

# 服务营销范式的演进与变革<sup>①</sup>

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## Evolution and Innovation of Service Paradigms

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**Abstract:** The theory of services marketing evolves fast, but the academic research on the service paradigm is few and far between. Using the tool of Kuhn's paradigm assumptions, the thesis clarifies the three stages of services marketing paradigm evolution, and implies the innovation of service paradigm. The research findings show that service science is right direction for the development of the service paradigm, but not replacement, what matters is the regeneration of the old paradigms.

**Key words:** paradigm; evolution; innovation

Paradigm theory is applied to both nature and social science researches, and its paradigm, not other things, determines the basic frame work of a social science. However, science and technology revolution makes it incompatible between existing Service Marketing theory and service practice, which can't make right direction for Service Marketing practice. Therefore, it is necessary to reexamine Service Marketing Paradigm in technology revolution.

By analyzing the available literatures and interview with founders of the services marketing literature, such as Evert Gummesson, Christian Grnroos, etc., this paper tries applying paradigm theory to explore Service Marketing evolution and elaborates 3 potential Service Marketing paradigms, which can not only help us clarify the discipline characteristic and background but also avoid the management confusion stemming from new philosophy and concept.

The existing paradigms are out of date, but up to now, we can not found the substitutable paradigms to construct a new frame of services marketing, so the

old paradigms need innovation instead of replacement.

The researches concerning the paradigms are really few and far between, what the paper deals with will determine the future of services marketing, and whether the service science can be generated.

### 1 The Evolution of Service Marketing Paradigm

#### 1.1 1970s-service marketing prescience

Before 1970s, the distinction between service and physical product was heavily neglected. Regan<sup>[1]</sup> is the earliest scholar who pointed the service characteristics which are intangibility, inseparability, perishability and ubiquity, but he didn't make further illustrations. Say<sup>[2]</sup> targeted at medical service and considered immaterial (intangibility) as the most distinct characteristic of service. He considered diagnosis procedure as the production process and the process of taking advice as

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the consumption, which are simultaneous. From then on, scholars proposed many other service characteristics.

Developed countries deregulated the service industry from 1970s, which intensified competition in service industry. In order to survive in hot-white market competition, service firms cried for new theory to guide business practice. Service Marketing theory made a further development accordingly, and scholars viewed service issues as the appendage of goods to discuss<sup>[3]</sup>, focusing on theory frame without any empirical studies. There's no accepted service paradigm.

### 1.2 1980s~1990s Service-the initial normal science of service marketing

It is an important period of Service Marketing development, during which service paradigm was forming. There are consensuses in academia: service is activity or effort with different characteristics from goods; Challenges stem from service characteristics never exist in traditional marketing; and traditional marketing for goods isn't available to solve the problems<sup>[4]</sup>; Evaluation model and dimensions of service quality are also constructed in this period, and 2 schools of Service Marketing-Nordic School and North America were developing.

Grönroos, who the founder of Service Marketing and the scholar of Nordic School, proposed the concept of perceived service quality which differentiates service quality from goods quality radically. As Grönroos said, perceived service quality is composed of functional quality and technical quality. Service quality=PQ (Perceived service quality)-EQ (Expected Service Quality), depending on both service effort and customer expectation, which is so-called Disconfirmation theory and become the basic of SERVQUAL developed by North America.

Compared to Nordic School, the outstanding contribution of North America is the empirical study of Service Marketing, which propels Service Marketing theory to a new development. PZB, who are scholars of North America developed the well-known service quality measurement—SERVQUAL, which was revised in 1994 and 1996 to improve the applicability. Their researches combined service quality with customer behavior.

As far as service characteristics, scholars still have different viewpoints: Grönroos<sup>[5]</sup> defined service characteris-

tics as: intangibility, activities rather than things, simultaneous (production and consumption) and customer participation. Rust<sup>[6]</sup> considered intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability as important service characteristics. PZB discovered the frequencies of service characteristics are: intangible(all), inseparability (most), heterogeneity or nonstandardization (70%) and perishability (more than 50%) by survey. In spite of the controversy, 5Is of service -intangibility, inability to own, inconsistency, inventory and inseparability is established and intangibility is considered as the foremost characteristic of service. Service Marketing theory is developed and is applied to deal with service challenges.

### 1.3 After 1990s-Challenge faced by service marketing

With the development of internet technology, e-commerce is playing more and more important role in KIBS (knowledge intensive business service). Traditional face-to-face interaction is replaced by virtual interaction, by which customers can act as both service providers and consumers. The difference between service and goods and the heterogeneity among services are disappearing, terms "service manufacture" and "manufacturing services" are emerging. For example, IBM acclaimed that it's a service firm because of the value created by service is much more remarkable than goods.

