S Research Priorities ● *for the* Science *of*
Service

CENTER *for* **SERVICES LEADERSHIP**

ASU® W. P. CAREY
SCHOOL *of* BUSINESS

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Executive Summary

Evolving business models and emerging academic paradigms suggest that "all businesses are service businesses." Services have become a driving force in economies around the world: they dominate advanced economies and represent critical growth levers for emerging economies. This growth, coupled with the complex nature of services, has created significant opportunities and challenges for businesses worldwide as they seek to compete and innovate through service. As a result, governments, academic institutions and businesses are calling for increased focus on building a science of service. Ideally, this new science will direct and support emerging business models, innovations, and service paradigms that will shape our world for generations to come.

Despite the need and enthusiastic global response, the efforts to create a science of service have been dispersed and fragmented. The time seems ripe for a cohesive effort to establish priorities and build a foundation for the science of service going forward.

This backdrop led us at Arizona State University's Center for Services Leadership (CSL) to spearhead an effort to identify global, interdisciplinary, and business-relevant priorities for the science of service. The results of this effort are presented in this report and the associated *Journal of Service Research* article[1]. It is our hope that the priorities will drive discussions, decisions, and investments within and across academia, business, and governments to build thought leadership and direct business practice.

To develop the priorities, we secured diverse inputs from over 300 business executives and academics from a variety of disciplines, functions, and geographies. These rich inputs led to 10 overarching priorities for the science of service:

- Fostering Service Infusion and Growth,
- Improving Well-Being through Transformative Service,
- Creating and Maintaining a Service Culture,
- Stimulating Service Innovation,
- Enhancing Service Design,
- Optimizing Service Networks and Value Chains,
- Effectively Branding and Selling Services,
- Enhancing the Service Experience through Co-creation,
- Measuring and Optimizing the Value of Service, and
- Leveraging Technology to Advance Service.

Within each priority, we identified high-value topic areas to inform and direct research activities at a finer-grained level. We also secured commentaries on each of the priorities from service-minded executives and academics which feature high-value questions needing attention. All of this is included in the report that follows.

We strongly encourage you to digest, share, discuss, use, and revisit the priorities and select topic areas. We hope these priorities will enable you to enhance your strategic emphases and support your service innovation efforts. We do not expect all priorities to be relevant and meaningful to every company, organization or individual. Yet, we hope the report will broaden your perspective and accelerate the advancement of services in your company and with your customers.

[1] For more depth and detail around this effort and each of the priorities, please see: Ostrom, Amy L., Mary Jo Bitner, Stephen W. Brown, Kevin A. Burkhard, Michael Goul, Vicki Smith-Daniels, Haluk Demirkan, and Elliot Rabinovich (2010), "Moving Forward and Making a Difference: Research Priorities for the Science of Service," *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (1), 4-36.

The Process Behind the Priorities

The Center for Services Leadership carried out an 18-month effort to bring together the diverse perspectives of business and academia to establish a set of jointly valuable and beneficial service research and innovation priorities for the field. It is important to note that these priorities are not only specific to the CSL and our member companies. Rather they are broad-based and resonate across disciplines, functions, and industry sectors.

In terms of approach, we focused on three key principles. First, we knew that we needed a broad leadership team with rich and diverse expertise to shape and drive this effort. Second, we understood the need to secure inputs and participation from a wide variety of service-minded individuals in order to address the broad field. Finally, we realized that we could only arrive at well-vetted and supported priorities by taking an iterative approach – i.e., one that makes ongoing enhancements to the evolving priorities by seeking and incorporating feedback.

With these principles in mind, we assembled a diverse leadership team, including multiple thought leaders from marketing, supply chain management, operations, and information systems. This eight-member leadership team designed the multi-phase process shown in Figure 1 and began fleshing out and executing each of the successive phases. Through the process, the team secured inputs from over 300 business executives and academics from a variety of disciplines, functions, and geographies. We identified the priorities and are communicating them in a variety of ways, including this report. For more information on the methods and contributors, please refer to the Appendix.

Figure 1: Service Research Priorities Multi-Phase Process

Phase 1: **Secure Diverse Inputs** → **Phase 2:** **Develop Research Priorities** → **Phase 3:** **Communicate Priorities Broadly** → **Support Research**

Broad Themes Emerging from the Effort

Beyond the priorities themselves, six broad themes emerged through the process of gathering diverse inputs. These themes provide a higher-level, strategic view of the priorities and a context for digesting, sharing, discussing, using, and revisiting service science priorities and associated activities. The themes are the:

Need for Interdisciplinary Research
Despite the inherent challenges of interdisciplinary work, there is broad consensus that the truly unique and most valuable insights will come from bringing together diverse expertise and perspectives around real world opportunities and challenges.

Shift to a Service-Based Mindset
Making strides in using service or customer logic as opposed to goods logic is critical for success in a world where "all businesses are service businesses." This means focusing on customers, delivering value-in-use and co-creating value with customers and partners. Within academia, this mindset is referred to as service-dominant logic[2] and is critical in helping break strong goods-based paradigms.

Trend Toward Globalization
Advances in technology will continue to break down physical geographical barriers associated with service. In an interconnected world where services can be delivered and experienced across borders, it is important for executives and researchers to consider new opportunities for growth and research.

Underrepresentation of Business-to-Business Research
Existing service knowledge is dominated by a business-to-consumer focus. Yet, complex service opportunities and challenges are everywhere in business markets and need the attention of service-minded researchers and business leaders to ensure they are captured and addressed.

Emergence of Transformative Service
Service-focused academics and executives alike see the need to focus on improving quality of life and well-being through services. There is a shared view that we should broaden our focus beyond improving firm and customer outcomes to include outcomes tied to community and societal well-being.

Importance of Technology for Service
Technology is having a significant impact in shaping every aspect of service. This theme will likely grow even stronger over time as technologies improve and evolve and technology-based disciplines and functions get more involved in the service field.

While most of these themes are not surprises, they are absolutely critical to keep in mind as future service research efforts are shaped and pursued. These six broad themes are tied strongly to well-rooted paradigms and point to powerful trends that need to be acknowledged and addressed in the development of the science of service.

[2] For more information, refer to: Stephen L. Vargo and Robert F. Lusch (2004) 'Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing', *Journal of Marketing* 68 (January): 1–17.

Service Research Priorities Overview

This research priorities effort resulted in the identification of 10 overarching research priorities and a number of related high-value research topic areas. The overarching priorities will likely be fairly stable over time with the research topic areas within the priorities evolving at a quicker pace. This approach allows for a consistent framework for research focus and discussion while allowing for the targeted research topics to be fluid – e.g., new ones added based on changing needs and existing ones removed due to advances of cutting-edge research in the area. As depicted in Figure 2, the 10 overarching service research priorities can be broken into three broad aspects of business and one pervasive force.

Figure 2: Service Research Priorities Framework

Pervasive Force: Leveraging Technology to Advance Service		
Strategy Priorities	**Development Priorities**	**Execution Priorities**
Fostering Service Infusion and Growth	Stimulating Service Innovation	Effectively Branding and Selling Services
Improving Well-Being through Transformative Service	Enhancing Service Design	Enhancing the Service Experience through Co-creation
Creating and Maintaining a Service Culture	Optimizing Service Networks and Value Chains	Measuring and Optimizing the Value of Service

In the sections that follow, we describe and provide a flavor of each of the 10 overarching science of service priorities. We hope this will inspire business strategy and thought leadership in each of the areas. We do so by 1) offering a brief overview of the priority and its associated topic areas, and 2) presenting commentary quotes from service-minded executives and academics with expertise in the area. The goal of the quotes is to provide a flavor of research questions or areas of great value and to share a diversity of expertise from across industries, countries, and academic disciplines. For a deeper analysis of the priorities including full commentaries, please refer to the *Journal of Service Research* article.[3]

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[3] For more depth and detail around this effort and each of the priorities, please see: Ostrom, Amy L., Mary Jo Bitner, Stephen W. Brown, Kevin A. Burkhard, Michael Goul, Vicki Smith-Daniels, Haluk Demirkan, and Elliot Rabinovich (2010), "Moving Forward and Making a Difference: Research Priorities for the Science of Service," *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (1), 4-36.

