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### ► To cite this version:

Johannes Cottyn, Hendrik van Landeghem, Kurt Stockman, Stijn Derammelaere. (20th ICPR) A Method to Align a Manufacturing Execution System with Lean Objectives. International Journal of Production Research, 2011, pp.1. 10.1080/00207543.2010.548409 . hal-00680177

**HAL Id: hal-00680177**

**<https://hal.science/hal-00680177>**

Submitted on 18 Mar 2012

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**(20th ICPR) A Method to Align a Manufacturing Execution System with Lean Objectives**

Journal:	<i>International Journal of Production Research</i>
Manuscript ID:	TPRS-2010-IJPR-1231
Manuscript Type:	Original Manuscript
Date Submitted by the Author:	12-Dec-2010
Complete List of Authors:	Cottyn, Johannes; University college of West-Flanders; Ghent University, Industrial Management Van Landeghem, Hendrik; Ghent University, Department of Industrial Management Stockman, Kurt; University college of West-Flanders Derammelaere, Stijn; University college of West-Flanders
Keywords:	MANUFACTURING INFORMATION SYSTEMS, LEAN MANUFACTURING, VALUE STREAM MAPPING, CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
Keywords (user):	ISA 95

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Manuscripts

## A Method to Align a Manufacturing Execution System With Lean Objectives

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The application of IT and Lean principles have long been seen as mutually exclusive, but both approaches are more and more claimed to be interdependent and complimentary. Real-time production information is crucial to make important business decisions. A Manufacturing Execution System (MES) can provide the necessary support during the Lean journey. MES can trigger, feed or validate the Lean decision making process by providing useful information. In addition, MES can maintain the process improvements by enforcing the standardized way of working. However, this is only possible when MES is aligned and is kept aligned to the Lean objectives. The MES processes must be included in the continuous improvement cycle to prevent them of becoming obsolete. In this work a method is proposed to analyze this alignment between Lean and MES. The Manufacturing Operations Management (MOM) framework provided by ISA 95 is believed to deliver the necessary components to identify and structure this alignment. Mapping MES and Lean activities onto the same framework brings valuable insights about their dependency. The analysis is explored through a case example. Preventing the system of becoming obsolete, by proposing standard model changes, is an important direction for further research.

Keywords: manufacturing, execution system, lean, ISA 95, continuous improvement, value stream map

## 1. Introduction

Today's economic environment drives the adoption of strategic initiatives. In order to survive, companies need to get the most and the best out of the available resources. It is a continuous struggle to eliminate unnecessary production costs; improve manufacturing, process and business performance; increase throughput; reduce cycle times; maintain quality; etc. (Epicor 2008a). One of the strategic initiatives that helps manufacturers to remain competitive is Lean Manufacturing. Lean is a philosophy carrying the motto 'Doing more, with less!'. The concept of 'Lean' was first introduced by Womack et al. (1990) in order to describe the working philosophy and practices of the Japanese vehicle manufacturers and in particular the Toyota Production System (TPS). The essence of Lean thinking is specifying value and - by doing so - simultaneously uncovering waste. The initial concept of Lean was extended to five key principles by Womack and Jones (1996): Specify value; identify value streams; make value flow; let the customer pull value and pursue perfection. The ultimate goal is a production process without any of the seven deadly wastes: overproduction, waiting, transport, extra processing, inventory, motion and defects. However, as that situation is impossible to reach, Lean manufacturing is a continuous process towards perfection.

Lean thinking has evolved over time and has expanded beyond its origins in the automotive industry and its narrow definition around shop floor improvement (Hines et al. 2004). Lean is a philosophy and not a tool itself. Numerous tools and techniques - such as Single Minute Exchange of Dies (SMED), Six Sigma, Kanban, Value Stream Mapping (VSM), 5S, Total Quality Management (TQM), Theory of Constraints (TOC), Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), Business Process Management (BPM), Visual Management, etc. - can support the Lean transformation in order to identify, measure and remove waste, variability and overburden and deliver improvements in specific areas. SMED reduces waiting and overproduction by creating shorter machine setup times. VSM draws the actual material (and information) flow through the manufacturing resources and can reveal important areas for improvement. VSM can be considered as the starting point for any Lean transformation and its applicability is well documented in literature (Rother and Shook 1999, Braglia et al. 2006, Abdulmalek et al. 2007, Nash and Poling 2008,

