

Workshop Proceedings:

**The Challenge of Services in the 21st Century:
Opportunities for Education & Business**

Services Science Management and Engineering (SSME) Workshop
1st July 2008, University of Westminster

Introduction

The first SSME workshop held recently on the 1st July 2008, witnessed the gathering of academics and practitioners in the interest of advancing knowledge in the service economy.

The concept of Service Science continues to gather momentum, driven by global economic change and the growth in the importance of "services". A critical element of Service Science is the changing shape of the academic curriculum that will be required to provide businesses with the best graduates. Work has been progressing in both academia and industry. The time is now right to bring the whole community together and agree the way forward. A White Paper and Call to Action called 'Succeeding Through Service Innovation' was recently published and provides essential prior reading for this workshop.

Hence, the main objective of this workshop was to raise awareness of the need for educators to respond to the challenge of the growing services economy and to stimulate business to become involved in the development and delivery of curricula. It also aimed to provide a platform for encouraging dialogue between academics and professionals from the service industry to discuss challenges a service orientation might bring. This first SSME workshop brought together 60 researchers and practitioners from 11 UK organisations and 16 universities.

In brief, the workshop was divided into two panel sessions with the first session delivered by industry and the second session by academics. This was followed by a breakout session with four groups discussing the facilitators and inhibitors of service research.

Presentation

The SSME workshop opened with an introduction by Dr. Mark Patton followed by a welcome address by Professor Geoffrey Petts (VC, University of Westminster). Professor Petts set the tone for the day by speaking of the "SSME graduate" as an important part of the future where world problems are becoming more complex. There is a need for graduates who are multi and inter-disciplinary, free thinking and able to manage in an unpredictable and unstable environment.

The first presentation was by Kevin Bishop (VP Marketing for IBM, Northeast Europe). He summarised the SSME concept as a "call to action to improve service innovation, an emerging academic discipline and a new, integrative area of research". He highlighted 4 recommendations for education in developing the SSME as an academic discipline:

- Enable graduates from various disciplines to become "T-shaped professionals", adaptive innovators with a "service mindset";
- Promote SSME programmes and qualifications;
- Develop a modular template-based SSME curriculum;
- Explore alternative and innovative provisioning routes for SSME related education.

In the first panel session, the speakers were from HP Labs (Chris Toft), BAE (Paul Tasker) and Reuters Thompson (Adam Wills). In summary, the panel discussed a range of issues surrounding the education of the T-shaped professionals. Among the key issues raised by industry were:

- Communication – being able to speak a common language across the different silos. Knowing what needs to be shared and what constitutes valid utterance?
- Multidisciplinary – what constitutes the "T-shaped professional"? Is it the vertical or the horizontal? What is more important?

Systems Thinking – lack of integration and insular behaviour engendered in single discipline education. Discussions tended towards skill-sets associated with facilitating integration.

Behaviour – Strategic thinking, service centred, service focused type of people. Able to understand the needs of the customer and develop service solutions.

The second panel session, had speakers were from University of Exeter (Irene Ng), University of Cambridge (Duncan McFarlane) and University of Westminster (Katherine Tyler). The panel discussed issues on the current programmes that are offered for their Service Science curriculum. They ranged from undergraduate to postgraduate programmes. Some of the challenges facing universities are:

- Defining the T-shaped educators that are able to assist the T-shaped student
- Identifying the market for service education?
- Redeploying resources and capabilities within the university to cope
- Tearing down boundaries, promoting open systems, removing silos

During the panel discussions, some of the interesting questions raised by the audience included:

- The SSME concept and what are its key principles that should govern the way we educate the new graduates?
- Is the pricing structure important in determining what the universities offer?
- Examining the horizontal line of the “T-Shape” from the vertical perspective, is that an issue? If so, how do we train these T-Shaped professionals?
- Are there quick fix types of solutions to service problems for industry to refer?
- How do we account for service users who are necessarily the payers of the service?

Points arising from the breakout sessions on the facilitators and inhibitors of services:

Facilitators	Inhibitors
Publications (Academic/Industry)	Lack of credibility/fuzzy edges
Increased in cross discipline publications	Lack of knowledge & understanding/fear
Gap between industry and academia	No measurement/benchmarking
Systems thinking for cross disciplinary	Little payoff
Service Industry partners/ Personal links	Uncertain market size
Policy makers (EPSRC/AIM)	Industry is fragmented (different services)
Hot topic/encouraging publicity	KPIs of academia is mismatched
Internet delivery	Lack of definition
Universities offering SSME courses	No proven tools – where is the science
	Interdisciplinary/difficult to engage others

The session ended with Linda Macaulay (University of Manchester) addressing the coming SSME workshop in to be held at from the 17-18th Sept 2008 entitled “Establishing SSME as a new academic discipline: Thought Leadership Workshop”. This two day workshop provides an opportunity to connect with leading researchers and practitioners, and to contribute to the development of a new academic discipline.