STRATEGY PRIORITY:
FOSTERING SERVICE INFUSION AND GROWTH

Service infusion and growth is focused on increasing and enhancing an organization's ability to pursue services by transforming from goods-dominant organizations into goods and services or solutions enterprises and developing, integrating, and aligning related strategies and portfolios.

To foster service infusion and growth, we identified four priority topic areas in need of future research:

- Identifying business models for growth and expansion based on service;
- Evolving product-based organizations into service-oriented enterprises;
- Integrating and aligning goods, services, and solutions strategies, and
- Developing and managing a services-goods portfolio

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"…we need to understand which customers really want services, how to adopt a production-line approach to service, how to shift from a product-centric to a service-savvy sales organization, and how to best integrate services into the overall organization."

Wolfgang Ulaga, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Marketing, HEC School of Management, Paris

"A few of the most important issues that are worthy of research attention are as follows:

- *How can a firm change its value proposition and measure of success to focus on its customers' success (e.g., the value created for their business model; improvement in their competitive position)?*
- *How can firms acquire, develop, and retain 'thought leaders' with deep knowledge and understanding of the customer's business to compete in a services environment?*
- *What organizational structure and critical business processes are required to provide the ability to rapidly commit enterprise resources across groups to solve unique customer problems?*
- *How do firms balance having a customized versus a standardized marketing approach to best acquire customers (i.e., approaching customers / 'buyer' as a market of one vs. a mass marketing approach)?*
- *How do firms drive senior leadership support for running a services business as a stand alone business with a services business P&L (profit and loss statement) and appropriate services accounting practices versus it being subsumed under a traditional product business model?"*

Tom Esposito
CEO, The INSIGHT Group
(Formerly Vice President of Global Consulting and Services, IBM)

"…five challenges, which present tremendous opportunities both for academic research and for successful practice, include developing value propositions for services–goods offerings, determining who does what to execute on the value propositions, creating standardized service building blocks that can be combined to create consistent but customizable services, pricing service offerings, and training customer-centric contact personnel to be capable of matching customer needs with company offerings."

Valarie A. Zeithaml, Ph.D.
David Van Pelt Distinguished Professor of Marketing
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

STRATEGY PRIORITY:
IMPROVING WELL-BEING THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE SERVICE

Transformative service is focused on creating uplifting changes and improvements in the well-being of both individuals and communities and seeking to better the quality of life of present and future generations of consumers and citizens through service and services.

Given its recent emergence, several topic areas were identified as valuable including:

- Improving consumer and societal welfare through service;
- Enhancing access, quality, and productivity in health care and education;
- Delivering service in a sustainable manner (i.e., one that preserves health, society, and the environment);
- Motivating the development and adoption of green technologies and related services;
- Planning, building, and managing service infrastructure for metropolitan areas, regions, and nations;
- Democratizing public services for the benefit of consumers and society; and
- Driving service innovation at the base of the pyramid.

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"Improving customer well-being through service necessitates the examination of transformative and restorative experiences and requires researchers to consider the impact of the customer's role in consumption and value creation, relationship development and social interaction, servicescape and service design, planning, building and managing service infrastructure, and technology and innovation on well-being."

Tracey Dagger, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer, Marketing, The University of Queensland, Australia

"The transformational question is: Are payers and consumers open to purchasing health care focused on achieving 100% compliance with evidence-based medicine and guarantees to save time, money, and improve health outcomes? Will consumers be open to systems that analyze their health information and proactively alert both the patient and physicians of needed preventive services, diagnostics, and prescription therapies?"

Jack Bruner
Executive Vice President, Strategic Development, CVS Caremark

"…an important and fruitful avenue for future research is the development of a better understanding of the optimal combination of expanded marketing-mix elements, government subsidies, and the use of social norms in enhancing the acceptance of services that replace products as a primary mechanism for meeting consumer needs."

Rajiv Sinha, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing, Arizona State University

"…the monumental question (is): Can we create a global model for the world's major interdependent service systems? In addition, can we create a next generation of citizens around the world who understand service systems? Can we learn to adopt a run–transform–innovate investment model to continuously improve service systems?"

James C. Spohrer, Ph.D.
Director, Global University Programs, IBM

"Emerging ICT (information and communication technologies) services can have a major impact on future energy and resource consumption through a range of services, including remote working, energy and waste management systems, improved logistics, and so on....A key question is determining which incentives will ensure that resource savings in one area are not offset by increased consumption elsewhere."

Michael Lyons, Ph.D.
Chief Researcher, Service and Systems Science
British Telecom Innovation and Design, United Kingdom

"The design, marketing, operation, and delivery of services demanded and offered by those at the base of the pyramid (the largest, but poorest socio-economic group) certainly require careful consideration, creative exploration, and establishment of alternative frameworks to expand current theories and paradigms to help researchers make sense of this fascinating reality of services."

Javier Reynoso, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair, Services Management Research and Education – EGADE
and
Robert Grosse, Ph.D.
Professor and Dean, Graduate School of Management and Leadership – EGADE
Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM), Mexico

STRATEGY PRIORITY:
CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SERVICE CULTURE

Service culture is focused on achieving a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace by an organization developing, sharing, and sustaining a set of service-focused values and beliefs around why the organization exists, what it offers, and how it operates. These service–focused values are reflected both internally with employees and externally with customers.

For service culture, five topic areas were identified for future research – namely:
- Recruiting, training, and rewarding associates for a sustained service culture;
- Developing a service mind-set in product-focused organizations;
- Creating a learning service organization by harnessing employee and customer knowledge;
- Keeping a service focus as an organization grows, matures, and changes; and
- Globalizing a service organization's culture across different countries.

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"The overarching question is how to develop and sustain a service culture and mind-set in historic product companies….This leads to the big question: Can a company transform the current employee base to one of 'thinking' and 'acting' services and solutions rather than products, or will it be necessary to hire new employees or acquire companies that already have an established services and solutions culture?"

Steve Church
Senior Vice President and Chief Operational Excellence Officer, Avnet, Inc.

"…our work (State of Georgia) leads to several important macro-level issues worthy of additional study. These include the following:
• Why do taxpayers (i.e., 'customers' of government services) tolerate the current level of service provided?
• What is the tipping point for government organizations to realize that both a new standard and a higher bar need to be set on service?
• What will it take for government organizations to transition from being the 'employer of last resort' to the 'employer of choice'? "

Joe Doyle
Administrator of the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs
The State of Georgia, United States

"Imagine the response from a customer of a trucking company if suddenly the driver spends additional time communicating his company's latest service offering rather than vacating the dock….Careful thought and research on the response from the customer should be considered while developing or, more important, shifting to a service culture." Christopher Zane
President, Zane's Cycles

"…we need further research on the integration of the following issues: (1) identification of the attributes (skills, knowledge, personality) of the people who create a service climate; (2) identification of what those people do to create that service climate; and (3) the involvement of clients and customers in the creation, maintenance, and enhancement of a service climate."

