

Managing Services

The rapid increase in global services during the last few decades is without doubt one of the most challenging social, cultural, political and, especially, economic forces of our time. Services have supplanted agriculture, manufacturing and resources as the primary source of international competitive advantage in many countries, providing wealth, employment and almost unlimited future opportunities for growth, whether in traditional or more innovative forms. The complex nature, stakeholders and interrelationships of the global services sector have provided a broad range of opportunities and challenges for its strategic management, including conceptual, definitional, contextual and implementation issues.

This book explores the strategic management of services through an Integrated Services Management Model which links operational, marketing, financial and human resource management functions within a broad and diverse collection of international, regional and local service contexts. It contains numerous case examples, student projects and exercises, designed to illustrate common problems and innovative approaches, with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific and Australasian regions.

Cambridge University Press
0521606519 - Managing Services
Edited by Alan Nankervis
Frontmatter
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Curtin University of Technology*



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
0521606519 - Managing Services
Edited by Alan Nankervis
Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521606516

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First published 2005

Printed in China through Everbest

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

National Library of Australia Cataloguing in Publication data

Managing services.

ISBN-13 978-0-521-60651-6 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-60651-9 paperback

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 60651 9.

ISBN 9 78052160 6516.

1. Management science – Australia. I. Nankervis, Alan R.

658.00994

ISBN-13 978-0-521-60651-6 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-60651-9 paperback

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Contributors

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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In addition, Dr Helen Singleton deserves our deep appreciation for her patient, but rigorous, editing of draft chapters; as does Glen Sheldon of Cambridge University Press for his support of the project.

Preface

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
March 2005

Acknowledgements

Our appreciation is expressed to the authors and publishers for permission to reprint the following illustrative excerpts:

Chapter 1

- p. 10: Ellis, E. 2002, 'Air Asia: No-frills seeker', *The Australian*, 24 September, pp. 21–2.
pp. 13–14: Mills, K. 2004, 'E-loans cut bank paper trail', *The Australian*, 27 March, p. 25.
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pp. 291–4: Gurowka, J. 2000, ‘Sun Life Insurance – A case study: Activity based costing implementation’, *Focus Magazine for the Performance Management Professional*, *The Economic Times*, New Delhi.

Cambridge University Press
0521606519 - Managing Services
Edited by Alan Nankervis
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xiv Acknowledgements

pp. 294–7: Cagan, P. 2001, 'HIH Insurance: A case study', E-Risk Publication, November. Retrieved from <www.erisk.com/Learning/CaseStudies/HHCaseStudy.pdf>.

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