

The Working Customer – an Emerging New Type of Consumer

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ABSTRACT¹

In many sectors, self-service is replacing service. Moreover, customers not only serve themselves, they also serve other customers. Our main hypothesis is that a new aspect of the relationship between consumption and production is developing. Consequently, a new type of consumer is emerging, the working customer. These customers are characterized by three features: a) working customers create use value; b) their skills are valuable economic assets and c) they are systematically integrated into corporate structures, much as if they were employees. Three current research projects are presented, that analyze changes in the everyday life of customers caused by the development of the working customer. The research shows that the challenge of acting as a working customer is already an important part of everyday life. The result is an erosion of private life, the sanctity of which has previously been an important characteristic of our society.

Keywords

Self-service – working customer – everyday life – working conditions – service quality

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