



One Logic, Two Labels

Brunello Menicucci — Menicucci & Associati

Why busy shop floors still ship late — and what actually fixes it, with a personal read for project teams



FACITE AMMUINA!

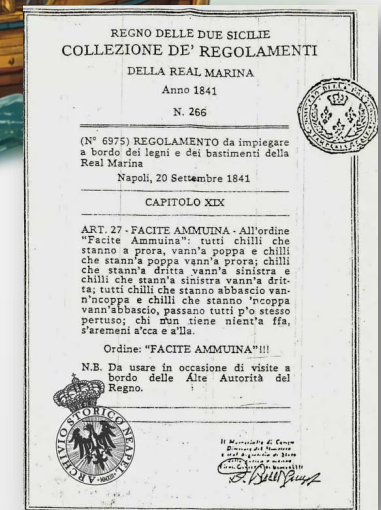
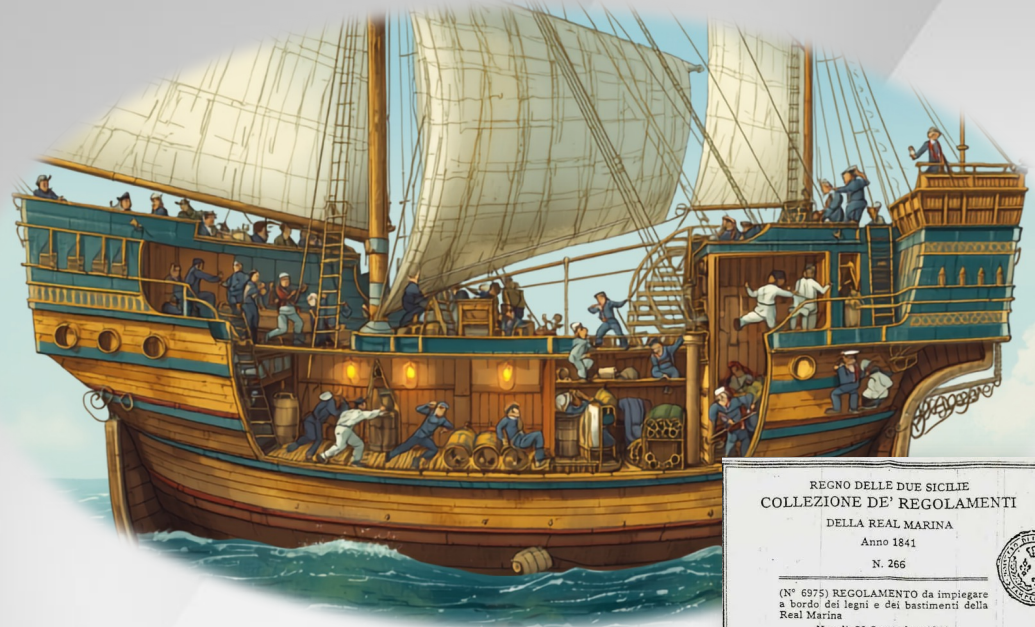
“Facite Ammuina (make noise)!”

At the order 'Facite Ammuina':

all those at the bow go to the stern,
and those at the stern go to the bow;
those on the right go to the left,
and those on the left go to the right;
all those below go up,
and those above go down,
all passing through the same hatch;
whoever has nothing to do, goes back and
forth here and there

THE ORIGINAL VERSION

All'ordine Facite Ammuina: tutti chilli che stanno a prora vanno a poppa e chilli che stanno a poppa vanno a prora; chilli che stanno a dritta vanno a sinistra e chilli che stanno a sinistra vanno a dritta; tutti chilli che stanno abbascio vanno 'ncoppa e chilli che stanno 'ncoppa vanno abbascio passanno tutti po stesso pertuso. Chi nun tene niente a ffà, s'aremene a ccà e a llà

