COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION – Visiting Professor Module

MODULE NAME: OPERATIONS STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT – A European Perspective

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MODULE DESCRIPTION

This module will give a perspective on both Operations Strategy and Operations Management from a European perspective. The content will give students an opportunity to hear about Lean as it is being applied and developed in Europe. An insight will be given into how Ireland is adopting a Lean Business Programme to drive National competitiveness in its industry and service companies and also what types of results are being achieved. The course will deal with how Benchmarking is used in Europe, combining both Quantitative and Qualitative approaches.

Operations Strategy (OS) is defined in terms of the total pattern of decisions that shape the long-term capabilities of the operation and their contribution to overall strategy. OS achieves these outcomes through the ongoing reconciliation of market requirements and operations resources so as to achieve a sustainable fit between the two while managing the risks of misalignment.

Operations management relates to transformations of materials, people and information for the production of goods and the delivery of services. The working of an operation has always been an enigma. On the one hand, the operation is a visible part of the organisation where people or equipment can be seen to be working away and where something happens. On the other hand, the operation will neither come right nor stay right of its own accord and, even if challenged, answers to the following questions are not obvious:

- What makes it work as it does?
- Could it work better in its current form?
- What different forms could it take and still get the same result?
- What market, internal or environmental change would cause most disruption to the working of the operation, and with what knock-on effects?

Operations Management is the act of combining people and technology in an organisation so as to produce goods and to deliver services now and in the future.

As an area of managerial responsibility, operations management is the act of combining people and technology in a firm so as to deliver customer service and productivity now and in the future. Managing this area strategically requires the interaction with differing functional perspectives – strategy, marketing, finance & accounting, HRM.
LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACH

The learning and teaching approach is based on case studies and class worked examples based on real world experience, which assist students towards acquiring deeper subject knowledge. Combined with readings, these problem-focused exercises provide a basis for conceptual analysis of practice and linkages among these practices in differing industries and countries. Here, students develop an understanding of the underlying complex system through case description, detailed analysis, evaluation and development of a plan of action. Interactive discussion invites students to apply and to extend the scope of conceptual frameworks introduced at key points in the module. Further, as the case situations are multi-dimensional, the module challenges students in real time to interpret the current case situation drawing upon key concepts, their projects or other experiences from earlier in the MBA course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Having completed this module, the student should be able to:

- To define and to describe the field of operations strategy and management
- To identify and to understand the working of manufacturing and service firms from an operations perspective
- To conduct relevant analyses of operational and managerial situations and scenarios
- To apply key concepts in the field of operations strategy such as process, capacity, quality, development, improvement, focus

TEXTBOOK, CASES AND REQUIRED READINGS

Core text:


Supplemented by material from:

Supplementary Reading
- Becoming Lean, R Keegan. Supplied
- Becoming a Lean Service Business, Supplied
- East and West, R Keegan, Supplied.

List of case studies:
- Plugs – Electrical Goods Incorporated
- Machines
- A National Step Change Initiative - Strengthening Ireland’s Manufacturing
Session 1  The nature, content and process of Operations Strategy

Required Reading
- Becoming Lean or Becoming a Lean Service Business

Considerations
In reading “Becoming Lean”, or “Becoming A Lean Service Company” please consider the following:

- What are the significant elements of the booklet that strike you?
- Is the simplification of the approach helpful or not?
- Are the Lean Principles, Rules and Tools with the 5 Questions going in the face of Lean or are they a helpful support for people on their journey?

Session 2  Benchmarking as an objective Diagnosis

Required Reading
- Chapter 2, Applied Benchmarking for Competitiveness
- Chapter 21, Applied Benchmarking for Competitiveness

Considerations
- What are the key types of Benchmarking?
- How can the types of benchmarking interact and support each other?
- Is there a “Timeline” for benchmarking application at different levels?

Session 3  Alternative Improvement Approaches & Improvement Tools

Required Reading
- Chapter 20-29, Applied Benchmarking for Competitiveness
- Chapter 5, Applied Benchmarking for Competitiveness

Considerations
- What are the similarities and differences between the different improvement approaches?
- Compare and contrast Lean and Six Sigma as Operations Performance improvement activities. Discuss how the approaches could be adapted for use in a service and a manufacturing environment. Use examples, where possible, to support your reasoning
- How can the types of improvement approach interact and support each other?
- Is there a “Timeline” for application of different approaches at different stages of development of companies or parts of companies?
Session 4  Applying Tools in a practical case

Saturday, 10/11/2014 – 13:00-16.00

Required Reading - Case

- Plugs – Electrical Goods Incorporated

Considerations

- We will work through the case in class, discussing how to address the issues and improve performance.

Session 5  Ireland – A National Effort to Drive Performance

Sunday, 10/12/2014 – 12:00-14.00

Required Reading

- A National Step Change Initiative - Strengthening Ireland’s Manufacturing
- Ireland national Lean Development Approach
- Enterprise Ireland Web site - Productivity Section
  o http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Productivity/

Required Reading – Case

- Machines

Considerations

- Is there a valid reason for the State to support companies to improve their operations?
- Challenge the approach or make an argument to support it
- Do some research to see what other approaches are in place across the USA or worldwide (Don’t overburden yourselves with this, one hour max surfing is suggested)
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Richard Keegan is the manager of the Competitiveness Department of Enterprise Ireland. He is also the advisor to the EU Japan Centre for Industrial Co-Operation. Having trained as an engineer and worked in a number of industries, he gained practical experience in Operations and was awarded a Doctorate by NUI Galway. He led Company Benchmarking for the European Commission for four years. He is published in Italian and Portugese as well as in India. He is asked by European companies to help them with their development. He is Fellow of the Institute of Engineers of Ireland. He is an adjunct assistant Professor at the Business School, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

He likes to ride motorcycles.