

CHAPTER 1

Operations and Productivity

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The text suggests four reasons to study OM. We want to understand (1) how people organize themselves for productive enterprise, (2) how goods and services are produced, (3) what operations managers do, and (4) this costly part of our economy and most enterprises.

2. Possible responses include: Adam Smith (work specialization/division of labor), Charles Babbage (work specialization/division of labor), Frederick W. Taylor (scientific management), Walter Shewart (statistical sampling and quality control), Henry Ford (moving assembly line), Charles Scorsen (moving assembly line), Frank and Lillian Gilbreth (motion study), Eli Whitney (standardization).

3. See references in the answer to question 2.

4. The actual charts will differ, depending on the specific organization the student chooses to describe. The important thing is for students to recognize that all organizations require, to a greater or lesser extent, (a) the three primary functions of operations, finance/accounting, and marketing; and (b) that the emphasis or detailed breakdown of these functions is dependent on the specific competitive strategy employed by the firm.

5. The answer to this question may be similar to that for question 4.

Here, however, the student should be encouraged to utilize a more detailed knowledge of a past employer and indicate on the chart additional information such as the number of persons employed to perform the various functions and, perhaps, the position of the functional areas within the overall organization hierarchy.

6. The basic functions of a firm are marketing, accounting/finance, and operations. An interesting class discussion: "Do all firms/organizations (private, government, not-for-profit) perform these three functions?" The authors' hypothesis is yes, they do.

7. The 10 decisions of operations management are product design, quality, process, location, layout, human resources, supply-chain management, inventory, scheduling (aggregate and short term), maintenance. We find this structure an excellent way to help students organize and learn the material.

8. Four areas that are important to improving labor productivity are: (1) basic education (basic reading and math skills), (2) diet

of the labor force, (3) social overhead that makes labor available (water, sanitation, transportation, etc.), and (4) maintaining and expanding the skills necessary for changing technology and knowledge, as well as for teamwork and motivation.

9. Productivity is harder to measure when the task becomes more intellectual. A knowledge society implies that work is more intellectual and therefore harder to measure. Because the U.S. (and many other countries) are increasingly "knowledge" societies, productivity is harder to measure. Using labor hours as a measure of productivity for a postindustrial society vs. an industrial or agriculture society is very different. For example, decades spent developing a marvelous new drug or winning a very difficult legal case on intellectual property rights may be significant for post-industrial societies, but not show much in the way of productivity improvement measured in labor hours.

10. Productivity is difficult to measure because precise units of measure may be lacking, quality may not be consistent, and exogenous variables may change.

11. Mass customization is the flexibility to produce in order to meet specific customer demands, without sacrificing the low cost of a product oriented process. Rapid product development is a source of competitive advantage. Both rely on agility within the organization.

12. Labor productivity in the service sector is hard to improve because (1) many services are labor intensive and (2) they are individually (personally) processed (the customer is paying for that service—the hair cut), (3) it may be an intellectual task performed by professionals, (4) it is often difficult to mechanize and automate, and (5) often difficult to evaluate for quality.

13. Taco Bell designed meals that were easy to prepare, with actual cooking and food preparation done elsewhere; automation to save preparation time; reduced floor space; manager training to increase span of control.

ETHICAL DILEMMA

With most of the ethical dilemmas in the text, the instructor should generate plenty of discussion with this dilemma. The authors are hesitant to endorse a particular correct answer. And students may well be on both side of this dilemma.

Many students will be inclined to accept the child labor laws of their home country. For instance, Americans accept teenagers working. But Germans (and others) are more likely to expect teenagers to be home studying or in an apprentice program; they frown upon teenagers working. Students raised in more affluent environments may not understand children working. However, those who had to scrape by in their youth or had parents that did may be more sympathetic to 10-year-olds working.

From an economic and self-preservation perspective many 10-year-olds do work and need to work. There are still a lot of

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Answer: TRUE Diff: 1 Key Term: Operations management LO: 1.1 Define operations management Learning Outcome: Discuss operations and operations management as a competitive advantage for the organization 26) Reasons to study operations management include: A) studying how people organize themselves for productive enterprise. B) knowing how goods and services are consumed. C) understanding what ...

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Operations Management Heizer Forecasting Problems

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