

30 SSOW March 16 – 19, 2026
Orlando, FL

THE 30-YEAR EVOLUTION OF SHARED SERVICES

Stability Through Constant Change



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STABILITY THROUGH CONSTANT CHANGE

Reviewing shared services' evolution over the past three decades has been a fascinating task. I joined SSON 25 years ago, so I can honestly say I've witnessed most of it firsthand. Back then, the "industry," as we called it, was straightforward: consolidate, centralize, standardize. That delivered cost savings, better quality, and trust. Then came the great location debate – onshore, nearshore, offshore – followed by outsourcing the transactional work no one really wanted (and which BPOs could do better and cheaper in any case). That brings us to the early 2000s, when continuous improvement took center stage, along with the inevitable growing pains of moving toward GBS. A turbulent wave of automation and digitization eventually led us to today's embrace of AI in all its forms. And looking ahead, the pace of change will only intensify.

When I joined the industry in 2000, everyone was talking about "lights out" service delivery – the idea that operations would run themselves from a cockpit, and the last person out would turn off the lights. It felt like science fiction then. Today, we're certainly much closer to that scenario.

But the more we advance digital operations, the more one truth stands out: Yes, you can run transactions blindly through bots, but you cannot reach GBS's full potential through machines alone. That requires bold, future-focused conversations, a willingness to innovate, and the visionary leadership to look beyond today's boundaries. I can't imagine any scenario where humans aren't leading that charge.

Of course, delivering on this transformation hinges on board-level commitment. For all kinds of reasons, even successful GBS models can be undone – not always because of their performance. You know better than anyone how many conflicting forces can stall your ability to support the business. But that's another discussion entirely...

What has remained strikingly consistent is the integrity of the shared services model. It has weathered pandemics, politics, and war. Often described as the enterprise's backbone, modern shared services give businesses the stability they need to satisfy demanding customers and face up to shifting markets. Whatever changes come, the model has proven resilient – and, increasingly, indispensable.



Barbara Hodge
Global Editor
SSON Research & Analytics



THE EARLY PIONEERS

The idea of centralizing back-office functions via a shared unit started in the mid-1980s, initially in the U.S.

That early wave was limited in scope and largely domestic, focused on transactional, volume-based functions (accounting, payroll, etc.). The transition to what we today call “GBS” – global, multifunctional, cross-business-unit shared services – took place in the late 1990s /early 2000s, as companies globalized and embraced integrated IT platforms alongside process standardization. From limited early adopters, the model soon spread to most large multinationals.

Some of the true pioneers of the shared services model – Procter & Gamble, General Electric, Ford Motor Company, Shell, American Express, Hewlett-Packard, and ABB – began consolidating finance, HR, and procurement functions in the 1990s. Their early efforts shaped the first real playbooks for centralization, global standardization, and multifunction service delivery. Those models became the blueprint for what we now recognize as modern Global Business Services.

PROCTER & GAMBLE (P&G)



Adopted shared services: Mid-1990s P&G is frequently cited as the archetype of early shared services. They centralized finance, HR, IT, and procurement early and built one of the most mature global models. Their operating principles became a benchmark for early SSC/GBS strategy across industries.

GENERAL ELECTRIC (GE)



Adopted shared services: Late 1990s GE implemented one of the first large-scale multifunction shared services environments, anchored in finance and HR. GE’s reputation for operational excellence helped popularize shared services globally and accelerated adoption across the Fortune 500.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY



Adopted shared services: 1996 Ford’s “Ford 2000” transformation is one of the earliest well-documented shared services journeys, starting with finance and accounting. They were among the first large U.S. multinationals to formally centralize administrative functions globally.

SHELL



Adopted shared services: Late 1990s / early 2000s Shell was a trailblazer in building large-scale global hubs across finance, HR, logistics and procurement. Known for early global process ownership and strong governance, Shell set the standard for the energy sector’s subsequent adoption of shared services.

AMERICAN EXPRESS



Adopted shared services: Late 1990s A pioneer in consolidating finance and customer service operations, American Express was also early in establishing global capability centers in India and the Philippines. Their model is frequently referenced in early offshoring case studies.