Benjamin Schneider, Ph.D.
Senior Research Fellow, Valtera
Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY: STIMULATING SERVICE INNOVATION

Service innovation is focused on creating value for customers, employees, business owners, alliance partners, and/or the communities they serve through new and/or improved service offerings, service processes, and service business models.

Seven topic areas were identified as important for future research – specifically:
- Identifying drivers of sustained new service success;
- Designing emergent and planned processes for incremental and radical service innovation;
- Identifying and managing customers' roles throughout the service innovation process;
- Infusing creativity and arts into service innovation processes;
- Aligning organization structure, customer, and supplier relationships with service innovation;
- Generating, prioritizing, and managing service innovation ideas; and
- Using modeling and service simulation to enhance service innovation.

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"The very essence of innovation takes the guardrails off, but during challenging times, the rules of engagement need to be more flexible. The following question remains: Can we create steadfast innovation processes that will prevail in difficult times and position a company to build on that success when the times turn around?"

Kimberly Gravell
Vice President, Innovation and Strategy Management, Cardinal Health

"The inherent nature of process consumption and co-creation of value with customers in many service activities requires clear focus on the customer role in innovation and design. What tools should be developed to describe the role of customers in innovative services? How can firms ensure that customers are playing their roles correctly given the capability and skill variations among customers? How and to what extent can firms engage customers in the innovation process? What are driving forces for customer engagement?"

Xiucheng Fan, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing and Director of the Center for
Service Marketing and Management, Fudan University, China

"…three focal questions seem pertinent: (1) How can firms innovate to alter the three generic roles of customers: as users (co-creating value), buyers (making a buying decision), and payers (providing monetary feedback for exchange)? (2) How can firms relieve customers from the activities they are not willing or unable to perform, or how can they enable customers to perform the activities they prefer to do? and (3) How can firms create and redesign value constellations (i.e., the interplay across multiple actors and multiple resources that co-create values) for the benefit of both the firm and its customers?"

Stefan Michel, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing, IMD International, Switzerland

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY:
ENHANCING SERVICE DESIGN

Service design is focused on bringing service strategy and innovative service ideas to life by aligning various internal and external stakeholders around the creation of holistic service experiences for customers, clients, employees, business partners, and/or citizens.

Opportunities to break new ground exist in the following service design research topic areas:
- Integrating "design thinking" into service practices, processes, and systems;
- Integrating the performing and visual arts into service design;
- Designing dynamic and flexible services across economic cycles, maturity stages, and market segments;
- Aligning service design approaches with existing organizational structures;
- Learning systematically about how to best engage customers and employees in collaborative service design; and
- Using service design to influence the behavior of people within service systems.

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"…the discipline is young, and one research challenge will be to evaluate and measure systematically the effects of service design. This will support the integration of service design into business models. It will also be important to learn more about culture- and market-specific needs for the design of services. What are the specific challenges? How should methods and processes be adapted to obtain the best result? How can service design be applied to B2B systems?"

Birgit Mager, Ph.D.
Professor of Service Design, University of Applied Sciences in Cologne, Germany

"It is remarkable that the topic of service design has received so little attention in academic research and business press. Although there is ample literature around best practices and case studies of the companies that "do service well," there is surprisingly little information around how great services companies think about forward-looking innovation and design."

Travis Fagan
Partner, McKinsey and Company

"… (There are) two particular areas in which much more service design work is needed: serving emotional needs and technology-enabled services…. (With regard to serving emotional needs,) Investigation into the co-creation of emotional content in service experiences, drawing on the arts as foundational disciplines, could be very valuable…. (With regard to technology-enabled services,) More interdisciplinary design research is needed that pushes technology to the background and makes it easier to use."

Raymond P. Fisk, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair, Marketing Department, Texas State University-San Marcos

"As we look to the future, it would be valuable to determine how service firms can leverage and modify product-dominant companies' design processes, best practices, templates, systems, and test environments. In parallel, a study that assesses the unique and specialized processes and best practices specifically needed for the services firm would be invaluable."

Joe Shaheen
General Manager-Director, Boeing Service Company

"IDEO's three principles of envisioning, enabling, and evolving service designs are important, but they are very broad in nature. This leads to the bigger question: How can companies best operationalize and build these principles into the fabric of an organization? For example, with regard to evolving, how can an organization scale with comfort knowing that operating and services standards are being met but, at the same time, provide local entities control over decision making? How can an organization empower employees to have a hand in owning and evolving service if they do not always have a direct role or full responsibility?"

Beth Viner
Business Lead, IDEO

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY:
OPTIMIZING SERVICE NETWORKS AND VALUE CHAINS

Service networks and value chains are focused on profitably meeting customers' needs and expectations through the configuration, connection, facilitation of various activities and interactions between various parties across the entire customer experience.

Within service networks and value chains, the high-value research topic areas identified were:
- Optimizing interorganizational service network collaboration around customer experiences;
- Creating and improving distributed service networks globally;
- Developing effective pricing to share gains and losses across a service system;
- Managing upstream and downstream migration in the service value chain, and
- Using outsourcing for enhanced service productivity and success.

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"Key questions for future research include designing services for effective supply chain management, further understanding the service bullwhip effect and how to mitigate it, improving the process of service specification, designing robust service supply chains, and exploring further how distinctive aspects influence supply chain design and management. There is an urgent need for a coherent approach to develop the area of service supply chains."

Chris Voss, Ph.D.
Emeritus Professor of Operations and Technology Management
London Business School, United Kingdom

"Coordination of action across a network depends on information flowing among stakeholders—not just information about the provision of service and resource allocation but also information about facts on the ground, client needs, provider capabilities, and more. The biggest research opportunity lies not in technology for information sharing, but rather in the larger context of human communication. That is what information sharing is for."

Paul P. Maglio, Ph.D.
Senior Manager, Service Systems Research, IBM Almaden Research Center

"How can firms ensure that service standards and quality of customer care are delivered especially in cases in which there is an informal governance structure and limited coordination among partners (unlike traditional supply chains)? Furthermore, how can firms maintain ownership of their customer relationships when much of the value and key contact is delivered by partners?"

Stephen S. Tax, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing and Service Management, University of Victoria, Canada

EXECUTION PRIORITY:
EFFECTIVELY BRANDING AND SELLING SERVICES

Service branding and selling is focused on identifying, packaging and communicating the critical but intangible elements of the service, good-service combination, or solution that resonate most with customers and provide differentiation from competitive market offerings.

To build on this priority, five research topic areas worthy of attention are:
- Effectively branding service and solutions and identifying ways to assess brand value;
- Developing consistent brand experiences across touch points;
- Harnessing social media's impact on service brands;
- Achieving effective solution selling and defining the new role of the sales force, and
- Forging closer relationships between employees and the brand.

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"Studying strong service brands such as Mayo, Starbucks, McDonald's, Google, and Southwest Airlines raises questions that merit research attention, such as the following:
• How should brand execution priorities change as a brand evolves through stages, such as creation, spread, and protection?
• What are the critical differences between branding an organization (common in services) and branding a manufactured good?
• What are the most effective ways to manage customer expectations given the variability of labor-intensive services?
• What roles can marketing personnel effectively play to improve the consistency and overall quality of customers' experiences using the service?
• What are the important distinctions between external branding (to customers and prospects) and internal branding (to service providers), and what are the implications of these distinctions? "

<div align="right">Leonard L. Berry, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor of Marketing, Texas A&M University</div>

"Brand leaders will need to proactively explore innovative new research techniques to understand which values and trends are likely to endure and which are ephemeral. With many new features and offerings becoming possibilities (to address newly discovered 'unmet customer needs'), and with continuing pressure on margins, many brands are challenged to determine which attributes and/or specific solutions of the past are no longer as critical or valued as before. Thus, service brand research needs to become more dynamic than ever and also well integrated with the parent company's experience innovation and concept development engines."

