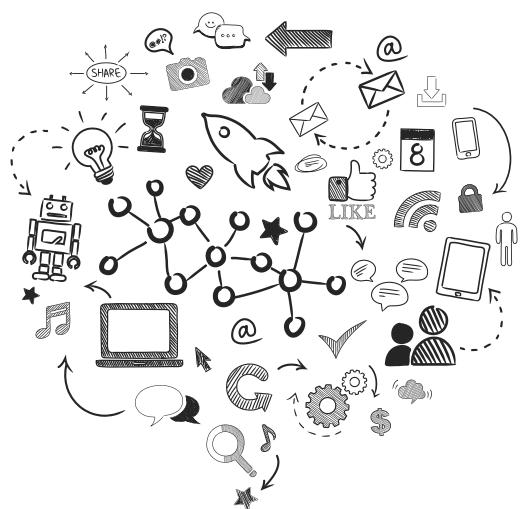# 3

Enhancing Trade Show Value through Servitization Strategies

Duangdej Yuaikwamdee

Enhancing Trade Show Value through Servitization Strategies

Duangdej Yuaikwamdee[1]

[1]Chiang Mai University Business School, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand

e-mail : duangdej_y@tceb.or.th   duangdej@yahoo.com

Abstract

The trade show industry is experiencing a strategic shift as professional exhibition organizers (PEOs) increasingly implement technology-enabled servitization to enhance participant value, personalize experiences, and build long-term relationships. This study explores how digital technologies can be embedded into auxiliary services that extend value beyond traditional exhibition formats. Using a qualitative, exploratory approach, in-depth interviews with twelve exhibition professionals from Europe, Asia-Pacific, and Thailand uncovered four key service transformation dimensions: Technology-Enhanced Services, Customer-Centric Approaches, Organizational Readiness, and Workforce Competency Development. These findings offer a practical framework for integrating digital servitization into trade show management, helping PEOs deliver innovative, hybrid, and CRM-enabled exhibition services in an evolving competitive landscape.

Keywords: Digital Transformation; Servitization; Hybrid Events; CRM-Enabled Exhibitions; Trade Shows Innovation; Immersive Experience

Introduction

The global trade show industry is confronting substantial challenges related to market differentiation, client retention, and the rising expectations of event participants (Liu & Wang, 2021). As the competitive landscape intensifies, organizers are increasingly exploring integrated service approaches, commonly referred to as servitization, to move beyond

traditional models centered on booth rental and physical displays. This evolution is driven by demand for immersive, result-oriented experiences that deliver measurable outcomes for both organizers and stakeholders.

Servitization represents a strategic transition from product-centric offerings to hybrid models that embed enhanced services and technology into the overall experience (Kowalkowski et al., 2025). Applications such as AI-driven matchmaking, real-time data tracking, and mobile service platforms have enabled organizers to improve efficiency and unlock new revenue streams through more personalized and intelligent event formats. Reed Exhibitions pioneered the introduction of such value-added digital solutions which have since been widely replicated across the industry.

Despite growing interest in such strategies, a structured, sector-specific framework for applying servitization principles within the exhibition context remains underdeveloped. Unlike the manufacturing sector, where service transformation models are well-established, the exhibition domain lacks empirical models tailored to its operational complexity and stakeholder dynamics.

This study therefore seeks to investigate how PEOs conceptualize and operationalize service innovation, and what organizational and technological factors influence long-term engagement with participants. The aim is to propose actionable strategies that address current market demands while preserving the experiential integrity of in-person events.

Objectives

This research aims to address the lack of structured frameworks for implementing servitization in the trade show sector by focusing on two core objectives.

1. To explore qualitative insights into how trade show organizers are enhancing event outcomes through service-based strategies.

2. To examine these strategic approaches from the perspectives of experienced executives within the exhibition industry, identifying key drivers, challenges, and contextual nuances.

Literature Review

The concept of servitization has gained widespread recognition as a critical mechanism for value creation across multiple industries. While its implementation is well documented in manufacturing and service sectors, its application within the exhibition domain remains relatively underexplored. Servitization entails a transition from offering standalone products to providing integrated solutions that combine services and technological features (Shin et al., 2022). This model not only fosters deeper customer relationships but also supports recurring revenue through expanded support offerings and tailored service enhancements.

Recent research indicates that hybrid event formats have become a sustainable model for B2B trade shows, blending physical engagement with digital reach (Kourkouridis et al., 2024; Yu & Benson-Rea, 2023) and findings from Kim and Roh (2022) highlight how online trust and user satisfaction significantly shape participant perceptions of offline exhibition experiences. These findings reinforce the relevance of hybrid service models where virtual tools enhance rather than replace physical interactions.

