

# Award-winning bellman puts his customers first

*Edmund "Buster" Civerolo, a bellman at the 1,310-room Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa, was honored last month with the 2009 Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year Stars of the Industry Award (properties more than 300 rooms) by the American Hotel & Lodging Association.*

*Civerolo, 54, was recognized for his positive demeanor, team spirit, personal attention to guests, and commitment to giving back to the community.*



**EDMUND "BUSTER" CIVEROLO**

## Q&A

*"His daily enthusiasm is genuine and infectious, and we're delighted to see him achieve this national recognition," Chris Tatum, the Waikiki Marriott's general manager, said in a statement.*

*Civerolo, who began his bell-service career in 1978 when the Mar-*

*riott was the Hawaiian Regent, spoke with PBN's Chad Blair about his hospitality work.*

### Describe a typical day in the bell-service business.

A typical day would be greeting the guests, checking them in and telling them about the hotel, escorting them to their room, and also checking guests out, making sure they had a pleasant time with us, and wishing them well and hoping they had a good time and will come back in the future.

### Has your job changed over the years?

Yes, sir. At the Marriott, which used to be the Hawaiian Regent, we were used to seeing a lot of group movement, either from Japan or the Mainland, but now it is more like independent travelers, not so much groups.

The groups are much easier, because with very large groups like NCL [Norwegian Cruise Line], which used to have a lot of Japanese groups, you just pack bags, mark them, and take them straight to the rooms before the guests even arrive. But, because of the economy, I guess, things have changed.

### Give some examples of the kind of personal attention that guests appreciate.

Personal attention for guests, for instance, if they are handicapped they need certain assistance, and I try to assist them on and off the hotel.

We have ramps, because the hotel is



CHRISTINA FAILMA PBN

**Bellman Edmund "Buster" Civerolo is seeing more independent travelers and fewer large tour groups at the Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa. He says guests remain generous with their tips, despite the tight economy.**

very well-equipped for handicapped people. But, as I do check some in, some are not able to travel easily, so I try to get things for them, like medication. I will take them to the pharmacy. Or, I go to Walgreens if the guest calls [the prescription] in, and you just run over. And they are quite appreciative. There are not a lot of [handicapped] guests, but we do have a good handful.

The Make-A-Wish program — the Marriott helps a lot with that foundation — [helps] terminally ill people. We try to make their stay very pleasant and enjoyable when they stay with us.

Another example is return guests. They will come, a gentleman and wife who sleep with breathing machines. They need certain things like purified water and so forth, so I make sure upon arrival they have that waiting in the room. And they travel with that machine, which needs alcohol to clean the machine. I make sure they have that waiting for them so they don't have to travel with those things.

### How do you manage to keep such a positive attitude in such a demanding job?

Well, I enjoy what I do. It is always nice because the people that I work with, they are very pleasant and very easy to work with. So, that makes my job easier.

And I am meeting new people every day, which keeps me going very strong-

ly. They are from all over the world, from New York to Japan to Australia. You meet some very interesting people. It's exciting.

### Are guests still generous with tips despite the economy? Are they getting cheap?

No, sir, they are still generous. I guess giving a good smile and the right information helps.

### I understand you find time to help with Marriott's community volunteer work.

That's correct, sir. I enjoy doing the beach cleanup in front of the Marriott, which we do two to three times a year. And then I also participate in the Kewalo Basin beach cleanup once a year, a half-day project. A lot of dignitaries come down and help out, people with the state. It's my way of giving back, because I enjoy surfing [and run marathons] and I like to keep the area clean for when tourists come.

It's sad that the homeless people had to leave Waikiki, but I noticed the tourists are much happier because they don't see that, you know. It was kind of depressing to see that right in Waikiki. It doesn't look too good.

### Are you going to keep working?

Yes, sir. I am not going to retire. I cannot, with all the great people I work with. I enjoy it too much. Aloha.