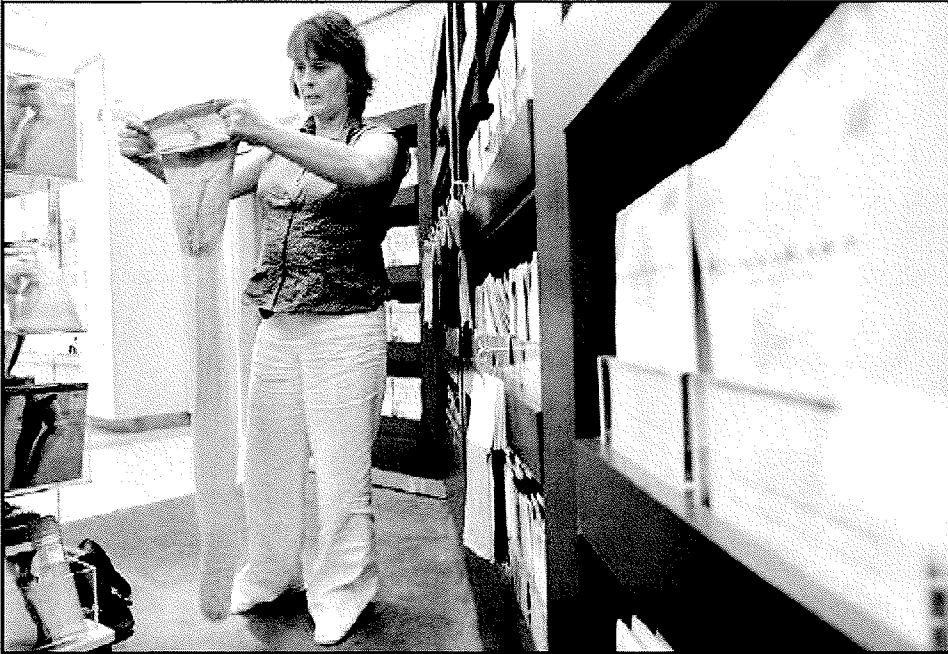


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Concierge service saves workers time, trouble

OhioHealth gives its employees a break



RENEE SAUER DISPATCH

At Nordstrom's, concierge Kim McClintock examines a pair of pantyhose requested by a client. OhioHealth hired her company to help its employees.

By Suzanne Hoholik THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Kim McClintock pulled a pair of pantyhose from a package in the hosiery department at Nordstrom at Easton and began stretching the waistband.

Back and forth, up and down, trying to judge how much they would bind around the waist. She handed the pair back to the clerk, chose another pair and repeated the process.

McClintock took a deep breath, stretched the waists of two more pairs and settled on the first one. They came in nude or sand.

"My gut feeling is nude," she said.

McClintock is a concierge who spends her days running errands for OhioHealth employees. The hospital system contracted with her company, Atlanta-based 2 Places at 1 Time, to make employees' lives easier.

"We won't wash your dishes, we

won't take your son to football practice, but we'll do one errand per person, per day, as long as it's under three hours," she said.

About 50 companies nationally use 2 Places at 1 Time, including law firms, banks, pharmaceutical companies and consulting firms, said Andrea Novakoski, founder and president. Concierges are paid about \$30,000 a year plus bonuses, she said.

The service provides "a gift of time" to employees at Grant Medical Center, Riverside Methodist Hospital and other Ohio-Health affiliates, said Debra Plousha Moore, senior vice president of human resources for OhioHealth.

It's available to all employees — from housekeepers to executives — as a way to limit stress and provide more free time on their days off. OhioHealth also has child-care centers at two hospitals, offers employees access to group rates on pet

and legal insurance and allows employees to work part time if they are taking college courses to pursue other positions within the hospital system.

Since December 2004, concierges have filled nearly 8,500 requests. They buy groceries, stand in line for concert tickets, pick up lunch and research vacation options. The five concierges run errands for 17,000 employees. As the service becomes more popular, requests might not be completed within 24 hours but would be completed in two days.

