

Operations



**Ann
Vereecke**

**PROFESSOR OF OPERATIONS &
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT**

Ann Vereecke is Professor and partner at Vlerick Business School, and Professor at Ghent University. She was Faculty Dean of Vlerick Business School from 2008 till 2018. Ann graduated as an engineer at Ghent University, and obtained her PhD at Ghent University in 1997, having been a visiting PhD candidate in INSEAD (France). She teaches Operations and Supply Chain Management in the MBA and Master program at Vlerick Business School. Ann is actively involved in executive teaching and in research projects for a broad range of companies in various sectors. Her main interests are supply chain management and manufacturing strategy, in particular international manufacturing strategy.

Operations management is of strategic importance to an organization. The acceleration of technological innovations leads to more effective and efficient operations. In a production facility, we call this 'Industry 4.0'. As a general principle, it remains crucial that the operations unit actively cooperates with the other organizational units and vice versa.

How can you improve this cooperation? Employees need to communicate about their tasks and activities to learn each other's terminology. Speaking the same language creates opportunities to discuss pain points and organizational

improvements. For example, the operations unit wants more inventory to deliver the expected customers' orders on time, and the financial department wants to keep the inventory level low to control the costs. What is the optimum inventory level? If the inventory is too low, you cannot deliver on time, and the customer will go to another supplier. That reduces your revenue and impacts the operations- and the financial department. The solution is to understand how you can calculate the optimum inventory level. Additionally, it is essential to practice lean operations. What techniques are available to achieve this?



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The operations module offers a set of educational resources to combine theory and practice. You receive an introduction to operational concepts. Operations managers put these concepts into practice in their testimonies about their day-to-day tasks. Through various exercises, you learn step-by-step more about the operational terminology. As the module progresses, you also learn about supply chain management as your organization is part of a chain of suppliers and customers. How do you cooperate in a supply chain? What problems do you encounter, and how to solve those problems?

The aim of the operations module in the Learn to speak business program is to gain insight into the operations terminology and to understand the importance of cooperation between operations and other internal and external organization areas. Speaking the same business language equips you and your colleagues to solve problems, strengthen each other's competences, and achieve better business results.