

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.
10. The need to manage the supply chain.

Reading: Why Manufacturing Matters

1. Given that the U.S. economy is becoming more service based, the percentage of employment in manufacturing is declining while the percentage of employment in the service industry is increasing. In addition, the loss of manufacturing jobs results in the loss of service jobs as well (a general estimate is that four service jobs are lost for each manufacturing job lost).
2. The government could offer companies tax incentives for purchasing new equipment or for hiring workers. In addition, the government could work with manufacturing companies to re-train workers in more advanced manufacturing processes.
3. Manufacturing innovation is important because it requires high value-added knowledge work that supports future innovation. Second, innovation generates high-paying jobs. Third, innovation is important because it improves productivity, thereby slowing the outsourcing of jobs to lower wage countries.

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Terry C. Jones



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Table of Contents Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems

1. Understanding the eBook Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems User Reviews and Ratings
 - Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems Free and Paid eBooks
 - Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems Public Domain eBooks
 - Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems eBook Subscription Services
 - Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems eBook Formats
 - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems Compatibility with Devices
 - Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Interactive Elements Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems

8. Staying Engaged with Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Setting Reading Goals Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Operating Management 11e Chapter 3 Stevenson Solution To Problems
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements
 - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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