<div align="right">Julie Moll
Senior Vice President, Brand Strategy and Research, Marriott International</div>

"One of the most important drivers enabling the migration from products to services is convincing the organization on the viability of service sales. Given its importance, further research should consider the impact of service branding on internal consumers. Does having a more independent service brand facilitate change, or does it hold it back? Is there an impact in sales, and if so, is it driven by customers' increased interest or sales force enthusiasm? Is there an adequate mix of branding innovation and traditional branding? What is the impact, if any, of using a new brand on other, more standardized product brands used by the company?"

<div align="right">Luciano Arosemena
Service Sales Manager, Abbott Laboratories, Colombia</div>

EXECUTION PRIORITY:
ENHANCING THE SERVICE EXPERIENCE THROUGH CO-CREATION

The co-created service experience is focused on the creation of value for the customer and organization through collaborative efforts – between customer and organization or customer and customer – which can take place at any or every point within the holistic experience.

For advancement related to this priority, efforts can be focused on these research topic areas:

• Managing the customer experience across complex and diverse offerings, touch points, and customers;
• Defining the customer's role and developing methods for motivating customer contributions to enhance service success and loyalty;
• Driving customer/service collaboration through technology (e.g., Web 3.0);
• Creating, managing, and measuring the impact and returns of customer communities; and
• Determining intellectual property rights to and the pricing of co-created services.

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"As an industry, we need to further explore the underlying questions and implications of co-creation. Even if we have the willingness of customers and the Web 2.0 technology platforms to foster co-innovation, new questions arise. How do we determine intellectual property rights of co-created services? How do we manage and measure the impact and returns of customer communities? How do we drive adoption and sustain participation in this new collaboration channel?"

James Patrice
Senior Vice President, Global Support Operations, Oracle Corporation

"…this perspective (value as contextual, emerging, and experienced, rather than fixed, deterministic, and objective) raises new, challenging questions about (1) how to measure value as an experiential quality; (2) how to innovate and design for co-created experiences; (3) how to understand the role of goods as inputs into customer experiences; (4) how to translate customers' co-creative activities into firm value; and (5) how to plan and manage in complex, interdependent service ecosystems."

Stephen L. Vargo, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

"Customers are a good source of information regarding what they want from a service—they are experts on their own consumption process. Companies, however, often view the customer as a passive responder to various offerings, rather than an active participant in the value-creating process. Part of the problem is that organizations view themselves as the sole experts on their offering and do not consider how customers can contribute. There is a need to understand when and how customers should be invited to actively co-create and when to use the more traditional passive approach."

Anders Gustafsson, Ph.D.
Professor, Service Research Center (CTF), Karlstad University, Sweden

EXECUTION PRIORITY:
MEASURING AND OPTIMIZING THE VALUE OF SERVICE

Service measurement and optimization is focused on maximizing the value for customers and organizations by identifying, implementing, tracking, and finding the ideal balance of the critical components that create value in the service across the entire customer experience.

Input from our diverse participants highlighted the following key research topic areas:
- Measuring the value and return on investment from service;
- Creating and enhancing tools for capturing the value in use for services and communicating value to customers and throughout the firm;
- Integrating service value and the costs of service delivery into joint optimization models;
- Creating and enhancing service standards and metrics that link to financial outcomes of the firm;
- Managing the sales and service channel portfolio to maximize value; and
- Integrating the role of customers, employees, and technology for value optimization (e.g., the use of self-service technologies).

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"Some of the challenging questions that researchers might address include the following:
- *Where are the hidden values of service design changes within and across business functions? (For example, a customer facing technology improvment may improve order accuracy, enable operations to correctly execute the first time, avoid operations rework, reduce customer complaint call volume, improve customer retention, and reduce requirements for capital investment.)*
- *What are the standard metrics for service? How are they linked to financial performance? (Building case studies will help management teams believe until they prove it for themselves; demonstrating that valuation methods and data analysis are practical will give them confidence to try.)*
- *How can organizations find the break points at which differential levels of service matter? How can organizations evaluate adjustments to multiple levers?"*

Chris Melocik
Senior Vice President, Integration and Process Improvement, Republic Services, Inc.

"There is a pressing need for more comprehensive frameworks for offering managerial guidance—and a commensurate opportunity for cutting-edge scholarly research to develop such frameworks—in determining the most appropriate services and service levels to offer. Especially needed are robust joint-optimization models that simultaneously consider cost effectiveness from the company's perspective and benefit maximization from the customer's perspective. A parallel need exists for developing appropriate metrics for operationalizing non-monetary costs (e.g., customer frustration due to poorly designed services) and benefits (e.g., potential increase in customer loyalty due to the provision of complementary services) in the value-assessment models. The models also need to incorporate customer heterogeneity in preferences (e.g., across-customer-segment variations in preferences for hi-tech vs. hi-touch services)."

A. Parasuraman, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing, University of Miami

"Companies need more comprehensive methodologies and tools to measure service value and to develop systemic frameworks to map these supplier–customer, end-to-end value chains and processes. This will enable a more effective customer segmentation that is mandatory to optimize the service portfolio, true value-based pricing, and service delivery performance."

Eric Senesi
Vice President and General Manager, Agilent Technologies

"For far too long, research has concentrated on studying trust, commitment, satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived quality effects of service strategies. Now monetary effects should be studied, and metrics required to do such measurements should be developed….Value for the firm is dependent on the value the customer can create, and therefore metrics that capture value creation for both the firm and the customer should be used. This requires a dyadic approach (and a network approach), which means that accessibility to data may be even more challenging."

Christian Grönroos, Ph.D.
Professor of Service and Relationship Marketing
Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, Finland

PERVASIVE FORCE PRIORITY:
LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE SERVICE

Technology in service is focused on breaking down boundaries, creating more seamless and user-friendly customer experiences, and enabling new service offerings by identifying and leveraging technologies in a manner that keeps the customers' need and desires at the core.

Critical research topic areas worthy of study within the technology and service arena include:
- Building business models for new service technologies (e.g., smart services, cloud computing);
- Accelerating adoption and acceptance of new, service-oriented technologies;
- Capturing and delivering service-oriented information for real-time decision making;
- Enabling and accelerating mobile commerce and productivity for consumers and employees;
- Enhancing online privacy and security of information and assets to protect service consumers, employees, companies, and society;
- Using the service system paradigm to drive innovation; and
- Enabling agility and integration through service-oriented architecture and service platforms.

SELECT QUOTES FROM SERVICE THOUGHT LEADERS

"Smart services will shift the health care community toward preemptive maintenance of wellness versus reactive treatment of sickness. But will the insurance industry keep pace or quell innovation? Will patient security and privacy concerns be sufficiently addressed to satisfy regulators? These and other questions need to be explored to understand how companies will compete in the smart services age."

Mark W. Vigoroso
Director, Strategic Market Development
nPhase, a Verizon Wireless and Qualcomm Joint Venture

"There are some challenging elements in this transformation (remote connectivity of tangible products enabling manufacturers to become services and solution providers): understanding customers' adoption and usage behavior for new services that are emerging from this connectivity (in particular, remote and smart services), understanding how usage data are predictive of future customer needs and behavior, realizing how such data can play a role in innovation and customer relationship management, and understanding how firms can use those services to transform themselves into service and solution providers that leverage appropriate business models."

