# How Will Guidara’s unreasonable hospitality is redefining client service beyond the restaurant world



When failure becomes the stepping stone to profound success, remarkable transformations can occur. Will Guidara, a renowned restaurateur, experienced this firsthand during a life-altering moment in a London auditorium. At the World’s 50 Best Restaurants awards ceremony, his celebrated establishment, Eleven Madison Park, was announced as the last in a prestigious ranking. The sight of that moment, as he later recalled, was akin to “getting kicked in the groin.” Yet, this pivotal experience ignited a revolutionary shift in his outlook on hospitality and customer service.

Instead of adhering to traditional metrics of culinary excellence, which typically focus solely on food quality, Guidara resolved to adopt an unconventional strategy. He articulated a new philosophy, which he dubbed “unreasonable hospitality,” centred on fostering genuine connections with customers. This shift recognised that emotional engagement often outweighs mere technical perfection in service industries.

A defining moment came one busy lunch when Guidara overheard a group of European tourists lamenting their missed opportunity to taste a genuine New York hot dog. Taking a bold step, he dashed outside, purchased a $2 hot dog from a street vendor, and had it artfully plated by his Michelin-starred chef. The delighted reaction from the tourists transcended anything he had witnessed throughout his extensive career. “I’ve never seen anyone react the way they did when I served them that $2 hot dog,” he shared, highlighting how this seemingly simple gesture embodied profound lessons about attentiveness, humility, and personalised service.

For professionals in real estate, this perspective offers invaluable insights. Guidara illustrated how one agent distinguished themselves by paying meticulous attention to the personal lives of clients, studying photographs of a home during showings and stocking their new refrigerator with favourite items captured in those images. This level of care turns what is typically a transactional relationship into one that builds trust, loyalty, and long-term advocacy. “It is impersonal, it is lazy, and it is bad business,” Guidara asserted, critiquing the prevalent norm of giving generic gifts, like a bottle of sparkling wine, to clients.

The success of Eleven Madison Park was not merely the result of grand gestures but stemmed from identifying “recurring moments” within the dining experience. These moments, such as couples getting engaged or families celebrating milestones, provided opportunities for innovative service. For instance, through a collaboration with Tiffany & Co, Guidara’s team created custom champagne flutes specifically for newly engaged couples, turning even routine acknowledgements into unforgettable memories.

In the real estate sector, similar moments are ripe for the taking: first-time buyers, empty nesters, or families expanding their homes are all opportunities for agents to forge deep emotional connections through thoughtful, idea-driven gestures. Being present, in this context, requires an unfiltered focus on clients, allowing realtors to put aside distractions of the digital age and engage with clients genuinely.

Guidara’s transformative approach also emphasised the necessity of hiring individuals for their interpersonal qualities rather than solely their professional qualifications. By reallocating responsibilities to team members based on passion and character, he empowered them to take ownership of their roles. This reorganisation led to a notable turnaround in the restaurant's performance, culminating in multiple awards and, a decade later, the coveted title of the best restaurant globally.