HEWLETT-PACKARD (HP)



Adopted shared services: Late 1990s / early 2000s HP emerged early as a leader in consolidating finance, HR, and internal shared services across global business units. They were also among the first technology companies to embed shared services into a broader enterprise transformation strategy, influencing later GBS models in tech and electronics.

ABB



Adopted shared services: Late 1990s ABB, long regarded as an operational innovator, was one of the earliest European multinationals to implement shared services globally. They centralized finance, HR, and procurement early and became a model for cross-border process standardization in complex industrial organizations.



A JOURNEY OF 30 YEARS: FROM INCEPTION TO THE PRESENT

In order to understand how shared services became what it is today, SSON returned to its earliest records. Physical archives from decades of events that were stashed away in boxes and storage units were revisited to surface the ideas, debates, and priorities that defined each era. The result is a chronological view of shared services as it unfolded, from early experiments in cost consolidation to today's AI-enabled, enterprise-wide value orchestration. More than a retrospective, this timeline reflects how the shared services community itself has continuously adapted, matured, and redefined its role inside the enterprise.

Why It Matters:

Creates the first scalable enterprise operations model, proving that process centralization unlocks quality, visibility, and cost savings.

Late 1990s

A shift towards global, **multifunctional SSC/GBS** as companies centralize multiple functions (finance, HR, IT, procurement, etc.) into one global organization.



Theme
Multifunctional SSC/GBS

Up to mid-1990s

First SSCs appear in mid-80s among large U.S. corporations, **consolidating back-office operations** (finance, accounting, sometimes HR/IT). By mid-90s, a still limited group (around a dozen Fortune-500 firms) operate with discrete shared-service centers but growth is accelerated by globalization, need for scale, and rising overheads from decentralized operations.



Theme
Consolidating back-office operations

1990s

Shared Services Conference 1997, Boston
(35 attendees! Cost: US\$1,295 paid by mailed check!)

Consolidating "best practice" staff and support functions for significant operational cost reductions!

FOCUS ON: the evolution from US transaction centers to global shared services. Integrated enterprise-wide processes, a.k.a. "shared business services".

Shared Services Conference 1999, New Orleans, Louisiana:

How to develop and implement shared service services globally

PLUS: How to overcome the true barriers to shared services



Shared Services Conference 2000, New Orleans, Louisiana:

Managing shared services in a global environment!

PLUS: The challenges of **site selection** and overcoming cultural barriers!

Shared Services Week 2003, Orlando, Florida:

Shared Services Excellence Awards launch!

PLUS: The next step in the evolution of shared services – new business process outsourcing organizations offer re-engineering, transactions processing, and self-service technologies.

2010-2015

Global Business Services (GBS) solidify as companies consolidate multiple functions under single governance, unified service experiences, and enterprise performance measures. This results in a more integrated, customer-centric model designed to deliver value across the entire enterprise.

Theme
Governance is key

2000

Global **offshoring hubs** emerge, particularly India, the Philippines, Central & Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

Theme
Offshoring hubs emerge

Mid-2000s

Rise of outsourcing & hybrid delivery as outsourcing matures alongside captives and many enterprises seek a combination of both. New enterprise platforms (SAP, Oracle, PeopleSoft) unify data and processes across borders.

Theme
Outsourcing matures

Shared Services Week 2006, Orlando, Florida:

Building the business case for offshore or outsourcing.

PLUS: Meet **Jack Welch!**

Why It Matters: Outsourcing catalyzes the globalization of back-office operations and introduces professionalized delivery at scale.

2000s



2010s

Shared Services Conference 2002, New Orleans, Louisiana:

Integrating legacy systems and streamlining processes in a merged environment.

PLUS: Self-service.com – the new shared services that is now a “make or buy” decision.



Early 2000s

End-to-end process ownership models evolve (hire-to-retain, order-to-cash, etc.), driving integrated enterprise delivery platforms.

Theme
Integrated service delivery

Shared Services & Outsourcing Week 2013, Orlando, Florida:

Who owns the governance?

FOCUS ON: What is a “Customer Relationship Management” (CRM) Framework?