Florian v. Wangenheim, Ph.D.
Professor of Service and Technology Marketing
Technische Universität München, Germany

"There are important questions on how services productivity surges will unfold:
- *Which services will evolve the fastest and which will be the slowest to benefit from technology?*
- *Which countries, regions, and professions will benefit, and at whose expense?*
- *How will global competition, coupled with disruptive innovation, re-sort current services' profit pools?*
- *Many wicked problems facing society involve services'. Modernizing the global electricity grid, for example, requires complex changes. How will all these individual decisions and investments be orchestrated?*
- *How will data access, security, and privacy concerns be resolved? "*

R. Gary Bridge, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President, Internet Business Solutions Group, Cisco Systems

"This (increased numbers of mobile workers) leads to several critical questions regarding the technology that is deployed in these service settings. How can communication among these mobile workers be better managed? What devices and technology should these mobile workers be equipped with to better do their jobs? What broadband and infrastructure dependencies will these technologies require? How can privacy and security be assured in this mobile environment? And what will be the impact of these enabling technologies on the traditional office? Will it become obsolete?"

Bob Zollars
Chairman and CEO, Vocera Communications, Inc.

"We live in the era of service revolution where the world economy is largely service dominated. But there are important questions that we need to analyze and answer:
- *What role does IT play as a major force in the service economy?*
- *What role will service innovation and research play in driving future IT innovations, business productivity, and building a smarter world?*
- *Will services drive technology, will technology drive services, or is it a two way street?*
- *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) play a very significant role in driving the future of the service economy. What changes are needed in STEM to move forward?*
- *How will future technology focuses shift to products and services?*
- *Services have different meanings and scopes. How can we universally clarify definitions and constructs?*
- *A deeper understanding of future requirements of different market segments and service verticals is critical to defining the future product and technology roadmap. How do we achieve this deeper understanding?*
- *The service world is a huge mountain. Real service innovation will require global partnerships. How will that occur, and what will motivate it? "*

Kris Singh
President, Service Research & Innovation Institute (SRII)
Director of Strategic Programs, IBM Almaden Research Center

Conclusion

The service research priority setting effort proved extremely valuable in identifying broad themes, overarching priorities, and select topic areas worthy of investment in thought leadership and research in the coming years. The convergence of executives and academics around the importance and future direction of the service field is powerful. It is an ideal time for this effort because there is significant opportunity for truly ground-breaking work and progress through collaboration across interested organizations and individuals.

As a recap, we identified six broad and important themes that stand out at the highest level: 1) need for interdisciplinary research, 2) shift to a service-based mindset, 3) trend toward globalization, 4) underrepresentation of business-to-business research, 5) emergence of transformative service, and 6) importance of technology for service. Keeping these themes in mind is imperative as we advance the field of service, break down existing paradigms, and drive related business practices based on research.

Our sincere hope is that several of the 10 overarching research priorities and targeted research areas topics resonate with you. We attempted to paint the priorities with a broad brush in the hope of being inclusive. We see a role and opportunity for anyone interested in the field — whether academic, business executive, or government leader — to advance this arena. It is broad and diverse enough, and there is a need to initiate multiple efforts on several fronts. We envision the overarching priorities remaining fairly stable over time while seeing more frequent changes in the topic areas within each priority. The hope is that business executives and academics can use the broader framework containing the 10 overarching research priorities as a longer-term point of reference to ensure thought leadership and research efforts are viewed and traded-off within the bigger picture.

We would be remiss if we did not identify limitations of this research priority setting effort. First, on the academic side, we had participation from various disciplines and geographies but only scratched the surface in terms of broad and deep involvement from interested disciplines and relevant geographies. Second, on the business side, we secured inputs from various companies, functions, and even countries but there is the opportunity to go broader and deeper especially with non-US based organizations. Third, within government, we uncovered opportunities and highlighted research topic areas in the government space from an 'outside-in' perspective but had limited government leader involvement. Finally, we used a qualitative approach in this effort, which was best suited for the task at hand, but has inherent limitations – e.g., subjective interpretation and development of themes and priorities.

Call to Action

It is our sincere hope that the research priorities for the science of service will help drive discussions, decisions, and investments within and across academia, business, and governments and spur research to advance the field in an integrated and value-added manner. For this to happen, it will require service-minded individuals – within academia, business, and government – to take it upon themselves to use the priorities and drive action through collaboration.

For business and government leaders, we encourage you to digest, share, discuss, use, and revisit the priorities on a regular basis. Through these steps, this report and the broader *Journal of Service Research* article[4] can become living thought leadership documents in your organization. We will provide additional guidance by briefly shedding light on these five steps:

• **Digest** – This first step involves more than reading the research priorities and targeted research topic areas. It entails reading, re-reading, and beginning the process of personalizing the content to your organization's specific situation.

• **Share** – This second step involves identifying and sharing the research priorities with others who have a passion for the field. These people can be individuals inside or outside of your organization or even outside of the business arena. The priorities resonate with people at all levels in an organization so we encourage you to share them with everyone from your senior team to your front-line.

• **Discuss** – This third step entails using the research priorities as a basis for discussion in company and other meetings – e.g., collaborative discussions with university or business researchers. Ask questions such as, "Where are we driving thought leadership efforts today across the priorities? How – if at all – can we increase or shift our activities and efforts to capture even greater value?"

• **Use** – This next step is all about action. We encourage you to push yourself to go beyond discussion and actually make decisions and investments based on these insights. This may entail partnering with university or business-based researchers to explore new and exciting areas for your company.

• **Revisit** – Finally, we encourage you to take the final step and regularly revisit the priorities as your organization evolves and your thought leadership priorities shift. It is important to continue to look to future opportunities which may only become clear after taking your next step in this arena.

In closing, we would strongly encourage you to actively identify and leverage expertise outside of your own organization to support you in your organization's service journey. This expertise can come from a variety of sources and places including customers, partners, consultants, and university-based centers and researchers. Moving in new directions requires shared passion and diverse expertise to be successful.

[4] For more depth and detail around this effort and each of the priorities, please see: Ostrom, Amy L., Mary Jo Bitner, Stephen W. Brown, Kevin A. Burkhard, Michael Goul, Vicki Smith-Daniels, Haluk Demirkan, and Elliot Rabinovich (2010), "Moving Forward and Making a Difference: Research Priorities for the Science of Service," *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (1), 4-36.

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Next, we would like to thank the CSL staff – in particular Jessica Fischer and Denise Fireng – for their time and efforts. It was a major initiative which could not have been undertaken without them.

Finally, we would like to thank service-minded thought leaders – in academia, business, and government – and established and emerging service centers around the world for their passion and commitment to advancing the field. We look forward to collaborating as a broader service-focused community to identify and conduct truly cutting-edge, high-value research.

Appendix

METHODS

This appendix section provides a look into the methods used and sheds light on the specific steps in the process. For a more detailed discussion of the methodology and approach, please refer to the Appendix in the *Journal of Service Research* article.[5]

In late 2008, the co-authors used in-depth interviews, online surveys, and face-to-face sessions to collect inputs and encourage participation from a diverse set of service-minded academics and business executives. We asked individuals to shed light on future trends and issues as well as provide insights on the future service areas of greatest value from business and academic perspectives. We secured participation from over 200 academics – from more than 15 disciplines and 32 countries - and over 95 business executives – from 11 countries and 25 industries. On the business side, the respondents ranged from founders of small startups to senior executives at Global 1000 firms. This diversity is critical for wide applicability of results.