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3 Mazur and Chen 2008, Serrano et al. 2008). Kanban reduces inventory by introducing  
4 a consumer pulled production system. The thoughtful application of the various  
5 approaches to exploit full Lean potential has had its share of attention (Shah and Ward  
6 2003, Lasa et al. 2009). In order to avoid the misapplication of Lean manufacturing  
7 tools and metrics, Pavnaskar et al. (2003) introduce a classification scheme. With the  
8 classification scheme, manufacturing problems can be linked to the appropriate Lean  
9 manufacturing tools that will solve the problem.  
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18 As various tools and techniques exist to work towards the Lean goal, it is  
19 necessary to carefully plan and keep track of the Lean efforts. Value stream mapping  
20 results in the construction of a Lean roadmap. This work plan is a sequence of Lean  
21 practices that will be performed in order to evolve from the current (AS-IS) to the  
22 future (TO-BE) situation. A Lean planning system can document as well the progress  
23 as the impact of each step on carefully selected Lean metrics. This assessment tool  
24 structures the Lean journey by continuously updating the performance and the work  
25 plan. Lean metrics are a set of performance measures for Lean manufacturing.  
26 Examples are process throughput, total manufacturing lead time, labour productivity,  
27 Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE), etc. Many studies define their own metrics  
28 by performing some sort of statistical analysis on survey data. Shah and Ward (2007)  
29 use a feature extraction method to determine adequate measures of Lean production.  
30 Ray et al. (2006) developed a Lean index for the wood products industry. The study  
31 demonstrates that the statistical methodology of factor analysis can be used to develop  
32 a quantitative definition and assessment of the concept of 'leanness' for any wood  
33 processing company. The impact of typical Lean activities on the features of a Lean  
34 environment and the Lean performance metrics are presented by Duque et al. (2007).  
35 Mejabi (2003) proposes a framework for a Lean planning system that can be used to  
36 monitor and quantify the continuous improvement efforts.  
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53 To be able to pinpoint improvement opportunities and assess the progress,  
54 (historical and real-time) information must be available (Aberdeen 2005). That is why  
55 manufacturers see a greater need to adopt, upgrade or expand their business IT  
56 solutions. For example, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software maintains  
57 important business data and supports the administrative processes. Product Lifecycle  
58 Management (PLM) software guides the product through the different stages of its  
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3 lifecycle. Collecting, maintaining and updating the business data in support of the  
4 business processes, is important for daily operations. But additionally, in-depth  
5 business visibility can be created by adding an appropriate level of intelligence.  
6 Carefully designed windows on the data can extract useful information, that is not  
7 visible at first sight. This Business Intelligence (BI) can expose the necessary  
8 opportunities to steer the business decision-making process.  
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16 Figure 1 shows how this idea can be extended to the manufacturing level.  
17 Real-time production information is crucial to the daily manufacturing operations. But  
18 additionally, Manufacturing Intelligence (MI) can provide the necessary visibility for  
19 the continuous improvement efforts within the production facility. Different kinds of  
20 software tools can analyze the real-time data and turn them into valuable knowledge  
21 to optimize manufacturing operations. Production departments have always favored  
22 the development of custom-made software applications for manufacturing operations  
23 support, due to a lack of attention paid by information system specialists to the shop  
24 floor. However, the difficulty of integrating multiple point systems has brought  
25 software providers to package multiple execution management components into  
26 single and integrated solutions (Saenz et al. 2009). These systems, commonly referred  
27 to as Manufacturing Execution System (MES), provide a common user interface and  
28 data management system. The emergence of functional (MESA 1997) and integration  
29 (ISA 2000) standards defined the role of those systems within Computer Integrated  
30 Manufacturing (CIM) more closely. That has proven to be an important step from  
31 custom-made to pseudo-standard (configured) MES solutions.  
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46 In this work the necessary alignment between strategic objectives and  
47 operational support is described. In particular, the role of manufacturing operations  
48 management (MOM) during the Lean journey is emphasized. Both approaches pursue  
49 the same objectives and – if properly combined - are seen as mutually supportive.  
50 MOM can trigger, feed or validate the Lean decision making process by providing  
51 useful information. In addition, MOM can maintain the process improvements by  
52 enforcing the standardized way of working. On the other hand, MOM processes must  
53 be included in the continuous improvement cycle to prevent them of becoming  
54 obsolete. Section 2 provides a general overview of the combination of the Lean  
55 philosophy and the use of Information Technology (IT). The MOM framework  
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3 provided by the ISA 95 standard is believed to deliver the necessary components to  
4 structure the alignment between MES and Lean. Section 3 describes the method for  
5 this alignment, in as well green- as brownfield projects. The proposed method is  
6 explored by a case example in section 4. Section 5 concludes and mentions further  
7 research.  
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## 10 11 12 13 **2. Continuous Improvement & IT**

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15 The application of IT and Lean principles have long been seen as mutually exclusive.  
16 Lean advocates have the idea of putting in place a simplified information management  
17 system (Houy 2005). They consider that organizations based on continuous flow  
18 should limit information needs to local communication between upstream and  
19 downstream production units. In their view, it is preferable for employees to search  
20 for the information they need, as and when they need it, rather than configuring  
21 software to provide them with information that is repeated at predetermined times.  
22 Womack gives the following idea about information management: “Piling up  
23 information in a large inventory is as bad – maybe worse - than piling up large  
24 inventories of products.” Information must be sent in small batches at a high  
25 frequency instead of large batches infrequently. System failures must be made  
26 immediately visible, so that they can be treated directly. Manual systems – such as the  
27 labelling system (Kanban), the andon cord and others – are more suitable because  
28 they are harder to ignore and force immediate action. Hicks (2007) describes the  
29 application of the Lean philosophy on IT systems in more detail. Within the proposed  
30 context of Lean Information Management, the seven deadly wastes are projected on  
31 the use of IT systems.  
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47 However, both approaches are more and more claimed to be interdependent  
48 and complimentary (Epicor 2008b, Riezebos et al. 2009). A Lean approach to high  
49 product mix, shared production assets and volatile demand scenario’s are far from  
50 ideal. Kanban cards and heijunka boards become unmanageable. Calculating raw  
51 material, work in process, finished goods inventories, etc. can no longer be based on  
52 simple rules of thumb and experimental design. Here is where IT comes in handy.  
53 Complex issues can easily be dealt with in real-time. For example, Wan et al. (2007)  
54 describe a web-based Kanban system for job dispatching, tracking and performance  
55 monitoring. Lean IT solutions can also connect with suppliers, for example to include  
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3 them in Kanban loops. The legal provisions in regulated industries (ex. food,  
4 pharmaceutical) require tracing functionality to link each finished product to its raw  
5 materials and processing steps. Without IT support, this task would be impossible to  
6 achieve. The human factor plays a crucial role when it comes to process  
7 improvements. But it is also very important to maintain those accomplished  
8 improvements. IT is seen as an enabler of the implemented improvements. Bell  
9 (2005) and Rio (2005) describe IT as the ideal solution to enforce standard work  
10 procedures. Ward and Zhou (2006) concluded that IT integration facilitates the  
11 implementation and the use of effective Lean/JIT practices.

