

## **MOVING FORWARD AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE: RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR THE SCIENCE OF SERVICE\***

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Given the significant, sustained growth in services experienced worldwide, Arizona State University's Center for Services Leadership embarked on an 18-month effort to identify and articulate a set of global, interdisciplinary research priorities focused on the science of service. Diverse participation from academics in a variety of disciplines working in institutions around the world—in collaboration with business executives who lead organizations ranging from small startups to Global 1000 companies—formed the basis for development of the priorities. The process led to the identification of 10 overarching research priorities. In addition, for each priority, several important and more specific topic areas for service research emerged from the process. The intent is that the priorities will spur service research by shedding light on the areas of greatest value and potential return to academia, business, and government. Through academic, business, and government collaboration, we can enhance our understanding of service and create new knowledge to help tackle the most important opportunities and challenges we face today.

Research Category: Service Thought Pieces

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## **THE SERVICE IMPERATIVE\***

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This paper captures our thinking regarding what we call the “service imperative” or the compelling global need to focus energy around service research and service innovation.

The service imperative has resulted from the relentless growth of services in economies around the world, combined with a relative lack of investment in service innovation and research by companies, governments and academic institutions. We discuss the resulting need to build a stronger and deeper science of service on a foundation of research and innovation. We also present existing best practices of innovative organizations that focus on their customers and compete effectively through service. We conclude with practical guidance for companies, universities, and governments in support of the service imperative. It is our belief that widespread embracing of the service imperative can lead to improved prosperity for nations, new ways to compete for companies, and improved well being for individuals worldwide.

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## **AN ANALYSES OF PARADIGMS IN SERVICE RESERACH\***

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Service research has successfully evolved over several decades and is becoming a research discipline of its own. Throughout its development, this research has mainly focused on practical issues related to managerial relevance. There has been little, if any, ontological and epistemological discussions, nor much commentary about the paradigmatic assumptions of the research field. Major dialog about a service dominate logic (SDL) and the movement to create a multidisciplinary service science also suggest some of the limitations of service research to date. Recognizing these shortcomings, this paper assesses to core characteristics of major services articles, examines different epistemological foundations and then proposes a framework to describe and better understand the development and future of service research. The framework offers a guide to paradigmatic and methodological analysis of service research and contributes to discussion about the future of this emerging discipline.