

**SERVICE SCIENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION:
AN EVOLVING MODEL FOR INTEGRATING
BUSINESS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

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ABSTRACT

In 2001, the University of Auckland launched a new undergraduate degree aimed at producing graduates who can effectively bridge the worlds of business and information technology (IT). The Bachelor of Business and Information Management (BBIM) is a tightly structured program that takes an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to learning. While Service Science, as a discipline, was not specifically taken into account in the initial development of the BBIM, much of the Service Science philosophy underpins the degree. The BBIM is proving highly effective in producing so-called “T-shaped people”, graduates with both depth and breadth of knowledge. The degree does more than just develop students’ IT skills. The aim is to integrate the study of IT within a business context and to focus on how managers *use* information.

While the BBIM’s structure combines a major in Information Management with a second major chosen from either Accounting or Marketing, the degree also draws on many disciplines which are delivered in integrated and specialist courses. There is an emphasis throughout the degree on both individual and organizational learning. This is further complemented by tightly integrated core courses in Communication and Project Management. The packaged nature of the BBIM leads to a cohort-based learning experience where students flow from class to class together during their years in the programme. This fosters an environment where interaction and teamwork are a given. Finally, an integrated capstone project experience is packaged into the students’ final semester.

The BBIM has faced the typical cross-disciplinary challenges found in an academic environment built around discipline based research. However, a core group of dedicated teachers has emerged and the market is “speaking” with a buoyant demand for BBIM graduates. Looking forward, there are still opportunities to further develop and identify this degree even more closely with the discipline of Service Science.