Shared Services & Outsourcing Week 2015, Orlando, Florida.

The digital revolution is coming!
[Editor's note: But RPA is not featured!]

FEATURING:

Andrew McAfee
co-founder of MIT's initiative on the digital economy.

Shared Services & Outsourcing Week 2022, Orlando, Florida:

Turning information into action!

FOCUS ON: Using **data analytics** to drive operational excellence.

2024-Present

The rise of generative/agentive AI alongside autonomous digital agents marks a new AI-native shared services era. AI embeds in workflows to predict and resolve issues before they occur, while entire segments of knowledge work are automated. Roles are redefined, talent is rebalanced, and transactional delivery shifts to value orchestration.

Theme
Digital revolution

2015-2020

RPA, workflow digitization, cloud platforms, and intelligent automation mark a technology-driven reinvention of shared services. Customer and employee experience emerge as central design principles, shifting focus from productivity to frictionless service delivery and user-centric outcomes.

Theme
Data analytics

2022-2023

Data & advanced analytics become a priority as the focus shifts from processing work to analyzing and improving work. GBS analytics centers of excellence deliver forecasting, KPI intelligence, and automation opportunity identification. GBS is seen as a consultative partner with influence over enterprise planning and strategic decision-making.

Shared Services & Outsourcing Week 2026, Orlando, Florida:

Celebrating 30 years of excellence in shared services & GBS.

FEATURING:

Erin Brockovich on the power of one! **Eckard Eberle** CEO, Siemens Global Business Services, Siemens (Top 5 ranked GBS from the 2025 World's Best GBS Award).

PLUS:

- Agentic AI for Shared Services Bootcamp.
- Non-linear career paths.
- AI as career accelerator.
- Broadening the GBS value proposition to front & middle office.
- Unlocking enterprise efficiency through workforce insights.
- Rethinking org design based on skills not titles.
- How CX is rewiring GBS from the front.

2020s SSOW

Theme
Remarkable resilience

Shared Services & Outsourcing Week 2021, Orlando, Florida:

SSOW is back post pandemic!

FOCUS ON: From play to pause and back to play. **Resuming transformation efforts** after a COVID stall!

2020-2022

COVID-19 pressure-tests shared services at a global scale, and the model proves **remarkably resilient**. Entire GBS organizations transition to remote delivery without service disruption, cementing GBS as a continuity engine, and accelerating adoption of cloud, collaboration platforms, virtual operations, and digital workflows.

SSOWs 30th Anniversary is Here!
LEARN MORE

ssow
30
SHARED SERVICES & OUTSOURCING WEEK
Celebrating 30 Years of Excellence in Shared Services & GBS
MARCH 16 - 19, 2024 • ORLANDO, FL • WWW.SHAREDSERVICEWEEK.COM

10 CATALYSTS THAT REDEFINED GBS

1

Consolidation & Standardization

The foundational move to centralize processes, reduce duplication, and create unified standards across the enterprise.

2

Globalization of Service Delivery

Expansion across borders enabled by global operating models, multinational footprints, and cross-regional scalability.

3

Functional Integration

Bringing multiple functions (Finance, HR, IT, Procurement, etc.) under one coordinated enterprise services model.

4

Location Strategy: Offshoring & Nearshoring

Using global talent hubs to optimize cost, capacity, skills, and 24/7 operations.

5

Hybrid Delivery: Captive + Outsourcing Models

Leveraging external partners to supplement internal teams, scale capability, and introduce specialized expertise.

6

End-to-End Process Ownership

Redesigning work around complete value chains (O2C, P2P, H2R) to reduce fragmentation and improve outcomes. Enabled by widespread ERP adoption.

7

Enterprise Governance & Operating Model

Unified leadership, service management, performance metrics, and cross-functional accountability that define modern GBS.

8

Digital Foundations: RPA, Workflow & Core Digitization

Automation, cloud workflows, and digitized processes that shift shared services from manual processing to digital execution. Eliminates labor-based scaling.

9

Experience-Led Design

Embedding customer and employee experience principles to create frictionless, user-centric interactions.

