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Understanding Services

We begin our study of service management in Chapter 1, The Service Economy, with an appreciation of the central role that services play in the economies of nations and in world commerce. No economy can function without the infrastructure that services provide in the form of transportation and communications and without government services such as education and health care. As an economy develops, however, services become even more important, and soon the vast majority of the population is employed in service activities.

However, services have distinctive features that present unique challenges for management. Perhaps the most important characteristic of service operations is the presence of the customer in the service delivery system. Focusing on the customer and serving his or her needs is the basis for a service-dominant logic that is an alternative to the traditional goods-centered paradigm.

An effective competitive strategy is particularly important for service firms because they compete in an environment where there are relatively low barriers to entry. We begin Chapter 2, New Service Development, with a discussion of the strategic service vision, a framework in the form of questions about the purpose and place of a service firm in its market. The well-known generic competitive strategies—overall cost leadership, differentiation, and focus—are applied to services. The competitive role of information in services is highlighted.

The Service Economy

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Describe the central role of services in an economy.
2. Identify and differentiate the five stages of economic activity.
3. Describe the features of preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial societies.
4. Describe the features of the experience economy contrasting the consumer (B2C) with the business (B2B) service experience.
5. Explain the essential features of the service-dominant logic.
6. Identify and critique the six distinctive characteristics of a service operation, and explain the implications for managers.
7. Describe a service using the five dimensions of the service package.
8. Use the service process matrix to classify a service.

服务产业成为了经济命脉，它创造的新工作潜在地提升了每一个人的生活质量。

We are witnessing the greatest labor migration since the industrial revolution. This migration from agriculture and manufacturing to services is both invisible and largely global in scope. The migration is driven by global communications, business and technology growth, urbanization, and low-cost labor. Service industries are leaders in every industrialized nation, they create new jobs that dominate national economies, and have the potential to enhance the quality of life of everyone. Many of these jobs are for high-skilled knowledge-workers in professional and business services, health care, and education. As shown in Table 1.1, the extent of this migration to services is significant in the industrialized nations (United States, Japan, and Germany) but also represents a proportion of the labor force larger than that employed in goods production for the developing BRIC economies (Brazil, Russia, India, and China).

TABLE 1.1
Sector Employment in
Top Ten Nations by 2010
Labor Force Size

Source: <http://www.nationmaster.com>.

Nation	% of World Labor	% Agri	% Goods	% Services
China	21.0	50	15	35
India	17.0	60	17	23
U.S.	4.8	2	20	78
Indonesia	3.9	45	16	39
Brazil	3.0	23	24	53
Russia	2.5	12	23	65
Japan	2.4	5	26	69
Nigeria	2.2	70	10	20
Bangladesh	2.2	63	11	26
Germany	1.4	3	28	69

Chapter Preview

In a discussion of economic development, we learn that modern industrialized economies are dominated by employment in the service sector industries. This represents a natural evolution of economies from preindustrial to industrial and finally to postindustrial societies. The nature of the service economy is explored in terms of employment opportunities and the transition to experienced-based relationships for both consumers and businesses.

The distinctive characteristics of service operations suggest that the service environment is sufficiently unique to question the direct application of traditional manufacturing-based management techniques. In particular, the service manager operates in a system in which the customer is present and a co-creator of value. The concept of a service package to describe a service from an operations point of view is the foundation for an open-systems view of service management challenges. We begin with a selection of service definitions.

Service Definitions

我们可以找到许多关于服务的定义，它们都包含一个共同的方面，就是强调服务的无形性以及生产和消费的同时进行。

Many definitions of service are available but all contain a common theme of intangibility and simultaneous consumption. The following represent a sample of service definitions:

Services are deeds, processes, and performances. (Valarie A. Zeithaml, Mary Jo Bitner, and Dwayne D. Gremler, *Services Marketing*, 4th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006, p. 4.)

A service is an activity or series of activities of more or less intangible nature that normally, but not necessarily, take place in interactions between customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems. (Christian Gronroos, *Service Management and Marketing*, Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1990, p. 27.)

Services are economic activities offered by one party to another, most commonly employing time-based performances to bring about desired results in recipients themselves or in objects or other assets for which purchasers have responsibility. In exchange for their money, time, and effort, service customers expect to obtain value from access to goods, labor, professional skills, facilities, networks, and systems; but they do not normally take ownership of any of the physical elements involved. (Christopher Lovelock and Lauren Wright, *Services Marketing: People, Technology, Strategy*, 6th ed., Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2007, p. 6.)

A service system is a value-coproduction configuration of people, technology, other internal and external service systems, and shared information (such as language, processes, metrics, prices, policies, and laws). (Jim Spohrer, Paul Maglio, John Bailey, and Daniel Gruhl, *Computer*, January 2007, p. 72.)