In early 2009, the co-authors used the inputs collected to create a first pass set of service research priorities. Throughout the spring and summer of 2009, the co-authors revisited and enhanced the service research priorities through smaller sessions and larger events – e.g., European business-academic conference. The iterative approach validated and enhanced the research priorities and helped ensure that the final output was fully vetted and broadly supported.

In late 2009, the co-authors developed an academic article and this business report to help communicate the priorities widely. Given the broad nature of this effort, the publications were pursued in a unique manner. Rather than one or a small handful of authors, the content showcases the perspectives of over 50 academic, business, and government contributors. These contributors were selected carefully in an effort to broadly represent the service research priorities landscape. It is our hope that the unique publication approach and various communications and promotions components will drive readership and thereby achieve the ultimate goal of helping to advance and accelerate research for the service field.

[5] For more depth and detail around this effort and each of the priorities, please see: Ostrom, Amy L., Mary Jo Bitner, Stephen W. Brown, Kevin A. Burkhard, Michael Goul, Vicki Smith-Daniels, Haluk Demirkan, and Elliot Rabinovich (2010), "Moving Forward and Making a Difference: Research Priorities for the Science of Service," *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (1), 4-36.

CONTRIBUTORS

CO-AUTHORS AND OVERARCHING PRIORITY LEADERS

Laurel Anderson
Arizona State University
United States

Mary Jo Bitner*
Arizona State University
United States

Ruth N. Bolton*
Marketing Science Institute
United States

David E. Bowen
Thunderbird School of Global Management
United States

Stephen W. Brown*
Arizona State University
United States

Kevin A. Burkhard
Arizona State University
United States

Lawrence A. Crosby
L.A. Crosby and Associates, Inc.
United States

Haluk Demirkan*
Arizona State University
United States

Michael Goul*
Arizona State University
United States

Amy L. Ostrom
Arizona State University
United States

Elliot Rabinovich*
Arizona State University
United States

Vicki Smith-Daniels*
Arizona State University
United States

COMMENTARY AUTHORS

Luciano Arosemena
Abbott Laboratories
Colombia

Leonard L. Berry*
Texas A&M University
United States

R. Gary Bridge
Cisco Systems
United States

Jack Bruner*
CVS Caremark
United States

Steve Church*
Avnet, Inc.
United States

Tracey Dagger
The University of Queensland
Australia

Joe Doyle
The State of Georgia
United States

Tom Esposito*
The INSIGHT Group
United States

Travis Fagan*
McKinsey and Company
United States

Xiucheng Fan*
Fudan University
China

Raymond P. Fisk*
Texas State University-San Marcos
United States

Kimberly Gravell*
Cardinal Health
United States

Christian Grönroos*
Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration
Finland

Robert Grosse
Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM)
Mexico

Anders Gustafsson*
Karlstad University
Sweden

Michael Lyons
British Telecom Innovation and Design
United Kingdom

Birgit Mager*
University of Applied Sciences Cologne
Germany

Paul P. Maglio*
IBM Almaden Research Center
United States

Chris Melocik*
Republic Services, Inc.
United States

Stefan Michel
IMD International
Switzerland

Julie Moll
Marriott International
United States

A. Parasuraman*
University of Miami
United States

James Patrice*
Oracle Corporation
United States

Javier Reynoso*
Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM)
Mexico

Benjamin Schneider*
Valtera / University of Maryland
United States

Eric Senesi*
Agilent Technologies
United States

Joe Shaheen
Boeing Service Company
United States

Kris Singh
Service Research and Innovation Institute (SRII)
IBM Almaden Research Center
United States

Rajiv Sinha
Arizona State University
United States

James C. Spohrer*
IBM
United States

Stephen S. Tax
University of Victoria
Canada

Wolfgang Ulaga
HEC School of Management
France

Stephen L. Vargo*
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
United States

Mark W. Vigoroso
nPhase, a Verizon Wireless and Qualcomm Joint Venture
United States

Beth Viner
IDEO
United States

Florian v. Wangenheim
Technische Universität München
Germany

Chris Voss*
London Business School
United Kingdom

Christopher Zane
Zane's Cycles
United States

Valarie A. Zeithaml*
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
United States

Bob Zollars*
Vocera Communications, Inc.
United States

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWEES**

Neeli Bendapudi
The Ohio State University
United States

Richard Boals
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona
United States

Ken Boyer
The Ohio State University
United States

Richard B. Chase
University of Southern California
United States

Bernard J. Clark
Charles Schwab and Co., Inc.
Schwab Institutional
United States

Steve Clark
Siemens Building Technologies
United States

Sue Conger
University of Dallas
United States

Beth Dockins
Scotts Lawn Service
United States

Michael Evans
Pearson
United States

Shelley Evenson
Carnegie Mellon
United States

Peter Goebbels
SAP AG
Germany

Herbert Goetschius
McNichols and Company
United States

Evert Gummesson
Stockholm University
Sweden

Robert Harmon
Portland State University
United States

Ronald Hutchinson
Harley-Davidson Motor Company, Inc.
United States

Michael Jannini
Marriott International
United States

Robert Johnston
The University of Warwick
United Kingdom

Michael Landes
Eisenhower Medical Center
United States

Katherine N. Lemon
Boston College
United States

Robert Lusch
University of Arizona
United States

Matthew Malenfant
VWR International
United States

Richard Metters
Emory University
United States

David Palmer
eTelecare Global Solutions
United States

Adrian Paull
Honeywell Aerospace Services
United States

Lijin (Emma) Qiu
Fudan University
China

Aleda Roth
Clemson University
United States

Roland Rust
University of Maryland
United States

Lee Scanzano
Cox Communications
United States

Joachim Schelp
University of St. Gallen
Switzerland

Kingshuk K. Sinha
University of Minnesota
United States

Michael Tully
AAA Arizona, Inc.
United States

Atul Vashistha
Neo Advisory
United States

Rohit Verma
Cornell University
United States

Dan Wiersma
Sony Electronics
United States

Robert Winter
University of St. Gallen
Switzerland

Jochen Wirtz
National University of Singapore
Singapore

Lu Xiongwen
Fudan University
China

Liang-Jie (LJ) Zhang
IBM T. J. Watson Research Center
United States

SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTORS***

Steven Alter
University of San Francisco
United States

Dale Ammon
Pfizer, Inc.
United States

Tor W. Andreassen
BI Norwegian School of Management
Norway

Ralph D. Badinelli
Virginia Tech
United States

David Ballantyne
Otago University
New Zealand

Steve Baron
University of Liverpool
United Kingdom

Ray Benedicktus
California State University - Fullerton
United States

Markus Berg
Vitamin T4change
Germany

Daniel Berg
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute /
University of Miami
United States

Gary Bernie
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
Ireland

Sundar Bharadwaj
Emory University
United States

Bob Boscamp
RC Cabinets
United States

Stephanie Bothe
Univerisität Hohenheim
Germany

David Brenneman
McNichols Company
United States

Eileen Bridges
Kent State University
United States

Rod Brodie
University of Auckland Business School
New Zealand

Kathryn Brohman
Queen's University
Canada

Jacob Brown
Willis of Arizona
United States

Tom J. Brown
Oklahoma State University
United States

Elisabeth Brüggen
Maastricht University
The Netherlands

Thomas Burger
Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering
Germany

Cheryl Burke Jarvis
Southern Illinois University
United States

Timothy Butler
Wayne State University
United States

Kim Cassidy
Lincoln University Business School
United Kingdom

Ronald T. Cenfetelli
University of British Columbia
Canada

Kah-Hin Chai
National University of Singapore
Singapore

Yichih Chen
*Graduate School of Services
and Technology Management*
Taiwan

Klaus Chojnacki
Volkswagen Kunden Club GmbH
Germany

Christian Coenen
Zurich University of Applied Sciences
Switzerland

Tugrul U. Daim
Portland State University
United States

Aidan Daly
National University of Ireland, Galway
Ireland

Guillermo D'Andrea
IAE Business School
Argentina

Sidhartha R. Das
George Mason University
United States

Gerald Dassler
Foth Companies
United States

Mark M. Davis
Bentley College
United States

Celso Augusto de Matos
*Federal University of Rio Grande
do Sul (PPGA-EA-UFRGS)*
Brazil

