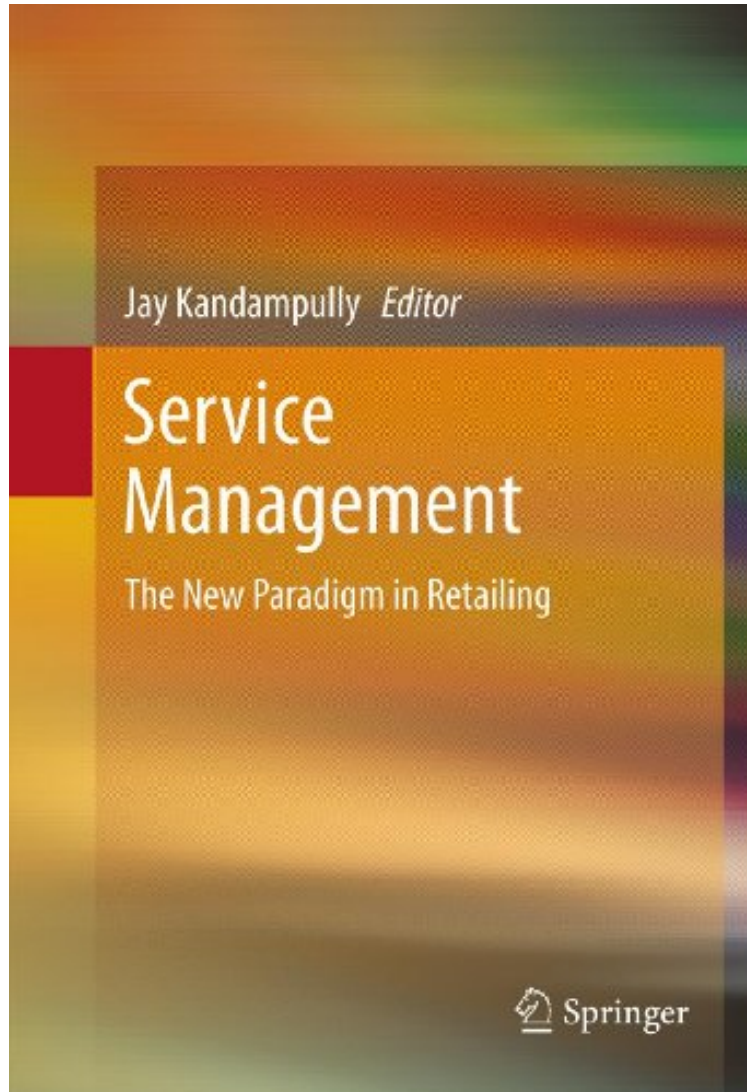


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From the Back Cover Services permeate our everyday lives. Within the past 24 hours, you might have listened to the radio, watched television, gone to the cinema, taken a trip on a plane, made or received a phone call, consumed a restaurant meal, used a bank or ATM, worked out at a gym, attended a sporting event, visited a doctor or lawyer, had dealings with an insurance agency, bought groceries, purchased a magazine, filled a car with gas, and used electricity and water. In all of these instances, these services are consumed through a process of exchange (between the customer and the provider) that is commonly referred to as "retailing." The supply and management of such retail services is more than just a business issue dominated by concerns about market share and profit-and-loss. Because services pervade our lives, it is actually a quality-of-life issue: the better the quality of service of our doctors, lawyers, grocers, bankers, department stores, hotels, and other service providers, the better is the quality of life of the communities in which we live. In a deregulated and competitive global environment, the success of any firm is dependent on understanding the needs of customers, eliminating service and product failure, exceeding the expectations of customers, establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with customers, innovating products and services on an ongoing basis to enhance their value-and doing all these things better and/or faster than the competition. Retailing is one of the largest service sectors-not only in developed economies, but also in emerging economies. Indeed, the prominence of retailing as a service has escalated in recent years with the burgeoning use of the Internet, which has enabled retailers to serve customers globally through multiple channels. As retailing has become more prominent, researchers have conducted numerous studies to examine a wide variety of management issues within the retail industry. However, despite this interest, it would seem that managers and students alike continue to have a relatively limited understanding of the significance of service management for success in what is now a globally competitive retail industry. Against this background, the aim of this book is to provide a detailed account of the critical service-management concepts that have direct application in the retail industry. Using case examples, experts from around the world illustrate how these concepts can be used effectively to gain customer loyalty, achieve market leadership, and ensure profitability in the retail industry. "With a growing understanding of service as a phenomenon and perspective of business and marketing, retailers are increasingly seeing the need to transform from distribution of products to service providers. This book includes considerable insight regarding the importance of the service perspective and how it can be implemented in retailing." --Christian Grouml;nroos, Professor of Service and Relationship Marketing, CERS Centre for Relationship Marketing and Service Management, Hanken School of Economics, Finland