

15.2: Why It Matters- Managing Process

Why explain how operations management contributes to organizational success?

Operations management is just what it sounds like: managing the operations of the business. The role of an operations manager is broad and encompasses multiple operational areas. While other employees can focus on a specialized area of operation (for example, finance and marketing), an operations manager wears many hats and does a bit of everything. While the term may be unfamiliar, you have probably already seen operations management in action—it even played a role in creating the beautiful turkey dinner in the photo below.



What does it take to make Thanksgiving dinner happen? Planning, scheduling, technology, logistics, supply chain management, quality assurance—all the aspects of operations management. As an overview of this module, let's take Turkey Day as an example:

- **Planning.** Turkey dinner for fifteen people doesn't just happen. It takes careful planning and possibly delegating tasks and duties to others. Who sets the table? Who brings the green bean casserole? What time should everyone arrive?
- **Scheduling.** A turkey can take up to six hours to cook, and if you have only one oven, you'll need to schedule what time the bird goes in and comes out so the rolls and sweet potatoes get a turn in the oven.
- **Technology.** You'll need an oven (or maybe a high-tech turkey fryer) and any number of cooking gadgets. Even the humble thermometer counts as technology. Unless you're preparing a raw, paleo Thanksgiving dinner, technology will be essential.
- **Logistics.** Fifteen people won't all fit around your current table. What should you do? Seat the children at a card table? Rent a larger table? And where should Uncle Stanley sit so he can't pick a fight with your spouse or your dad? Logistics, logistics.
- **Supply Chain Management.** Aunt Sue is bringing pies, Bob is responsible for rolls, and Margaret is bringing the green beans. The host has to secure a fresh turkey before they sell out at the grocery store. If you live in the South, you'll want to call the local fisherman and reserve some oysters for the oyster dressing. All are important components of the supply chain—leave one out, and you'll miss a dish.
- **Quality Assurance.** Anyone who cooks knows you must taste, season, and taste again to ensure the food is up to snuff. Quality assurance might also include asking Jean to bring drinks and flowers because she's a terrible cook.

Any undertaking that involves coordinating effort, tasks, and resources can be considered operations management. In this module, you'll learn how operations management works in both manufacturing and service industries—in short, you'll see how others get their turkey on the table.

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