

CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION TO OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

Teaching Notes

Many students come to this course with negative feelings, perhaps because they have heard that the course includes a certain amount of quantitative material (which many feel uncomfortable with), or perhaps because the course strikes them as "how to run a factory." Others seem to have very little idea about what operations management is. I view the initial meeting with my classes, and this first chapter, as opportunities to dispel some of these notions, and to generate enthusiasm for the course.

Highlights of the chapter include the following:

1. Operations as one of the three main functional concerns of most organizations.
2. The role and job of the operations manager as a planner and decision-maker.
3. Different ways of classifying (and understanding) production systems.
4. System design versus system operation.
5. Major characteristics of production systems.
6. Contemporary issues in operations management.
7. Operations as essentially managerial (planning, staffing, etc.)
8. The historical evolution of production/operations management.
9. Manufacturing operations versus service operations.

Reading: The Challenges of Managing Services

1. In comparison to manufacturing industry, services have:
 - a. Less structured jobs.
 - b. Higher customer contact.
 - c. Lower worker skills.
 - d. Low skill entry-level positions.
 - e. Higher employee turnover.
 - f. Higher input variability.
2. Because of the factors listed in the answer to question 1, in service industry it is more difficult to control costs and quality resulting in lower productivity. In addition the risk of customer dissatisfaction is greater and employee motivation is lower.

Reading: Why Manufacturing Matters

1. Since the U.S. economy is becoming more service based, the percentage of employment in manufacturing is declining while the percentage of employment in service industry is increasing. An agile manufacturer is able to switch quickly and economically from one product to another with very little disruption.

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Irvin N. Gleim, Terry L. Campbell

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