

Raja-lynn Lacuesta  
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### Clerks of Longs at Ewa Town Center

Do you need help finding something? Are you looking for anything in particular? Have you found everything alright? How can I help you? These are just a few questions that the clerks of the Longs in Ewa ask nearly everyday to almost every customer. Clerks at Longs Ewa Town Center work very hard to maintain a welcoming atmosphere. Although at times things may get rough, they always find a way to get back on schedule. The clerks at Longs in Ewa are hard working individuals who have to multi-task at everything that they do. From restocking to cashiering and everything in between they have to do it all.

#### **First Impression**

When first walking into Longs seeing clerks restocking shelves and cashiers ringing people out are very common, but what makes it so different is that the employees are have made a lot of personal and professional relationships with many customers. Their friendliness is what makes the clerks here at Longs in Ewa so unique when compared to other Hawaii Longs Drug Stores and their employees. When seeing two employees talk to each other whether about work or personal business, it's not hard to see how close each employee is. One of the first people who I met was Deanna. She explained that the reason why she doesn't work at a Longs' closer to her house (she lives in Waianae) is because at any other Longs it doesn't feel as welcoming and because the employees are more like a family rather than co-workers. After three months of working here I find that to be true.

#### **Sales, Schedules, and Attendance**

At Longs Drug Stores there are certain ways that things are run in each store. Each Longs has Sunday sales, Wednesday sales, in-store specials, Value Book sales, rotating schedules, and strict attendance. Every week, two different sale ads are posted in the newspaper at different times which advertise the Sunday and Wednesday sales. From what I observed the day before each sale the clerks must move items to “basic” and “display” items that are on sale. “Basic” means that the items go into the aisles and “display” means that the items go on the front flats, middle aisle, and in place that is easy for customers to find and look at. Value Book sale is a sale that happens every month. A yellow booklet containing all the sell items are released, these booklets are called Value Books. During Value Book sales the process of stocking and moving items are the same, but instead of lasting only three days like the weekly sales the value book sales lasts for a week. Sunday the first day of the Value Book sale is usually the busiest. Customers are so eager to purchase the sale items that they wait outside before the store even opens (the store opens at seven in the morning). All sales except the in-store specials are the same in every Longs Drugs Store in Hawaii. The schedules are not set; schedules are rotating so that everyone has different days off and different working hours. Rotating the schedule seems fair, but when the staff is short or people call in sick that is when things get bumpy. From Carlo’s point of view “when someone calls in sick we have to work harder because we have to pick up their slack.” For the clerks of Ewa Longs they are assigned certain duties to fulfill during their scheduled times and when one does not show up they all have to pick up the slack. There are many rules that must be followed here at Longs and of the most important rule that is kind of hard to not break is attendance. Attendance is very strict. The attendance is run on a point system. Being one minute or five minutes and calls in means that it equals a half point. For every time an employee does not show up and does not call equals two points. There are

many rules and procedures to follow as well, but the clerks who work at Longs keep up the good attendance without delay.

### **Daily Duties**

When on the clock the clerks have daily duties that they must accomplish such are, but not limited to restocking, tagging/labeling, grabbing carts, assisting managers, sweeping, cashiering, and answering “customer service” calls. Of all the duties, the most prominent are restocking and labeling. As customers grab items off the shelves, the clerks are constantly straightening and restocking. In order for the store to prosper the shelves must always be stocked with up-to-date, undamaged, and correctly labeled items. Restocking and labeling are the main point of their job. Grabbing carts, assisting managers, cashiering, and answering “customer service” calls are some what of a drag for most of the clerks because it takes them away from completing things that need to be completed. James, a full time clerk, looks at grabbing carts as a time to relax a little, but for courtesy clerks it’s the most irritating part of their job besides sweeping the store. When clerks assist managers what they do is called “pick.” A “pick” is when the managers go around to each cash register and empty out the Reno bins which are little slots in the check stand counter which is where we insert hundred dollar bills, fifty dollar bills, and extra twenty dollar bills. They also check to see if the cashiers only keep 10 twenty dollars bills under their draw, if not the cashier will get a few verbal warnings and then written up. When cashiers call in sick or when it gets really busy clerks who have been previously trained must cashier. Even though some clerks might not like cashiering it is actually beneficial because if the customer has a question about something the clerk who is cashiering might be able to answer them accordingly. Since the cashiers don’t usually go on the floor they won’t know where exactly everything is or how much a certain item is. When cashiers need a