### 20 **2.1 Continuous improvement - the role of MES**

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22 Some research has already been done on the combination between the Lean  
23 Production System and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) (Goddard 2003). New  
24 technologies – such as SOA - enable the development of software systems that are  
25 able to support the requirements of Lean information management (Pfadenhauer et al.  
26 2006). These MES systems can be flexible enough to accommodate the continuous  
27 improvement philosophy of a Lean environment. The (near) real-time information  
28 flow of the MES looks like a better fit for Lean than the batch oriented ERP systems.  
29 No previous research on this topic has been found, but software vendors already  
30 anticipate the Lean MES story. Stand-alone applications are already developed to  
31 automate and support Lean practices, such as E-Kanban, Six Sigma programs, Visual  
32 Management screens, Key Performance Indicators generators (KPI), etc. More and  
33 more MES software vendors have some Lean support incorporated. Every product  
34 folder has some reference to the Lean philosophy (Siemens 2007, GE Fanuc 2009). It  
35 must be that there is need for a MES that supports the Lean philosophy. In its Plant-  
36 to-Enterprise (P2E) model, the Manufacturing Enterprise Solution Association  
37 (MESA) shows how strategic initiatives are linked to the shop floor within the entire  
38 enterprise IT system (MESA 2008). The model depicts the generation of information  
39 at the most basic value adding process levels of the plant and how this information  
40 supports and is supported by enterprise business application processes and longer  
41 term strategic initiatives. The importance of a well established manufacturing  
42 operations layer to create the necessary real-time manufacturing visibility is  
43 emphasized. MESA published manufacturing guidebooks for each strategic initiative  
44 they defined. Lean manufacturing is one of them (MESA 2010). However, a study of  
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3 AMR (Masson and Jacobson 2007) shows a limited adoption of Lean IT so far. Ease  
4 of deployment and use remains a barrier to the adoption of Lean software on the shop  
5 floor. There is still room for innovators, for example to provide much-needed  
6 analytical workbenches on top of real-time data collection. A functionality that – in  
7 our opinion – is part of (or connected to) the presented MOM framework and can be  
8 aligned with MES software.  
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16 The continuous improvement philosophy of Lean (kaizen) can be supported by the  
17 Manufacturing Intelligence (MI) incorporated in MES. DMAIC (Define-Measure-  
18 Analyze-Improve-Control) is a structured and disciplined approach to process  
19 improvement and is part of the Six Sigma methodology. Based on the DMAIC  
20 decision-making cycle, the role of MES in continuous improvement can be illustrated.  
21 The first steps are *defining* metrics and *measuring* them. A system that continually  
22 improves, relies on feedback. Due to its real-time data availability, MES is seen as the  
23 best tool to measure real-time performance indicators such as the use of materials,  
24 process times and machine breakdowns (Hwang 2006, Saenz et al. 2009). Typical  
25 operational Key Performance Indicators (KPI) reflect safety, customer service and  
26 cost factors such as overtime, inventory, utilization and quality (MESA 2006). The  
27 *analysis* phase requires human expertise and additional tools such as operational  
28 research and analytical methods. Process metrics (ex. OEE for equipment  
29 performance), analysis (ex. Pareto charts for machine breakdown causes) and  
30 reporting has become somewhat standard functionality within MES software  
31 applications. But the current literature lacks sufficient attention on how to make MES  
32 (or even information technology in general) support this analysis (Saenz et al. 2009).  
33 Efforts rarely exceed the use of spreadsheets or stand-alone software tools that require  
34 intensive human interaction. In fact, methods such as VSM are generally believed to  
35 be manual processes (Biddle 2006). But the real-time data availability and user  
36 friendliness of a MES can speed up and guide the analysis efforts. During the  
37 *improvement* phase, MES is naturally not involved. Except for the necessary  
38 improvement of MES itself to control the improved situation. To *control* the change,  
39 MES can standardize the new way of working by imposing standard work on the shop  
40 floor.  
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## 2.2 MES - the role of continuous improvement

The main reason why the use of IT is feared by Lean practitioners is its tendency to become obsolete. Bell (2005) discusses the use of IT to maintain continuous improvement initiatives by also adapting the Enterprise IT system itself. From the point of view of the whole Lean Enterprise, Bell focuses on Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software. However, when considering Lean production, the combination with a Manufacturing Execution System (MES) seems more appropriate. A MES is located closer to production and is fine-tuned to the specific company needs. The usability of MES highly depends on its ability to reflect the current manufacturing situation. The continuous improvement of MES itself during the Lean journey is important to keep the system reliable. A MES should always present the data wished for by the user, at the right format, at the right time, at the right place. This application of the Lean philosophy to information technology is referred to as Lean Information Management (Hicks 2007). Recent literature acknowledges the need for a reconfigurable (Zhaohui et al. 2009) and adaptable (Gang et al. 2010) MES in order to follow manufacturing changes quickly and adequately. A MES should be flexible enough to follow the changes made as result of continuous improvement initiatives.

## 3. Alignment method for MES and Lean

Before implementing a MES, all processes – as well from the material as the information flow - must be critically reviewed to ensure an optimal workflow. Otherwise you just end up ‘automating a mess’. That is why a thorough analysis is needed before selecting and configuring the software. By modeling the AS-IS situation, everyone is forced to question the current way of working. Problems get discovered and inefficiencies revealed, resulting in a TO-BE situation. Lean practitioners strongly suggest a manual Lean transformation before IT adoption (Masson and Jacobson 2007). But at which point can you switch from manual to IT? When your processes are perfect and won’t change anymore? Lean is a continuous improvement process, so that situation will never occur. In addition, even early Lean efforts can benefit from IT support, in particular for data collection and analysis. As stated in section 2, some functionalities even require the support of IT, because they are too complex (ex. controlling WIP with high product mix and volatile demand) or simply enforced by legal provisions (ex. tracking & tracing). So why not take both

