

# Managing Services

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This book is the outcome of the collegial activities of many academics in the School of Management at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia. From its conception to eventual publication, school colleagues have enthusiastically and tirelessly worked to produce an innovative and high-quality text for both students and industry professionals. The following contributors deserve special recognition:

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The rapid rise of global services during the last few decades is without doubt one of the most challenging social, cultural, political and, especially, economic forces in almost all countries in the world. It has been the outcome of the combined influences of the decline of the more traditional agricultural and manufacturing sectors; the development of new technologies including telecommunications, information technology, nano-technology, and biotechnology; and changes in the expectations of consumers.

While in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, China and India services are a major economic and social influence, other regional nations are (to varying degrees) dependent on them for their very survival. In Singapore, for example, the absence of physical resources and disproportionately high education levels has ensured the economic dominance of services, and Thailand's tourism sector has long exceeded rice production as an export income earner.

The multifaceted nature of services has spawned a broad range of opportunities and challenges for their strategic management, including the delineation of their parameters; analyses of their broad global contexts; determination of their 'stakeholders'; the definition and quantification of 'service' dimensions, qualities and measures; and the applications of all of these issues to their integrated management functions, including marketing, operations, financial and human resource management.

Management issues discussed in the book include the difficulty of defining 'services', given their varied and diverse nature; their inherent 'vulnerability', and opportunities for greater sustainability; the management of multiple stakeholders; 'service quality' management; and the development of an integrated service management (ISM) model, which provides the framework for the book. The book's distinct difference from competitive texts lies in its strategic management (rather than marketing) perspective, and its Asia-Pacific regional (rather than northern hemispheric) focus.

The book addresses all of these issues through comprehensive theoretical and applied frameworks, accompanied by a very broad range of regional industry examples, case studies and student exercises. It also reflects the views and experiences of an esoteric collection of academic colleagues from the School of Management at Curtin University of Technology.

We hope that the book will enthuse students and professionals in their management of services, and stimulate their further development of the numerous opportunities and challenges.

Alan R. Nankervis  
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