FOR YOUR TEAM · THE OPERATOR

The Operator

Operations Management · Bottlenecks, Queues & Quality

Run a company's operation from its inbox: every call lands on a live line of capacity, queues and quality.

Learning objectives

- Find the bottleneck and spend there: capacity added at any other step buys nothing (Goldratt, The Goal).
- Use Little's Law to read lead time and backlog, and see why a step run near 100% busy swings far harder after a shock than one at 80%.
- Weigh prevention against absorbing a quality problem when the cost of failure arrives days later (cost of quality).
- Manage cash as something the operation earns: revenue follows what is delivered, and running out forces cuts.
- Write decisively under time pressure, and build a team rhythm for continuous, interrupt-driven work.

How it runs

1. **Inbox arrival**
   On every active day the line runs the day and fresh emails land, the same ones for every team, each tagged urgent, important or info.
2. **Read the board**
   The operations board shows each step's capacity, work and queue, today's bottleneck, lead time against the promise, output, quality, revenue and cash.
3. **Triage**
   Skim the inbox. Urgent emails close sooner and count more, so they go first. An email still open when the next day starts can let its problem land on the line.
4. **Choose or write**
   Choice emails give three or four options; their effects stay hidden until you answer, and the order is shuffled for each team. Written emails ask for a short real response (100-250 words).
5. **See the grade, then the line**
   Each answer is graded against the options available, on the pillars it touches; its effect on the line starts the next operating day. A missed email counts as zero.
6. **Weekly review**
   Every five operating days: output, lead time, backlog, the bottleneck, quality, money and the team's own inbox numbers, with a line on what moved each. Each student then writes a short reflection from their role: what the bottleneck was and what they did about it.

Pillars & scoring

CUSTOMER HEALTH	TEAM MORALE	BRAND HEALTH	OPERATIONS HEALTH
Part of Call Quality: grades on the calls that touch customers, such as complaints, renewals, support and pricing (0-100). Written replies to customer emails count here.	Part of Call Quality: grades on people calls, such as hiring, resignations, burnout, pay and reorganizations (0-100). Written replies to employee emails count here; each forced cut counts as a 0.	Part of Call Quality: grades on the calls that shape reputation, such as press, regulators, competitors, positioning and partnerships (0-100). Written replies to strategic and external emails count here.	Part of Call Quality: grades on the calls that keep the day-to-day running, such as outages, suppliers, security, budgets and spend (0-100). Written replies to operations and financial emails count here.

Key features

- An operating line under the inbox
- Emails that act on the line
- Weekly operations review
- Same email, same day; shock day
- LLM response grader
- Flexible cadence, 7 companies
- Light roles tied to the line

Fit & format

PACING

One sim day per active day: 25 on the 5-week format, 40 on 8-week, 70 on a semester (Mon-Fri at 3 emails a day by default). Any day-of-week pattern works, and the professor can change the number of days.

COHORT SHAPE

Designed for ~15-30 students in teams of 4-5. Each team runs one persistent company and splits four light roles (one student can hold two on a small team).

BEST FOR

Core operations management, MBA and undergraduate (capacity, bottlenecks, queues and quality, in service, plant and warehouse settings); service operations; and operations leadership in general management and executive education. Especially strong for blended/online courses where weekly check-ins don't fit.

WHAT SETS IT APART

The platform's operations-management sim: continuous operations instead of batched rounds, with a live process line (bottleneck, queues, quality, cash) under the inbox. Students live in an inbox; the LLM grades written responses in real time; cadence is fully professor-configurable.

LMS

Canvas, Blackboard, Brightspace, Moodle via LTI 1.3. Students launch from your LMS with single sign-on; one-click grade publish posts scores back with the rubric breakdown as the comment.

PRICING

$20 / student

Founding Faculty: free in spring 2027, then $10 / student

Per semester. No platform fee, no per-section charge, no seat minimums. Institutional invoicing available.

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