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4 Lean and MES into account during the first analysis and take the best of both (Gifford  
5 2002)? This approach could also have a positive impact on the Return On Investment  
6 (ROI) calculation, as the intangible benefits of IT are quite difficult to quantify  
7 (Nagalingam and Li 1997, Nasarwanji et al. 2009, Fraser 2009). The quick wins of the  
8 Lean transformation could help justify the initial investment cost of MES.  
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### 12 13 **3.1 Manufacturing Operations Management (MOM) analysis** 14

15 Manufacturing operations management gives a detailed overview of all the activities  
16 that support manufacturing in the area of production, inventory, maintenance and  
17 quality. As well MES as Lean activities can be classified within this framework.  
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#### 20 21 **3.1.1 MES activities** 22

23 Saenz et al. (2009) describe the traditional internal structure of most MES solutions.  
24 They are designed on a modular basis, so each system can be configured and  
25 integrated as desired. As a consequence, the complexity of analyzing the  
26 manufacturing operations support needed for each manufacturing case is high and far  
27 from trivial. The contribution of the ISA 95 standard is only discussed briefly by  
28 Saenz et al. (2009) as the formalization of the exchange around the manufacturing  
29 system to other areas of the company. It's use is presented as the design of  
30 information flows between shop floor level applications and those of a higher level. In  
31 addition ISA 95 is stated to deliver a consistent terminology. Although these are in  
32 fact the main contributions, it's practical benefits reach a lot further and deserve some  
33 extra attention. ISA 95 part 1, 2 & 3 (ISA 2000) provide a number object models and  
34 terminology that serves as a common model of integration, a standard terminology to  
35 define system requirements and integration between different software systems. By  
36 mapping the existing manufacturing systems and tools on the models (AS-IS  
37 situation), filling the blanks with new systems, checking the integration needs and  
38 considering the different information flows, ISA 95 can be the roadmap for a well  
39 structured analysis. Based on the ISA 95 models, a blueprint of the TO-BE situation  
40 can be constructed. Scholten (2007) describes the procedure to construct a User  
41 Requirements Specification (URS) document. This document is used by consultants  
42 to clearly specify the requirements of the manufacturing company within the  
43 manufacturing operations domain. The result can be used in the selection procedure of  
44 the MES solution that best fits all needs. Figure 2 illustrates the use of the MOM  
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3 framework to list the manufacturing operations support in a specific company  
4 situation (AS-IS).  
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### 7 8 *3.1.2 Lean activities* 9

10 The MOM definition is part of the ISA 95 standard and was mainly introduced to  
11 create a common ground to classify and compare existing MES software systems or  
12 integrate different components to seamlessly one solution. However, MOM provides a  
13 framework to classify all manufacturing operations, disregarded the fact whether they  
14 are performed manually or automated. Therefore, the framework can also be used to  
15 classify the support for Lean practices and as consequence check the possible  
16 alignment between MES components and Lean practices (Cottyn et al. 2008, Cottyn  
17 et al. 2009). This is the foundation of the proposed alignment within this paper. Figure  
18 3 illustrates how the Lean practices can be marked onto the MOM framework. A non-  
19 restrictive amount of examples is given.  
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### 28 29 *3.2 Alignment method* 30

31 The MES functionalities and Lean practices can be mapped onto the same MOM  
32 framework for a specific company situation. This makes it possible to check the  
33 necessary information flow (support) in between all components during the MOM  
34 analysis. By zooming into a certain functionality, the required information flows can  
35 be identified in more detail. All information flows consist of standard object models,  
36 as defined by ISA 95 part 1, 2 & 3 (ISA 2000). Figure 4 shows the alignment method  
37 for a brown- and greenfield project. A brownfield project has historical information at  
38 the start, while a greenfield project hasn't. The available information is standardized  
39 to ISA 95 object models to enable a generic MOM analysis. The result of the  
40 complete exercise is an alignment between MES and the selected Lean practices in  
41 the work plan. In a greenfield project, the support is incorporated in the requirements  
42 analysis. A change management approach is necessary within a brownfield project.  
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53 Value stream mapping – a crucial Lean practice at the start of the Lean  
54 journey - is explored as an example. Until recently, VSM has generally been a manual  
55 process (Biddle 2006). It is based on five phases put into practice by a special team  
56 created for such a purpose (Rother and Shook 1999): (1) Selection of a product  
57 family; (2) Current state mapping; (3) Future state mapping; (4) Defining a work plan;  
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4 (5) Achieving the work plan. Similarities between product workflows are searched to  
5 define product families. The necessary data are collected by walking through the  
6 production process. The current state map is drawn with paper and pencil. After  
7 analysis, a future state map and a Lean transformation plan is created. Following up  
8 the Lean progress is done by continuously repeating the data collection and drawing  
9 steps. However, this approach has a number of limitations:

- 14 • It is time and labor consuming. It takes a while to walk through the whole  
15 process and collect all necessary data.
- 18 • The result is only a snapshot of the real value stream and can lead to poor  
19 decisions.
- 22 • The manual process is prone to different kinds of errors: process interpretation  
23 faults, wrong measurements, writing or reading errors, vague estimates, etc.
- 26 • The manual drawing of the current and future state can be sloppy and cause  
27 misinterpretation within the team.
- 30 • The operational threshold is very high. The data collection won't be done  
31 frequently due to the high time and labor intensity. That can cause an  
32 inefficient follow-up of the progress and - as a consequence – an inability to  
33 react to unforeseen circumstances. An insufficient follow-up makes it hard to  
34 sustain the continuous improvement initiatives.

38 The use of IT can increase the practical performance of VSM (Serrano et al. 2008).  
39 There are electronic tools available that allow a better representation of the maps,  
40 support the analysis and document and visualize the progress. They are called  
41 electronic value stream mapping (eVSM) tools and are mostly based on spreadsheets.  
42 Another recent evolution is the combination of VSM with discrete event simulation to  
43 analyze and evaluate the current and future states (Lian and Van Landeghem 2007).  
44 After a simulation run, the potential impact of the proposed modifications can be  
45 measured. This allows the team to make changes and observe the effects without  
46 disrupting the production process or causing downtime and costs. But the main effort,  
47 namely collecting the data, remains purely manual.

