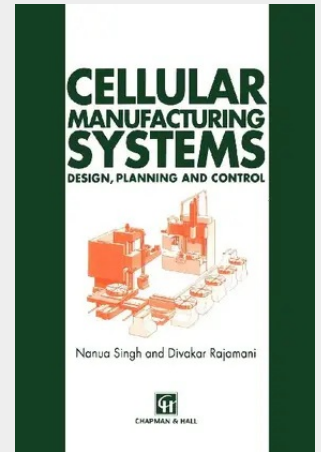


Cellular Manufacturing Systems

Design, planning and control

Batch manufacturing is a dominant manufacturing activity in the world, generating a great deal of industrial output. In the coming years, we are going to witness an era of mass customization of products. The major problems in batch manufacturing are a high level of product variety and small manufacturing lot sizes. The product variations present design engineers with the problem of designing many different parts. The decisions made in the design stage significantly affect manufacturing cost, quality and delivery lead times. The impacts of these product variations in manufacturing are high investment in equipment, high tooling costs, complex scheduling and loading, lengthy setup time and costs, excessive scrap and high quality control costs. However, to compete in a global market, it is essential to improve the productivity in small batch manufacturing industries. For this purpose, some innovative methods are needed to reduce product cost, lead time and enhance product quality to help increase market share and profitability. What is also needed is a higher level of integration of the design and manufacturing activities in a company. Group technology provides such a link between design and manufacturing. The adoption of group technology concepts, which allow for small batch production to gain economic advantages similar to mass production while retaining the flexibility of job shop methods, will help address some of the problems.

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