Above all, the original paradigm of service discipline, premise and presumption has changed. Service production and consumption can be separated by internet technology in some cases (eg. internet medical system). In traditional service, perceived service quality depends on employee, emotion and attitude of customers. However, perceived service based on internet not only depends on service provider's skill but also the internet quality; Service customizing is limited by both service designing and the customer acceptance of technology. In internet environment, customers have to evaluate intangible service by means of intangible elements. The perceived mechanism of service has changed: it's much more difficult to own service because of the intangible technology which is hard to operate for customers, but customers can also get the visual result through screen, which improves the service tangibility and availability of service. Due to such big transformation, some scholars challenge the scientificity of Service Marketing. Kotter and Heskett<sup>[7]</sup>: I sense a kind of malaise in services marketing. Berry<sup>[3]</sup>: The field seems to lose its bearings. Therefore, some

new researches and practice are emerging, for example, e-servqual and e-tailq measurements for e-commerce based on traditional SERVQUAL.

The review of Service Marketing paradigm indicates that service paradigm evolvement is the independence from traditional marketing for goods. However, with the development of technology, especially internet, the original Service Marketing paradigm and research method is facing great challenge. It is necessary for us to reexamine and develop new Service Marketing paradigm.

## 2 The Innovation of Service Marketing Paradigm

### 2.1 Services science induced by technology dynamics

Regan<sup>[1]</sup> proposed intangibility, inseparability, perishability and ubiquity as the service paradigm and Say<sup>[2]</sup> argued that immaterial is the key nature of service. From then on, some new elements were added into the spectrum, and some elements were faded away. And except ownership, most of the paradigm components are questioned by different scholars. Intangible dimension is once a most popular one, but now, it faces the toughest challenge<sup>[9]</sup>.

In 2004, Service Science is proposed in America as one of key innovation strategies: “Service Science is the synthesis of management science, mathematics, decision science, IE and other social science, with the core of service system management, service innovation management, computer science and applied theory”.

Recently, Service Science is also noticed by Chinese academia. From 2004, the 1st International Conference on Service Systems and Service Management was held in Qing Hua University. In 2006, ICSSSM'06 attracted more than 500 papers from 23 countries, and 284 of them were accepted, and these papers were presented concerning 29 topics.

As we can see from Table 1 and Table 2, both subject and object of Service Marketing are changing: background of researchers is diversity, disciplines are mingling, new technology (especially computer and internet technology) is extensively applied to service management and the gap between manufacturing and services is fuzzy.

In addition, the forum hold by NSFC in Tianjin Normal University in 2008 is also focused on “Service Science Development Strategy” , which suggests that

“Service Science” is taken into account by Chinese government and academia. However, there’s no uniform and accepted definition of Service Science.

Table 1 Topics and researchers’ nationality in ICSSSM’ 04

Topics	Chinese	Authors Foreigners	Total
Cooperation technologies and knowledge management for e-services	2	6	8
Customer relationship management	3	2	5
Data analysis and empirical studies for service systems	6	3(1)	10
Design and management of knowledge systems for service	9	0	9
Design and management of manufacturing systems	0	5	5
Forecasting, pricing, inventory control and lot sizing	16	9	25
Hospital and health care systems	2	12(1)	5
Information technology	4	0	4
Integration of simulation & optimization for operations planning	0	8	8
Logistic service	6	6(2)	5
Maintenance systems	0	5	5
Markets and financial systems	8	0	8
Modeling, design and service	2	2	4
Models and concepts for service	8	9(2)	19
Multi-Agents systems and service	2	7	9
Multiobjective decision	2	6	8
Optimization	2	8	10
Performance evaluation	1	4	5
Production planning and inventory control models	1	4	5
Risk management	7	0	7
Robustness issues in the field of the design, organization and planning of service or manufacturing systems	0	5	5
Scheduling	1	28	29
Service quality	7	2	9
Service systems: between optimization and management	6	5	11
Supply chain	11	3	14
Telecommunication	4	1	5
Transportation Service	1	4	5
Web and service	7	2	10
Applications	0	5	5

Resources: Service Systems and Service Management. Proceedings of ICSSSM' 04, Beijing: Qinghua University.

Table 2 Involved Disciplines in ICSSSM' 04

Involved Disciplines	Number of Papers
E-commerce	37
Management Science and Engineering	57
Operational Research	62
Science of Behavior	19
Supply Chain and Logic Management	59

Resources: Summarize from Service Systems and Service Management. Proceedings of ICSSSM'04, Beijing: Qinghua University.

As far as we are concerned, "Service Science" is an emerging discipline combining information technology with industrial engineering. It is the right direction but not replacement for the development of the service paradigm, which can guide economy development much more effectively.

## 2.2 Service science is still on the way

The heated argument of service science should not be neglected, and we do admit it's a right direction for the evolvement of service paradigms, but we have to say, service science, if it could be defined as a science, leaves a lot of problems unsolved:

In terms of service science, what's the exact meaning of 'service' Does it stand for service sector or Service-Oriented Enterprise Does it have anything to do with customer service Or service science deals with 'Industrial Product Service Systems' (iPSS) In the forum titled "Service Science Development Strategy" held by NSFC in Tianjin Normal University in 2008, we can found more than 10 definitions of service science!