56 A good alignment with a MES – where a lot of data is already available -  
57 could speed up this process. We are not suggesting a tool to automatically perform the  
58 construction and analysis of VSM. But MES can deliver meaningful information to  
59 generate an eVSM template to start from or to be used to validate the manual result.  
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When the information from MES doesn't match the manual result, then something is wrong. As well a wrong manual exercise as information errors in MES are not acceptable and must be corrected somehow. Figure 5 shows part of the MOM framework that is useful in the case of VSM, which is contained within (or connected to) the performance analysis. Useful information for the construction (or validation) of the value stream map are the different incoming arrows. Possible input from MES can be:

- Identifying product families
- Creating part of the AS-IS process flow
- Creating part of the AS-IS information flow

All information can be identified through standard ISA 95 object models. Activity definitions are described by process segment object models. The actual use of those processes is delivered by segment response object models. Based on that information, the different VSM atoms can be connected together to form the material and information value stream. The corresponding performance information can be added as KPI's on the map.

#### 4. Case example: a furniture company

To illustrate the use of the alignment method, a case example is performed within a small (< 50 employees) furniture company. There is (limited) production support by software tools in the AS-IS situation, so the case is treated as a brownfield project.

##### 4.1 Map the AS-IS situation

###### 4.1.1 Information flow

The current manufacturing operations support is shown in Figure 6 and consists of:

- MS Excel: The production manager creates a production schedule once a week. Internal quality problems are kept in another Excel file.
- Barcode scanning: The start of each activity on an order by an employee is recorded through barcode scanning.
- Paper based: Work orders and product definitions are distributed by the production manager based on the schedule. Once or twice a day the progress is measured by revisiting each work center. Quality checks are indicated on the work orders and results are written down by the employees.
- MS Access: Customer complaints are logged into a custom application.
- Custom ERP system: Accounting, procurement of raw materials, order processing, etc.

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3 Most of the above functionality was introduced in the past to be able to calculate  
4 some Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Each month the manager retrieves  
5 information from the different systems and calculates the KPI values with MS Excel.  
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- 8 • Number of seats produced
  - 9 • Efficiency of employee or work center
  - 10 • Leather consumed
  - 11 • Number of internal reparations
  - 12 • Number of external complaints
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16 Based on the scanning results, the theoretical production time of each step within ERP  
17 is regularly modified (manually). This is done to actualize cost calculation for the  
18 different models and can be used as starting value for a comparable production  
19 activity for new models.  
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#### 23 24 *4.1.2 Material flow*

25 The available historical data (6 months of production) are mapped onto ISA 95 object  
26 models. To generate a starting template for eVSM, the same steps are performed as in  
27 the manual case. All end products have a similar production path (production  
28 definition), so they are combined to one product family. The map is drawn in opposite  
29 direction of the value stream itself. The last step of the VSM is the process segment of  
30 which the corresponding segment responses have the final product(s) of the product  
31 family as 'Material Produced Actual'. Then, for each 'Material Consumed Actual' of  
32 that segment response, the next process segment (with that material type as 'Material  
33 Produced Actual') is drawn in front of the previous one. These steps must be repeated  
34 until the beginning of the value stream, namely receiving the raw materials. The  
35 selected values to be added to the map are the number of employees and the mean  
36 cycle time of each activity (the duration is recorded by the barcode scanning). The  
37 time that each product stays in inventory is not exactly known, but is expressed in a  
38 mean number of days (date of next activity - date of previous activity). The eVSM  
39 template of figure 7 can be used as starting document for the manual effort or later on  
40 used for validation purposes.  
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#### 54 55 *4.2 Map the TO-BE situation*

56 On one hand the company wants to upgrade and simplify their manufacturing  
57 operations (information flow). On the other hand, they want to optimize production  
58 performance by reducing the work in process (and by doing so, reducing the product  
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3 lead time) and creating a higher manufacturing visibility. Figure 8 shows the desired  
4 software landscape. In a first phase all production support must be incorporated by a  
5 paperless MES system. The production manager gets the released orders from ERP  
6 and must be able to launch orders on the shop floor. Each work center has a touch  
7 panel with an overview of its waiting list of orders. Through simple screen actions,  
8 employees can indicate which order they start. They get electronic information about  
9 the required materials and actions. When finished they are guided through some  
10 quality checks and can forward the order to the next step. Based on this information,  
11 the monthly desired key performance indicators are calculated in real-time for the  
12 manager. In a second step, a small Warehouse Management System (WMS) will be  
13 implemented to control the stock of raw materials.

#### 23 24 **4.3 Create a Lean work plan**

25 To start the Lean journey, 5S will be introduced on the shop floor. In addition a *Visual*  
26 *Management* screen will keep all employees informed about the production  
27 performance (ex. Seats/day, quality problems/week, etc.). In order to reduce the work  
28 in process, a *CONWIP* system will be initiated. The number of orders on the  
29 production floor will be limited. Each time an order is finished, the production  
30 manager can launch a new one. To optimize the production activities, each work  
31 center will prioritize its waiting orders.

- 32 • The cutting process will group the available orders based on the colour. That  
33 will minimize the changeover times.
- 34 • The sticking process will group orders with similar actions, because  
35 employees prefer repetitive actions (and perform better this way).
- 36 • The covering process will group orders according to the region of the  
37 customer. This approach must minimize the waiting times of the end products  
38 to be transported to the customer.

39 This strategy will be initiated based on the historical data and later on fine-tuned  
40 depending on the performance. The different practices will be implemented in a  
41 phased approach (Figure 9).

