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Adapting Manufacturing Strategy to Industrial After-Sales Service Operations
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This dissertation is initiated from an increased awareness within industry of the importance of services in general and of after-sales services in particular. The scope of this research is to analyse how the specific characteristics of after-sales services affect a company’s manufacturing strategy, which in effect should become an operations strategy not only considering the manufacturing of goods. Considering the after-sales service as a product, consisting of both good and service characteristics, the objective of this dissertation is to develop conceptual models for an improved long-term management of operations where production of both new goods and after-sales services are competing for the same or similar resources. Specifically, the structural decision categories of a manufacturing strategy, process technology, capacity, facilities, and vertical integration, are adapted to include the demands of after-sales service products.

The research result is an extension of the existing manufacturing strategy framework, which is transformed towards a more general operations strategy framework capable of providing managerial guidance for a larger set of products than just pure goods. Tools are developed for analysing what processes would be suitable for the after-sales services, and whether the after-sales processes should be merged with, or separated from, the new goods process. An extended long term service capacity framework is also introduced, looking specifically at the needs of after-sales service operations. Through seven case studies as well as a survey of 45 Italian providers of both manufactured goods and services, the after-sales supply chain is mapped and classified with respect to vertical integration and facilities.

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