10

Data, Analytics & AI

Progression from reporting to predictive analytics to generative and agentic AI, enabling proactive, autonomous, insight-driven services. GBS shifts from processing to orchestrating enterprise value and becoming a strategic enabler of growth.



30 YEARS OF BRINGING THE INDUSTRY TOGETHER

Little would we have guessed, when we ran our first Shared Services conference in Boston in 1996, just how far – and for how long – this journey would carry us. From a small gathering of curious practitioners, we’ve grown to over 1,200 executives. Where women were once the minority on stage, today half of our speakers are female executives. The early fixation on cost and structure has shifted toward a richer conversation about value, integration, and enterprise enablement.

But it’s always been about more than metrics and operating models. Shared services – and now GBS – sits at the innovative edge of enterprise technology. It has become a hub for experimentation, where new ideas are tested, refined, and scaled. Many of the initiatives that ultimately transform the enterprise begin life in the GBS “sandbox.” And as the model has matured, so has its standing: GBS leaders now report to CFOs, COOs, and even CEOs. Its influence and impact are undeniable.

That’s why the tagline for our 30th annual SSOW in 2026 is “stability through constant change.” It captures the very essence of this work – and the resilience of the people behind it.

As we look ahead, it is striking how much opportunity still lies in front of us. If the past 30 years have taught us anything, it’s that this community thrives on reinvention. And whatever the next wave brings – challenges we haven’t yet imagined – there is no doubt that GBS will continue to lead the way. Here’s to the next chapter together.



REFLECTIONS FROM GBS LEADERS WHO DROVE THE CHANGE

I'm one of the early birds and I remember back in the very early days explaining to people in the USA that their new Shared Services was on a different time zone and not to arrange meetings at 4pm!! Shared Services have evolved so far in 30 years that if it was related to my health, it would be complaining about millennials, joint pain, and the cost of groceries. We started with big monitors, fax machines, cubicles, and everyone sat around a conference speaker hearing "hallo, hallo, can you hear me?" Today we've got global processes, A.I., live dashboards, and consultants judging us in real time. What used to take three signatures, two phone calls and a walk down to the local supplier from Betty in accounting with a check book, is now done by a bot before you finish your protein shake. Basically, shared services grew up, and got smarter (like some of us) ... and like the best of us, it now spends most of its time explaining itself to executives.



Steve Rudderham
Former Head of Global Business Services
Carrier



When I began in Shared Services, it started as basic back office consolidation of Finance processes i.e. A/P and Payroll...more "widgets" processed in one place to cut costs, reduce errors, and impose consistency. The second evolution introduced the hub-and-spoke model, expanding from regional hubs and nearshoring into full offshoring and follow-the-sun support, expanding into more Finance tasks, and absorbing work from HR and IT as scale and specialization grew. The third wave elevated the model into digitally enabled GBS, where automation, analytics, and global process ownership unified back and middle office processes and began pushing into select front office journeys like Customer Service, Collections, Marketing, and Sales Support, shifting the mandate from transactional delivery to enterprise enablement. Now this fourth evolution is emerging: an intelligence-driven operating system, powered by GenAI, predictive insights, and increasingly autonomous workflows that blur the lines between front, middle, and back office altogether. The coming shapeshifter is the move from delivering services to delivering decisions, where GBS becomes the organization's real-time intelligence and execution layer without boundaries on function. GBS...the quiet genius of a few companies: copied everywhere, understood by only a handful, and mastered only by the most bold CEOs who elevate it into the organization's Intelligence Core and Performance Architecture of Tomorrow as its enduring competitive superpower.



Suzanne Leopoldi-Nichols
GBS Executive
(Previously Head of GBS at WPP and UPS)



The evolution of the GBS industry in the past three decades has been astronomical. Thirty years ago, GBS wasn't even a thing at Procter and Gamble. That started twenty-seven years ago for P&G by creating shared services centers for labor arbitrage. Then Filippo coined the term GBS a few years later. But the true evolution has been in terms of business value – from cost efficiency to business transformation engine; from a people-and-process improvement lever to competitive-advantage driver; and from a risky wild-west idea to a structured, must-have strategy. That's why we are so passionate about disseminating the standards and capabilities of this industry. It's a necessary and powerful business idea today.