However, despite the potential benefits, servitization strategies face persistent challenges. These include technological adoption resistance, misalignment between digital platforms and participant needs, and the difficulty of assessing return on service innovation. The literature suggests that while many industries have successfully leveraged these approaches, the trade show sector requires tailored models that account for its face-to-face engagement dynamics, logistical complexity and participant heterogeneity.

Digital Transformation in Exhibition and Event Management

The exhibition and event industry is experiencing significant transformation driven by technological advancements and a shift in stakeholder expectations. PEOs are increasingly adopting service dominant strategies that prioritize long term relationships, participant engagement, and operational excellence. Emerging post-pandemic studies highlight that AI-enabled matchmaking, analytics dashboards, and virtual networking tools increasingly enhance service personalization in exhibitions (Proszowska, 2025). This shift moves beyond transactional models, emphasizing the integration of intelligent systems such as AI, data analytics, and automation to support co-creation and meaningful interaction.

Contemporary research has identified digital transformation as a foundational enabler for innovation in service design and delivery. As events evolve into hybrid and omnichannel formats, the role of digital tools expands from logistical coordination to personalized engagement mechanisms that improve relevance and outcomes for attendees and sponsors alike. This growing emphasis on experience driven value generation necessitates that PEOs strategically align their technological initiatives with service innovation goals.

Service-Dominant Logic (SDL)

The Foundation for Value Co-Creation Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), introduced by Vargo and Akaka (2017), offers a paradigm shift from goods-centric to service-oriented business practices. In this view, value is co-created collaboratively by multiple actors within a network, rather than delivered unilaterally by providers. This model emphasizes the interactive nature of service ecosystems, where each stakeholder contributes to the experience and outcome.

In the context of exhibitions, SDL underscores the importance of collaborative platforms and participant-centered design. Manser Payne et al.

3

(2021) demonstrated that co-creation processes facilitated through digital touchpoints such as AI-based matchmaking, feedback systems, and real time data sharing enable more relevant, personalized and outcome-oriented experiences. Furthermore, SDL supports mechanisms such as advisory panels, tiered service packages, and onboarding programs that allow organizers to tailor services to diverse participant profiles, fostering trust and long-term commitment.

Technology Acceptance and Digital Tool Adoption by Participants

Understanding how participants adopt and interact with digital tools is central to the success of service transformation. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a robust framework for exploring the psychological and behavioral factors that influence adoption. Key elements such as perceived usefulness and ease of use are particularly relevant in the high-touch environment of trade shows, where exhibitors and attendees must rapidly engage with new systems.

Veile et al. (2022) highlight how digital platforms can enhance communication, data transparency, and business-to-business engagement. Fredriksson and Lahtinen (2024) further argue that motivational factors such as gamification and intuitive design increase adoption, particularly when digital solutions align with participants' business objectives. In practice, this implies that PEOs must develop user friendly portals, analytics dashboards, and virtual platforms that clearly articulate their strategic utility and minimize barriers to engagement.

Digital Servitization and Organizational Transformation for PEOs

Digital servitization refers to the process by which organizations transition from traditional, asset-based offerings to integrated service solutions supported by intelligent technologies. For PEOs, this transformation involves reimagining operations, client interaction models, and internal capabilities. Suuronen et al. (2022) identify several enabling

conditions for successful transformation, including scalable IT infrastructure, adaptive organizational culture, and cross-functional coordination.

Baldi et al. (2022) emphasize the significance of AI-powered decision support systems in optimizing real-time responses, enhancing stakeholder interaction, and streamlining service delivery across various touchpoints. Similarly, Sawung Murdha et al. (2023) present a transformation model that foregrounds the importance of workforce upskilling, digital literacy and the redefinition of service roles. These perspectives underscore the need for PEOs to cultivate service oriented mindsets and support structures such as CRM enabled platforms, customer success teams, and data sharing frameworks.

Ultimately, digital servitization requires not only technological adoption but also systemic shifts in organizational behavior. As Suuronen et al. (2024) note, PEOs must move away from transactional revenue models and embrace stakeholder centric strategies that prioritize ongoing interaction, data informed customization and long term service innovation.

Synthesis and Identification of Research Gaps

While substantial literature exists on Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), technology acceptance and digital transformation, research that bridges these frameworks within the exhibition management context remains limited. Most prior work centers on manufacturing, finance, and retail, offering few insights into the unique relational, logistical, and experiential dynamics that define trade shows.