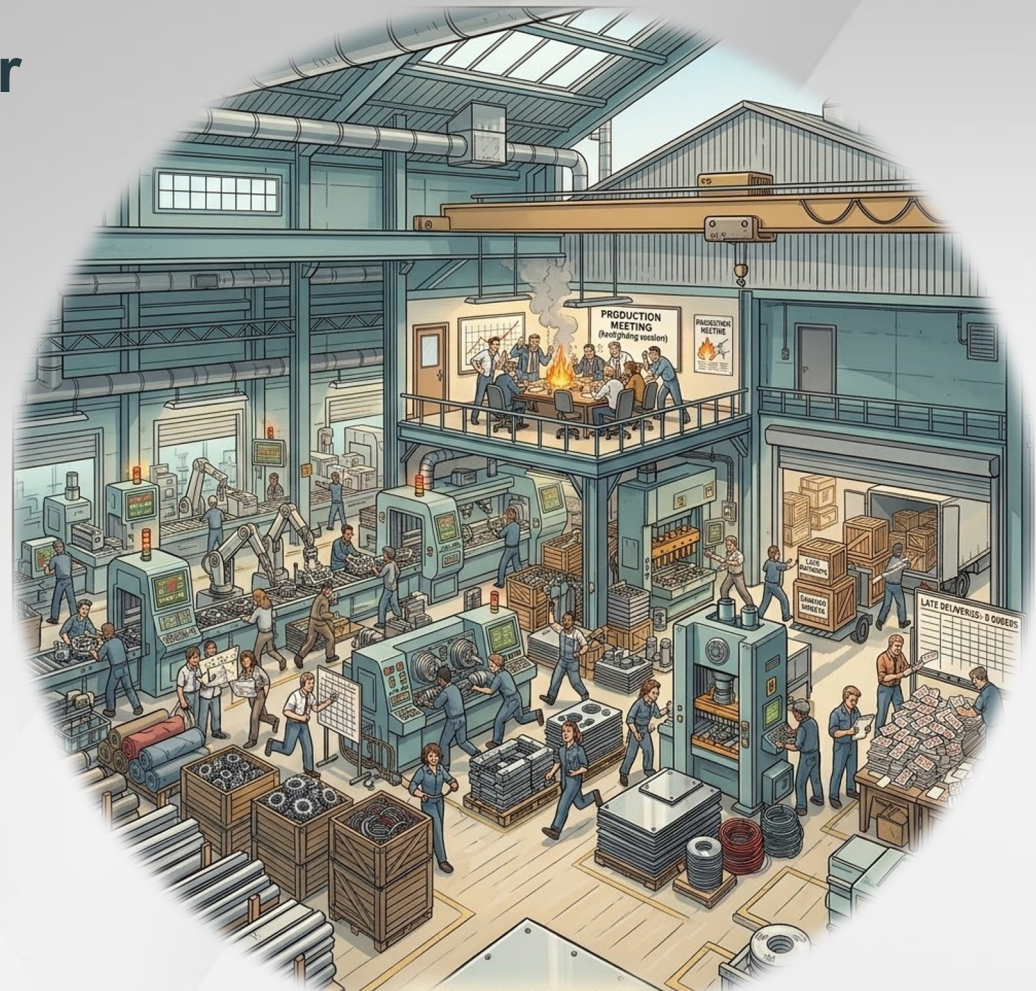


THE PARADOX

The Paradox on Every Shop Floor

- Walk onto a shop floor and most likely you'll see a bustling area
 - machines running at high speed,
 - people busy,
 - work-in-process stacked up everywhere
- Deliveries are **still late**.
- Production meetings look just like firefighting sessions.

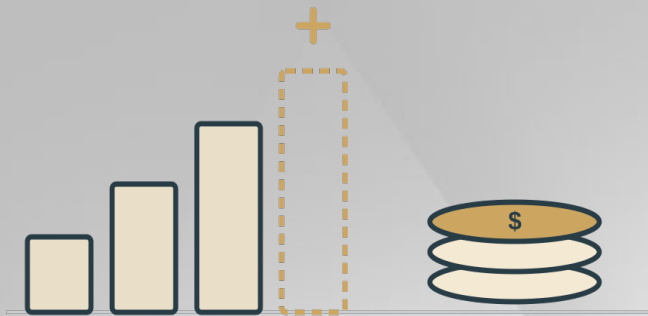
Everyone's working. Nothing's shipping on time. That's the paradox.



