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WAIT LIFTERS

IMPATIENT N.Y.ERS PAY PROFESSIONALS TO STAND IN LINE

By REED TUCKER



Melissa Keefe, director of a company called RequestWorks, gets paid to stand in line for others - in this case, for Broadway tickets at the TKTS booth.

Photo: J. Scott Wynn

July 20, 2006 -- NEW Yorkers are busy. Busy and impatient. We're so busy and impatient, that more and more of us simply can't wait.

For anything.

Waiting, it turns out, is one more thing you can pay people to do.

Enter the for-hire personal assistant, an hourly admin mercenary who's happy to perform various mundane tasks so you don't have to, including personal shopping, scheduling travel and the all-important trudging-around-various-snaking-lines-as-your-proxy.

What at first sounds decadent all of a sudden starts to make sense. Life in New York can sometimes feel like nothing more than a series of lines - short lines that take seconds (the bodega), long lines that take days (the DMV), short lines that should take seconds but end up taking days (pretty much any Duane Reade).

Most of us would rather catch Naomi Campbell's cellphone with our face than visit the New York's DMV more than

once a lifetime, but those who stand in line for a living claim that, with a good book and a cellphone, waiting is actually tolerable.

"It's not that frustrating," says Melissa Keefe, owner of errand-running service RequestWorks, who once waited at the Indian consulate for multiple hours for four days in a row trying to land a client a visa.

"It's a lot different standing in line for a client than standing in line for yourself. I know how busy my clients are, and it feels good that I'm saving them time."

Hey, whatever it takes to get you through the day.