Empirical application of SDL in the PEO-exhibitor relationship is especially underdeveloped. Although TAM has been validated across various digital domains, its relevance to exhibitor behavior, particularly in environments characterized by time constraints, high stakes negotiation and face to face engagement requires deeper exploration. Additionally, the organizational implications of digital servitization such as skill alignment, team structure, and change readiness remain insufficiently studied.

3

This gap presents opportunities for targeted research into how trade show specific conditions affect the adoption and impact of servitized offerings. Future studies should examine the types of services that enhance participant engagement without undermining traditional event value propositions, the readiness of different organizer profiles to transition to digital formats, and the ways that co-creation, analytics, and human machine interaction influence satisfaction and loyalty in exhibition ecosystems.

Conceptual Framework

This study presents a conceptual framework that synthesizes critical factors influencing the adoption of servitization strategies in B2B trade shows. Grounded in empirical insights and theoretical foundations, the proposed model delineates four interdependent dimensions that collectively shape the trajectory of service transformation within the exhibition industry.

They are as the follow:

Technology-Enhanced Services focuses on the deployment of intelligent digital solutions such as AI-powered matchmaking, real time analytics and data dashboards to facilitate personalized interactions and measurable outcomes.

Customer-Centric Approaches involves the design of service strategies based on participant segmentation, individualized engagement, and continuous feedback mechanisms aimed at enhancing satisfaction and long term loyalty.

Organizational Readiness refers to the internal capabilities and infrastructural preparedness of exhibition organizers, including CRM adoption, cross functional collaboration and agile service processes.

Workforce Competency Development emphasizes the cultivation of skills essential for digital era service delivery such as emotional intelligence, consultative communication, and digital fluency.

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1-1 delineates the four components construct underpinning the proposed model.
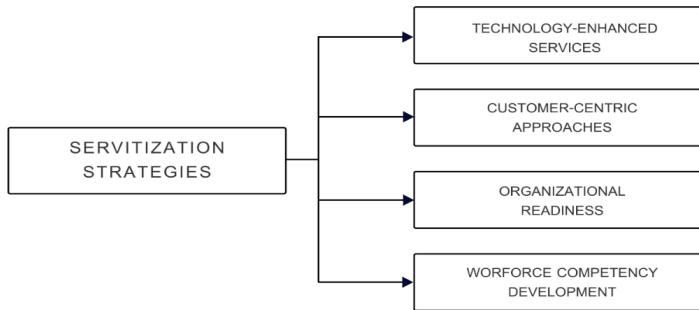
Figure 1 Conceptual framework comprising four components of servitization strategies. Together, these components form the foundation for a strategic transformation framework that is contextually adaptable across regions and industry sectors.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how trade show organizers conceptualize and implement servitization strategies across diverse regional and operational contexts. A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to ensure the inclusion of information-rich cases. The sample comprised twelve senior professionals, each with a minimum of ten years of industry experience in trade show management. Participants were drawn equally from three regions, Europe (n = 4), Asia-Pacific (n = 4), and Thailand (n = 4), to ensure both contextual diversity and cultural representativeness.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a standardized protocol that included open-ended questions aligned with the four core dimensions of the proposed framework: Technology-Enhanced Services, Customer-Centric Approaches, Organizational Readiness, and Workforce

3

Competency Development. Probing techniques were applied to elicit depth, clarify meanings, and uncover underlying rationales. Interviews were conducted in person, online, or through written responses, depending on participant availability and preference.

Ethical clearance was obtained prior to data collection to ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic content analysis following established procedures (Braun et al., 2006; Guest et al., 2006). Codes were iteratively refined and clustered into higher-order categories corresponding to the framework components. Data saturation was confirmed when no new themes or insights emerged from the final set of interviews, indicating adequacy of the sample size for thematic development and interpretive validity.

Results

The qualitative analysis from in-depth interviews identified four strategic components, each comprising a set of observed variables. In total, ten observed variables were derived, with the top three most frequently mentioned presented as illustrative examples.

Technology-Enhanced Services

This component encompasses the integration of intelligent digital tools into service offerings, enabling personalized engagement, improved targeting, and real-time responsiveness. The following three key variables were central to this component. The complete list of all ten observed variables synthesized from the interviews is provided in Figure 2.

AI-Powered Matchmaking: PEOs consistently reported the use of artificial intelligence to analyze visitor profiles, preferences, and behavioral data to facilitate precise matchmaking between exhibitors and potential clients. This capability was credited with increasing lead quality and enhancing ROI for participants.

"We no longer rely on manual selection, AI can now predict optimal matches and suggest meetings before the show begins." (Interviewee #3, Europe)

Centralized Smart Portals: Several organizers described the implementation of exhibitor dashboards or "smart portals" that aggregate data such as booth traffic, lead information, and session analytics. These platforms reduce friction, enable self-service capabilities, and enhance information transparency during the event.

