Processes are the lifeblood of the service operation. Rather like DNA provides the pattern for a living organism, a good process ensures that service is delivered con- sistently, time after time. Process design describes and prescribes the procedures to be followed in service delivery and also how they will use or interact with other resources such as materials or equipment. For example, call centre agents in a telephone bank are given clear guidance as to how to speak to the customer, what questions to ask, and what performance standards are expected. The agents also have access to screens on their computers to prompt them to ask particular ques- tions or to help them answer routine enquiries. Finally, the information system will guide the agents through the customer data requirements to be filled in during or immediately after the call. Part Three lService delivery Moving to a macro level, process managers and designers have to pay attention to how the various activities or sub-processes link together to provide the whole serv- ice. In the telephone bank the service is not simply that delivered by the agent but also involves loan application processes, credit card issuing processes, international funds transfer processes and so on. The whole interrelated chain of processes needs to be carefully designed, managed and controlled to deliver value to customers and to the organisation. However, designing and then managing service processes is not easy. Processes are as varied as the service organisations of which they are a part. Some are extremely flexible, able to meet a wide variety of customer requirements using the same set of resources. Some management consultants, for example, are able to utilise a wide range of approaches in developing customised solutions for their clients. Other processes, such as many call and contact centre operations, are much more closely defined in order to achieve benefits of consistency and efficiency. In a similar manner, some processes depend a great deal on the skill, knowledge and expertise of individual employees, such as medical doctors in general practice, while other processes employ resources such as technology or information systems to reduce the dependence on individual .skills, thus enabling the service organisa- tion to deal with greater volumes and to grow geographically