
Operations Strategy Choices: Capacity, Network and Sourcing Decisions Training Course

17 – 21 January 2027
Zoom





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Programme Summary

Operations strategy choices are the subject of this one-week training course for directors, vice presidents and heads of operations, supply and manufacturing, ending in an operations strategy brief for one business unit. Many organisations expand capacity, open sites and outsource work case by case, so operations drift away from what customers value. The programme moves from competitive priorities, through diagnosis of capability, capacity and network gaps, to design of capacity, network and sourcing options, and then to application. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this operations strategy choices programme for leaders from mixed organisations.

The Business Case

Capacity, network design and sourcing strategy commit capital and supplier relationships for many years. When each decision is taken on its own, the organisation can hold spare capacity in the wrong place, depend on a single supplier or lose a capability customers pay for. Leaders who link each choice to stated competitive priorities can defend investment, retire weak assets and explain trade-offs to their boards.

- Capacity Utilisation: Improves as capacity plans follow demand and priority, not habit.
- Supply Resilience: Strengthens as sourcing choices are tested for dependency and disruption risk.
- Investment Return Discipline: Rises as projects are sequenced against a single operations roadmap.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Hayes and Wheelwright's view of operations as a competitive capability: It frames the stages-of-contribution assessment in Session 1.
- Terry Hill's order winners and order qualifiers: They link market requirements to operations priorities in Sessions 1 and 2.
- Competitive priorities as the basis for operations choices: They guide the option comparison in Session 3 and the roadmap in Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Directors who set the direction and investment envelope for operations.
- Heads of manufacturing who decide where, how much and how flexibly to produce.
- Supply leaders who own sourcing strategy and supplier dependency.
- Operations finance and planning leads who test investment cases.

Typical functions include manufacturing, energy, logistics and consumer goods operations.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to distinguish order winners from order qualifiers for their own markets.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose gaps between operations capabilities and competitive priorities.
3. Participants will be able to evaluate capacity planning options by timing, cost and flexibility.
4. Participants will be able to construct a network and sourcing comparison, including make-or-buy decisions.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise investments on a sequenced operations roadmap.
6. Participants will be able to justify an operations strategy brief to executive colleagues.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Operations Strategy Choices and Competitive Priorities

What must operations do well for the organisation to win in its markets?

- Operations Strategy Fit Map
- Order Winner and Qualifier Grid
- Competitive Priority Ranking Sheet
- Stages of Operations Contribution Ladder
- Operations Mandate Statement

Day 2: Diagnosing Capability, Capacity and Network Gaps

Where do current capabilities, capacity and footprint fall short of market needs?

- Capability Gap Scorecard
- Capacity Utilisation Profile
- Network Footprint Cost Map
- Bottleneck and Flexibility Review
- Service Level Versus Cost Trade-Off Chart

Day 3: Designing Capacity, Network and Sourcing Options

Which capacity, footprint and sourcing options meet the priorities at acceptable risk?

- Capacity Expansion Timing Options
- Network Redesign Scenario Table
- Make-or-Buy Decision Matrix
- Supplier Dependency Risk Map
- Process Technology Choice Sheet



Day 4: Measures, Roadmap and Investment Sequencing

How are choices sequenced, funded and measured over time?

- Operations Performance Measure Set
- Investment Sequencing Roadmap
- Business Case Evidence Sheet
- Risk and Contingency Register
- Governance and Review Cadence Plan

Day 5: Applying Operations Strategy Choices to One Business Unit

Does the operations strategy hold when tested against every earlier session?

- Applying the Session 1 Fit Map to the Unit
- Testing the Session 2 Gap Scorecard on Live Data
- Comparing the Session 3 Options on Cost and Risk
- Rehearsing the Session 4 Roadmap Defence
- Completing the Operations Strategy Brief

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise method built on anonymised capacity and cost data, supplier profiles and short written cases from manufacturing, energy and consumer goods. Participants work in small groups on one business unit, record their reasoning on shared templates and receive facilitator and peer feedback on each work product before it enters the operations strategy brief.

- Suggested activity: Sorting a product range into order winners and qualifiers and testing the result with a sales colleague.
- Suggested activity: Comparing three capacity expansion timings against a demand range.
- Suggested activity: Scoring a make-or-buy case for dependency, cost and control.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an operations strategy brief for one business unit. It holds a ranked set of competitive priorities, a capability gap scorecard, a capacity and network option table, a sourcing decision matrix and a sequenced roadmap. The brief is used at work to seek executive agreement on investment.



Frequently Asked Questions

Are operations strategy choices suitable for leaders who have not set an operations strategy before?

Yes. Operations strategy choices are taught from first principles and assume responsibility for a plant, network or supply base, not prior strategy work.

Which models do operations strategy choices rest on in this programme?

Operations strategy choices here rest on Hayes and Wheelwright's view of operations as a competitive capability and on Terry Hill's order winners and order qualifiers.

How is the operations strategy brief from operations strategy choices used at work?

You use the operations strategy brief to seek executive agreement on capacity, network and sourcing investment and to order the projects that follow.

How do operations strategy choices differ from a programme on supply chain planning?

Operations strategy choices centre on long-term capability, capacity and sourcing direction, while supply chain planning centres on matching supply to demand each cycle.