#### 42 43 **4.4 Align MES with Lean**

44 When considering the overlap of Lean and MES activities in the MOM framework,  
45 the MES system must be configured to support the Lean practices. A few examples:

- 46 • Each work center must have a user-friendly screen that enables the employees  
47 to easily assess the priority of each order. For example, at the cutting process,



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3 each order is listed (and marked) depending on its colour. The information at  
4 the covering process contains the region of the customer. At the stitching  
5 process a similarity percentage of each order can be given.

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- 7 • The CONWIP restriction must be enforced. However, the production manager  
8 must have the authority to fine-tune this value.
- 9
- 10 • The manager must have access to a dashboard screen containing all KPI  
11 values and trends. Some values are displayed within the production hall to  
12 inform and stimulate the employees.
- 13
- 14 • The time registration at each work center must reveal the value-adding time. A  
15 proper use of the system must be enforced by logical and fixed user screens.  
16 The production manager must be informed of eventual abnormalities.
- 17 • The performance information can be used at a later stage to redraw a basic  
18 eVSM document and re-analyze the situation.
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20 Based on this requirements, the MES system must be configured. However, MES  
21 must follow process improvements and must be reconfigured to control the change.  
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## 24 **5. Conclusion and Further Research**

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26 Different kinds of software tools can analyze real-time data and turn them into  
27 valuable knowledge to optimize manufacturing operations. However, the difficulty of  
28 integrating multiple point systems has brought software providers to package multiple  
29 execution management components into single and integrated solutions. These  
30 systems, commonly referred to as Manufacturing Execution System (MES), provide a  
31 common user interface and data management system. An alignment method between  
32 a Manufacturing Execution System (MES) and Lean objectives is introduced within  
33 this work. MES can provide the necessary support during the Lean journey. MES can  
34 trigger, feed or validate the Lean decision making process by providing useful  
35 information. In addition, MES can maintain the process improvements by enforcing  
36 the standardized way of working. However, this is only possible when MES is aligned  
37 and is kept aligned to the Lean objectives. By mapping the activities of both on the  
38 Manufacturing Operations Management (MOM) framework of ISA 95, a common  
39 ground can be identified. In brownfield projects, historical data are available to create  
40 a template to start or to validate a manual Value Stream Map (VSM). Greenfield  
41 projects start from scratch. By structuring the information as ISA 95 object models, a  
42 generic analysis is possible. After analysis a TO-BE MOM situation can be drawn,  
43 which stipulates the necessary requirements for the MES selection and  
44 implementation. In order to illustrate the methodology, a case example of a small  
45 furniture company is explored. Further research has to be done on a change  
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3 management approach for MES that facilitates the model state changes as result of  
4 typical Lean transformations. The impact of the proposed alignment on the Return On  
5 Investment (ROI) calculations can also be worthwhile.  
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5 Figure 1. Creating business and manufacturing visibility to support the continuous  
6 improvement cycle  
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9 Figure 2. Example of the use of the MOM framework to list the manufacturing  
10 operations support  
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12 Figure 3. Example of the use of the MOM framework to list the Lean practices  
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14 Figure 4. The alignment method between MES and Lean for brown- and greenfield  
15 projects  
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17 Figure 5. Detail of the MOM framework in the case of Value Steam Mapping  
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19 Figure 6. The MOM support in the AS-IS situation of the case example  
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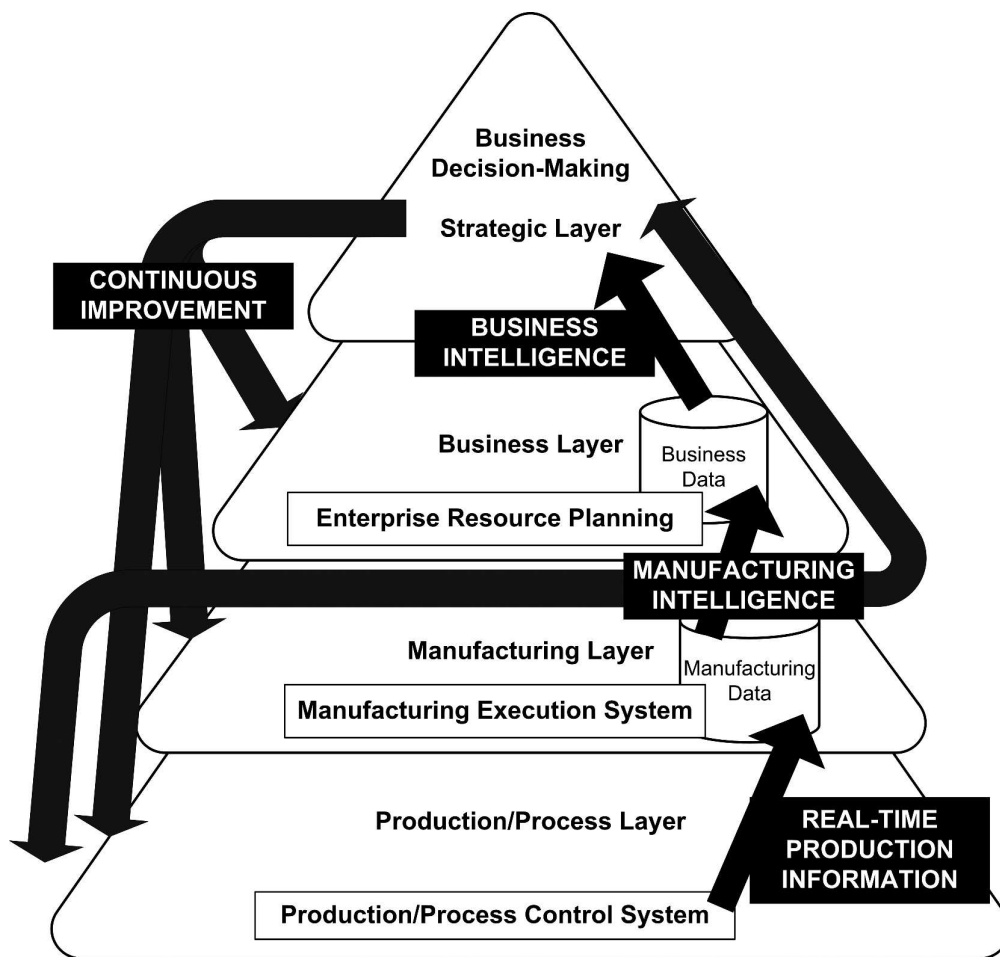
21 Figure 7. The automatically generated eVSM template of the case example  
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23 Figure 8. The TO-BE situation of software landscape of the case example  
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25 Figure 9. The phased approach of the Lean transformation of the case example  
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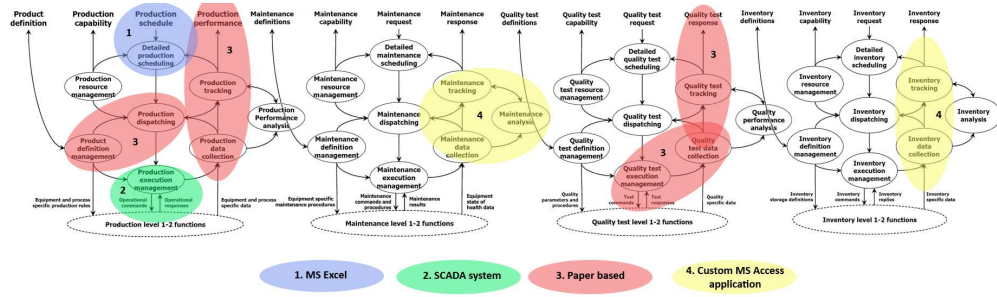


