

Executive overview

The last chapter looked at the design of delivery systems for services and this chapter does the same for manufacturing. The principal sections covered by the chapter are as follows:

The factors involved in making products, including product categories (from special to mass products), the complexity of a product and the volumes involved.

The types of process (from project through to continuous processing) are then explained, with examples to illustrate each together with a summary of the key characteristics involved.

Then follows a section which links together the previous sections and summarizes the key points in Exhibit 6.10. In addition, several reflections are also provided to help illustrate the product categories and process types and how they relate to one another.

The next section looks at the business implications involved when the different types of process are selected and those are summarized in Exhibit 6.16.

Many companies choose to develop processes that are, in effect, a mix of the classic process forms highlighted in an earlier section. Known as hybrid processes, these include cells, linked batch, Nagare production system and transfer lines.

The need to align manufacturing processes to the needs of a company's markets is paramount. The section entitled 'Product profiling' provides a way to undertake this check, with an illustration of its use in Exhibit 6.21.