

Heading to Vail? Let Personal Concierge Mark Dubovy '92 Do the Legwork

A simple, but significant premise guides the work of Mark Dubovy '92: If people are going to spend a lot of money to rent a home or condominium for a week-long vacation, they should have access to the same amenities that a hotel or resort would offer.

With his new venture, Mountain Resort Concierge in Vail, Colorado, Mr. Dubovy offers visitors to Vail and Beaver Creek resort communities a variety of custom amenities, all while fulfilling his goals of living and working in the mountains and catering to what he considers an under-served niche in popular online vacation markets, namely AirBNB, Home Away, and VRBO. He describes his company as "lifestyle management," offering one-stop shopping for vacation needs that range from dining reservations and transportation to ski equipment rentals and groceries. Customers can even arrange for concert tickets, catered dinners, photography, videography, or holiday decorations.

Mr. Dubovy's experience has shown him that travelers, especially those with large families, do not always have time for vacation planning. "It is much easier and more convenient for them to work with one local professional to handle all of their needs and serve as their point person during their trip. It's a solid investment when you are spending a

lot of money on a vacation and don't feel like managing all the details."

So, how did Mr. Dubovy, who has a background in sports/entertainment marketing and worked for companies such as ESPN and Spike TV in New York, decide that he wanted to run a concierge service out West in the mountains? For starters, during his college years in Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, he spent his summers working at resorts in Lake Tahoe and Vail and knew that he loved the area. Second, he is a skier, biker, and hiker, so the lifestyle is a welcome contrast to a corporate existence and the stress of living in a big city. And there are the people. "There is a greater sense of community here, where everyone is looking out for each other and where the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and growing. Instead of relying on your résumé, most people here work on reputation and relationships, and I think that is a good foundation to build a small business on."

For those who think his business might thrive only in the winter when it snows in Vail—think again! "Vail has grown exponentially over the past few years and has established itself as an international, year-round tourist destination," Mr. Dubovy says. "The city has invested a lot in a diverse range of seasonal events. Whether it's the Burton US Open [snowboarding], Taste of Vail [springtime food and wine festival], Bravo! Vail [summertime classical music



festival], GoPro Mountain Games [summertime celebration of adventure sports, art, and music], or Vail Oktoberfest, not to mention amazing hiking, mountain biking, and fishing, Vail has become a haven for sports, culture, entertainment, and epicurean delights."

Interestingly, Mr. Dubovy's biggest challenge when starting his business was to secure general business liability insurance. "Many companies didn't want to insure me because personal concierge service is a new field, there's no official designation for it, and they didn't understand my business structure. It was a long process to explain that my business is low risk, since I work only with licensed and insured vendors, and to educate them that I operate similarly to a travel agency or personal assistant," he says. His second-biggest challenge was to find the right business partners to serve as vendors. "I need their personalities and dedication to customer service to match my expectations for exceptional, personal, custom-designed experiences."

One of Mr. Dubovy's most memorable compliments came from a couple celebrating their 15th wedding anniversary last summer: "According to them, I was able to hit a home run on all of their requests. When you have a satisfied customer like that, that is all you can ask for."

Visit Mountain Resort Concierge at mountainresortconcierge.com. 



Vail has become a year-round tourist destination for lovers of outdoor activities, culture, and more.