Whenever we refer to 'science', there must be available paradigms, for that will constitute the basic frame work of the 'science', but up to now, what we can see is only the definitions from American government, from IBM, as well as from academic authorities, nothing else. And all the scholars believe what their research covers service science. So service science can be operational research, system theory,

network, and anything else. What matters is that the 'kernel' of service science remains unclear, let along the frame of the theory.

We should not take a part for the whole, i.e., we should find out the 'trunk', and then 'branch', and last, leafs, not the other way round.

## 2.3 Rental/Access-A potential basis for a new service marketing paradigm

It is out of question that the application and development of technology in service makes "intangibility" which is the original accepted service characteristic is out of date. Gummson had proposed that the hypothesis "service is intangible" is not supported at all, let alone the distinguishing characteristic of service. Therefore, we have to develop a new service paradigm, and "nonownership" could be the basis for new service paradigm. According to Rental/Access paradigm, services involve a form of rental/ access in which customers get benefits by gaining the right to use a physical object, to hire the labor and expertise of personnel, or to obtain access to facilities and networks.

As we can see, most of scholars are still discriminating service from goods, believing that service is different and distinctive from goods. They always define service compared with goods, since service must has its own milestone.

## 2.4 Service logic based on value creation

Grönroos<sup>[10]</sup> thinks there are 3 different aspects of the concept of service used in literatures at present: Service as an activity; Service as a perspective on the customer's value creation; Service as a perspective on the provider's activities (business logic). The service concept is probably more important for businesses as a perspective than as an activity only<sup>[11]</sup> so service as a perspective or logic need to be developed further.

There's no difference between service and goods, which means that people buy goods and services in order to create value for them. For example, groceries are not bought for the sake of having them in store, they are bought to provide input resources in the process of cooking dinner for a nice family occasion around the dining table, which is the value of the process of cooking dinner.; A precious painting is not bought only for the

sake of the painting, but in order to be able to appreciate it, to show it to others, or just for the sake of knowing that it is in the buyer's possession, which are all processes where the painting is an input resource needed to create value for the owner.

From value creation perspective, the customer service logic relates to how customers create value for themselves by consuming service. It is different from provider service logic, which in turn is a perspective on how firms adjust their business strategies and marketing to customers' service consumption-based value creation by adopting service approach. However, value is created when customers use goods and services (value-in-use) rather than being embedded in goods or services (value-in-exchange). Value-in-use is the foundation for value-in-exchange which is the function of value-in use, if customers cannot make use of a good, value-in-exchange is nil for them. Therefore, customers and providers exchange resources for value rather than value. Customer is the creator of value (value-in-use), but existing researches confuse the dual roles of customer as service production resource and value creator.

The role of providers in value creation depends on whether they adopt service logic (Table 3). According to service logic, firms are not restricted to making value propositions only, they have the opportunity to influence value fulfillment as a value co-creator. According to the goods logic, firms can only make value proposition, they cannot get involved in customer's consumption and value-generating processes nor actively influence the process during which value is really created as value fulfillment.

When value creation is the goal for marketing and customer value is viewed as value-in-use, interaction rather than exchange becomes the foundation for marketing. When focusing on interactions, firms can extend their value facilitation efforts to value co-creation with its customers and directly influence value fulfillment. The market offering is also expanded from a goods-based offering to including firm-customer interactions, and marketers are no longer restricted to making value propositions only.

Table 3 Value creation and value fulfillment according to service logic (Value Fulfillment Model) and goods logic (Value Facilitation Model)<sup>[10]</sup>

Role	Supplier	Customer
Creation of value-in-use according to a service logic: Value Fulfillment Model	Value facilitator Providing customers with a foundation for their value creation in the form of resources(goods, service, information and other resources) Value co-creator Engaging in interactions with customers during value-generating process(consumption)	Value creator Other necessary resources available to customers and skills held by customers are added during value-generating processes(consumption); interacting with suppliers as providers during the value-generating processes, where value-fulfillment takes place
Creation of value-in-use according to a goods logic: Value Facilitation Model	Value facilitator Providing customer with a foundation for their value creation in the form of resources(goods, service, information and other resources)	Value creator Other necessary resources available to customers and skills held by customers are added during value-generating processes(consumption)

### 3 Conclusion

Firstly, due to the different development backgrounds, the evolvement of Service Marketing paradigm experiences a reverse path compared to traditional Marketing paradigm (classical marketing-marketing management-relation marketing): Independence-Relation Marketing-Service Science. Though Service Science is the right direction for Service Marketing paradigm, it is not the replacement for original service paradigm (at least at present). It is only the innovation of Service Marketing research paradigm and a kind of service operation science.

Secondly, Rental/Access paradigm can distinguish service from goods effectively and depict typical service, but still can't include all kinds of service. Moreover, researching and defining service compared to goods constraints the universality of service logic and impedes the further development of Service Marketing theory.

Lastly, the crisis faced by Service Marketing doesn't reduce the effect of service logic. In the period during which customers create value for themselves, all firms are facing service competition, rather than the competition on a kind of goods or service. Firms provide customers with proposition for solving problems rather than goods or service. Service is a perspective, both manufacturing and services should be oriented by service and following Service Logic.

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