

CHAPTER 21

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT: ECONOMIC ORDER QUANTITY, JIT, AND THE THEORY OF CONSTRAINTS

QUESTIONS FOR WRITING AND DISCUSSION

1. Ordering costs are the costs of placing and receiving an order. Examples include clerical costs, documents, and unloading. Setup costs are the costs of preparing equipment and facilities so that they can be used for producing a product or component. Examples include wages of idled production workers, lost income, and the costs of test runs. Carrying costs are the costs of carrying inventory. Examples include insurance, taxes, handling costs, and the opportunity cost of capital tied up in inventory.
2. As ordering costs decrease, fewer and larger orders must be placed. This, in turn, increases the units in inventory and, thus, increases carrying costs.
3. Reasons for carrying inventory: (a) to balance setup and carrying costs; (b) to satisfy customer demand; (c) to avoid shutting down manufacturing facilities; (d) to take advantage of discounts; and (e) to hedge against future price increases.
4. Stock-out costs are the costs of insufficient inventory, e.g., lost sales and interrupted production.
5. Safety stock is simply the difference between maximum demand and average demand, multiplied by the lead time. By re-ordering whenever the inventory level hits the safety-stock point, a company is ensured of having sufficient inventory on hand to meet demand.
6. The economic order quantity is the amount of inventory that should be ordered at any point in order to minimize the sum of ordering and carrying costs.
7. JIT minimizes carrying costs by driving inventories to insignificant levels. Ordering costs are minimized by entering into long-term contracts with suppliers (or driving set-up times to zero).
8. Shutdowns in a JIT environment are avoided by practicing total preventive maintenance and total quality control and by developing close relationships with suppliers to ensure on-time delivery of materials. Internally, a Kanban system is used to ensure the timely flow of materials and components.
9. The Kanban system is used to ensure that parts or materials are available when needed (just in time). The flow of materials is controlled through the use of markers or cards that signal production of the necessary quantities at the necessary time.
10. JIT hedges against future price increases and obtains lower input prices (better usually than quantity discounts) by the use of long-term contractual relationships with suppliers. Suppliers are willing to give these breaks so that they can reduce the uncertainty in the demand for their products.
11. Constraints represent limited resources or demand. Internal constraints are limiting factors found within the firm. External constraints are limiting factors imposed on the firm from external sources.
12. First, graph all constraints. Second, identify the corner points of the feasible region. Third, compute the value of the objective function for each corner point. Fourth, the optimal solution is defined as the corner point that produces the largest value for the objective function. The simplex method is used to solve higher dimensional linear programming problems.
13. Throughput—the rate at which an organization generates money. Inventory—the money an organization spends in turning materials into throughput. Operating expenses—the money the organization spends in turning inventories into throughput.
14. Lower inventories mean that a company must pay attention to higher quality—it cannot afford to have production go down because of defective parts or products. It also means that improvements can reach the customer sooner. Lower inventories mean

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LL Leslie

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Table of Contents Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions

1. Understanding the eBook Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions User Reviews and Ratings
 - Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions Free and Paid eBooks
 - Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions Public Domain eBooks
 - Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions eBook Subscription Services
 - Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions eBook Formats

- ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions Compatibility with Devices
 - Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Interactive Elements Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 8. Staying Engaged with Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
 11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Setting Reading Goals Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
 12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Cost Accounting Chapter 21 Solutions
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
 13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
 14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements
 - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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