

Expect the Unexpected

The alarm went off at 5:00 A.M., but David knew he couldn't hit the snooze button. It was going to be a busy day and he wanted to be at work by 6:30 A.M. The hotel was full, and a large convention group was checking out with an even bigger group checking in that afternoon. As the assistant general manager of a large downtown hotel, David prided himself on the quality of service his staff delivered to each guest every day. Although his employees were well trained, he liked to be on hand, especially on busy days, to help out where needed.

As he rubbed his eyes and looked out the window, he stared in disbelief and his mind began to race. It was snowing and the parking lot in front of his apartment was covered with snow. If he had been living in the North, where snow was common, this would not have been a problem, but he lived in Georgia, where snow was a novelty. Could he get to work? Could his employees get to work? Would the airport be open?

The drive to the hotel that morning was a little nerve-racking, but he made it. While he listened to the radio on the way to work, he groaned. The city buses would not be running today and unseasonably cold weather was still in the forecast. Everyone was being encouraged to stay home, and several "fender benders" had already been reported.

When he arrived at the hotel, he was relieved to see that some of the kitchen staff had made it. He asked the night auditor and front desk employees if they would stay a few extra hours and help out. Several other employees had arrived after braving the slick streets and sidewalks, but the calls were starting to come in from many more employees who were not able to get to work. By 7:00 A.M., the lobby was beginning to fill with guests, and a line had formed in front of the coffee shop.

This may not be a typical day in the life of a hotelier, but David had learned to expect the unexpected. The day was still young, and there were sure to be many more challenges. Solving problems, meeting needs, training employees, and being an active part of the community kept his job from being anything but dull.



The Stanley Hotel, Estes Park, Colorado, just one of many lodging choices. Photo by C. A. Cook