

Three Unique Resort Jobs

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You may love your job. But does your day-to-day include planning the ultimate proposal for a couple or hosting poolside game shows? Read on to learn about resort professionals who perform these duties—and more—during their 9-to-5.



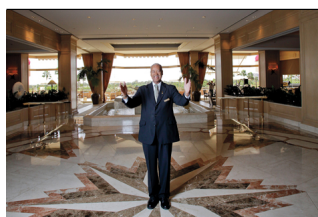
LABOR OF LOVE

Their evening began with the perfect setting: Bella Vista tower overlooking the beautiful Arizona sunset. The table was set with a personalized menu and adorned with lavender rose petals. A bottle of Lindauer Champagne was chilled and waiting while the melody of a flamenco guitar filled the air. It was the perfect evening as our couple arrived at T. Cook's, with the unsuspecting lady having no idea what surprise lay ahead. I suggested a guided tour of the beautiful historic estate; the couple obliged. Our tour led them to the romantic destination of the Bella Vista tower where their private table awaited. As the couple turned to Camelback Mountain, a banner, via plane, read: 'I will love you forever. Will you marry me?' She, of course, said 'Yes.' After that magical moment of acceptance, fireworks filled the air in celebration. All in a day's work for Robert Vickrey, Director of Romance at Royal Palms Resort and Spa. Since 2007, Vickrey has made special events even more special by "planning everything from violinists, flamenco guitarists, poem readers, rose petals (lots of rose petals), diamond-laced desserts, white doves and fireworks," he says. Whether he's arranging grand gestures or intimate details for a notable birthday or a proposal, the end result is always the indicator that it's a job well done for Vickrey. "The guests' reaction to the detail and thought represented for each special touch is truly so rewarding."



IT IS ALL FUN AND GAMES

How would Joshua Riffe, Chief Fun Officer (CFO) at The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, describe his job? "Like a cruise director on land." After 10 years as a cruise director at sea, Riffe spied a job opening for his position in 2007. "When I found the position posted on [Westin's] Web site, it was kismet," he says. Though some days as the CFO call for a suit and tie during a sales meeting or a few hours poring over spreadsheets, much of Riffe's time is spent hosting the Newlywed Game or family challenges poolside; at the on-site lake testing out the resort's new remote-controlled speedboats; and designing and implementing fun activities for resort guests of all ages. "We help people create their own memories that will last a lifetime," Riffe says. "They may or may not remember how their kids enjoyed the four-diamond restaurant they went to on their trip to Scottsdale, but Mom will never forget the looks on her kids' faces as they raced against Dad on the Kierland Remote Control Truck Raceway." If you're thinking such a job seems too good to be true, you're not alone. Riffe often has to whip out his business card to prove his CFO title to Westin guests. "Their reaction goes from disbelief to pure, unadulterated envy."



WARM WELCOME

For 16 years, guests at The Phoenician resort have been greeted by the same friendly smile belonging to James Meeks. As the Phoenix resort's Official Greeter, Meeks spends his day at the resort's porte cochère and his "job is to make each and every person feels like the VIP guest they truly are at The Phoenician," he says. "I consider myself a walking, talking concierge." Apart from being a Phoenician fixture for longtime resort regulars, the associates also get a kick out of the Official Greeter. "When I'm on duty, The Phoenician associates will say, 'James is here. I can't see him, but I can hear him laugh!' A warm smile and sincere greeting sets the tone for the day, and perhaps the guest's entire stay."