

Aotea Gifts Press Release

10/06/16

Social Media Saves Tourist

Aotea Gifts has a WeChat* account that regularly interacts with their customers, sharing New Zealand products, facts and culture. At 4.41pm on Thursday afternoon, they answered a slightly different query: a distress call from a previous customer and tourist, Yuan, lost on Queenstown Hill.

Having shopped at Aotea Gifts on Wednesday, Yuan added the store on WeChat.

On a walk along the Queenstown Hill track on Thursday afternoon, she found herself lost off the track, with no one else in New Zealand to contact. It was getting dark, and cold, and the tourist could not see or recognise any reference points. She messaged Aotea Gifts for help, and WeChat customer service consultant, Victor Li, who was based in Auckland, instantly responded.

Initially, Victor suggested she call local police using '111', however she was using her iPad and was unable to make calls. He then suggested the tourist send her real-time location through WeChat, but was unable to due to a weak internet connection. Yuan sent photos of her surroundings and was told to stay calm, while Victor put her in touch with Lucia Hao, from the Aotea Gifts Queenstown team.

Once connected with the stranded customer on WeChat, Lucia kept her company and let Yuan know help was on the way. Rayna Calder, Acting Store Manager, called and informed the Queenstown police, who visited the Aotea Gifts store, on 87 Beach St.

With police present, voice messages were made to work out the tourist's location. Police then updated the Search and Rescue Team (SAR) with the details needed to locate Yuan, now lost in the dark. She was told to shine her iPad torch when she heard a helicopter approaching, and through this method and WeChat, the tourist was able to let police know where she was in relation to the helicopter.

The SAR team found Yuan safe and well around 8.30pm.

The power of the local police and rescue team, Aotea Gifts and social media app WeChat helped bring the tourist to safety.

Yuan thanked the Aotea Gifts team, exclaiming that they were her only New Zealand contact, and she really appreciated all their help.

Police SAR co-ordinator Julian Cahill commented “without establishing communications, she could have quite easily ended up spending the night out on the hill”.

Julian Bottaro, General Manager of Aotea Gifts is “so happy and proud of our team, going above and beyond to look after a customer and help a tourist in need. The power of social media has been highlighted in a very positive way, and we are very relieved that through our WeChat channel, Yuan is safe and able to enjoy the rest of her time in Queenstown.”

**WeChat is a social media messaging app with over 650 million monthly active users, with the majority of users based in China.*

About Aotea Gifts:

Aotea Gifts is the ultimate place for travellers to encapsulate their New Zealand memories, and also share them as gifts with others.

We carry the best of New Zealand fashion, skincare, healthcare as well as homewares and lifestyle products. Aotea Gifts provides a diverse range of high quality and New Zealand made merchandise and brands, and we also exclusively stock a number of brands and product ranges. This offers unlimited choices for every customer, to ensure our customer has a unique New Zealand shopping experience.

Aotea Gifts has been in Queenstown, on 87 Beach Street since 1988. The company was established in 1979 with our first store in Auckland. We have 8 stores around the country and are 100% New Zealand family owned and operated, with the mission to share the very best of New Zealand with the world.

www.aoteanz.com

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