

Press release translation

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University centre for service innovation to open in Amsterdam

The University of Amsterdam and the VU University Amsterdam will launch one of the first European university centers for service innovation: the Amsterdam Centre for Service Innovation (ACSI). A hallmark of the service sector economy is its large capacity for innovation. There is an increasing need for managers who possess expertise in both business and information technology, along with the ability to apply this knowledge to create successful innovations. The new centre will offer study programmes for executives and stimulate scientific research related to managing innovation processes in service providing businesses.

Different UvA and VU research groups from a variety of disciplines will work together at the AMSI. The centre will be accommodated at the UvA's Amsterdam Business School and the first courses will start in 2009. What is special about this programme is the relationship between business practice and practice-oriented research in the field of service innovation. This is a programme that requires a multidisciplinary approach.

Service innovation and the business community

This initiative is supported by IBM Benelux, Royal Dutch Airlines KLM, Rabobank Nederland, the Municipality of Amsterdam and the Telematica Institute. Harry van Dorenmalen, director of IBM Benelux stated that this initiative is closely related to research already being conducted by his company in this area. 'This centre will look further than the process chain to see how service innovation can be applied, for example, in the health care or logistics sectors. This will contribute to the development of innovation in the Netherlands and as a result, this will influence development in the Dutch business community'.

Peter Hartman, President & CEO of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines supports the initiative as it fits in with KLM's key characteristics – enterprising and innovative: "Education and research in the field of innovation management has focused too heavily on product and business model innovation in recent years. As a full service company, KLM has a specific need for dynamic insight into service innovation. We hope that this faculty will provide a much-needed boost in this field."

'As a significant financier of the Dutch business community, it is obvious that we would support a university centre for service innovation' says Piet van Schijndel, a Rabobank management board member.

The Municipality of Amsterdam supports this initiative within the context of the *Amsterdam Top City* programme. Alderman for Economic Affairs Lodewijk Asscher: 'The centre for service innovation is an example of universities and the business community combining their strengths to put Amsterdam on the map as a centre for knowledge and expertise.'

Mark de Jong, general director of the Telematica Institute and professor by special appointment at the UvA is one of the initiators of the centre. He suggests that a centre like this is indispensable for the Dutch economy, where 70% of the activity is service related, 'especially if you want to take advantage of the possibilities for growth available with the liberalisation of services traffic. In order

to be repeatedly successful in developing innovative services, you need to have a good grasp of the process. This is a new discipline where science and international practice will converge.'

In the United States, the business community took the initiative to develop similar programmes under the name 'Service Science, Management and Engineering. The AMSI will be working in cooperation with the University of California in Berkeley to make optimum use of their existing experience in this field.