"Everything is now in one place such as leads, content, live updates. Exhibitors appreciate that autonomy." (Interviewee #6, Asia-Pacific)

AR/VR & Gamification Integration: Particularly in hybrid and international shows, PEOs introduced augmented and virtual reality to enrich product demonstrations and provide immersive experiences. Gamified interactions were also used to incentivize booth visits and content engagement.

"When physical demos are not feasible, VR allows us to give the same product feel and even more engagement." (Interviewee #8, Asia-Pacific)

Technology-Enhanced Services

Variable	Europe	Asia-Pacific	Thailand	Total
AI-Powered Matchmaking	4	4	4	12
Centralized Smart Portals	4	4	3	11
AR/VR & Gamification Integration	4	4	2	10
Voice-Activated Interfaces for Booths	3	3	3	9
Predictive Lead Scoring Algorithms	3	3	3	9
Mobile-based Smart Navigation Tools	2	2	3	7
API Integration with Sponsor CRM	2	2	2	6
Blockchain for Data Security	2	2	1	5
AI-powered Speech Analytics	1	2	2	5
Interactive Kiosks for Surveys	1	2	2	5

Total No. of Respondents (n=12)
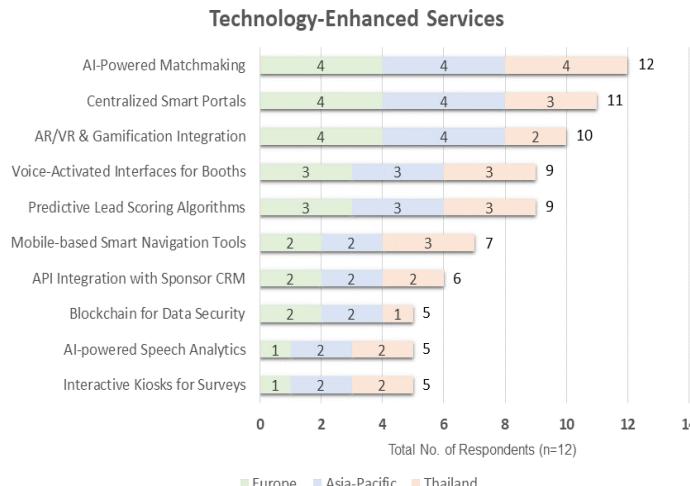
■ Europe ■ Asia-Pacific ■ Thailand

Figure 2 Top ten observed variables identified from the interviews are clarified by region, with ten observed variables listed under Technology-Enhanced Services.

3

Customer-Centric Approaches

This component highlights the shift from standardized service delivery to personalized, context sensitive strategies that respond directly to exhibitor needs. Three key variables were identified. The complete list of all ten observed variables synthesized from the interviews is provided in Figure 3.

Segmented Service Customization: Organizers emphasized tailoring service packages based on exhibitor type, industry, and experience level. Such segmentation enabled more relevant support, particularly for SMEs and first-time participants.

"We don't treat all exhibitors the same anymore—tailoring services helps them succeed an return." (Interviewee #2, Europe)

Real-Time ROI Dashboards: Many PEOs have introduced real-time dashboards displaying metrics such as visitor engagement, lead count, and time spent per interaction. This transparency enhances exhibitor satisfaction and facilitates mid-event adjustments.

"They want to see value while the show is happening, not after." (Interviewee #5, Asia-Pacific)

Co-Creation through Advisory Engagement: Several firms created mechanisms such as exhibitor advisory boards and structured feedback loops to ensure services evolve in alignment with participant expectations.

"Our services now reflect what they've told us they need, not just what we think they want." (Interviewee #10, Thailand)

Customer-Centric Approaches

	Europe	Asia-Pacific	Thailand	Total
Segmented Service Customization	4	3	4	11
Real-Time ROI Dashboards	4	3	3	10
Co-Creation through Advisory Engagement	3	3	3	9
Personalized Content Streams	3	3	2	8
Adaptive Booth Visit Scheduling	3	3	2	8
Customer Personas Mapping	2	3	3	8
Integrated Exhibitor-Support Chatbot	2	2	2	6
Behavioral Response Tracking	2	2	1	5
Smart Badge Feedback Loops	2	1	2	5
Voice of Customer Analytics	2	2	1	5

Total No. of Respondents (n=12)

