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GCSE Business Studies

Flow Production

Flow production involves a continuous movement of items through the production process. This means that when one task is finished the next task must start immediately. Therefore, the time taken on each task must be the same.

Flow production (often known as **mass production**) involves the use of production lines such as in a car manufacturer where doors, engines, bonnets and wheels are added to a chassis as it moves along the assembly line. It is appropriate when firms are looking to produce a high volume of similar items. Some of the big brand names that have consistently high demand are most suitable for this type of production:

- ▶ Heinz baked beans
- ▶ Kellogg's corn flakes
- ▶ Mars bars
- ▶ Ford cars

Advantages

Flow production is capital intensive. This means it uses a high proportion of machinery in relation to workers, as is the case on an assembly line. The advantage of this is that a high number of products can roll off assembly lines at very low cost. This is because production can continue at night and over weekends and also firms can benefit from economies of scale, which should lower the cost per unit of production.

Disadvantages

The main disadvantage is that with so much machinery it is very difficult to alter the production process. This makes production inflexible and means that all products have to be very similar or standardised and cannot be tailored to individual tastes. However some "variety" can be achieved by applying different finishes, decorations etc at the end of the production line.

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