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**Gert Zülch**  
**Sascha Stowasser**  
**Harinder S. Jagdev (eds.)**

## **Human Aspects in Production Management**

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on Human Aspects in Production Management -  
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Internet: [www.shaker.de](http://www.shaker.de) • eMail: [info@shaker.de](mailto:info@shaker.de)

# Preface of the Editors

The Working Group 5.7 of the International Federation of Information Processing (IFIP WG 5.7) held its annual Working Conference in Karlsruhe (Germany), between 5th – 9th October 2003. This Working Group was founded in 1978 as a part of the Technical Committee 5 "Computer Application in Technology" (IFIP TC 5), thus forming a member of a worldwide community of practitioners and scientists under the auspices of UNESCO. At the moment, IFIP WG 5.7 has 75 members from 25 countries around the world.

Formally dedicated to "Computer-aided Production Management", IFIP WG 5.7 has been focusing on "Integration in Production Management" for several years now. Considering the scope of interest during the first two decades of the group's existence, integration, as in the first part of the group's name, certainly still encompasses the application of computer tools. Today, as a result of the economic development around the world, it also comprises the integration of production processes within an enterprise as well as the networks of enterprises.

The second part of the group's name addresses the field of application, namely production management. Research activities and solutions in industry have traditionally been dominated by topics like facility and machinery equipment management, material supply and warehousing concepts and tools, configuration of production programmes, strategies for order processing and computer tools to support the design and control of production systems, only to mention a few aspects.

Beyond these more technical, organisational and information technology related aspects there is certainly another one which has to be considered more closely than ever before, namely that of human resources. Is not group technology also related to group work? Do partners in a global network only operate according to predefined

process schemes with no personal contact? Are the mental process models of the programmers of ERP-systems the same as those of the users? What is the impact of human behaviour and what consequences are to be expected if organisational and individual objectives are separated? And finally, how do necessary technological changes affect the workforce and the individual needs and wishes of the employees.

As a consequence, production management should consider human aspects in more details for a better understanding of their double role within production management: Humans are not only regarded as managed resources, as they are looked upon from a traditional perspective. They are also managing resources, not only on the executive level of an enterprise, but in many cases also on the shop floor level, as demonstrated by many examples of continuous improvement teams in the industry.

Hence, to address these important human-related aspects in the manufacturing, this Working Conference was devoted to the "Human Aspects in Production Management". This volume contains the enlarged abstracts of the presented papers. They reveal numerous problems within this topic, often leading to more questions than answers or solutions. Thus, this conference pointed out a broad field for further research work as well as the need for solutions in industry.

The theme of this Working Conference was initially proposed by the local organiser, the ifab-Institute of Human and Industrial Engineering of the University of Karlsruhe. The organisers appreciate that this topic, which is in fact very much related to the ifab-Institute, was accepted for the first time in the IFIP WG 5.7 series of Working Conferences, but they sincerely hope that conferences with similar and associated themes will appear in the future.

As usual, this Working Conference was also open to other current topics in the field of productivity management. The enlarged abstracts these papers are presented in volume 6 of this series.

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Dipl.-Wirtsch.-Ing. Gert Zülch  
Dr.-Ing. Sascha Stowasser  
Dr. Harinder S. Jagdev

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