

Service



Doing what a customer wants.



Interaction with customers that promotes the values of the service provider.

Educating more people to university level shrinks the pool of people able to do lower-skilled work. This helps to stabilise their wages, because there are fewer people available to do those jobs. It is no accident that plumbers can charge \$75 an hour or that good housekeepers or cooks are hard to find.

Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat*

The word ‘service’ comes from the verb ‘to serve’, which originally meant to fulfil another person’s wishes. In mediocracy, however, the idea of one individual simply doing what another individual wants is too threatening.

‘Service’ therefore has to be redefined, shifting emphasis from individual to social preferences, and from wishes to *interests*. There may be references to ‘customers’, ‘choice’ and so on, but these are superficial. They prove necessary because without them, service providers are liable to be too preoccupied with corporate culture to remember customers at all.

The concept of *individualism* proves useful in this context. People are taught to find it demeaning to serve (in the original sense), encouraged to believe that they should not have to do so, and to feel, instead, that they have a right to exercise their judgement and creativity.