

EurOMA 2012 - P&OM 4th World Conference, Amsterdam 1-5 July 2012

Looking for synergies in the Production and Operations Management discipline at the end of the past century, Production and Operations Management Society (POMS), European Operations Management Association (EurOMA) and Japanese Operations Management and Strategy Association (JOMSA) agreed to collaborate on organizing a Production and Operations Management (P&OM) World Conference every four years. In 2012, the 4th P&OM World Conference was hosted at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands and was co-organized by Eindhoven University of Technology, University of Groningen, Erasmus University Rotterdam and VU University Amsterdam. Previous P&OM World Conferences were held in Seville (2000), Cancun (2004), and Tokyo (2008).

The EurOMA conference has been identified as a very relevant arena for the dissemination of research results from SFI NORMAN Research Area 2 – *Operations Management in Norwegian Manufacturing*. By attending the conference, many of the researchers connected to RA2 have also been able to build up a network of competence within OM, drawing on expertise from other countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and the USA. With nearly 700 participants from all over the world, over 500 papers were presented at the conference on key OM research themes such as Supply Chain Management, Sustainable Operations Management, Lean, Service operations, Healthcare and Product development.

Professor Luk Van Wassenhove from INSEAD, Belgium was the key note speaker and discussed the topic "*Operations Management – Quo Vadis?*" in which he reflected on what the OM discipline has done, where we are and where we are going. Some key words from the presentation:

- Boundary expansion – SCM, services, sustainability, behavior, crisis management
- Future – new media, iCloud, networks
- Academics are the problem – and the solution
- "The large majority of papers in top journals have no relation whatsoever to a real problem"
- Production and OM is an applied science – trying to add value to practitioners – which means we must keep our fingers on the pulse of the real world.
- "We must be rigorous and relevant – and stop being armchair researchers"

In fact, a key topic for the key note speakers at EurOMA for the past 5-6 years has been methodology: calling for more relevance and more interaction between researchers, educators and practitioners. This strengthens the relevance of the Scandinavian model for research, even though the majority of journals continue to prioritize publication of traditional "desk research".

Fact Box: 4th P&OM World Conference

Submitted abstracts	903
Accepted abstracts	567
Submitted full papers	529
Registered participants	686

A number of researchers and PhD candidates from both NTNU and SINTEF presented results from current work. This included a very popular presentation from PhD student Torbjørn Netland entitled

“Implementing company-specific production systems in global networks”, where he presented results from his work as a visiting Fulbright Research Fellow at Georgetown University, in the USA, where he has had the chance to work closely together with the Volvo Group and world-leading scholar, Professor Kasra Ferdows.

PhD student Daryl Powell presented some preliminary results from his collaboration with fellow researchers from the University of Bergamo (Italy) from their paper entitled *“Towards a framework for Lean Product-service systems”*. Taking insight in the Servitization literature, their framework illustrates how companies can benefit from the systematic application of lean thinking when developing a portfolio of services as an extension to their product offerings.

PhD student Anita Romsdal also presented her paper *“Linking supply chain configuration with production strategy; the case of food production”*, which she wrote together with Profs. Heidi Dreyer and Jan Ola Strandhagen. The paper illustrated how food producers like TINE can increase their market responsiveness by applying make-to-stock and make-to-order production planning and control approaches simultaneously. Strandhagen also presented some of his current work which has been carried out with Danish partners from the University of Aalborg, Dennis Kikkenborg Pedersen and Iskra Dukovska-Popovska *“SORIOS – A method for evaluating and selecting environmental certificates and labels”*.

Another of Strandhagen’s PhD students Mario Mello also presented some results of his research visit at Cardiff University in his paper *“A soft systems approach to improving an engineer-to-order supply chain”*. The paper was written in collaboration with Profs Naim and Gosling from Cardiff University, UK and provides an original contribution on the application of soft system methodology in an engineer-to-order context (shipbuilding industry). Through this paper they addressed the main challenges to improve the coordination in a shipbuilding supply chain based on a holistic perspective that takes into account the roles of different project partners.

All in all, the presentations were well attended, and the presenters gained good feedback from an attentive and knowledgeable audience. This represented a fantastic opportunity for them to extend their professional networks!