As the real estate market becomes increasingly competitive, the clarity of Guidara's message resonates: while thorough knowledge of properties and market dynamics is undoubtedly essential, the agents who succeed will be those who can make their clients feel genuinely respected and cherished. In a business centred around life’s significant moments, this personalised human touch is not merely beneficial—it is the crux of long-lasting client relationships and the gateway to a thriving career.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://eliteagent.com/what-a-2-hot-dog-can-teach-real-estate-agents-about-unforgettable-service/), [[4]](https://howleaderslead.com/leaders/186/will-guidara/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://eliteagent.com/what-a-2-hot-dog-can-teach-real-estate-agents-about-unforgettable-service/), [[2]](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/674289/unreasonable-hospitality-by-will-guidara/), [[3]](https://www.theceomagazine.com/business/management-leadership/will-guidara/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.opentable.com/blog/unreasonable-hospitality-lessons-will-guidara//), [[7]](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/eleven-madison-park-partners-on-new-ventures-and-journey-to-worlds-best-restaurant/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://eliteagent.com/what-a-2-hot-dog-can-teach-real-estate-agents-about-unforgettable-service/), [[5]](https://passionstruck.com/will-guidara-mastering-unreasonable-hospitality/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://eliteagent.com/what-a-2-hot-dog-can-teach-real-estate-agents-about-unforgettable-service/), [[3]](https://www.theceomagazine.com/business/management-leadership/will-guidara/), [[7]](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/eleven-madison-park-partners-on-new-ventures-and-journey-to-worlds-best-restaurant/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://passionstruck.com/will-guidara-mastering-unreasonable-hospitality/), [[6]](https://www.opentable.com/blog/unreasonable-hospitality-lessons-will-guidara//)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://eliteagent.com/what-a-2-hot-dog-can-teach-real-estate-agents-about-unforgettable-service/), [[6]](https://www.opentable.com/blog/unreasonable-hospitality-lessons-will-guidara//)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://eliteagent.com/what-a-2-hot-dog-can-teach-real-estate-agents-about-unforgettable-service/), [[3]](https://www.theceomagazine.com/business/management-leadership/will-guidara/), [[7]](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/eleven-madison-park-partners-on-new-ventures-and-journey-to-worlds-best-restaurant/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://eliteagent.com/what-a-2-hot-dog-can-teach-real-estate-agents-about-unforgettable-service/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/674289/unreasonable-hospitality-by-will-guidara/> - Will Guidara's book, 'Unreasonable Hospitality,' explores how his restaurant, Eleven Madison Park, transformed from a struggling establishment to the world's top-ranked restaurant by focusing on exceptional, personalized service. Guidara emphasizes the importance of creating memorable experiences for guests through thoughtful gestures and genuine connections, illustrating that success in the hospitality industry comes from prioritizing people over product.
3. <https://www.theceomagazine.com/business/management-leadership/will-guidara/> - In an interview with The CEO Magazine, Will Guidara discusses the concept of 'unreasonable hospitality,' which involves pursuing relationships with creativity and intention. He shares insights on how this approach led to Eleven Madison Park's success, highlighting the significance of listening to guests and making specific, thoughtful gestures to enhance their experience.
4. <https://howleaderslead.com/leaders/186/will-guidara/> - Will Guidara recounts a pivotal moment at Eleven Madison Park when he overheard European tourists lamenting they hadn't tried a New York hot dog. He purchased one from a street cart, had it plated elegantly, and served it to them, leading to an overwhelmingly positive reaction. This incident underscored the impact of personalized, attentive service in creating memorable dining experiences.
5. <https://passionstruck.com/will-guidara-mastering-unreasonable-hospitality/> - In a Passion Struck podcast episode, Will Guidara discusses mastering the art of human connection to create 'unreasonable hospitality.' He shares how focusing on building intentional connections and providing exceptional service can lead to memorable experiences for customers, emphasizing that true hospitality goes beyond just providing a service.
6. <https://www.opentable.com/blog/unreasonable-hospitality-lessons-will-guidara//> - OpenTable highlights five lessons from Will Guidara's book 'Unreasonable Hospitality,' including the idea that hospitality is for everyone, setting lofty goals, and sharing credit. Guidara emphasizes that creating a hospitality-first culture can lead to improved business outcomes, and that setting ambitious goals and sharing credit with the team are key to success.
7. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/eleven-madison-park-partners-on-new-ventures-and-journey-to-worlds-best-restaurant/> - CBS News profiles Will Guidara and his journey with Eleven Madison Park, detailing how the restaurant's focus on personalized service, such as serving a New York hot dog to guests who hadn't tried one, contributed to its rise to the top of the World's 50 Best Restaurants list. The article highlights the importance of going beyond traditional fine dining to create memorable experiences.