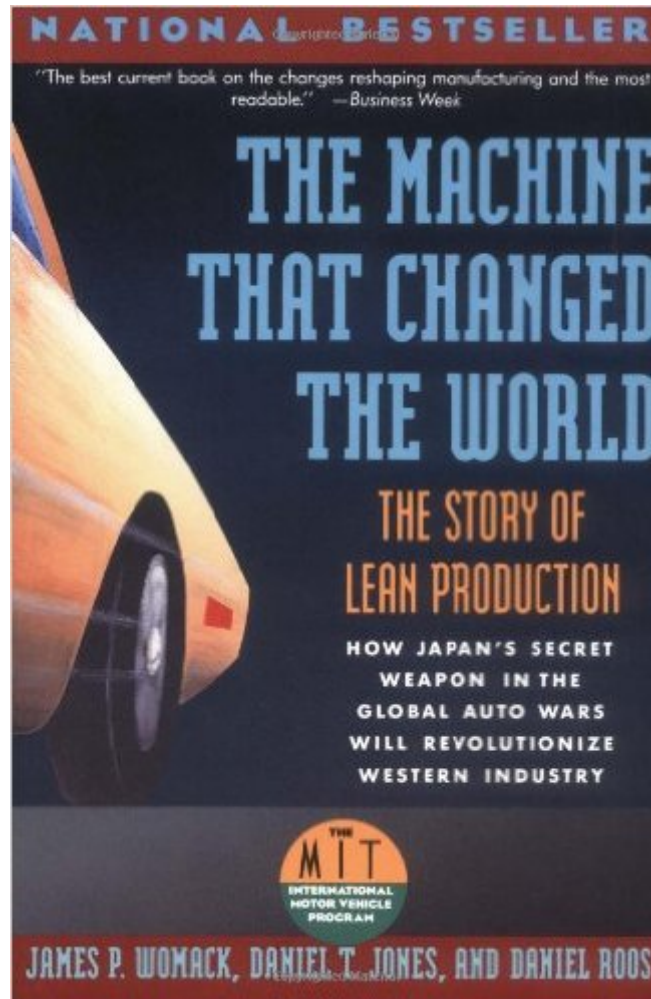


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The Machine That Changed The World : The Story Of Lean Production



Synopsis

This volume carefully traces the rise of the Toyota system from its take-off point in Ford's mass production system to its spread across the world, starting with the NUMMI joint venture with General Motors in California and now advancing in Europe, Latin America, and East Asia as well. It then identifies and describes the advantages of this system, which needs less of everything including time, human effort, inventories, and investment to produce products with fewer defects in smaller volumes at lower costs for fragmenting markets. The Machine That Changed the World even gave the system its name: lean. In the decade since its launch in the fall of 1990, The Machine That Changed the World has sold more than 600,000 copies in 11 languages and has introduced a whole generation of managers and engineers to lean thinking. No lean library is complete without this groundbreaking book. "The fundamentals of this system are applicable to every industry across the globe and will have a profound effect on human society. It will truly change the world." - New York Times Paperback / 1990 / 323 pages

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Customer Reviews

I have read a lot of the so called quality books, and have a master's degree in the field, and I have found few books that had this kind of relevance to how things are produced and why they work or don't work. More importantly, this is one of the few 'academic studies' (I recall this one came out of MIT) that is actually clearly written and straightforward. Yes, Toyota is much of the focus in this book and it can sometimes seem to border on the PR level, but that doesn't take away from the

information in this book. Having had access to most of the auto manufacturers when this study was done, and seeing the nuts and bolts, it is what people do wrong at other places that is as important as what Toyota had been doing right (a trend, I might add, that in recent years has dimmed, Toyota has had embarrassing quality faults recently). The book does mention that what Toyota "pioneered" was not entirely homegrown, many of the techniques existed, but Toyota was unique in the auto world in the number of things they chose to adopt (as a counterpoint, when the 70's hit and the US auto makers started having real competition, they hired Dr. Edwards Demming as a consultant, he told them many of the things that this book points out and they basically paid the check, used it for PR about how they were serious, and ignored him). And these are not new issues and continue to plague companies, fallacies like: 1) "It is the fault of the labor force"..while the UAW has not exactly been cutting edge, what this book points out is something known in quality circles for years, that most of the problems are using your labor force badly, not listening to them, and just plain bad management. 2) "The secret is robotics"..

This book is a classic on the advantages of being lean - Product Design, Manufacturing, Supply Chain Management - the entire gamut from concept to delivery in the Automobile industry. What Ford's mass production did to craft production and its profound effects on the developed economies in the first half of the last century is an old but interesting story. With the advent of Ford's manufacturing techniques, there was a consolidation in the Auto industry. Within a couple of decades the number of automobile manufacturers fell from over a hundred to less than twenty and the big three cornering over ninety percent of the market share. Detroit became the center of pilgrimage for the rest of the world trying to emulate and replicate this success story in other continents. Silently, the Japanese led by Toyota were working on a different concept of putting the automobile in the hands of the customer, at better quality, lesser costs, shorter development times and with the ability to offer a wider choice. The statistics collected from these "lean systems" is mind boggling. The competitive advantage that Japan enjoyed over the American system was neither due to lower wages in Japan nor due to higher levels of automation as widely believed. It was primarily the lean machine that was conquering the mass machine. This book is based on the research done in the 1980's and published around 1990. The authors while acclaiming lean manufacturing as the panacea for the ills of manufacturing systems globally had at the time of the research and the publication of this work, probably ignored the next major change that would sweep across continents.

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