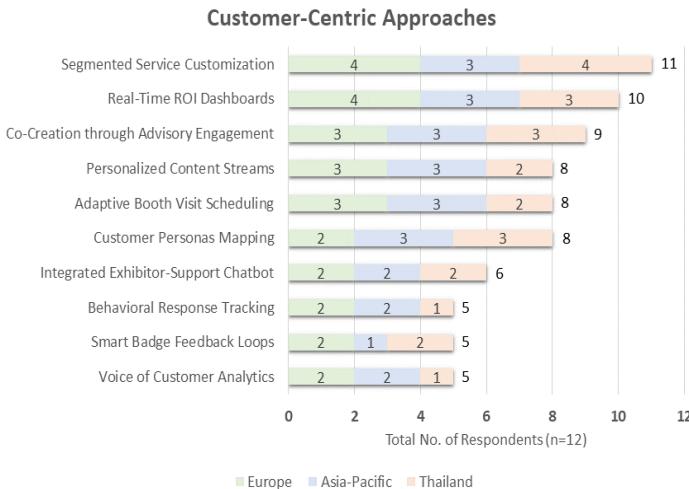■ Europe ■ Asia-Pacific ■ Thailand

Figure 3 Top ten observed variables identified from the interviews are clarified by region with ten observed variables listed under Customer-Centric Approaches.

Organizational Readiness

This component reflects the internal infrastructural and managerial capacity necessary to execute service-based transformation. PEOs identified the following three key variables as foundational. The complete list of all ten observed variables synthesized from the interviews is provided in Figure 4.

CRM-Driven Personalization: The deployment of CRM systems was central to managing exhibitor relationships, streamlining data capture, and personalizing service touchpoints throughout the event lifecycle.

"Our CRM connects everything—from onboarding to post-show feedback—it's essential for consistency." (Interviewee #1, Europe)

Cross-Functional Service Teams: Organizers increasingly rely on cross-departmental teams that integrate sales, marketing, and operations. This approach facilitates unified service delivery and rapid problem solving.

3

"Siloes are the enemy of service. We now have integrated teams for key accounts." (Interviewee #4, Asia-Pacific)

Scalable IT Infrastructure: Investments in scalable cloud-based infrastructure allowed for real-time updates, mobile access, and the flexibility to adapt services across different show sizes and locations.

"We can scale without stress—our systems are cloud-native and can handle surges in demand." (Interviewee #9, Thailand)
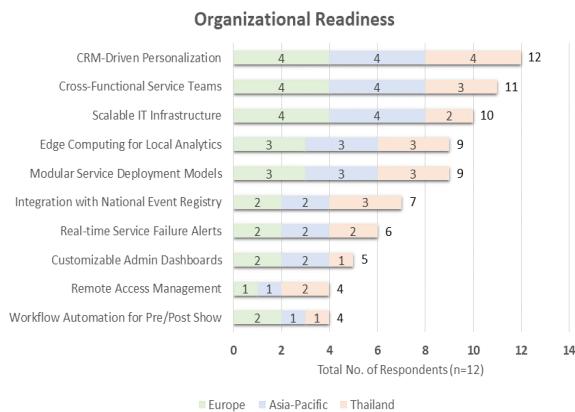

Organizational Readiness

Figure 4   Top ten observed variables identified from the interviews are clarified by region, with ten observed variables listed under Organizational Readiness.

Workforce Competency Development

This component addresses the human capabilities required to sustain high-quality, digitally supported exhibitor services. Three prominent variables emerged as the following. The complete list of all ten observed variables synthesized from the interviews is provided in Figure 5.

Empathetic Communication: PEOs reported a growing emphasis on soft skills, particularly in frontline roles, where empathetic listening and emotional responsiveness were viewed as differentiators in service quality.

"People still want to feel heard even if tech is everywhere. Empathy remains our edge." (Interviewee #4, Europe)

Digital Literacy Across Roles: Staff are expected to master a suite of digital tools, from lead capture systems to mobile CRM interfaces. Training programs were cited as essential to ensure confidence and fluency in real-time service environments.

"Everyone from sales to tech support needs to be fluent in the platforms we use, it's now baseline." (Interviewee #7, Asia-Pacific)

Proactive Consultative Engagement: A shift from reactive troubleshooting to proactive advisory roles was observed, where staff guide exhibitors on strategy, booth design, data interpretation, and audience targeting.