Erik J. de Vries
University of Amsterdam Business School
The Netherlands

Pim den Hertog
University of Amsterdam Business School
The Netherlands

Xin (David) Ding
University of Houston
United States

Rick Dircks
Dircks Moving Services
United States

Bill Dixon
Ernst & Young, LLP
United States

Thomas Dotzel
McGill University
Canada

Steve Du
Georgia State University
United States

Magali Dubosson Torbay
HEG Geneva School of Business Administration
Switzerland

Lola C. Duque
University Carlos III of Madrid
Spain

Bo Edvardsson
Karlstad University
Sweden

Mark W. Engelhard
CVS Caremark
United States

Daisy Escobar
IE Business School
Spain

Garrett Ethridge
Fidelity Investments
United States

Dana H. Felthouse
Pharmacy Benefit Management Institute
United States

Erwin Fielt
Telematica Instituut
The Netherlands

Tim FitzGerald
Avnet, Inc.
United States

James Fitzsimmons
The University of Texas at Austin
United States

Filipa Fonseca
Catholic University of Portugal
Portugal

Andrew S. Gallan
Case Western Reserve University
United States

Ina Garnefeld
University of Paderborn
Germany

Olga Godlevskaja
*Rotterdam School of Management
abilex GmbH*
Germany

Margie Gomez
Chandler Gilbert Community College
United States

Sonia Graham
Maximum Business Advantage
United States

Yany Gregoire
Washington State University
United States

Dwayne D. Gremler
Bowling Green State University
United States

Ronald I. Gross
DynaTek Media Corporation
United States

Kevin Gwinner
Kansas State University
United States

Catharina Gylling
Helsinki University of Technology
Finland

Raf Haesen
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Belgium

David Hartsuiker
Radboud University Nijmegen
The Netherlands

Kristina Heinonen
Hanken School of Economics
Finland

Petra Hocová
Masarky University
Czech Republic

Bob Hogg
Oracle
United States

Jens Hogreve
University of Paderborn
Germany

Thomas Hollmann
North Carolina State University
United States

Mark Houston
Texas Christian University
United States

Michael J. Howley
Drexel University
United States

Cheng Hsu
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
United States

Andy Huber
Xerox Services
United States

Michael Hutt
Arizona State University
United States

Katja Maria Hydle
BI Norwegian School of Management
Norway

Ayham Jaaron
Loughborough University
United Kingdom

Frédéric Jallat
ESCP-EAP
France

Marijn Janssen
Delft University of Technology
The Netherlands

Antonie Jetter
Portland State University
United States

Lester Johnson
Melbourne Business School
Australia

Richard Jones
Copenhagen Business School
Denmark

Sue Keaveney
University of Colorado Denver
United States

Bill Keogh
AgKnowlogy Inc.
Canada

Seth Kiner
Southern California Edison
United States

Jim King
CVS Caremark
United States

Philipp Klaus
Cranfield University School of Management
United Kingdom

Trond Knudsen
The Research Council of Norway
Norway

Takao Kondo
Meiji University
Japan

Xiangyu Kong
The University of Warwick
United Kingdom

Paul Kontogiorgis
IBM
United States

Li Kouqing
Shanghai National Accounting Institute
China

Glen Kruse
Lutron Services Company
United States

Ajith Kumar
Arizona State University
United States

Rob Kwortnik
Cornell University
United States

Chris Lake
The Professional Education Institute
United States

Thomas W. Leigh
University of Georgia
United States

Paul Lillrank
Helsinki University of Technology
Finland

Ying Liu
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hong Kong

Gil Luria
Haifa University
Israel

Richard S. Lytle
Abilene Christian University
United States

Lala Mamedov
Intuit
United States

Carlo Mari
Università del Molise
Italy

Peter McClure
University of Massachusetts Boston
United States

Rick McCombie
The Co-operators
Canada

Ana Isabel Mena Matos
Catholic University of Porto
Portugal

Martin Mende
University of Kentucky
United States

Matthew L. Meuter
California State University, Chico
United States

Paul Mlodzik
The Co-operators Group
Canada

Manuel Mora
Autonomous University of Aguascalientes
Mexico

Felicia Morgan
University of West Florida
United States

Jean-Henry Morin
University of Geneva - CUI
Switzerland

Douglas Morse
*Services Transformation and
Innovation Group, LLC*
United States

Somnath Mukhopadhyay
The University of Texas at El Paso
United States

Lilian Myers
Allviant – A Division of Medicity
United States

Tadhg Nagle
University College Cork
Ireland

Irene Ng
University of Exeter and University of Cambridge
United Kingdom

Richard Nicholls
The Poznan University of Economics
Poland

Don Nunnari
AAA Arizona
United States

Matthew O'Brien
Bradley University
United States

Jukka Ojasalo
Laurea University of Applied Sciences
Finland

Katri Ojasalo
Laurea University of Applied Sciences
Finland

Andrea Ordanini
Bocconi University
Italy

Martha A. Ostrom
HomeBase Youth Services
United States

Michael Parfett
Stevens Institute of Technology
United States

Shrikant Parikh
S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research
India

Robert Paton
University of Glasgow
Scotland

Lia Patrício
Universidade do Porto
Portugal

Charles H. Patti
University of Denver
United States

Mark E. Patton
GCT Coaching and Training Services
Korea

Michael Paul
Bauhaus-University Weimar
Germany

Jan E. Persson
Lund University
Sweden

Cody Phipps
United Stationers, Inc.
United States

Gabriele Piccoli
Universitá di Sassari
Italy

Claudio Pinhanez
IBM T.J. Watson Research Center
Brazil

Sofia Pinto
Catholic University of Portugal
Portugal

Katrin Plein
Servmark Consulting
Germany

Carol Pollard
Appalachian State University
United States

Angelika Pößl
HHL Center for Leading Innovation and Cooperation (CLIC)
Germany

Rama Prasad Mamidi
CSC Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Marina Predvoditeleva
State University-Higher School of Economics
Russia

Robin Qiu
Penn State University
United States

Conor Quinn
The Co-operators Life Insurance Company
Canada

Ijaz A. Qureshi
Shaheed Zulifqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, Islamabad
Pakistan

Chatura Ranaweera
Wilfrid Laurier University
Canada

Nichola Robertson
Deakin University
Australia

Mikael Ronnblad
Elisa Corporation
Finland

Inger Roos
Karlstad University
Sweden

Mark Rosenbaum
Northern Illinois University
United States

Louise Rygaard Jonas
Copenhagen Business School
Denmark

M H Safizadeh
Boston College
United States

Nicklas Salomonson
University of Borås
Sweden

Gary R. Schirr
Radford University
United States

Eugene Schneller
Arizona State University
United States

Jan H. Schumann
Technische Universität München
Germany

Don Scott
Southern Cross University
Australia

Fabian Segelström
Linköping University
Sweden

Wolfgang Seidel
Servmark Consultancy
Germany

Willem Selen
Middle East Technical University-Northern Cyprus Campus
Turkey

J D Singh
Jaipuria Institute of Management
India

Anssi Smedlund
Helsinki University of Technology
Finland

Shane D. Smith
Kennesaw State University
United States

Felix Somerville-Scharf
Volkswagen AG
Germany

Beverley Sparks
Griffith University
Australia

Edwin R. Stafford
Utah State University
United States

James O. Stanworth
National Changhua University of Education
Taiwan

Sybil F. Stershic
Quality Service Marketing
United States

Shea Stickler
Lam Research (f.k.a. SEZ Group)
United States

Gillian Sullivan Mort
Griffith University
Australia

Erik Sundström
Karlstad University
Sweden

John Tara
Pfizer Hospital Products Group
United States

James Teboul
INSEAD
France

Stefan Thallmaier
HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management
Germany

