



SERVICE
MASTERS
EDITIONS

**The
12 Dimensions
of a
Service Leader**

Po Chung
with
Ran Elfassy

The 12 Dimensions of a Service Leader

Manage Your Personal Brand for the Service Age

Po Chung

with

Ran Elfassy

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Preface

Welcome to *The 12 Dimensions of a Service Leader*, one of the key parts from the Service Masters Editions catalog. Before diving into the material, I will explain why we wrote this series and how this book fits into it.

To begin with, let's go back a few centuries, when farmers started using advances in technology to include practices that would eventually lead to manufacturing. Through world trade, particularly over the past three decades, manufacturing moved to Asia, first to Japan and then China and other developing countries. The result is that advanced economies are shifting more toward service.

In order to appreciate the context of these works, let's put a philosophical spin on it to understand how a book's content is time dependent. Even if books themselves last for years, the ideas and words are stacked in ways that take time to write and then take time to read. A book also fits within a writer's lifetime and that author's personal 'timeline'. Understand where a book came from, how it came to be, and how it fits with respect to other works and you begin to appreciate its content. For these reasons, I'm prefacing all my books in the Service Masters Editions with this message.

From the day I was born in Macau in 1943 until the time I was inspired to co-author and draft *The First 10 Yards—The 5 Dynamics of Entrepreneurship* and *how they made*

a difference at DHL and other successful startups, my experience fed the momentum that would result in the Service Masters Editions. Since we live our lives looking forward but make sense of our experiences by looking back, it was only after I was well along the path of service leadership that I realized how all of this work fits under the Service Leadership banner.

For example, the first edition of *The First 10 Yards* didn't explain entrepreneurship under the light of service leadership. That would come out after publishing the first edition. However, my co-author Dr. Saimond Ip and I have since updated the book to reflect its rightful place within the Service Leadership domain. Although *The First 10 Yards* was originally written to help budding entrepreneurs, we explain how entrepreneurs are – essentially – service leaders to the people in their startup. We've also added more thoughts on specific needs relevant to a service organization.

I now have a much greater appreciation of how economies are trending towards greater and better service, and why service leaders are the crucial ingredient for organizational success. The best jobs are service jobs, and the best roles are service roles. Even in a multinational manufacturing company – producing anything from micro hinges to the latest electric car or smartphone – how people are organized, managed and led fall under service leadership.

One way of thinking about service is that it's the energy that exists between two people. If that energy delights and inspires, elevates and informs, then this is because of superior service leadership. Unlike a product, which brings excellence to people wherever it is, a service is co-created as the energy between the service giver and receiver. Service leadership is one-to-one, between people. Even if the service organization provides service to millions around the world, the service

moment and that service energy is exchanged from one to another. Under service leadership, my co-authors and I stress that a leader is someone who has followers, and good service leaders attract their followers through trust and respect. Just as no consumer would willingly choose a defective product or a product with a 'fatal flaw', people would eventually be repelled by a leader with a critical defect.

Whether an organization is a home, school, hospital, hotel, station, airport, or office, under the Service Leadership glossary these are service 'habitats'. Services are usually organized within habitats and do not happen in isolation from the greater system we call the 'service ecosystem'. Across habitats and ecosystems, the most competitive service and the health of that service is best when the people respect the service principles and rules that support the foundation of that habitat or ecosystem.

I passionately believe that superior service is how we help others when we are at our best. This is us in our whole, multidimensional selves, there to connect with others in ways that last and make a difference. Through these books, not only do I hope that you will be a better service leader at your office, home and everywhere in between, but I hope that they will offer new ways to feel happier and more fulfilled.

Thank you for including me on your journey.

Po Chung
Hong Kong



Dedication

Po Chung dedicates his work in the Service Masters Editions to future generations.

He extends his deepest gratitude to his beloved wife, Helen, their three daughters, Yana, Anca and Yangie, their son-in-law, Eric, and two grandsons, Connor and Trevor, for their much-needed, enduring support and immense encouragement throughout the long writing journey. Their trust is greatly appreciated.

Po Chung

For Delian and Cadence – we are the lucky ones.

Ran Elfassy



About the Authors

Po Chung co-founded DHL International in 1972 and he is Chairman Emeritus of DHL Express (HK) Ltd. He is also the Chairman of both The Hong Kong Institute of Service Leadership & Management, and The Good Life Initiative Limited. He has been a thought leader and keynote speaker on entrepreneurship, leadership, and corporate culture at conferences around the world. He is the co-author of *25 Principles of Service Leadership*, *Service Reborn*, *The First 10 Yards - The 5 Dynamics of Entrepreneurship and how they Made a Difference at DHL and other Successful Startups*, and other books.

Ran Elfassy has known and helped Po Chung since 2006. He has worked across many sectors in various communications-related roles, delivering advisory services for multinationals and smaller firms across North America and Asia Pacific.

“Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

“Real leadership, in nations or companies, comes from respect from the top to bottom and bottom to top of the organization.”

Simon Sinek



Table of Contents

Chapter 1	We Are in the Service Age	01
Chapter 2	You Are Your Personal Brand	19
Chapter 3	The 3-Cs of Service Leadership	43
Chapter 4	The <i>Competence : Expertise</i> Dimension	47
Chapter 5	The <i>Moral : Character</i> Dimension	59
Chapter 6	The <i>Care : Compassion</i> Dimension	71
Chapter 7	The <i>Social : Relationship</i> Dimension	79
Chapter 8	The <i>Visual : Daily Management</i> Dimension	93
Chapter 9	The <i>Emotional : Happiness</i> Dimension	103
Chapter 10	The <i>Mental : Intellectual</i> Dimension	115
Chapter 11	The <i>Spiritual : Inspirational</i> Dimension	129
Chapter 12	The <i>Physical : Health</i> Dimension	137
Chapter 13	The <i>Economic : Security</i> Dimension	147
Chapter 14	The <i>Leader : Follower</i> Dimension	157
Chapter 15	The <i>Life-long Learning : Maturation</i> Dimension	169
Chapter 16	The Conscientious Service Leader	177
	Acknowledgements	
	Bibliography	



Chapter ONE

We Are in the Service Age

For most of our lives we aren't *makers* but *providers*. We give our energy and knowledge to the people we know and we receive other people's energy and knowledge in return. Put another way, we usually relate to one another with what I call a service provider's mentality. Yet the way most people behave and are managed or led in their professional lives has roots in what could be called the manufacturing mindset - roots which date back to the Industrial Revolution.

For a few hundred years, manufacturing drastically changed and dictated the landscape for professional standards and behaviors. To succeed in manufacturing, there are rules and invisible pillars that define how people perform and act toward one another, such as those we find common to production lines the world over. The manufacturing mindset that lasted for generations and still lingers to this day is what was used to get things done efficiently and offer direct benefits, but all that is different now, given that we in the advanced economies have entered the Service Age. For most of us, we would do better to leave manufacturing in the past and focus on returning to a service mentality.

One core message in this book is that if you want to stay relevant and remain competitive in today's advanced economy, you need to shift from the command-and-control manufacturing mindset to the service mentality. This is necessary as societies

move from mainly industrial production to service, something we're seeing around the world. Life – maybe even civilization itself – is based on people providing services to one another. Since manufacturing was the driving force for economies for so long, its mentality took over and the principles of service fell behind. Now that we've moved beyond the manufacturing mindset that was born in the Industrial Age, we have the post-Industrial, *Service Age*. Moreover, the use of the term 'service' with regard to this book has a specific meaning that shouldn't be confused with the popular use of the word. When most people think of service, they typically think of things like customer service and service-sector jobs like those in the hospitality industry. Although these are good examples of service, our meaning here is less specific, yet more profound. We will get deeper into this discussion in the coming pages, but it is critical to first point out that service for our use here refers to any activity that involves the energy and relationship created by two or more people in order to get something done. I will argue that the most competitive service systems and organizations are the kinds that work best under *distributed* leadership. By distributed leadership, I mean where two or more people are together and the decision-making or authority can be shared across the group. This key distinction around distributed leadership helps to clarify why some service moments or organizations work better than others.

Before we continue to describe what I mean by service, distributed leadership, the Service Age, or the differences between manufacturing and service, I want to put this book in the right context. Ran and I are committed to helping you move forward in life and it's important that you start by understanding why and how we got here.

This guide came about a few years after I committed to helping bring General Education courses to Hong Kong's undergraduates. At the time, all eight of the city's universities

We Are in the Service Age

agreed to add a GenEd stream for their students, but the issue was that they didn't have the knowledge or experience of how to teach the material in the most effective way possible. However, I had experienced the power of GenEd while I was in university decades ago. My experience is what then inspired me to help the universities out. Rather than step in with specific GenEd content, I instead helped out by sponsoring more than 20 Fulbright scholars, who came to Hong Kong to help teachers figure out the best way to teach the material. The GenEd courses I took back when I was an undergrad were instrumental in my development, and I hoped the seminars and intellectual development that came from GenEd would help Hong Kong's students as well.

As I see it now, GenEd is what led me to service leadership and service management; not only to understand the content of these domains, but also to understand what was missing in the first place. As my commitment has grown in developing service leadership, I have seen how these programs can deliver real value to our next leaders. Service leadership isn't only for *doing things right*, but also for thinking through and figuring out what is the *right thing to do*. The material in this book is the result of my realization that we can help people get ahead by identifying the principles of service and the dimensions of a service leader.

