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Sir, can you please give a brief introduction about yourself, your role and experience in operations department

Answer: After doing my graduation in mechanical from IIT-BHU and post-graduation from NITIE, I joined Godrej consumer products and I have been with Godrej all along, currently handling Global operations for Godrej consumer products including India, Indonesia, Africa, USA, Argentina. Entire operation which includes not only manufacturing but also procurement, logistics and planning operations.

What are some of the major projects you handled related to operations?

Answer: There have been several of them. So, some of the operations such as setting up new facility etc. are done by all operations people but the major focus in our operations area has been to make the entire operations and supply chain a part of the customer delivery process. So I will extend that, the customer demand keeps varying from time to time and these are quite volatile in nature (the final demand for various products).

So how does operations and the entire supply chain which includes procurement solutions and planning be made a part of this flow of products so that as the demand changes, we keep changing the supply in line with the demand on a regular basis, so we call it demand supply synchronisation that helps in the major focus of all the operations people. For example, if the demand goes up, the production plan for that product should go up immediately, we should produce more of that and we should buy more of unique raw materials for that product. So how do we change the production level, distribution level and the procurement level of all the products on a dynamic basis in line with the demand has been the most ambitious project that I handled. Concepts such as Theory of constraints that help in keeping the sync between the demand and supply and Demand Payment Material Requirement Planning, which we had implemented long back in 2004 helps in the most ambitious projects.

How do you think the operations field has evolved over time?

Answer: Earlier operations used to be quite isolated and people were focused more on improving the operations efficiency which is a highly localised measure of performance. But nowadays, operations is seen more as the heart of the overall value delivery process and operations role is to keep enough flexibility in its operations so that we are able to adjust with the changing demand as an ongoing process.

Flexibility is an important dimension now in operations and the faster response time so that we don't take too much time in switching from one product to another. So, we bring flexibility in operations and we improve response time to changing demand pattern. These two are the major dimensions on which operations has changed.

Sir, where do you see the field going in the future. Role of automation in operations and your opinion on operations considered to be a highly maths-oriented field in management.

Answer: Operations uses a lot of mathematics but there is a lot of intuitive thinking as well. For example, supply chain is based on heuristics and how do you get the heuristics is a bit of intuition, logic and optimization involved. It's a mix of all and it's not really that mathematical. It's more of common sense and logic applied systematically.

What a typical day in your life looks like?

Answer: A typical day would mean we have certain performance measures related to the consumer, for example, whether the orders from the consumers have been fulfilled? Is there any shortage anywhere? Is there any crack or any production facility becoming constrained? We look at those parameters on exception basis and the mitigating measures. So a typical day would be looking at taking exception action by the team and a part of the day would be to look at improving the long term viability of operations which involves further improving flexibility, risk tolerance and productivity. Coming to optimization, automation has a specific place in operations.

Some people do it just for the sake of automating which is not the right thing to do. There are certain technologies of Industry 4.0 which are very helpful in improving flexibility, there are certain technologies which are very helpful in improving the speed of response and these must be applied at the right places and not across all the elements. Technologies like IOT, computer vision, drones, robotics, these have specific places and you should know where to apply them otherwise we are unlikely to get the benefits from these technologies

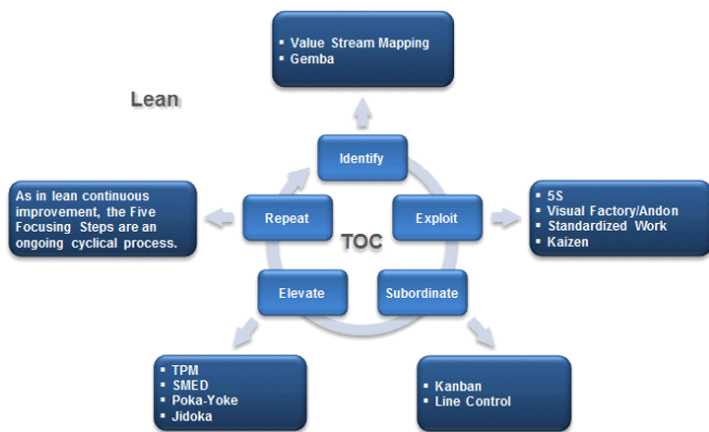
Why did you choose operations and what motivated you to choose operations?

Answer: Operations is where the action is, and it really is the backbone of any company. If operations are inefficient or ineffective, it affects the entire company's performance. So, improving the operations has a very direct impact on top-line, bottom line, working capital and every which way which is very exciting.

Tell us about any one major incident which defined your career?

Answer: The entire implementation of TOC (Theory of constraint) in manufacturing and the entire supply chain was really a turning point in 2004 where we worked with Dr. Eliyahu M. Goldratt and we streamlined and designed the entire supply chain from scratch. How the supply chain should be run? how the supply chain should be structured? and how much inventory we should keep as buffer at various places? The entire design was done in 2004 and ever since we have been regularly improving on that design and making it even more flexible and more effective so that has really been the best project that I handled so far which completely my way of thinking.

Why should students of 1st year go for operations and how lucrative it is as a career?



First understand the logic and then challenge all the assumptions behind that logic and by challenging the assumptions you could come to some ideas which can improve the operations even further. That will happen only when you don't take anything at face value and keep questioning and keep challenging the current scenario. Whatever company it is, it is always a possibility to improve the operations further and that's why they are taking interns like you. Thirdly, follow your heart. If your heart tells you something is not right and should be done differently, follow that line of logic and you will have a different answer which would be better than what you had

Answer: If they want to make a real difference to the company they should opt for operations. It means really working with their hands and getting into the thick of things. People who go for operations not only can make a big difference to the company but also to their own lives. Everything we do at work, also has an implication on how we manage our own lives. For example, TOC helps us in several aspects of our personal lives and the more we learn on the job, the better people we become.

What does the growth curve for a person in operations look like?

Answer: You must define your own growth curve. There is no such thing as a standard growth curve. It depends on your hunger for learning new things, your hunger for improving the operations in the company, there is no end to the measures you can take to improve the operations of the company.

How can people interning in Operations personally improvise on their knowledge

Answer: Be open to new learning, because the several traditional ways in which we have learned in colleges, from what we have read in textbooks or in lectures, many of the concepts may actually be outdated, so go with an open mindset that you don't know everything and there is lots to be learned. Secondly, you should challenge the assumptions behind the operations in a company only to improve the process further.