Filippo Passerini
Co-Founder, **Inixia** and Founding Member, **Alliance for Professional Excellence in GBS (APEX GBS)**



Tony Saldanha
Co-Founder, **Inixia** and Founding Member, **Alliance for Professional Excellence in GBS (APEX GBS)**



REFLECTIONS FROM GBS LEADERS WHO DROVE THE CHANGE



I believe we are about to enter the “5th Phase/Generation” of Shared Service organizations. I break the 5 down as follows:

- 1 Phase one was what I call “Discrete Shared Services” - This phase was pulling together like type transactional process to generate economies of scale productivity.
- 2 Phase two was “Functional/Regional Shared Services” - This is when companies started to give their shared service organizations more strategy. It also was the beginning of going global with their thinking. This phase also was the early emergence of BPOs.
- 3 Phase three is “Global Business Services” - This was the emergence of truly global shared services models and running their Shared Services more like a business. Self-service was introduced here, accelerating productivity. BPOs matured in this phase, and full outsource and hybrid models became common.
- 4 Phase four is “Intelligent Business Services” - This is the phase we are in now. This phase introduced new age technologies such as robotics, AI, Internet of things, data/process mining, etc.. Creating business value has become increasingly important here. This is value beyond labor arbitrage and continuous improvement.
- 5 Phase five is what I call “Digital Business Services” - I foresee this to be the next phase. I think it will be the full realization of emerging technologies and the largely elimination of traditional transactions. The elimination of transactions won't come from any one technology but the ability to link together various tools to do the work in a completely different fashion. For example: Leveraging data mining tools to pull information, AI to structure it, RPA to process it, Block Chain to record it, and Power BI to report it. Shared Service organizations will largely transform themselves into Governance, reporting, analyzing, data/process mining experts with the only transactional work being to trouble shoot any issues.



Richard Dobbs
GBS Executive
Previously Head of GBS at **Kimberly-Clark**,
and VP of Shared Services at **Mondelez**



Looking back over the past 30 years, I've seen shared services evolve from the early days of regional hubs – where centralizing transactional processes was a bold new step – to the exciting era when offshoring to India became a reality and a passion of mine. Those first offshore centers in Bangalore were built on the energy and commitment of amazing people, and even as technology and process models have advanced, the heart of our industry has always been about the people. I've learned that the leaders who truly succeed are those willing to embrace change, take risks, and build inclusive, adaptable cultures. Today, while AI and automation are set to be game changers, I firmly believe that people will remain at the core of everything we do. The real shapeshifter isn't just technology – it's our ongoing ability to nurture talent, drive value beyond cost, and keep people and culture at the center of shared services transformation.



Chris Gunning
Global Enablement Lead, Global Finance Operations
NielsenIQ



Is there really a shared services model? What we as an industry can focus on more, is what the company needs at that point in the business cycle. Perhaps we get too hung up, sometimes, on convincing ourselves that GBS should look and operate a certain way. Maybe we can focus more on understanding how we can contribute, without ego, without rigidity. We need to change as the company changes ... showing more flexibility and an openness to design “best for company” rather than “best in the shared services world.”



Vanessa Gleason
Global Head
Takeda Business Solutions





REFLECTIONS FROM GBS LEADERS WHO DROVE THE CHANGE



Here is my perspective on how the evolution of Shared Services has happened:

- From efficiency (standardization, cost reduction, transactional stability) to experience (end-to-end experience management, self-services, user-centric design)
- From consolidation (centralization and harmonization) to intelligence through automation and insight-driven operations
- From labor arbitrage to talent and capability
- From service delivery to value creation as a strategic partner and accelerator for innovation, transformation, and business outcomes



Matthias Maschke
Senior Vice President, Shared Services Delivery
Deutsche Telekom



In the last 30 years, Shared services have evolved from centralization and a cost arbitrage strategy to capability creation. What began as an efficiency engine has now become one of the most critical platforms for enterprise value blending technology, data, design, and human judgment in ways the original pioneers could never have imagined. The next shape-shift will come from Artificial and industry-contextual intelligence, where GBS doesn't just enable the business but anticipates it. We are moving from 'follow the process' to 'shape the enterprise to create shareholder value', and that is the most exciting frontier yet.



