

How to get your employees to provide solutions, not problems

"Ask the right question at the right time, and ask for relevant information." Service operations in a nutshell.

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What entrepreneur or executive wouldn't give part of their salary to "make people do what you want them to, and make it what they want to do"? Ultimately, this is the aim of the book by IESE professor **Beatriz Muñoz-Seca** titled [*How to Make Things Happen: A Blueprint for Applying Knowledge, Solving Problems and Designing Systems That Deliver Your Service Strategy*](#).

The book provides a conceptual framework for configuring operations in service companies in a way that sustains their competitive edges. The model "has the use of knowledge as its mainstay and makes people self-starters in order to deliver on what is promised," Muñoz-Seca explains.

According to the author, operations should provide the necessary infrastructure to free up workforce brain power, eliminate the irritation that comes with unproductiveness, and facilitate growth and enjoyment.

And with today's increasing labor costs and the slow-but-steady progress of robotics, "human beings must provide more and more added value," she writes, offering "individualized solutions for each client."

The crux of her proposal is to exploit knowledge through problem-solving. Key to this is to identify what everyone knows today, what they must know by today and what they must know by tomorrow. This forms the foundation that then allows colleagues to connect brains, knowledge, efficiency, sustainability, improvement and service.

One of the book's aims is to create an action plan to facilitate dialogue in the company. Creating a discourse that is coherent and can be assimilated by all members of the organization is essential for efficiency.

A model for dreaming

The model for **[Service Problem-Driven Management \(SPDM\)](#)** presented in the book starts with operational efficiency and combines that with service design, all guided by what the author calls "promise," "essence" and "flame red" — three concepts employed by Muñoz-Seca to give strategies concrete form.

SPDM is an integrative model that enables the identification of actions' gaps, synergies and complementarities in the world of operations management and whose axis is based on productivity, happiness and solutions.

According to Muñoz-Seca, each company is unique and each situation is different, so the formulas don't work; what is needed are frameworks and models through which to develop an individual operating structure that is competitive and adds value.

As such, the objective of her book — which includes 16 chapters and a 70-page manual to help implement the SPDM model — is to make the reader "think, reflect, invent, forget cost-cutting and discover new competitive edges."

In the words of Beatriz Muñoz-Seca, this book should serve as an impetus for you "to dream, change, and open up your heart and mind. So you can make all that come true and build companies that enrich society, your organization and yourself."

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