"Our teams are no longer just support but they are partners in achieving exhibitor success." (Interviewee #12, Thailand)

Workforce Competency Development

Variable	Europe	Asia-Pacific	Thailand	Total
Empathetic Communication	4	4	3	11
Digital Literacy Across Roles	4	3	3	10
Proactive Consultative Engagement	4	3	2	9
Digital Mindset Bootcamps	3	3	2	8
Soft Skill Training for AI-Assisted Sales	3	3	2	8
Multi-language CRM Competency	2	2	3	7
KPI-driven Coaching for Frontliners	2	2	2	6
Peer-to-Peer Learning Platforms	2	2	1	5
Change Leadership Upskilling	2	1	2	5
Context-Aware Response Training	1	2	2	5

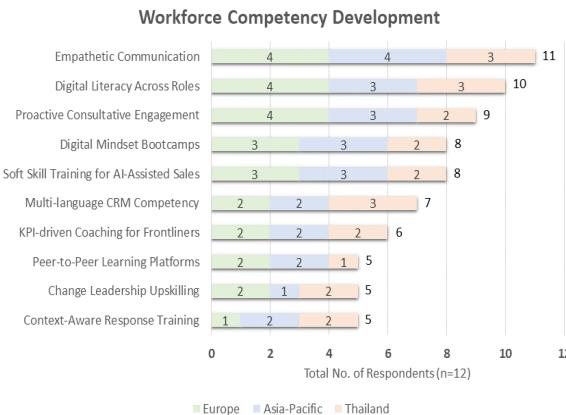Total No. of Respondents (n=12)

■ Europe ■ Asia-Pacific ■ Thailand

Figure 5 Top ten observed variables identified from the interviews are clarified by region, with ten observed variables listed under Workforce Competency Development.

Discussion

This study identifies four interlinked pillars of service transformation that are critical for implementing successful servitization strategies in trade shows including Technology-Enhanced Services, Customer-Centric

3

Approaches, Organizational Readiness and Workforce Competency Development. Collectively, these elements reflect an ecosystem approach, in which technological tools, human resources, and institutional structures work in concert to elevate event outcomes.

Technology-Enhanced Services

The integration of intelligent digital tools represents a foundational shift in value creation for trade shows. Participants consistently cited AI-powered matchmaking, real-time analytics and smart exhibitor portals as key innovations that deliver more targeted, efficient and measurable interactions. These findings resonate with Keiper (2023) who emphasized AI's potential for behavioral segmentation, especially in hybrid event formats. While immersive technologies such as AR/VR were less universally deployed, their inclusion in specific events suggests promise in addressing physical access limitations and enhancing product experience.

From a theoretical perspective, these practices align with both Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by demonstrating how digital infrastructure facilitates co-created, outcome-based value through participant engagement and system usability.

Customer-Centric Approaches

This component reflects a transition from one-size-fits-all service delivery to personalized and context sensitive engagement. Key strategies included segmented service customization, real-time ROI dashboards and structured advisory mechanisms. These elements enable organizers to deliver more relevant and responsive services, especially to SMEs and new exhibitors.

Such practices support findings from Majid et al. (2023) who emphasized contextual fit in service delivery and Adekunle et al. (2023) who found that data transparency builds trust and strengthens participant retention. The use of feedback loops and co-creation platforms also

reinforces SDL's focus on shared value generation, making exhibitors active contributors in service innovation.

Organizational Readiness

The successful execution of servitization strategies requires internal infrastructure and structural readiness. PEOs highlighted the importance of CRM-enabled data ecosystems, cross-functional teams and scalable IT systems as prerequisites for adaptive service delivery.

These findings mirror insights from Tran (2024) who identified CRM as essential for personalizing multi-stage service touchpoints and Aslam (2023) who emphasized the role of team integration in overcoming silos and improving service cohesion. In this regard, internal capability is not merely a support mechanism but a strategic differentiator enabling the move from transactional operations to value-driven ecosystems.

Workforce Competency Development

The human dimension of transformation emerged strongly from the data. PEOs increasingly expect staff to exhibit emotional intelligence, digital literacy, and consultative orientation, especially in frontline and account management roles.

These themes are supported by Ahn et al. (2025) who emphasize empathy as a competitive advantage in service interactions. Verma and Sybol (2025) who advocate for baseline digital fluency across roles and Lim and Park (2023) who highlight the growing importance of proactive, advisory engagement in complex service environments.

The workforce is thus positioned not as a reactive support mechanism but as a strategic interface for co-creating exhibitor success, an alignment that reinforces both SDL's relational logic and TAM's emphasis on perceived usefulness.

Regional and Industry-Specific Differences

Cross-regional analysis revealed meaningful variation in servitization maturity. European organizers led in system-level integration and CRM-based

3

personalization, driven by stronger infrastructure and innovation culture. Asia-Pacific firms emphasized adaptability and agile team structures, often tailoring innovations to event-specific conditions. In Thailand, digital transformation remains gradual, often embedded into existing face-to-face models with hybrid augmentation, such as dashboards and content streaming.

