
Preface

In a service-driven economy, companies must develop new and better services to stay competitive and make a profit. Service competition and development of new services which create customer value are major challenges not only for service companies, but also for manufacturing companies and public service providers. Since services are activities and interactions and not physical objects, we cannot apply concepts, models and techniques developed for product development *per se*.

New service development calls for concepts, models and techniques based on the logic of service and it emphasizes value creation through services. Service management theory implies that value is co-created with the customer and is assessed on the basis of the value in use. The customers are directly involved in the value creation process in different ways. Customers can also contribute in the development and design of new services and products. New service concepts and service offerings are also developed together with customers. Customer involvement in service development—the theme of this book—is a relatively new area. Customer involvement refers to becoming close with customers in order to learn from and with them.

This book is the first to address management issues in the area of customer involvement, where internationally leading scholars and consultants contribute and share their knowledge and insights. The book gives readers an overview and understanding of the business potential of learning with customers, an overview of concepts, models, strategies and techniques for involving customers in a fruitful way in the business development process, results from empirical studies and a number of cases as well as guidelines on how to organize and manage customer involvement.

This book is suitable for executive and management development programs at business schools and institutes, as well as for masters programs at business schools and technical universities. It is also relevant to reflective managers and executives working in areas such as marketing, business development, strategy and service and product development in both service organizations and manufacturing companies.

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