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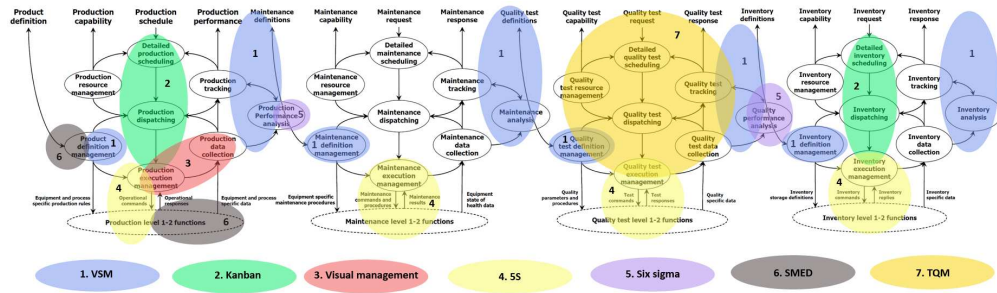
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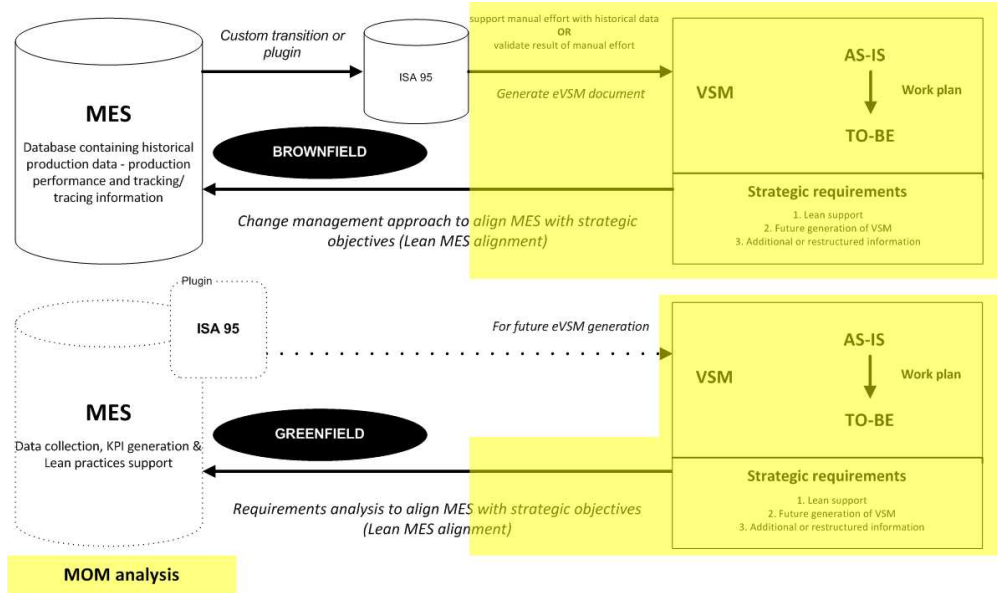
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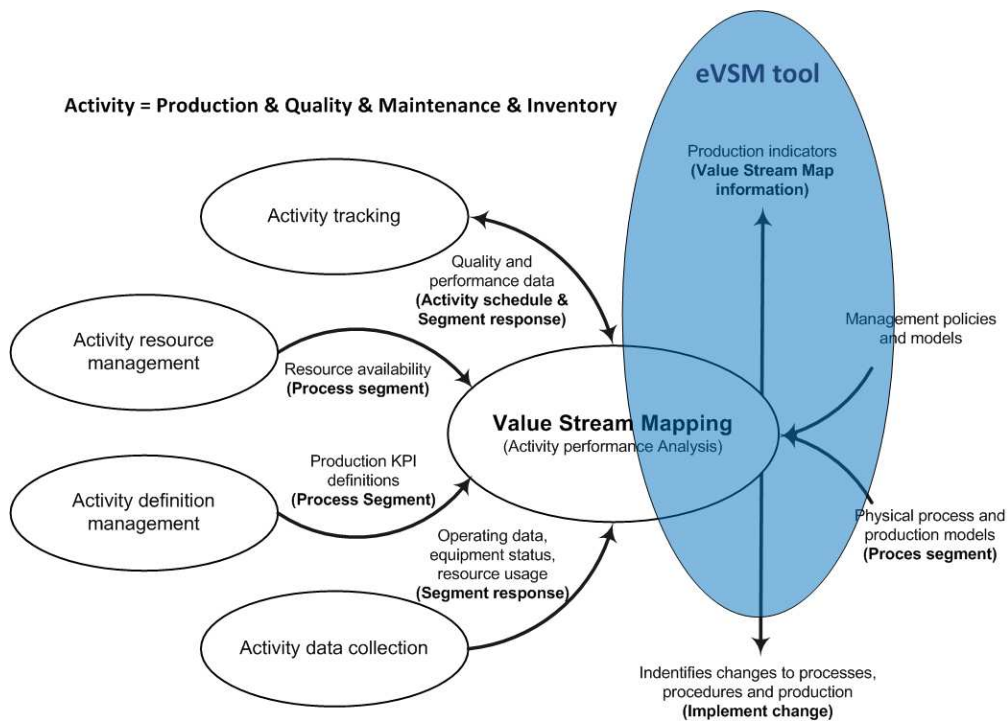