Sumit Mitra
CEO
Tesco Business Solutions & OmniSol



In the 1990s when I started out, India was considered too risky. Rightshoring was considered Chicago to Tulsa or London to Rotterdam.



Deborah Kops
Principal & Co-Founder
Sourcing Change



The shift over 30 years has been extraordinary for those of us who remember:

- From travelling for weeks for KT to Video Conferences & online KT
- From "proving the concept" to "this is the way we should work"
- From being "back of back office" to "Value Driver"
- From "who wants to work in a back office" to "what does it take to lead a GBS"



Manoj Kalra
Global Head of Convatec Business Services
Convatec





REFLECTIONS FROM GBS LEADERS WHO DROVE THE CHANGE



Here are my top 4 phrases to frame the evolution:

- 1 **Resilient:** When you look back over the last 30 years, the shared services model has been far more resilient than most people give it credit for. There have been multiple inflection points - it has and continues to evolve through every economic cycle, every technology wave and every shift in organizational priorities. The reason the model has endured is simple: the underlying business problems haven't gone away. Companies still struggle with fragmentation, rising costs, inconsistent processes and the need to scale globally. Shared services continues to be the most reliable way to solve those problems.
- 2 **Adaptable:** What started as a pure cost-takeout and consolidation play has steadily transformed into an enterprise-wide operating fabric. Today, shared services isn't just about cheaper delivery – it is about consistency, governance and scalable ways of working. And the model has kept reinventing itself - first through ERP centralization, then BPO and offshoring, later through Lean/Six Sigma and more recently through automation and AI. Each wave has expanded the ambition of what shared services can take on.
- 3 **Ambition:** One underrated factor in its scope and the ability to keep absorbing new functions and capabilities. Finance and HR were just the beginning. Over time, we have seen procurement, analytics, IT services, legal ops, marketing ops even parts of product ops move in. That kind of elasticity is rare.
- 4 **Talent:** The talent mix has changed massively. Shared services teams today include automation specialists, data analysts, service designers and product owners well beyond just transaction processors. This shift has elevated the entire operating model.



Jay Desai
VP – IT Infrastructure & Operations Digital & IT
JTI



From efficiency, to effectiveness to insights and ultimately, given the wealth of data flowing through the GBS pipes, we now provide foresight.



Angela Mangiapane
Former President, Mars Global Services
Mars



Looking back, the evolution of Shared Services can be summed up through what I call the 4Ts – Talent, Technology, Trust, and Transformation. Over the past decades, we have moved from labour-arbitrage and process consolidation to a model where Talent is globally orchestrated, augmented by Technology that enables intelligent automation and, now, GenAI. This journey has fundamentally strengthened Trust - trust in the quality of services, in data as a reliable basis for decision-making, and in Shared Services as a strategic partner to the business. Together, these forces have driven profound Transformation, with GBS evolving into an AI-driven value accelerator that not only delivers operational efficiency but actively shapes business performance and innovation. Looking ahead, GenAI will be the major shapeshifter - blending the four Ts, reinventing workflows, and enabling proactive, insight-led service delivery. Yet despite all technological advancements, the human-AI touch will remain the key differentiator: the ability to combine empathy, judgment, and expertise with intelligent systems will define the next era of Shared Services.



Turan Sahin
CEO, Allianz Services
Allianz



Having lived through multiple waves of shared services, what stands out is that the model only created real value once leaders stopped optimising transactions and started redesigning how work, decisions, and accountability flow across the enterprise. To be sure, early success came from consolidation and labour leverage; but sustained success came only from operating discipline, business intimacy, and the courage to say no to fragmentation. In practice, the strongest GBS and GCCs today act as control towers for capacity, risk, and execution—not as internal vendors. The next reshaping force won't be another centre or framework, but how effectively leaders integrate AI into day-to-day operations while preserving judgment, ownership, and trust. Shared services is no longer about where work sits—it's about who truly runs the enterprise engine. The future is exciting!



