

The art of superior service

Interviewed for *Qryx Premium*
by Greg Sunning



Michelin restaurant general manager, TV presenter, and all-round customer service perfectionist Fred Sirieix reveals the inside track on how to give and get excellent service.

On the 28th floor of the London Hilton hotel on Park Lane, Fred Sirieix has presided over the Michelin-starred Galvin at Windows restaurant as general manager for the last 10 years. Having founded and presented British TV series *Michel Roux's Service* alongside acclaimed chef Michel Roux Jr. and, more lately, a restaurant-based blind date TV series, Fred's role is a pivotal one, matchmaking the efforts of the kitchen with the most demanding of guests.

"The word 'service' means much more than service," says Fred. "It's about hospitality, about the way you make people feel, and the bonds and connections that you share with people. There are no grey areas in service – either people like what they get, or they don't."



"Great service comes from a desire to please the customer and to put them first. If they are satisfied they will come back and tell their friends, and our staff can feed their families. If they don't come back, you can't feed your family. This is why I take it very personally, because it's about who I am as a person. If I say, 'we're going to give great service' and I don't do it, then I'm a fraud. I just can't be that person."

"My company, The Art of Service, started working with brands who more often than not are outside the hospitality industry. I do a lot with the car industry because the values of service apply whatever sector or business. It's about seeing and understanding the customer journey and being able to identify each and every touchpoint. Once I have these, I make sure I understand how we must deliver it, so that each time the customer feels special and that they have come to the right place. Because it's the only way to add value."

"When you think about your brand or business, you need to think about what you stand for and what you want to be remembered for. That's why they're called values, because they are the minimum standard. If you cannot deliver your values when you are quiet or busy, then your values are wrong and you need to rethink your business model."

"You have to be determined and resilient. You have to have the skill and the will, but the will is more important than the skill. You need to have vision and standards, but they're only as good as the people who are going to deliver them."

"At the door, you want someone who is going to see, smile, and say hello to the customer before they do. Only this way can you build a sense of trust with the customer and make them believe you. They will only believe you – not because of what you say in a mission statement on a website – but because actions speak louder than words."

"Life is short. Making staff understand that whatever you do, do your best at everything you do: that's what I teach people who come to me – let's do it right, and afterwards it's going to be all good." 🍷

FRED SIRIEIX ON RECEIVING SERVICE

"As a customer, I don't mind mistakes. I never have. I just cannot stand negligence. A mistake happens once, twice, even three times. But negligence happens when you don't care and your heart is just not there. So why are you there in the first place, wasting my time, wasting my money? It's just not something I can tolerate or accept."