



The Measurement Nightmare: How the Theory of Constraints Can Resolve Conflicting Strategies, Policies, and Measures (APICS Constraints Management)

Debra Smith

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Today's competitive environment requires that companies distinguish themselves in the marketplace using factors other than prices. Companies that excel at on-time delivery, short cycle/leadtime, quality, and fast response to the market gain a competitive edge - and have the ability to market based on these features.

A proven approach to achieve this is the Theory of Constraints (TOC) production solution known, as drum-buffer-rope scheduling. Just in time (JIT), Total Quality Management (TQM) and other philosophies aim at exploiting these competitive edge factors. However, accounting systems, financial, and incentive measurements continue to be the biggest stumbling blocks to companies wishing to improve their financial performance with these tools.

Agreement on the need for a measurement system that encourages local actions in line with bottom line results is common, but solutions have remained elusive. Whether a company is pursuing JIT, TQM, or TOC, cost accounting is the common enemy.

Attempts have been made to introduce "new" costing methods such as activity based costing and economic value added, but they have failed to recognize the basic difference between product costing for financial statement purposes and collective management information to make real time decisions.

The Measurement Nightmare shows you how to resolve the conflicts and remove the accounting systems, financial, and incentive measurement roadblocks to adopting TOC, thereby gaining improved performance and sustaining competitive advantage. The techniques that the author, leading authority Debra Smith, has implemented and tracked at various companies highlight "the productivity measurement nightmare". Especially important are the day-to-day tools she developed to ensure successful implementation.

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