

Preface

We are students of service. Our education began just a few years ago, after IBM acquired Price Waterhouse Coopers Consulting and IBM Research focused squarely on IBM's service businesses for the first time (Horn, 2005). As it turned out, we had a lot to learn. And we still do. This volume represents only the most recent leg on our educational journey. It will not be the last.

Service Science, also known as *Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Design (SSMED)*, aims to be a new, interdisciplinary approach to study, improve, create, and innovate in service (Spohrer & Maglio, 2008, 2010). Though various approaches to service go back a long time (see for instance, Delaunay & Gadrey, 1992; Fisk, Brown, & Bitner, 1993; Smith, Karwan & Markland, 2007), Service Science is relatively new (Chesbrough, 2005). But already, a number of journal special issues and edited volumes collecting papers on it have already begun to appear (e.g., Hefley & Murphy, 2008; Spohrer & Riecken, 2006). In fact, when we first conceived of this volume, our idea was to take some articles from a special issue of the *IBM Systems Journal* that we had guest edited (Maglio, Spohrer, Seidman, & Ritsko, 2008), reprint some classic papers (to name just two, Shostack, 1977; Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1994), and invite a few new contributions to create a volume that marked a moment in the development of Service Science. Our publisher, Springer, liked the idea that we wanted to create an edited volume on Service Science, but they envisioned something more comprehensive. In the end, they convinced us to put together a *Handbook of Service Science* containing all original contributions in a much larger volume that would definitively mark the history, practice, and possibilities of Service Science. Well, we certainly have a much larger volume than we originally set out to produce – whether it is definitive remains to be seen.

Our approach to putting together the *Handbook* was simple: Create a list of as many important papers and books in service that we could think of, select thirty or forty, and invite the authors to write an essay related to, updating, or going beyond their original work. Simple. Actually, it was pretty simple. And it worked. We are truly gratified that so many service pioneers and other distinguished scholars agreed to contribute, and we are truly thrilled with what has been produced. We hope you are too.

We thank everyone who helped and encouraged us to put this volume together, including Bill Hefley and Wendy Murphy, co-editors of the Service Science series at Springer, Melissa Fearon and Jennifer Maurer, our contacts at Springer, Josephine Cheng, Mark Dean, Jai Menon, and Robert Morris, our bosses at IBM, Carl Schramm and William Baumol, who wrote the foreword, and of course all the contributors, whose extraordinary work we are lucky enough to showcase here.

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