Industry sector also shaped adoption. Tech-intensive industries adopted servitized models more readily while sectors like tourism or hospitality emphasized trust, interaction, and design experience. Automotive events showed hybrid characteristics, utilizing digital tools for lead capture while retaining traditional negotiation-based engagement.

Theoretical Implications

This study provides empirical support for the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) by illustrating how value in trade shows is co-created through interactive, technology-mediated service ecosystems. Exhibitors are no longer passive recipients but active contributors to service design and delivery.

These findings further advance SDL by demonstrating how co-creation mechanisms, such as advisory touchpoints and personalized service platforms, translate into actionable value propositions for exhibitors. In parallel, the study affirms and extends the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by revealing that participants' willingness to engage with digital platforms is shaped not only by perceived usefulness and ease of use but also by the alignment of these technologies with strategic business objectives. Collectively, SDL and TAM elucidate the interplay between experiential value creation and digital adoption in high-contact B2B exhibition contexts. By bridging theory and practice, the study extends these models to the underexplored domain of trade show management and offers latent constructs for future empirical testing.

Contributions

This research delivers both theoretical and practical contributions to the emerging discourse on servitization within the exhibition industry. Theoretically, it extends the application of Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by contextualizing these frameworks in the underexplored domain of trade show management. By integrating qualitative evidence from a cross-regional sample, the study contributes a grounded understanding of how co-creation, technological utility, and organizational adaptation intersect in this specific setting.

Practically, the study offers a four-dimensional framework that can guide PEOs in the design, implementation and evaluation of service transformation strategies. The model is adaptable across industry sectors and regional contexts, enabling organizers to tailor their approaches based on infrastructure readiness, customer expectations, and workforce competencies.

At the policy level, the findings support the development of localized service standards and training initiatives that align with regional digital maturity. In emerging markets such as Thailand, capacity building programs focused on digital trade show operations, participant analytics and customer engagement strategies can help accelerate the adoption of Technology-Enhanced Services. Additionally, international PEOs can leverage these insights to promote best practice benchmarks and facilitate knowledge exchange across global platform.

Beyond its conceptual contribution, this study opens pathways for empirical modeling. The components, Technology-Enhanced Services, Customer-Centric Approaches, Organizational Readiness and Workforce Competency Development may serve as foundations for future instrument development and validation. Applying EFA, CFA, and SEM would enable researchers to assess dimensionality, model fitness, and the causal influence of these constructs on exhibitor satisfaction and retention,

thus translating qualitative insights into quantitative and mixed methodology, predictive analytical frameworks.

Conclusion

This study investigates how PEOs can adopt servitization strategies, particularly those powered by advanced technologies, enriching participant experiences and strengthening long term business relationships within the trade show industry. Addressing a significant gap in the literature, the research provides empirical insight into how service transformation frameworks, previously explored primarily in manufacturing and retail contexts, can be effectively adapted to the exhibition sector.

Through in-depth interviews with 12 industry professionals across Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, and Thailand, four interdependent strategic components were identified including Technology-Enhanced Services, Customer-Centric Approaches, Organizational Readiness and Workforce Competency Development. These findings highlight how the integration of tools such as AI matchmaking, CRM systems, and ROI dashboards support both operational efficiency and deeper engagement with participants.

In connecting back to the objectives of the study, exploring enhancement strategies and examining organizer perspectives, the results confirm that successful servitization requires not only digital infrastructure but also cultural readiness, skill development and a long term service mindset. The frameworks discussed in this study align closely with the principles of Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), both of which emphasize value co-creation and user-oriented technology integration as essential enablers.

Theoretically, this research contributes a practical model for assessing and executing service transformation initiatives in trade show management. It also offers a foundation for future research that might include longitudinal analysis of participant satisfaction, comparative studies across industry

verticals, and exploration into emerging tools such as AI co-creation interfaces, immersive platforms (AR/VR) and predictive analytics for real-time service optimization.

Ultimately, this study underscores the potential for servitization to drive the evolution of trade shows from transactional, space-based events to relationship driven and technology enabled ecosystems. For practitioners and policymakers alike, the findings offer both strategic direction and practical tools to support competitive differentiation and sustainable growth in a rapidly evolving exhibition landscape.

Limitations and Future Research

While the qualitative approach offers rich contextual understanding, the findings may not be generalizable across broader populations. Future research should validate the proposed framework through quantitative methods, including Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). These methods will enable testing of construct validity, model fit, and causal relationships among key variables. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to examine the evolution and sustained impact of servitization strategies over time.

References

Adekunle, B. I., Chukwuma-Eke, E. C., Balogun, E. D., & Ogunsola, K. O. (2023). Improving customer retention through machine learning: A predictive approach to churn prevention and engagement strategies. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Computer Science, Engineering and Information Technology*, *9*(4), 507–523.