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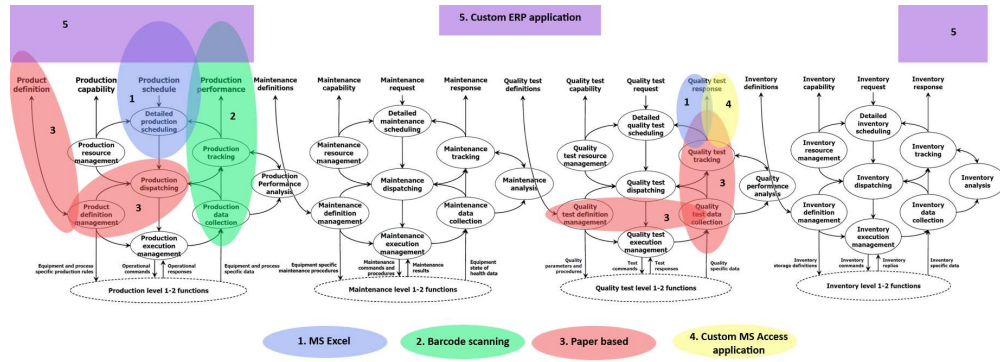
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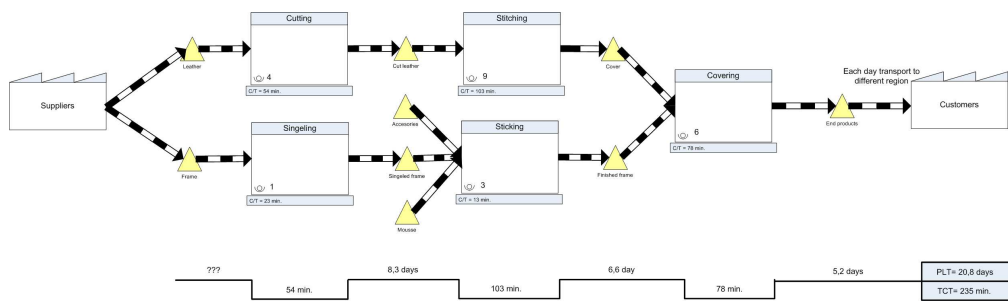
88x62mm (300 x 300 DPI)

view Only



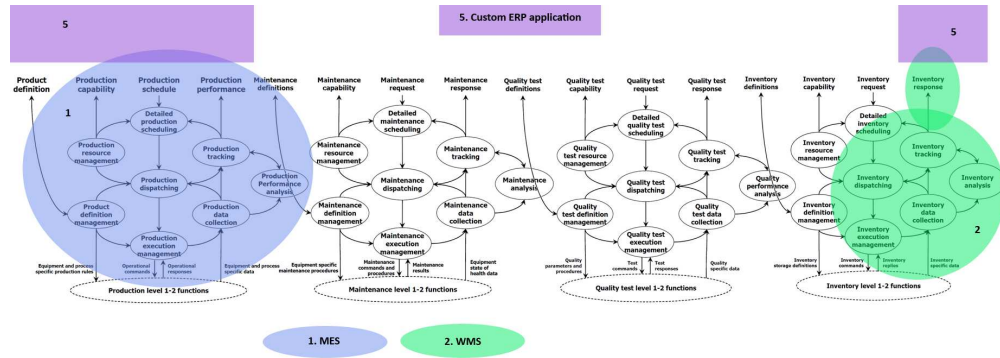
156x60mm (300 x 300 DPI)

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210x60mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Peer Review Only

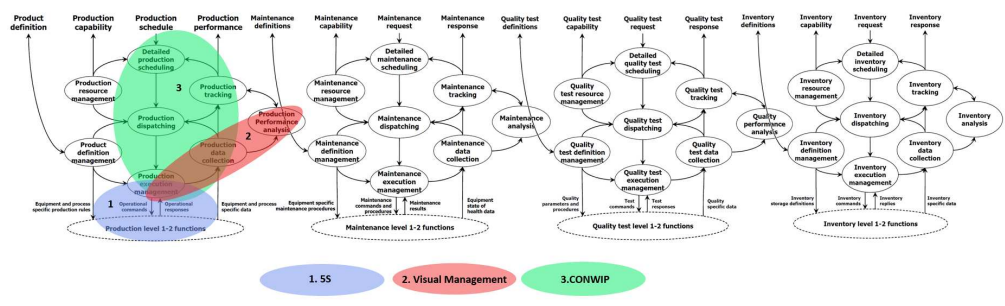


156x60mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Peer Review Only



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156x60mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Peer Review Only