

## Executive overview

This chapter concerns designing service delivery systems, with the next chapter doing the same for manufacturing processes. The principal sections here are now outlined:

**Distinctive service characteristics** – this initial section overviews the distinctive characteristics of services from their intangible nature and simultaneous provision and consumption to the time-dependent nature of service capacity and the role of customers in the delivery system.

**Factors involved in the delivery of services** – this section highlights several factors, including the mix of technology and people within delivery system design, the categories of services that exist from professional to mass services, the volumes involved and order-winners/qualifiers that need to be met.

**Overall and detailed design of service systems** – the next two sections look at the overall and detailed design features respectively and introduce key factors including front-, middle- and back-office dimensions, the level of customer interface within a delivery system, the non-repeat and repeat nature of the offering and the single or multi-step design of the system.

**IT and alternative designs** – the impact of IT and alternative design characteristics are then reviewed and developments in e-commerce and the increasing use of call centres are discussed.

**Service profiling delivery system alignment** – the final part of the chapter shows how alignment checks need and can be made to check the level of fit between the requirements of markets and the characteristics of the organization and its delivery systems.