

# JAPANESE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

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Some argue that Japanese companies excel in operations management. Toyota Motor Corporation, for instance, developed the Toyota Production System (TPS) — a methodology that enables the production of high-quality products with minimal inventory and near-zero defects. TPS is now taught in virtually every operations management course at business schools around the world.

Tokyo's Shinjuku Station handles 3.5 million passengers every day — the highest number globally. During rush hours, trains arrive and depart every three minutes, yet delays are extremely rare.

Is there such a thing as “*Japanese*” operations management? If so, what defines its essence? And if it truly exists, does it mean that non-Japanese companies cannot implement it?

This course invites you to rethink operations management from a Japanese perspective. Rather than focusing on quantitative analyses, the course emphasizes the **philosophical and managerial perspectives** that underpin Japanese operational excellence.

Students will learn primarily through **interactive discussions with executives from Japanese companies**. Potential guest speakers may include:

- A former Toyota executive who revitalized the company's Kentucky manufacturing plant in the United States.
- A CEO who doubled market share by reducing lead time from three months to three days.
- A former CEO of a supermarket chain whose sales per square meter are three times the industry average.
- A factory manager who resolved production fluctuations through innovative operations.
- The CEO of an artificial intelligence service company that helps large, established firms dramatically improve performance through AI.

**Note:** No prior knowledge of operations management is required.

The course begins with several introductory sessions covering the fundamental concepts of operations management for students who have not previously taken a standard course in the subject.

**Previous Title:** *Topics in Operations Management I: Operational Excellence – Japanese Perspectives*

**Course Date & Time:** TBD