

## Book Selection

Edited by MIKE PIDD and RICHARD EGGLESE

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### **An Introduction to Operations Management**

C. D. J. WATERS

*Addison Wesley, Wokingham*, 1991. xviii + 605 pp. £19.95

ISBN 0 201 41678 6

As its title suggests, this is very much an introductory text. It is aimed at general MBA and first year undergraduate students, and as such will find an eager audience wanting a clear, easy-to-follow guide to this subject.

The text is clearly laid out with many generally good worked examples throughout. Each chapter follows a standard format of contents, synopsis, objectives, main material and conclusion. The main material is divided into subsections, with summaries and self-assessment questions at the end of most of them. I found this a bit tiresome by the end, but not many students are going to read it from cover to cover. Most chapters (11 out of 13) had problems and case study material attached to them, which were of a good standard for the targeted audience. Each chapter also had a list of reference material attached to it. Answers were only provided for the self-assessment questions.

I liked the general style of the text. Although its material was only dealt with on a superficial level, it did not allow the reader to believe that any answer reached analytically had to be implemented exactly. It continually reinforced the need to use judgement in interpreting calculated results, and the difficulty of obtaining accurate data in the first place. I also felt at ease with the order in which I was led through the material. A logical path from product planning to quality assurance—via demand forecasting, facilities location, capacity planning, MRP and others—was drawn up. Each chapter made reference to previous and future ones, but could be taken on its own without any loss of understanding.

The book has definitely benefited from the use of a British-based consulting editor; small things such as the use of the £ sign instead of the more usually found \$ was appreciated. Overall, I think this book will prove to be a useful first-level introduction to the field of operations management and I shall certainly be dipping into it when planning lectures next year.

LESLEY DAVIS

### **Building Knowledge-based Systems – Towards a Methodology**

JOHN S. EDWARDS

*Pitman Publishing, London*, 1991. 248 pp. £15.99

ISBN 0 273 03048 5

The title of this book immediately recommended itself to me, as ‘Towards a Methodology’ seemed to imply that the answers had not been found but some steps in their direction had been made. The reader is not let down by the content as the book is both interesting and informative to those without a great deal of knowledge in the area and provides plenty of food for thought.

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