

IN MY VIEW

Live and learn

Senior FCSI Associate **Simon Cousin** is head of projects at BEGC in Nantes, France. Here, he tells us about his life, career and why he never stops learning

BEGC specialise in designing professional kitchens for hotels and the catering industry, but also for schools, hospitals and company restaurants. We lead projects from the first kitchen sketch to completion.

In my career I've learnt that the most important thing is to listen to people. It's also important to stay focused on the needs of customers in order to meet their requirements. We try to make proposals that match their expectations.

I enjoy the diversity of the sector. I work on different projects and each one has its own specificity. Every day is different and brings me something new.

When I was a child, I cooked a lot with my parents. I wanted to be a chef and have my own restaurant.

I first studied at ISTHIA (Institut Supérieur du Tourisme de l'Hôtellerie et de l'Alimentation - The Higher Institute of Tourism, Hospitality and Food) in Toulouse. You never stop learning, so every day I learn from feedback.

As a student, I attended a lecture by a consultant and it made me want to do the same job. I did several internships during my schooling. After that I joined the BEGC team, working with senior consultants where I continued to learn a lot before 'diving' into this job.

I am proud of being a member of FCSI. It facilitates meeting people and exchanging ideas with fellow members, in France, Europe and everywhere.

The biggest challenge the sector has to face now is the constant change in consumption habits, especially among younger people. Other challenges are ethical and environmental considerations.

For consultants, the challenges are being responsive, innovative and continuing to design ever more multifunctional kitchens. Another challenge we have to face is finding new collaborators. In France, not many people have heard about our profession, for example.

My advice to younger consultants is always try to be creative and don't implement pre-conceived solutions. Every customer is different, so every project is different.

I like to relax by reading novels and collecting comic books. I also love to spend time with my family and my friends. ■

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