

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE  
BUSINESS SCHOOL

BMA5010A MANAGING OPERATIONS

(Version: 23 June 08, Tentative)

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**Session:** Semester I (6 Oct – 21 Nov) 2008/2009

**Time and Venue:** 5 sessions: Monday: 1500-1750  
Tuesday: 0900-1150 & 1815-2105  
Thursday: 0900-1150 & 1815-2105

**Consultation Hours:** 14:30-17:30 Tuesdays

**Prerequisite:** BMA5002A

*While operational excellence alone is not the basis of a sustainable strategy,  
managing operations remains a priority for all organizations.*

– R. S. Kaplan & D. P. Norton

**Synopsis**

This module introduces you to the strategic and operating issues and decisions involved in managing the business/operational processes within an enterprise. An operational process is one that uses an organization's resources to transform inputs into goods, service, or both. Sound and creative operations management is a major competitive advantage. It is not hard to find industries where some firms are growing and prospering while others are entering bankruptcy. Many differences can separate winners from losers, but usually the way operations are managed is one of them. Indeed, it's rare to find a successful firm that is not managing its operations to provide a high quality product or service at a reasonable cost. Thus, *effective operations management* is a key ingredient for success and an understanding of it is essential for *all* managers. It is even more important for entrepreneurs who cannot afford to limit themselves to a narrow functional perspective, and who must above all deliver their product or service to customers.

Given this understanding, you will be positioned to involve yourself in an organization's defining strategic decisions, those relating to key processes affecting your and your organizational unit's performance. Further, you will be able to articulate the set of processes that most closely match and enhance your organization's competitive posture.

As an abridged module (2 MCs), this module covers only selected contemporary topics instrumental in the decision making process that contributes to operational excellence. The importance of cross-functional integration between operations and other functional areas such as marketing and finance will be emphasized.

**Objective**

The objective is to develop an appreciation for the strategic role of the operations in any enterprise value-creation process, and develop analytical insights into the problems encountered in producing goods and delivering services.

**Required Readings**

See BMA5010A Required Readings.

**Reference Texts**

(not required but will be available in HSSML RBR)

1. Stevenson, William J., *Operations Management*, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, 2007.
2. Chase, Richard B., Aquilano, Nicholas J. and Jacobs, F. Robert, *Operations Management for Competitive Advantage*, McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, 2006.

**Outline**

Session #	Week of	Topics	Assigned pre-class readings (article no. as shown in the Reading List)
1	6/10	Introduction and Operations Strategy ❖ Introductory mini-project ❖ Video	1-2
2	13/10	Managing for quality: TQM ❖ Case 1:	3-7 Case 1
3	20/10	Process Design and Service Operations ❖ Management Game 1 ❖ Case 2:	8-10 Case 2
4	27/10	Planning and Coordination <b>Team Project Assessment I (Preliminary)</b> ❖ Case 3:	11-13 Case 3
5	3/11	Returning to basics: Toyota Production System (TPS) ❖ Videos ❖ Case 4:	14-15 Case 4
6	10/11	Value creation through operations: Scheduling and Execution ❖ Management Game 2 Better than the Best: Six Sigma	Project Review
7	17/11	<b>Team Project Assessment II (Final Presentation)</b>	
Final Quality Approval (Final Test – via IVLE) <b>Open Period: 06:00 22/11/2008 to 23:59 23/11/2008</b> Scope: Comprehensive including the 4 cases studied			

**Class Preparation & Participation**

You will be divided into study groups to facilitate community learning throughout the module. It is important to note that meaningful class participation is founded on adequate preparation. You are expected to thoroughly review the material on every case and assigned readings prior to discussion in your study group. We shall discuss and analyze the readings and cases together in class.

While participation in discussion is usually on a voluntary basis, you may be called upon to contribute your views and/or provide comments. Active and constructive participation in class discussions from all students is expected. Approaching this module with a perspective of *partnership* between you and the instructor is important to making this a valuable and fun learning experience.

### **Assessment Method**

Case Discussion and Class Participation (including contributions in the Virtual Classroom)	20%
Group Case Report	10%
Team Project (including 5% Preliminary Team Project Evaluation)	25%
Peer Evaluation (for Case Report & Team Project)	10%
Final Quality Approval (open-book, take-home)	35%

### **Case Analysis**

The suggested case questions are provided for guidance in reading and analyzing the particular case. It is important to note that these questions are meant to help you focus your thinking rather than to be the complete definition of a satisfactory case analysis. By the same token, you should not assume that the assigned readings represent the entire focus of the case, or that the case is simply an application of the assigned material. Your task, as always, is to identify and propose a fact-based solution to the most important areas of managerial concern. Narrow these areas to as few as possible – two or three is normally appropriate – for your in-depth attention. Your ability to zero in on the killer concerns facing management in a situation will serve you well.

In preparing yourself for a case discussion, the following steps are recommended: Diagnosis; Analysis of Alternatives; Choice; Plan and Persuasion. In a sense, the guiding questions really can be summarized as follows: (a) What are the problems? (b) How do you analyze them? (c) What decisions do you propose and why? (d) Be action oriented!

The following approach is often helpful:

1. Read the first and last paragraphs to get a sense of the context of the situation. Look for any non-standard exhibits as these may give an indication of the type of useful information that may be needed to analyze the situation.
2. Skim the case and develop a hypothesis for the causes of the problem and its probable solution.
3. Reread the case more carefully searching for evidence to support or disprove your hypothesis. Perform only those analyses that go toward answering specific questions you have formulated in advance.
4. Always come to conclusions and make (or recommend) the required decisions. Support your recommendations with page references from the current readings whenever possible.
5. Lay out the specific actions that need to be taken to implement the decision. Why, Who, When, How and What resources (people, time, money, facilities) are required? Where will you get them if they are not available?
6. One last thing. All implementation plans have risks. An adequate analysis identifies the key, action-specific, implementation risks and how you intend to mitigate/manage them.