Enriching Production: Perspectives on Volvo's Uddevalla plant as an alternative to lean production

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Abstract

Enriching Production was first published by Avebury in 1995. The book was quickly sold out and is now made available again. Enriching Production was edited by professor Åke Sandberg, Arbetslivsinstitutet/ National Institute for Working Life and KTH The Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm.

Enriching Production was followed up by a symposium on the general theme of ‘Good work and productivity’. The papers were collected in a special issue of Economic and Industrial Democracy, Vol. 19, No 1, February 1998. There will also be follow up articles on Volvo and alternative production systems in a forthcoming reader Absolut management. Scandinavian perspectives on management in the new working life, to be published by SNS förlag, Stockholm, 2007/2008.

Abstract

Both researchers and practitioners in industrial organization ask themselves today whether lean production is the only possible model for the future. Enriching Production proposes a radically different alternative, which was put into practice at Volvo’s Uddevalla plant during its brief life span. Skilled workers in autonomous teams could altogether abandon the assembly line. With a work content of several hours they built cars according to customer order, with a short delivery time, thus avoiding stocks. In spite of its good performance the plant was closed after only a few years without having developed its full potential.

Enriching Production explains the design of the Uddevalla plant and tries to understand its closure against a background of organizational politics and Volvo’s production structure. In comparative chapters the NUMMI and Saturn plants in the US and European car manufacturers are contrasted to the Uddevalla model and also to Volvo’s Kalmar plant with still another form of group work. Chapters on social problems with lean production and recent developments in Japanese car manufacturing also contribute to an understanding of where the car building industry and the organization of industrial production is heading. Although the Uddevalla plant in its original form was closed, the vision of competitive systems of production that do not destroy but enhance human competencies and in a a wider sense a human working life lives on. Enriching Production contributes by reminding us that under certain circumstances good and competitive ways of arranging production are possible.

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Lean production. The Micro-Macro dimension, employment and the welfare state Peter Auer

Key words

Automobile, Automobile industry, car makers, employment relationships, team working, team leaders, lean production, reflective production, moving line, fordism, taylorism, toyotism, Volvo, Volvo Uddevalla plant, Volvo Kalmar plant, Volvo Gent plant, division of work, NUMMI, SATURN, Toyota, Volkswagen, Renault, Mitsubishi, DAF.

Concerned disciplines


Writing context

References, commentaries, critics

“This book -- a careful selection of well informed and provoking papers -- provides a solid basis for a reassessment of the socio-technical experiments at the Uddevalla plant and for a critical debate of the lean production system in industry.” Prof. Dr. Frieder Naschold

“This volume should come to represent a classic for all those interested in different national and international trajectories of work and design in industry.” Alan Jenkins, in Organization Studies

“An invaluable aspect of Sandberg’s book is the wealth of comparative information, not only about other Volvo plants in Sweden, but also with regard to those in the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Malaysia and Canada. … this invaluable collection of readings raises a wide range of additional questions which takes the critical debate about lean production significantly further. Its message is not only of relevance to academics, and managers unconvinced by the evangelical enthusiasm of many advocates of lean production, but also to those trade unions which are keen to preserve their independence through the development of new bargaining strategies in the face of an onslaught of new management techniques.” Dave Beale, in Industrial Relations Review

“…this is an important book and one to be read by academics and practitioners alike. Although it appears as a narrative relating to a single company, it goes beyond this; asking what it is we seek from work reforms.” Peter Cressey, in New Technology, Work and Employment

“This book closes the chapter on Uddevalla’s heroic experiment. It helps the sympathetic reader understand what really happened there, and it draws out the positive lessons of Uddevalla for the very unfinished chapter of ongoing worldwide production and work reorganization in today’s turbulent markets.” Lowell Turner, in Industrial and Labour Relations Review

“…essential reading for all those interested in the auto industry and the challenging innovations associated with Volvo.” Russel Lansbury, in Economic and Industrial Democracy

“…detailed and compelling…Enriching Production provides researchers with a very deep vein of information and analysis.” Steve Babson, in Work and Occupations

“…This is a valuable collection…for researchers in this area, and for those who teach in the field, this is a useful addition to the literature.” Human Resource Management Journal

“By its rich content, Enriching production is a good vehicle for keeping the discourse on alternative production systems rolling; and on the road” Lars Normann Mikkelsen, in Acta Sociologica

Current relevance

See also


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The chapters in this book are referred to in the text above with the authors name only (without year of publishing). They are not listed below.


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Enriching Production explains the design of the Uddevalla plant and tries to understand its closure against a background of organizational politics and Volvo's production structure. In comparative chapters the NUMMI and Saturn plants in the US and European car manufacturers are contrasted to the Uddevalla model and also to Volvo's Kalmar plant with still another form of group work. Perspectives on Volvo’s Uddevalla plant as an alternative to lean production, Avebury, Aldershot (UK), 1995, 459 p. Digital edition, New Preface, Åke Sandberg, Stockholm, 2007. Édition numérique, freyssenet.com, 2007, 5,7 Mo, ISSN 7116-0941. Suggested Citation. Sandberg, Åke, 1995. Often the book Enriching Production: Perspectives on Volvo's Uddevalla Plant As an Alternative to Lean Production will bring one to the new experience of reading the book. The author style to elucidate the idea is very unique. When you try to find new book to see, this book very suited to you. The book Enriching Production: Perspectives on Volvo's Uddevalla Plant As an Alternative to Lean Production is much recommended to you to read. You can also get the e-book from your official web site, so you can quickly to read the book. Kimberley Bailey: This Enriching Production: Perspectives... Book's title: Enriching production : perspectives on Volvo's Uddevalla plant as an alternative to lean production edited by Ake Sandberg. Library of Congress Control Number: 95075118. by an Associated Producers Group, Gemini Film, ApolloMedia, Talent Network Media production ; in association with Turner Classic Movies, United Artists Films, and Ostdeutscher Rundfunk Brandenburg ; producer, J. David Riva, Karin Kearns, H.W. Pausch ; writer, Karin Kearns ; director, J. David Riva. ISBN: 079285411X Publication & Distribution: Santa Monica, Calif.