

Platinum card holders enjoy concierge service

白金卡秘書 服務包羅萬象



“Line up for me and light a prayer candle at Longshan Temple!” “I want to buy a Lamborghini racing car that hasn’t been imported to Taiwan and costs over NT\$20 million (US\$622,000).” “Go to Tokyo or Hong Kong for me and buy 30 NT\$50,000 Hermès Kelly handbags!” Whatever their honored cardholders ask for, platinum card concierges will carry out the order. There are plenty of people willing to fork out thousands or even tens of thousands of New Taiwan dollars to pay someone an hourly rate for queuing up on their behalf, all for the sake of grabbing limited-edition items.

Platinum card concierges also provide free services, such as planning itineraries for overseas trips, arranging visits to famous sites, looking up transport information, and suggesting performances, cultural events and in-depth travel experiences, as well as weather forecasts, exchange rates and advice about safety, health etc. All it takes is a phone call and platinum card customer service will have the information for you in next to no time.

The thing is, most people don’t know how to take advantage of these added-value services. According to figures provided by the Taipei office of emergency assistance company Interna-

tional SOS, which has signed contracts with several banks to offer concierge services for more than 10 million platinum card holders in Taiwan, they only receive about 10,000 phone calls a month asking for travel advice, meaning that only about one percent of eligible cardholders avail themselves of this free service each year.

“Actually we don’t just serve the wealthy. We can fix things for ordinary people, too,” says Keynes Chen, general manager of the Taiwan branch of International SOS. Chen recounts how one cardholder called in to say she had heard that a cultural experience of “being Japanese for a day” was being offered in Tokyo. The platinum card concierge checked and found that this free activity really was on offer, and helped make a booking for the client. The cardholder proceeded to take a trip to Japan and try out special experiences like wearing a kimono, and it didn’t cost her a cent.

Chen says there was another cardholder who wanted to stay at Dubai’s sail-shaped Burj al Arab Hotel but couldn’t afford the room rate of NT\$60,000 to NT\$70,000 a night. A platinum card concierge found out that there is a hotel across from the Burj al Arab that shares its beautiful sea view, but whose room rate

is one tenth as expensive, allowing the cardholder to fulfill his dream.

For wealthy people, on the other hand, money is no object when seeking help. Some people have paid over NT\$8,000 extra for someone to go to Taipei’s Longshan Temple and buy a prayer candle with a number near the top of the list, even though the charge for a candle is just NT\$500. When an office worker in her 30s asked the customer service center to buy 30 Hermès Kelly handbags for her, they dispatched people to three major Asian cities to line up and buy the bags. The woman was happy to pay several thousand New Taiwan dollars extra in hourly fees for queuing up.

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY JULIAN CLEGG)

「幫我到龍山寺排隊點光明燈！」「我要買一輛台灣沒進口、價值兩千多萬元（六十二萬兩千美元）的藍寶堅尼跑車！」「幫我到東京、香港排隊買三十個五萬元愛馬仕凱莉包！」只要尊貴卡友開口，白金秘書都使命必達，不少人也樂於付出數千元或數萬元的排隊鐘點費，只求搶到限量商品。

白金秘書也提供免費服務，出國旅遊的行程規劃、參觀景點、交通資訊、表演文化、深度體驗等建議，或是天氣、匯率、安全及健康等資訊，只要一通電話，白金秘書就可迅速提供訊息。

只是這些好康的服務，多數民衆卻不知道善加利用。與國內多家銀行簽定合約、為上千萬名白金卡以上用戶提供白金秘書服務的國際SOS救援組織台北中心統計，每月只有約一萬通旅遊諮詢服務電話，等於每年只有約百分之二的卡友使用這項免費服務。

「其實我們不只為有錢人服務，也為一般人解決疑難雜症！」國際SOS救援組織台灣分公司總經理陳楷植說，曾經有位卡友來電表示，聽說日本京都有「當一天日本人」的文化體驗，白金秘書查詢果然找到這項免費活動，並幫忙預訂，卡友開心赴日旅遊體驗穿和服等特殊經驗，一毛錢也沒花。

陳楷植又說，也有卡友想住杜拜帆船飯店，可是花不起一晚六、七萬元的房價，白金秘書發現帆船飯店對面有一家飯店，同樣有美麗海景，房價只要十分之一，讓卡友一圓夢想。

不過有錢人找白金秘書「相救」則是不計代價，有人為了到龍山寺點光明燈，多花了八千多元買到前端號碼牌，才能用五百元點燈。三十多歲的女性上班族要求買三十個凱莉包，白金秘書動員人力到亞洲三大城市排隊才買齊，這位小姐也樂於額外付出數千元的排隊鐘點費。

(自由時報記者李文儀)

MasterCard Worldwide company staff show off outsized replicas of platinum cards co-branded with six credit cooperatives and featuring well known Taiwanese landmarks at the card launch in Taipei on June 23, 2005.

PHOTO: SUNG CHIH-HSIUNG, LIBERTY TIMES

二〇〇五年六月二十三日，萬事達卡國際組織在台北宣布與全省六家信用合作社推出以台灣知名地標為卡面設計的聯名白金卡；發表會上，萬事達卡國際組織人員展示超大白金卡模型。

照片：自由時報記者宋志雄攝

TODAY'S WORDS

今日單字

1. prayer /prer/ n.

祈禱 (qi2 dao3)

例：The congregation bowed their heads, and were led in prayer by the priest. (會眾低頭，由牧師帶領我們禱告。)

2. concierge /kɒn'sjɜːr/ n.

禮賓員 (li3 bin1 yuan2)

例：The concierge met us at reception and carried our bags to our room. (禮賓員在櫃台接待我們，並幫我們把行李搬到房間。)

3. itinerary /ar'tɪnə,rɪrɪ/ n.

行程規劃 (xing2 cheng2 gui1 hua4)

例：We had to change our itinerary at the last minute when it started to rain. (因為下雨，我們不得不在最後一刻變更行程。)

4. avail...of /ə'vel 'ʌv/ idiom.

利用 (li4 yuan4)

例：Dan decided to avail himself of the hotel's free shuttle service. (丹決定利用旅館的免費接駁服務。)



The son of a well-known Taiwanese entrepreneur asked platinum card customer service to have someone line up in Italy and buy this limited edition Lamborghini sports car, which costs more than NT\$20 million (US\$622,000).

國內一位知名企業家第二代要求白金秘書到義大利幫忙搶購這輛價值新台幣兩千多萬元（六十二萬兩千美元）的限量藍寶堅尼跑車。

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