Unlike many guides that promise recipes for success – such as the skills needed to grow your leadership aura, or what some people call charisma – this guide aims to help you identify and eliminate risks, pitfalls and toxic habits that might lead to failure. To put it another way, this book isn't about telling you what to do to be successful, but it will show you what you need to be aware of and avoid if you don't want to fail.

I firmly believe that when it comes to guiding behavior, it is

more pragmatic to avoid the negative than seek the positive. Here is a current, famous example to illustrate this point:

When it comes to large, public and visible companies, Google is certainly among the giants on the world stage. The company has grown so rapidly and left such a profound mark on society that what they do and don't do is on most people's radar. The Google management team includes undisputed corporate leaders who have attracted millions of people based on the quality of who they are and how they serve the global population of Internet users. The company's mission is to "organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful," and one of their core values is, "Don't be evil."¹

It's hard to define what '*do good*' looks like, even if it can be a powerful aspirational message. But when it comes to a code of conduct or a core value, it's more useful to work under the don't-be-evil directive. This has helped Google get feedback from the market when they do something that ventures into any grey area of operational behavior, because if they do something that is perceived as 'evil' by their customers, they're sure to hear about it pretty quickly. Just as importantly, the don't-be-evil mantra provides a strong internal principle that Google employees follow and can trust. This lends support as they develop new tools, products and services for customers; in fact, this approach goes back to Confucius and even the Ten Commandments. Rather than listing what you need to do to succeed, I will describe what not to do in order not to fail.

Service is like spinning 20 plates while moving between them to keep everything moving and balanced - a dynamic system with many independent moving parts. So it isn't realistic or productive to treat it like it can be frozen in time, like when you stop a production line to fix a local problem. For

We Are in the Service Age

a service organization to sustain itself, it must deal with each crisis locally, without fear that the organization will come to a halt. In fact, the measure of an organization's excellence can be expressed by how well it manages inevitable, unexpected crises.

We want to stress that everyone who is above the production line is a service *designer*. The principle of design is critical. In fact, the process of becoming a better service leader and creating healthy service habitats essentially comes down to design questions. The principles of service leadership, the 12 dimensions of a service leader, the rules of a service ecosystem (which can't exactly be designed, but must be respected), and the service habitat (which can be designed) are responses, conditions, and insights collected and shared to help you design a healthy service system.

In my previous book, *25 Principles of Service Leadership*, which I wrote with Dr. Art Bell, we described the conditions needed for successful service leadership. In this book, Ran and I offer a more personal checklist of what you can use to improve your own service leadership. This book is really about the *being* side of the service leader, an approach I've used in many classes and seminars. The stress is on the notion that service leadership isn't too concerned with attracting more followers – that kind of cult of personality might be good for some organizations, but not for the kinds of service groups that really stand apart. There is a kind of leadership skill that can look like charisma or charm, but that doesn't address the depth of leadership we aim to discuss here. Instead, service leadership is about cleansing who you are and shedding toxic qualities so that *you don't repel* others.

You will see that my approach is not like what James Kouzes and Barry Posner accomplished with their great work, *The Leadership Challenge*, which they supported

by extensive empirical research.² This book is more in the spirit of another great guide, by Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends & Influence*.³ Where *The Leadership Challenge* stands out because of the quality of ideas extended and supported from empirical evidence, *How to Win Friends & Influence People* has changed people's lives from a more qualitative approach. I'm not pitting one against the other; I am simply highlighting that the work behind this book offers a pragmatic route on a topic that needs more exploration.

It is my sincere hope and belief that this is by no means the last word on the principles of service and the dimensions of a service leader. For example, there may be more than 12 dimensions, but I doubt there are less than 12 when you thoroughly review what counts. The information and advice offered here are results of my exploration into what it takes to be a truly good service leader, one who has removed or limited the possibility of a downfall because of a personal fault. I'll leave it to the next generation of researchers to build from this point forward.

To highlight what this book addresses even more, the Systems Pagoda in Figure 1 illustrates a model I often use to show the relationship between different systems we face in our lives.



Figure 1 - The Systems Pagoda

The basic premise of the Systems Pagoda is that the bottom level –our Physiological Needs – is survival at its most basic. This includes what is essential to keep our biological state balanced; such as food, shelter, and clothing. Moving up the Pagoda, we find other systems that affect our lives.

This book focuses mainly on the systems of your Personal Values, How You Relate to Others, and Group Dynamics. The other systems are also influences, but for our purposes here, we will deconstruct the three middle systems so they are easier to understand and manage.

This book addresses the critical area of service, the *being* side of yourself as a service leader and how well you are in accordance with the principles of service leadership. As you can see from the Pagoda, there is the Service Ecosystem, which is where we find conditions that are mostly beyond our ability to change or manipulate. Compare this with the Service Habitat, which we can design, influence and change.

To illustrate the point, imagine you're caring for fish in a pond.