Facilitating Role of Services in an Economy

服务在任何社会中都处于经济活动的中心。

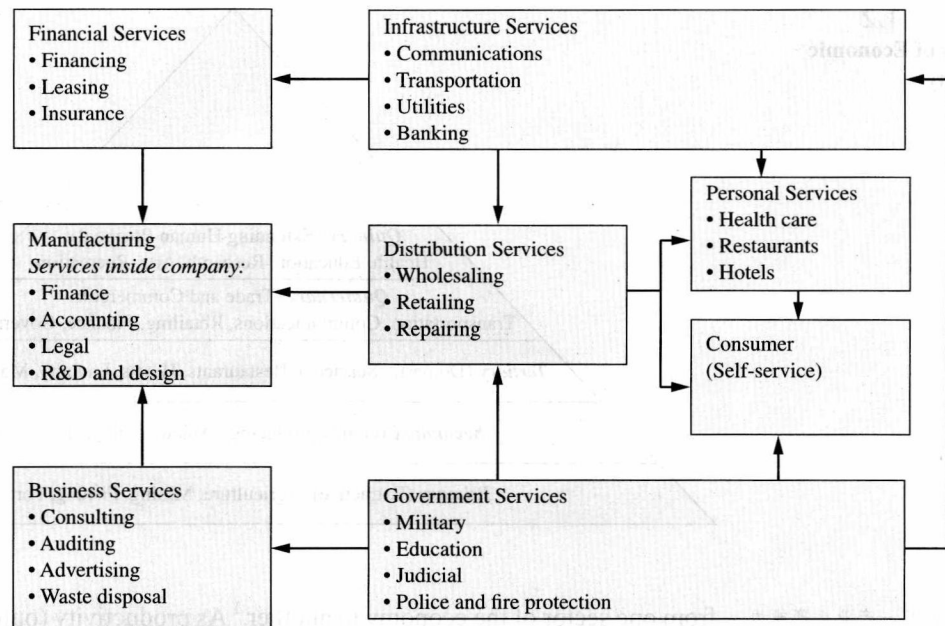
As shown in Figure 1.1, services are central to the economic activity in any society. Infrastructure services, such as transportation and communications, are the essential links among all sectors of the economy, including the final consumer. In a complex economy, both infrastructure and distribution services function as intermediaries and as the channel of distribution to the final consumer. Infrastructure services are a prerequisite for an economy to become industrialized; therefore, no advanced society can be without these services.

In an industrialized economy, specialized firms can supply business services to manufacturing firms more cheaply and efficiently than manufacturing firms can supply these services for themselves. Thus, more and more often we find advertising, consulting, and other business services being provided for the manufacturing sector by service firms.

Except for basic subsistence living, where individual households are self-sufficient, service activities are absolutely necessary for the economy to function and to enhance

FIGURE 1.1
Role of Services in an Economy

Source: Bruce R. Guile and James Brian Quinn, eds., *Technology in Services: Policies for Growth, Trade, and Employment*, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1988, p. 214.



the quality of life. Consider, for example, the importance of a banking industry to transfer funds and a transportation industry to move food products to areas that cannot produce them. Moreover, a wide variety of personal services, such as restaurants, lodging, cleaning, and child care, have been created to move former household functions into the economy. In fact, the consumer performing self-service activities is a service contributor often using technology (boarding kiosk) to eliminate non-value-adding tasks or affording personalization and control (online brokerage).

Government services play a critical role in providing a stable environment for investment and economic growth. Services such as public education, health care, well-maintained roads, safe drinking water, clean air, and public safety are necessary for any nation's economy to survive and people to prosper.

Increasingly, the profitability of manufacturers depends on exploiting value-added services. For example, automobile manufacturers have discovered that financing and/or leasing automobiles can achieve significant profits. Otis Elevator long ago found that revenues from after-sales maintenance contracts far exceed the profits from elevator equipment sales. As personal computers become a commodity product with very low margins, firms turn to network and communication services to improve profits.

Thus, it is imperative to recognize that services are not peripheral activities but rather integral parts of society. They are central to a functioning and healthy economy and lie at the heart of that economy. Finally, the service sector not only facilitates but also makes possible the goods-producing activities of the manufacturing sectors. Services are the crucial force for today's change toward a global economy.

我们应该尽快认识到服务不是可有可无的，而是一个社会的重要组成部分。它是经济健康发展的关键，是经济的核心。

Economic Evolution

In the early 1900s, only 3 of every 10 workers in the United States were employed in the services sector. The remaining workers were active in agriculture and industry. By 1950, employment in services accounted for 50 percent of the workforce. Today, services employ about 8 out of every 10 workers. During the past 90 years, we have witnessed a major evolution in our society from being predominantly manufacturing-based to being predominantly service-based.

Economists studying economic growth are not surprised by these events. Colin Clark argues that as nations become industrialized, there is an inevitable shift of employment