

Fulfilling Customer needs : A Practical Guide to Capacity Management, H. K. Jackson Jr. and N. L. Frigon, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 605 Third Ave., New York, NY 10158, 1998, 225 pp., \$64.95.

Jackson Jr. and Frigon , successfully link the basic tenet of business success fulfilling customer needs to the classical discipline of capacity management. In fact, this book is less about the technicality of capacity management but more of how to manage the enterprise to satisfy the customer needs.

To fulfill the customer needs, the enterprise must first determine what the customer wants, and then cost effectively delivering products and services that satisfy and delight the customer. The Voice of Customers can be discovered through identifying attributes that contribute to customer satisfaction. This includes expectors, spoken, unspoken and excitors. Quality Function Deployment (QFD) provides a method for listening to the voice of customer and answering it.

With the understanding of the Voice of Customers the stage is set to explain the core chapters of the book which includes: Resources Management, Process Capacity Planning and Optimization Strategies. A proper process capacity planning requires a process study to understand what is the process, how does process flow, what is the yield at each critical process point, and the system availability of the process.

The authors rightly point out in the chapter on Optimization Strategy that: "The focus on reducing inventory at all cost is a false economy. Inventory is the price of keeping a process running smoothly and consistently." Excessive inventory is a symptom but not the cause of a less than optimum operation. Thus, any attempt to manage capacity simply by manipulating the WIP or the inventory level without the consideration of real process capability (which includes current process yield/quality and system availability) bounds to fail. In fact, an appropriately set inventory buffer will assure a smooth operation while working on the improvement of the process quality and capability. Nonetheless, this book can be improved by providing more material of how to determine the optimum inventory buffer at each process stage.

This book is highly recommended to production managers and other management professionals. The first few chapters provide some insight for all

enterprise executives to identify the Voice of Customer and translating that voice to the enterprise vision and mission.

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