James M. Tien
University of Miami
United States

Marja Toivonen
Helsinki University of Technology
Finland

Mert Tokman
James Madison University
United States

Tuure Tuunanen
University of Auckland Business School
New Zealand

Jacqueline van Beuningen
Maastricht University
The Netherlands

Jan van Bon
Inform-IT
The Netherlands

E.A.M. van de Kar
Delft University of Technology
The Netherlands

Wietze van der Aa
*Amsterdam Academic Centre
for Service Innovation*
The Netherlands

Johan Van Genechten
HUBrussel
Belgium

Yves van Vaerenbergh
University College Ghent
Belgium

Peter Verhoef
University of Groningen
The Netherlands

Antonio Vieira
ISCAP/IPP
Portugal

Beth Walker
Arizona State University
United States

James Ward
Arizona State University
United States

Caroline Wiertz
Cass Business School
United Kingdom

Lars Witell
Karlstad University
Sweden

Paul Witman
California Lutheran University
United States

Dana Yagil
Haifa University
Israel

Wang Yi
Shantou University
China

Nick Yip
University of Exeter
United Kingdom

Soe-Tsyr Yuan
National Chengchi University
Taiwan

Ron Zielinski
Coherent, Inc.
United States

* Also participated as in-depth interviewees
** One in-depth interviewee chose not to be listed
*** 13 survey respondents or other contributors chose not to be listed; 18 participants did not provide their information

About the CSL

The Center for Services Leadership (CSL) is a research and education center within the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University (ASU) and serves as an outreach arm from ASU to the business community and the global academic community.

The CSL was founded in 1985 to pioneer the study of services when business schools were focusing primarily on products and manufacturing enterprises. Since then, the CSL has established itself as a globally recognized authority on how to compete strategically through the profitable use of services.

The CSL is focused on:

- **Science** – We are in the business of the science of services - we base our under standing of effective services on research and objective criteria.
- **Significance** – We are in the business of developing and sharing what works in the real business world.
- **Symbiosis** – We are in the business of building a cross-industry and cross-industry and cross-functional network of companies and academics who can help each other discover fresh ways to compete through service.

To learn more about the CSL, please visit our website at: **wpcarey.asu.edu/csl**

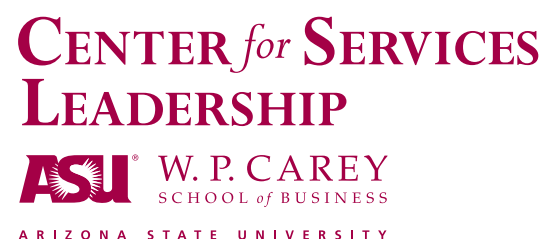**For all inquiries please contact:**

Center for Services Leadership (CSL)
W. P. Carey School of Business
Arizona State University
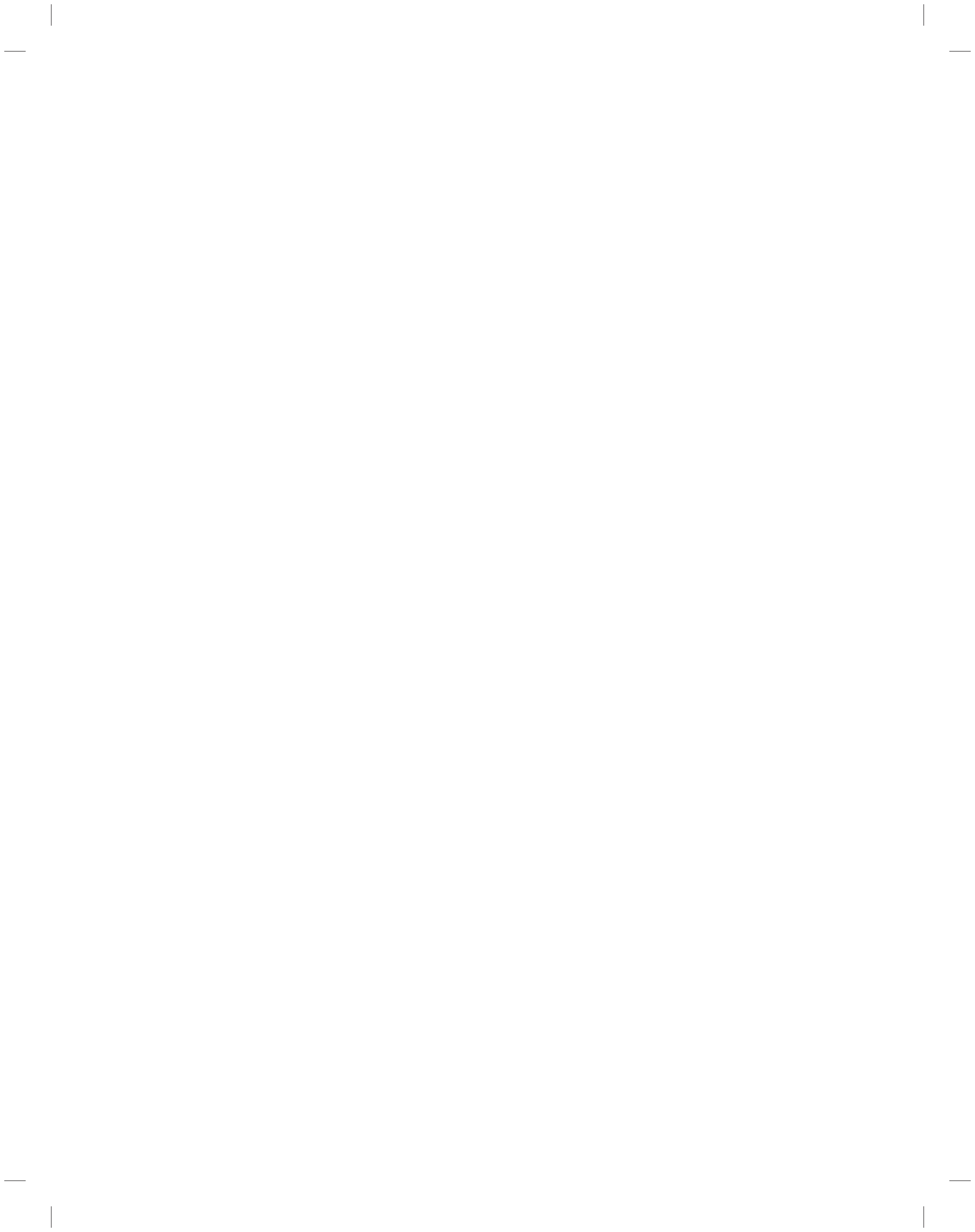PO Box 874106
Tempe, Arizona 85287–4106

Tel: 480–965–6201
Fax: 480–965–2180
Email: **CSL@asu.edu**
Web: **wpcarey.asu.edu/csl**

An electronic copy of this report can be found at **wpcarey.asu.edu/csl/ResearchPriorities**

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