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Workload control in job shops, grasping the tap

Land, Martin Jaap

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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2004

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):
Land, M. J. (2004). *Workload control in job shops, grasping the tap*. s.n.

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Download date: 22-08-2022

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Martin Land

Published by: Labyrint Publications
PO box 334
2984 AX Ridderkerk
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)180-463962

Printed by: Offsetdrukkerij Ridderprint B.V., Ridderkerk

ISBN 90-5335-027-6

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RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN

Workload Control in job shops, grasping the tap

Proefschrift
ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de
Bedrijfskunde
aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
op gezag van de
Rector Magnificus, dr. F. Zwarts,
in het openbaar te verdedigen op
donderdag 29 april 2004
om 16.15 uur
door

Martin Jaap Land

geboren op 18 mei 1968
te Groningen

Promotor	:	Prof. dr. ir. G.J.C. Gaalman
Copromotor	:	Dr. W.M. Nawijn
Beoordelingscommissie	:	Prof. dr. J. Wijngaard
		Prof. dr. ir. J.W.M. Bertrand
		Prof. dr. M. Perona

Preface

Writing this thesis was akin to a long journey. I got a great deal of pleasure out of it, but as I was approaching the end of it, I was looking forward to coming home and to making plans for the next voyage. On my journey I had the best company one could ever wish for, the impressive Operations Management group in Groningen. Indeed, so many people showed me the way that it is impossible to name them all.

My supervisor, Gerard Gaalman, aroused my interest in the field of Operations Management while I studied Econometrics and Operations Research at the University of Groningen. As an instructor he made a lasting impression. He still serves as an example to me, both as an individual and as a scientist. Wim Nawijn from the University of Twente joined the supervision team later. He always made time whenever I contacted him and has been a great help.

During my journey I had the pleasure of sharing ideas with many European colleagues in the field of Workload Control. Our meeting point has often been the inspiring environment of Igls in Austria. I have very fond memories of the meetings with Linda Hendry, Mark Stevenson, Alberto Portioli-Staudacher, Donatella Corti, Henny van Ooijen, Günther Zäpfel, Hubert Missbauer, Manfred Gronalt, and, of course, Jan-Wilhelm Breithaupt and Peter Nyhuis with whom I wrote one of the articles in this thesis. Peter Henrich joined our Workload Control crew in Groningen and makes enthusiastic contributions to our research.

Brian Kingsman from Lancaster University has been extremely stimulating to me. His untimely death, which occurred just before the completion of my journey, made me feel that I had arrived too late. Our plans for future co-operation will now never go beyond the stage of dreams. I will miss him at my thesis defence but the memory of Brian will always be with me.

It is a great honour to have Marco Perona and Wil Bertrand, two other highly respected researchers in the field of Workload Control, on the Assessment Committee. Among all his other research interests, Marco Perona keeps our European collaboration in Workload Control alive. His energy is inexhaustible and contagious. Wil Bertrand wrote his seminal thesis on Workload Control more than twenty years ago, and it remains one of the richest sources for research in that field.

Jacob Wijngaard is one of the committee members and has been a great boss. His creativeness, pragmatism, drive and humour are unparalleled. Under Jacob's direction a dynamic Production Management department has been developed. With my current colleagues Gera, Jan, Leonieke, Manda, Marjan, Marjo, Renny, Taco, the words 'colleagues' and 'friends' have become synonymous. I also owe thanks to many other (ex)colleagues, and in particular Manon and Klaske who created a haven for me at WSN 817 for many years.

My ‘paranimfen’ Jan Riezebos and Bas Oosterman mean a lot to me. Jan introduced me to the field of Operations Management. I continue to learn from him and I really enjoy working with him. Bas contributed to chapter 7 of this thesis. He is not only a great friend, but he was also a jovial colleague who brightened up my WSN days for many years.

My parents have always been there for me, offering their unconditional love. Last but not least, I turn my attention to Antheia. She is a wonderful source for support and inspiration. This journey would not have been complete without her.

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