Getting to know clients, such as the woman who needed pantyhose, helps McClintock make on-the-spot decisions.

A couple of hours earlier that day, she stood in front of a makeup rack at Sephora in Polaris Fashion Place and searched for a mauve lip pencil.

There were pinks and neutrals but no mauve.

The store clerk rubbed one on the back of her hand and showed it to McClintock.

"She wouldn't wear that," McClintock said, grabbing a stick in pink. "I think that's Linda."

McClintock is married, has three children and lives in Groveport. Before becoming a concierge, she worked for 12 years at restaurants at Port Columbus, working her way up from server to manager.

She said she loves her job's fast pace, that no two days are alike and that she's never stuck in an office or chained to a computer. Much of her day is spent navigating central Ohio in her Jeep Grand Cherokee or walking area malls and shops.

Oftentimes, she'll duck into a store that's not on her list. Call it reconnaissance.

"Mother's Day is coming, and people like to buy these things for their moms," she said after grabbing



RENEE SAUER DISPATCH

Farrukh Ashraf fills out a receipt for concierge Kim McClintock at the Enchanted Shoe Repair on 5th Avenue. One of McClintock's clients had two pairs of shoes that needed to be repaired.

that provides that service.

McClintock still has to find flowers for less than \$10. She drives to Blooms Direct in Grandview Heights. Employees there know her by name.

At Grant Medical Center, she delivers the flowers, the pantyhose and picks up some laundry for dry cleaning.

Then it's off to the cleaners near Eastland Mall. The client will pick up the clothes on her way home.

It's almost 4:30 p.m., and McClintock has put 130 miles on her Jeep. Her list is complete, and her shift is finished.

Then she considers another list — her own. She could use some groceries, and her Jeep is due for an oil change.

"I know, I know. I need a concierge," she said.

shoholik@dispatch.com

a brochure from a spa at Polaris.

Back in her Jeep, her pager and cell phone go off at the same time. It's Monro Muffler Brake & Service on Olentangy River Road. The minivan she had dropped off for an oil change that morning is ready.

McClintock arrives at the muffler shop at 11:20 a.m. It's her eighth errand of the day.

She returns the van to the Victorian Village Health Center lot, where a co-worker drops her Jeep for her, and gives the keys and receipt to Jeff Coleman. His credit-card number is on file, so there's no exchange of money.

Coleman, a nurse and clinical quality consultant, said he and his wife have three young children. He works days. She works nights.

"By having them change the oil, we're able to have breakfast together on Saturdays instead of one of us sitting at an oilchange shop waiting for that to be done," he said.

Lisa Meddock, benefits manager at the corporate offices, said she has the concierges buy her groceries, restring her son's guitar, buy gifts, plan vacations and fix her Prada shoes.

Without the service, "I would probably have to take more time off work, frankly," she said.

At Enchanted Shoe Repair on 5

th Avenue, McClintock gives the owner a list of instructions: new heels on both pairs, clean up the scuffs and, if possible, save the soles.

Later, she drives to a Westerville flower shop looking for a spring bouquet for less than \$10. She scanned the store and left.

"I'd rather get what the customer wants than take it back," she said.

During the drive to Riverside Methodist Hospital, her pager and phone continue to buzz and ring.

At the hospital, she delivers the lipstick (it's the right color) and spends 15 minutes preparing for a speech to the hospital system's information-technology employees.

No time for lunch. The Slim-Fast in her Jeep will have to do.

McClintock breezed through the talk. Employees' questions ranged from the serious ("How much does it cost?") to the absurd ("Will you pick up after my dog?").

OhioHealth contracts with 2 Places at 1 Time, which pays the concierges' hourly wages. The hospital system's employees pay the concierges' mileage — 36 cents a mile — and the cost of the flowers, oil change or groceries.

As for the dog, McClintock said she'd be happy to find a company