Priyaranjan Jha
SVP & Head of Global Business Services
Iron Mountain



PAST & PRESENT SSOW CHAIRMAN PERSPECTIVES



In the 1980s and 1990s corporations experienced downturns necessitating them to cut headcount without reducing work requirement and performance expectations. This satisfied the immediate need but not viable long term. A new approach emerged which analyzed processes from end to end enabling their fundamental redesign for increased efficiency and productivity, reduced costs and improved quality. Shared Services innovative process redesign yielding demonstrable performance improvements led to its initial recognition and subsequent adoption. Shared Services' focus was on headcount and workflow on a functional basis. The Finance function took the lead and was followed to a lesser extent by Human Resources, IT and Procurement. They each used their own approach and managed it in their own style. Benchmarking and best practices soon followed to show their comparative results and to identify potential improvement. With this, Functions proved in Shared Services and incorporated it into their overall design.



Dr. Leland Forst

Executive Consultant, 1997 SSOW Chairman
The Franchise Consulting Company



I remember when Shared Services was little more than an idea shared by a small group of pioneers - we began as centralized domestic financial centers with a valiant effort to maintain business unit trust. At the time, the concept was simple yet disruptive. Success was defined almost entirely by cost savings. Yet, that disciplined foundation enabled something far greater: Shared Services evolved into Global Business Services – expanding beyond functional silos to end-to-end multi-function capabilities. Robotics, analytics, and early blockchain use cases pushed us past labor arbitrage. And now we have a “menu” of delivery models to choose from: Hybrid BPO’s, Global Capability Centers, Landlord Models, Virtual Centers... all tailored to your own strategy and culture. As a result, today, GBS is entering the most exciting phase I have witnessed in three decades. Artificial intelligence and agentic AI are motivating us to rethink the rigid models many of us grew up with. We are moving beyond automation that merely expedites processes and assists our people toward digital agents that can sense, decide, and act across processes. That shift is mind-opening, yet uncomfortable for most. Concepts that were once taboo – customization and flexibility – are now reasonable expectations from our business partners, and can be delivered to elevate customer service without sacrificing scale, quality, or control. Still, the lessons of the past remain highly relevant today: technology does not create value on its own. The future of Shared Services and GBS will belong to organizations that pair intelligent automation with disciplined end-to-end process ownership, strong governance, and distinctly human strengths: judgment, critical thinking, ethics, and leadership. This future is not about replacing people with machines; it is about making deliberate choices where humans matter most, and designing our organizations accordingly.



Brad DeMent

Partner, SSOW Chairman, 2014 - Present
ScottMadden



Brad DeMent
Partner, SSOW Chairman,
2014 - Present
ScottMadden



A LOOK AHEAD TO THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHARED SERVICES & OUTSOURCING WEEK

As we look ahead to the future of Shared Services and GBS, the path forward is defined by innovation, agility, and a new era of intelligent operations. This report reveals how organizations are reshaping their operating models, elevating digital capabilities, and unlocking value through people, data, and technology.

To continue this conversation and explore what the next 30 years will bring, we invite you to join us at **Shared Services & Outsourcing Week** on **March 16 – 19, 2026** in Orlando, where the global community will come together to set the vision for the future.

VISIT THE SSOW WEBSITE

VIEW THE EVENT GUIDE

BOOK ONLINE

FEATURED KEYNOTES



Erin Brockovich

Keynote on *The Power of One* and how courage and persistence drive meaningful transformation.



Eckard Eberle

CEO
Siemens Global Business Services

Insights on new requirements, digitalization, and successful transformation in GBS.



Kim Skanson

SVP Global Business Services
Cencora

A people first perspective on balancing technology with purpose and culture.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Eight focused programs tailored to:

1. Human Resources Shared Services
2. Finance Transformation
3. Digital Transformation
4. Process Excellence
5. Procurement/Supply Chain Management
6. Scope Expansion
7. Shared Services Fundamentals
8. The Future of Business Services Boardroom

Agentic AI in Shared Services Bootcamp

SSOWomen's Day

Site Tours

The SSON Impact Awards Gala

The 'Lucky 30' SSOW Glow Party Celebration