The Production Myth: Plate VII
Shop Floor: The Reality of Busy-ness

THE GUT REACTION

Two Things Everyone Tries First



Add more resources.

- Throwing more capacity or budget at it seems to help — in the short term

Optimize everything.

- Get each department running its best — the better each department performs, the better the overall system runs

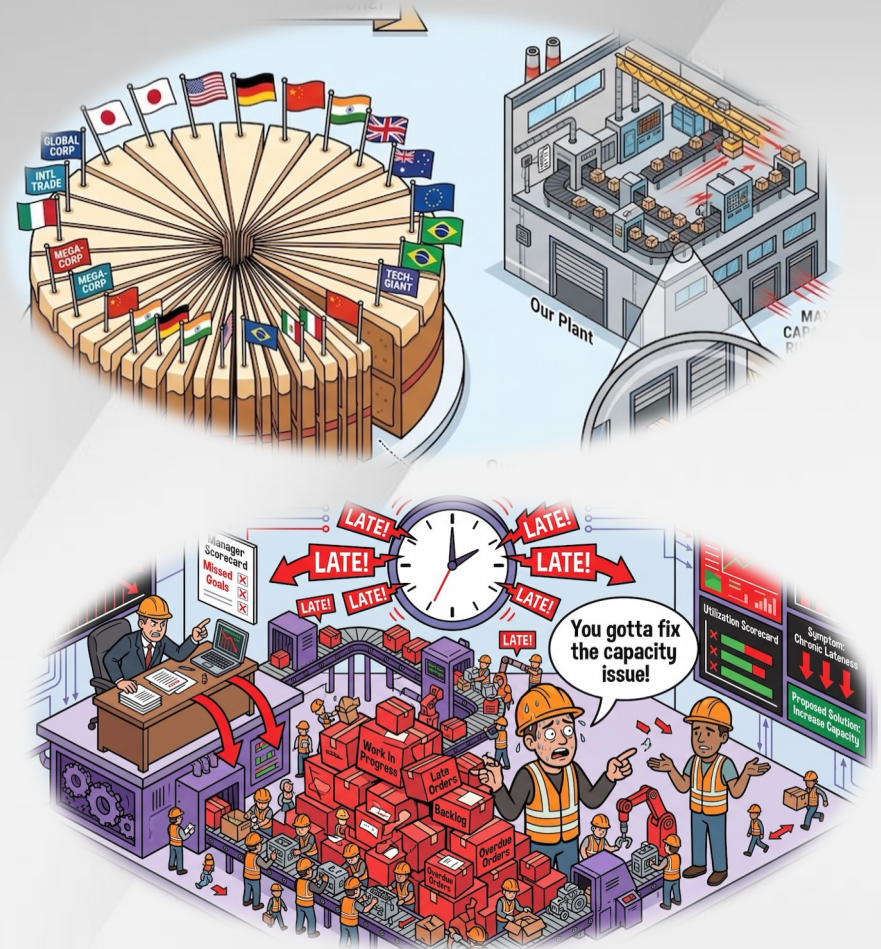
Two instincts. Let's put them both to the test.

THE GUT REACTION – ADD MORE RESOURCES

Do We Need More Capacity?

