Mr. Budi Prihardjanto, the Institute's Senior VP for Asia, is shown with the butler graduates of the Ritz Carlton in Jakarta, Indonesia



ABOVE: Recent private service graduates in Naples, Florida practice their table setting skills.

**The Institute is the only organization teaching the skills, with a focus on the mindset and superior communication skills of the traditional butler as applied to the modern world's service needs. Contact us for all your training needs via email at [enquiries@modernbutlers.com](mailto:enquiries@modernbutlers.com) or via telephone: USA 1-813- 354-2734. We invite you to also visit our website, <http://www.modernbutlers.com> for more information.**

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