Ahn, S., Park, J., & Ye, S. (2025). How AI enhances employee service innovation in retail: Social exchange theory perspectives and the impact of AI adaptability. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 84*(3), 104207.

3

Aslam, N. (2023). Cross-Functional Teams: Building Success Through Multidisciplinary Collaboration. *Research Journal*, *1*(01), 40-50.

Baldi, G., Megaro, A., & Carrubbo, L. (2022). Small-Town Citizens' technology acceptance of smart and sustainable city development. *Sustainability, 15*(1), 325.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Fredriksson, A., & Lahtinen, T. (2024). *Leveraging gamification for increased motivation in mobile applications: A quantitative study using self-determination theory & service-dominant logic* (Master's thesis, University of Gävle). Deva. https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1839721&dswid=-9062.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903.

Keiper, M. (2023). ChatGPT in practice: Increasing event planning efficiency through artificial intelligence. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 33*(2023), 100454. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2023.100454.

Kim, Y., & Roh, T. (2022). Preparing an exhibition in the post-pandemic era: Evidence from an O2O-based exhibition of B2B firms. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 185(C)*, 122041. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2022.122041.

Kourkouridis, D., Frangopoulos, I., & Salepaki, A. (2024). Post-pandemic trade fair dynamics: A longitudinal study of exhibitors' views on digital and hybrid trade fairs. *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites, 55*(3), 1174–1185. https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.55318-1290.

Kowalkowski, C., Kramer, V., Eravci, S., Salonen, A., & Ulaga, W. (2025, May 28). *Selling and sales management for successful servitization: a systematic review and research agenda*. Taylor & Francis Online. https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2025.2502168.

Lim, J. H., & Park, M. J. (2023). The Authenticity of Business to Business Salespersons on Consultative Selling Competence: The Role of Customer Orientation. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business, 14*(4), 1-21.

Liu, L., & Wang, Y. (2021). ISPO business model innovation: redefining the relationship between exhibition organizers and their customers. *Nankai Business Review International, 12*(2), 281-311.

Majid, G. M., Tussyadiah, I., Kim, Y. R., & Pal, A. (2023). Intelligent automation for sustainable tourism: a systematic review. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 31*(11), 2421–2440.

Manser Payne, E. H., Dahl, A. J., & Peltier, J. (2021). Digital servitization value co-creation framework for AI services: a research agenda for digital transformation in financial service ecosystems. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 15*(2), 200-222.

Proszowska, A. (2025). The place of technology in the evolution of modern trade fairs. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism, 16*(3), 206–217.

Sawung Murdha, A., Agus, H., Novianto Budi, K., Arry Akhmad, A., & Suhardi, S. (2023). Formulating a Conceptual Model of Digital Service Transformation Based on a Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Information Science Theory and Practice, 11*(1), 31-48.

Shin, J., Kim, Y. J., Jung, S., & Kim, C. (2022). Product and service innovation: Comparison between performance and efficiency. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge, 7*(3), 100191.https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2444569X22000312#abs0001.

3

Suuronen, S., Ukko, J., Eskola, R., Semken, R. S., & Rantanen, H. (2022). A systematic literature review for digital business ecosystems in the manufacturing industry: Prerequisites, challenges, and benefits. *CIRP Journal of Manufacturing Science and Technology, 37*(1), 414-426.

Suuronen, S., Ukko, J., Saunila, M., Rantala, T., & Rantanen, H. (2024). The implications of multi-sided platforms in managing digital business ecosystems. *Journal of Business Research, 175(3)*, 114544.

Tran, H. (2024). *The integration of social media data into Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategies-Impact on customer engagement and loyalty in the digital age.* THESEUS. https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/857532.

Vargo, S. L., Lusch, R. F., Akaka, M. A., & He, Y. (2017). Service-dominant logic: A review and assessment. *Review of marketing research, 6*(2017), 125-167.

Veile, J. W., Schmidt, M. C., & Voigt, K. I. (2022). Toward a new era of cooperation: How industrial digital platforms transform business models in Industry 4.0. *Journal of Business Research, 143(4)*, 387-405.

Verma, A., & Sybol, S. S. (2025). The role of technology in facilitating organizational transformation. In *Innovative approaches to managing conflict and change in diverse work environments* (pp. 343–380). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.

Yu, S., & Benson-Rea, M. (2023). Transforming trade fair services in the post-Covid-19 era: A perspective from China. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism, 25*(1), 33–53.https://doi.org/10.1080/15470148.2023.2278796.