price check, need to know where a certain item is, or when a customer needs help carrying things out they always call a clerk for assistance. The only clerks that are somewhat exempt from restocking and labeling items are the courtesy clerks because they are underage. The employee must be at least 18 years of age in order to restock items because Longs sells tobacco and liquor. Courtesy clerk's duties are to grab carts, sweeping each aisle, straightening and putting away returns. Kiara, a courtesy clerk, hates putting away returns especially when there are so many and she's the only courtesy clerk working. Though sometimes there are extra cashiers who help put away returns. Clerks daily duties can get quite stressful especially when there is a Value Book sale, but like Rhonda, a full time clerk says, "just keep doing have you have to do."

### **Off the Clock**

When the clerks are off the clock they are usually on their ten minute breaks, hour breaks (depending on the time its either dinner or lunch), scheduled off, just clocked out, or waiting to clock in. From observations, majority of the clerks usually come to work about five to ten minutes before they start. Deanna, Rhonda, Monique, Kristen (which are all full time clerks) usually cam in about an hour to an hour and a half early just to prepare themselves for what needs to be done. If the clerks do have time before work they would usually socialize in the lounge or see what they have been scheduled to do for that day. An employee would receive a ten minute break if you are scheduled to work only a five hour shift. If an employee is scheduled to work an 8 hour shift they would receive two ten minute breaks and one hour break. Full time clerks always work 8 hour shifts so they receive the two ten minute breaks and a one hour lunch. Part time clerks usually work 8 and 5 hour shifts. Courtesy clerks usually work five hour shifts which they are only allowed ten minutes. A new courtesy clerk by the name of Devin does not like only having a ten minute break because it doesn't give him enough time to eat a "real meal"

(which to him is not anything that is considered a snack). Kim, a part time clerk also disagrees with the short ten minute break she says, “It only gives you enough time to just use the bathroom.” During the hour breaks most of the clerks eat their lunch or dinner. Clerks would buy food from a near by restaurant or bring food from home. After work clerks sometimes make plans to get together at a co-workers house or plan a night out. Recently, most of the clerks have been going bowling at Leeward bowl after work. Leeward bowl is usually open until 2 am so it gives them time to bowl couple of games, but once their games are done they usually head to Miki’s, a late-night drive in. It is here that the clerks usually have their chats and get to know each other better. Although on some nights they would go out clubbing or “cruising around” meaning they would drive around finding a place to go. On days when they are scheduled off you would see clerks with their families, significant other, or themselves shopping for various items. Clerks of the Longs in Ewa not only hang out with others from different departments and different parts of the store. Basically, clerks of Longs in Ewa Town Center never really just hang out with clerks only, but they get along with everyone in the store and most times get together.

### **Perspectives from New clerks and Old clerks**

From all the interviews and observations what stuck out the most was the difference in perspectives between the new clerks and old clerks. The old clerks (which whom have been working at Longs for awhile) see their life in a different way and stress about things in differently from the new clerks. The old clerks seem to put more effort into their job because this is their living. The new clerks are much younger then the old clerks and see their job as stepping stone to something better. New clerks usually stress about school, parents, etc. Old clerks usually stress about their job like how the new clerks stress about school, parents, etc.

Most of the clerks who have been here needed a job to support their family and Longs has great benefits. The new clerks would say that they are just saving for tuition or a car; then they are going to find another job that pays more. Seeing the difference between the two gives you a whole new perspective on its like to depend on this job for a living and what its like to depend on this job for spending cash.

All in all, being a clerk at Longs in Ewa Town Center is a challenging job that comes with the same amount of stress and physical activity as almost any other job. From weekly sales to time off the clock the clerks are always work hard and having fun. Although their job may get stressful they stick what they have to do until their job is done. Multi-tasking is a big part of a clerk's job because they need to restock, then in a second they have to be a cashier, then in another second they need to assist a manager, and then in another second they have to help a customer with their groceries or help a customer over the phone. If a person is not good at multi-tasking and following strict attendance then they would not last to long. Longs clerks here at Ewa Town Center are hard, multi-tasking workers who always put their 110% percent into their jobs even when under stress.