- Considering the Globalization Effect
- Doing the Math
 - Add up your total capacity (hours × stations)
 - Compare it to what your order volume actually needs.
 - Identify the gap

Conclusion: almost every plant has capacity to spare



THE GUT REACTION – ADD MORE RESOURCES

If Capacity Exists, It Must Be the Flow

- The math suggests we have capacity to spare
- Yet our lead times are struggling
- This points to something else: not capacity — **it is a flow issue**
- Let's test it too



IT'S A FLOW ISSUE

Let's Test The "Flow Issue" Assumption

Goldratt's Predicted Effect	If Capacity Were the Cause	If Flow Is the Cause	How to Verify It
Lead Time Variability	Predictable — long but consistent lead times	Messy — same or similar orders take 3 days once, 20 days another time	Check ERP data: standard deviation of order completion times
Constraint Behavior	Stationary — the same machine always has the most WIP	Shifting — the "crisis station" changes week to week	Ask the floor: does today's problem area match last week's?
Expediting Levels	Structured — work follows the planned sequence	Recurring panic — hot tags, overrides, split runs	Count orders flagged "urgent," or given interrupt setups

IT'S A FLOW ISSUE

So, What's Actually Wrong?

- As said, there is capacity to spare
- The predicted effects suggest it's a flow issue
- Yet we have an unanswered question:
 - why are we still late?
- Two causes: local optimization and variability.

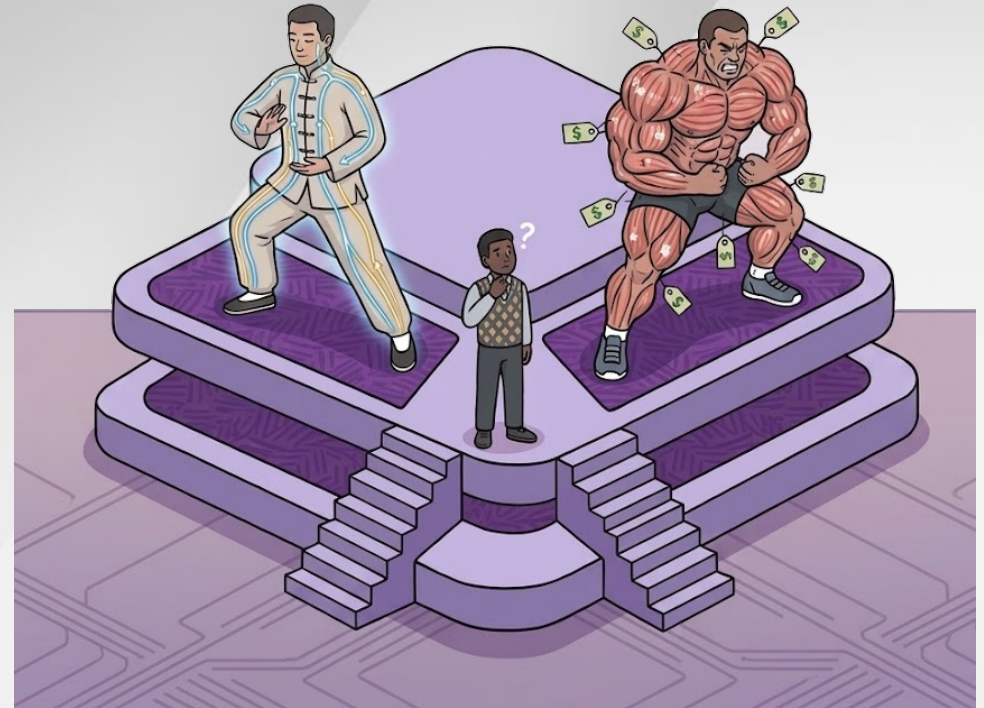


Local Optimization and Variability are the hidden rocks wrecking our river.

