

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**  
**NUS Business School**  
**Department of Decision Sciences**

**DSC 4211C OPERATIONS STRATEGY**

**Lecturer:** Dr. Mei Qi

**Session:** Semester II, 2014\_15\_2

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How did ZARA become one of the fastest growing and most profitable brands in fashion retailing? How did Wal-Mart grow to be the world's largest retailer? To a large extent the answer is that ZARA and Wal-Mart view their operational capabilities as an important and integral part of their competitive advantage. As do other successful companies, such as Procter & Gamble, Toyota, and Coca Cola, they invest strategically in physical plants and facilities, in process and information technology, in employee, supplier, and distributor relationships, and perhaps most importantly, in organizational practices and know-hows. The objective of this course is to provide students with a set of qualitative frameworks and quantitative tools to analyze and guide the long-term, strategic decisions for a company's operations function. The course is recommended for those interested in consulting, general management, or operations careers, but also for finance specialists interested in assessing the risks, the opportunities, the competitive advantage, and ultimately the value embedded in a company's operations.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After taking this course students will be able to analyze and improve a company's operations strategy. More specifically, students will be able to:

- List and explain the range of strategic choices to be made in operations strategy
- List and explain the various links between operations and other business functions
- Analyze and describe the internal and external factors that influence strategic operational investments
- Analyze and describe the connection between operations strategy and the firm's business strategy and competitive position
- List and describe basic principles that lead to an organization's operational success
- Assess an existing operations strategy by identifying its key elements and by evaluating it qualitatively and financially
- Improve an operations strategy by analyzing key drivers and decisions for each element and by developing recommendations and implementation plans

**PREREQUISITES**

DSC2006 - Operations Management

**REQUIRED TEXT AND READINGS**

- J. Van Mieghem, 2008. Operations Strategy: Principles and Practice. Dynamic Ideas (Lecturer has one copy for each group to loan)
- Lecturer will upload all other required cases and readings to our IVLE.

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

Each topic of the subject will be discussed using a combination of lectures, case-discussions, readings, and exercises. The anticipated mix for the course is 50-50 qualitative-quantitative. In a typical week we will cover one major case in-depth, supplemented by mini-lectures (by student groups) and qualitative discussions of other examples.