



Operations Strategy

By Nigel Slack, Michael Lewis

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Building on the success of the Slack et al Operations Management text, now in its third edition, this major new text provides a comprehensive and refreshing insight into the more advanced topic of operations strategy. This is particularly timely because of the increasing demand for courses in operations strategy at all levels. Practitioners and academics alike are waking up to the power which can be released through the effective strategic management of any organisation's operations resources. In fact, operations is increasingly seen as the area where the dynamic requirements of the marketplace and the developing capabilities of the organisation's resources must be reconciled. Building on concepts from strategic management, operations management, marketing and human resources, this text takes the reader towards a rich and potent understanding of operations strategy, making it suited to the needs of advanced undergraduates, postgraduates and practising managers.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Building on the success of Slack et al., *Operations Management*, now in its third edition in the United Kingdom, this major new text provides a comprehensive and refreshing insight into the more advanced topic of operations strategy. This is particularly timely because of the increasing demand for courses in operations strategy at all levels. Practitioners and academics alike are waking up to the power that can be released through the effective strategic management of any organization's operations resources. In fact, operations is increasingly seen as the area where the dynamic requirements of the marketplace and the developing capabilities of the organization's resources must be reconciled. Building on concepts from strategic management, operations management, marketing, and human resources, this text takes the reader toward a rich and potent understanding of operations strategy, making it suited to the needs of advanced undergraduates, postgraduates, and practicing managers.

Key Features

- Covers topical issues such as supply networks, capability development, learning, and risk.
- Includes many U.S. and international boxed examples from a wide range of industries.
- Provides easy-to-read, rigorous critical analysis.
- Pedagogical features include a coherent model of the subject that runs through the text and explains how the chapter fits into the overall subject; key questions that set the scene at the beginning of each chapter; definitions of key operations strategy terms; boxed examples illustrating real-world cases; theory boxes demonstrating the underlying principles that support the ideas discussed in the text; summary answers to key questions; and case examples at the end of each chapter, which provide food for thought and discussion.
- An instructor's manual accompanies the text.
- Additional resource material is available at www.prenhall.com/slack.

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Names are important. They are used to set expectations as much as they are used to describe something. This particularly applies to the seemingly simple title of this book: *Operations Strategy*. Depending on the punctuation you use, the meaning you ascribe to either word, or even the order of the words, could refer to several areas of study. These words could refer to the larger-term impact of day-to-day operations, the medium-term direction of a narrowly defined organizational function, or the more nebulous and dynamic interaction between all operational resources and the external requirements they attempt to satisfy. It is this last interpretation that forms the focus of this book.

INTRODUCTION

Just as some physical objects are so big that it can be difficult to see their whole, some concepts are so broadly based that they can be difficult to define. Operations strategy, as we see it, is like this. It is so all-embracing that it is easy to downplay the significance of the subject. Yet, operations strategy both lies at the heart of how organizations manage their strategic intent in practice, and is the context within which managers make strategic decisions. Take a look at some of the decisions with which operations strategy is concerned:

- How should the organization satisfy the requirements of its customers?
- What intrinsic capabilities should the organization try and develop as the foundation for its long-term success?
- How specialized should the organization's activities become?
- Should the organization sacrifice some of its objectives in order to excel at others?
- How big should the organization be?
- Where should the organization locate its resources?
- When should it expand or contract, and by how much?
- What should it do itself and what should it contract out to other businesses?
- How should it develop relationships with other organizations?
- What type of technology should it invest in?
- How should it organize the way it develops new products and services?
- How should it bind together its resources into an organizational structure?
- How should the organization's resources and processes be improved and developed over time?
- What guiding principles should shape the way any organization formulates its operations strategies?

All these questions are not merely important, they are *fundamental*. No organization, whether large or small, for-profit, or not-for-profit, in the services or manufacturing sector, international or local, can ignore such questions. Operations strategy is central, ubiquitous, and vital to any organization's sustained success.

THE AIM OF THIS BOOK

The aim of this book is provide a treatment of operations strategy that is clear, well structured, and interesting. It seeks to apply some of the ideas of operations strategy in a variety of businesses and organizations. The text provides a logical path through the key activities and decisions of operations strategy as well as covering the broad principles that underlie the subject and the way in which operations strategies are put together in practice.

More specifically, the text aims to be:

- *Balanced* in its treatment of the subject. In addition to taking the orthodox "market-led" approach to operations strategy, the book also provides an alternative but complementary "resource-based" perspective.
- *Conceptual* in the way it treats the decisions, activities, and processes that together form an organization's operations strategy. Although some examples are quantified, the overall treatment in the book is managerial and practical.
- *Comprehensive* in its coverage of the more important ideas and issues that are relevant to most types of business. In any book covering such a broad area as operations strategy, one cannot cover everything. However, we believe that the more important issues are all addressed.
- *Grounded* in the various bodies of knowledge that underlie operations strategy. Theory boxes are included in most of the chapters, which introduce concepts and principles, often from other academic disciplines, thereby illuminating the particular operations strategy issue being discussed.
- *International* in the examples that are used throughout the text. Of the more than 70 boxes describing practical operations strategy issues, approximately 35 percent are from the United States, 35 percent are from Europe, and 30 percent are either generally international or from elsewhere in the world.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS BOOK?

This book is intended to provide a broad introduction to operations strategy for anyone wishing to understand the strategic importance and scope of the operations function; for example:

- *Undergraduates pursuing business or technical degrees* (although we assume a prior knowledge of the basics of operations management).
- *MBA students* should find that this book both links and integrates their experience and study of operations management with their core studies in business strategy.
- *Post-graduate students* pursuing other specialized masters degrees should find that this book provides them with a well-grounded approach to the subject.
- *Executives* will also be able to relate the practical and pragmatic structure of the book to the more conceptual and theoretical issues discussed within the structure.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Clear structure

The book employs coherent models of the subject that run through each part of the text and explain how the chapters fit into the overall subject. Key questions set the scene at the beginning of each chapter and also provide a structure for the summary at the end of each chapter.

Illustration-based

The study of operations, even at a strategic level, is essentially a practical subject and cannot be taught in a purely theoretical manner. Because of this we have used both abstracted examples and "boxed" examples that explain some issues faced by real operations.

Theory boxes

Operations strategy is a practical subject which is driven by theoretical ideas. Most chapters contain one or more theory boxes that explain the underlying ideas that have contributed to our understanding of the issues being discussed.

Case exercises

Every chapter includes a case exercise including a brief case study suitable for class discussion. The cases are usually short enough to serve as illustrations, which can be referred to in class, but have sufficient content to serve as the basis for case sessions.

Selected further reading

Every chapter ends with a list of further reading which further expands on the topic covered in the chapter, or treats some important related issues.

Web site

A Web site, www.prenhall.com/slack, is available, which helps students to develop a firm understanding of each issue covered in the book and provides lecturers with pedagogical assistance. There is also a teacher's manual available.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Leigh Weimer:

What do you concerning book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you require something to explain what the ones you have problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy person? If you don't have spare time to do others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Everybody has many questions above. They have to answer that question due to the fact just their can do that will. It said that about publication. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on kindergarten until university need that Operations Strategy to read.

Michelle Saunders:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to you personally is Operations Strategy this e-book consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. This specific book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The terminology styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some exploration when he makes this book. Here is why this book suited all of you.

Rose Waldman:

Is it you actually who having spare time in that case spend it whole day by simply watching television programs or just lying on the bed? Do you need something new? This Operations Strategy can be the respond to, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

Jonathan Baker:

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