LOCAL OPTIMIZATION

What Néi Gong Taught Me

- Throughput is the goal: in Nei Gong, this is the "Song" (intentional release) and the flow of energy.
- Tension is the Constraint: every knot in your shoulder or tightness in your hip chokes your throughput

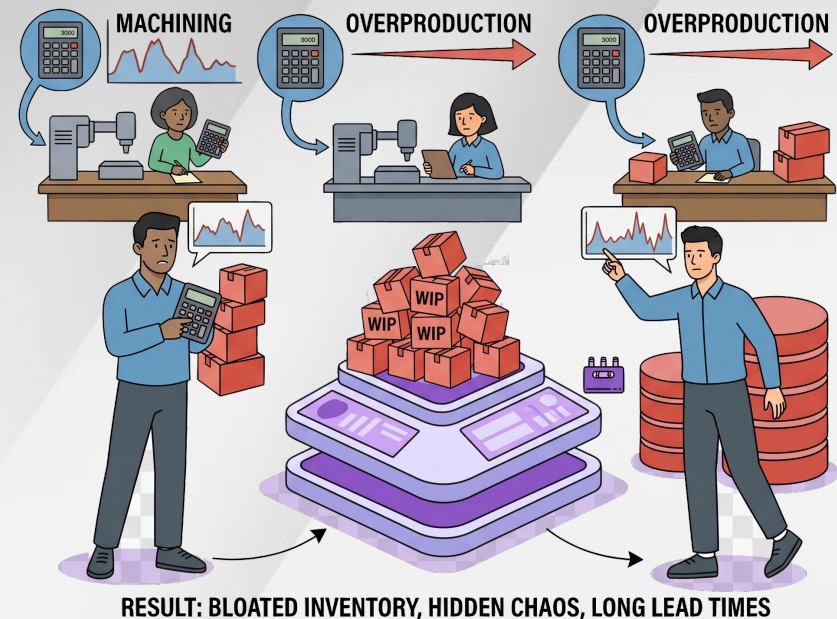


Release the tension, and energy flows again. It's the same idea, whichever system you're standing in.

LOCAL OPTIMIZATION

Local Optimization Kills Throughput

- Optimize every station on its own and remove all idle time.
- Chase utilization, or maximize OEE — and WIP piles up, deliveries slip, all in the name of "improvement."



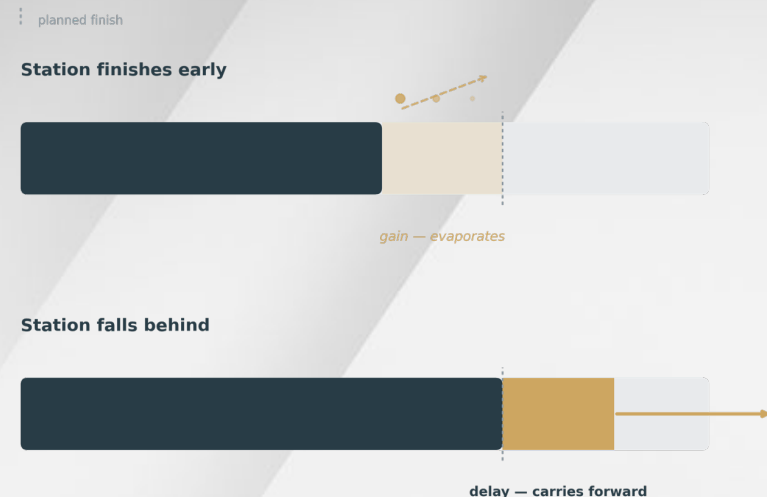
We've all seen it: local optimization can harm the whole system.

VARIABILITY

What If Nobody Was Chasing Utilization?

- Even without chasing utilization, you'd still get queues — every station has its own natural variation.
- Chain enough dependent steps, and delays don't cancel out. They compound.

Gains are lost. Delays persist. That's the asymmetry.



The Assumption Baked Into Every MRP System

- [illegible]

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WHY CHANGE

Can we breakthrough the situation?

STATUS QUO

Cost of not changing.

Recurring lateness, firefighting, cash tied up in WIP, trust eroding with customers.

Benefit of not changing.

Comfort of familiar KPIs — and little else.

CHANGE

Cost of change.

Unlearning familiar metrics, short-term discomfort while release discipline beds in.

Benefit of change.

Predictable dates, capacity found without new equipment, less to no expediting, happier customers

When there's evidence that status quo can't hold, the direction of change stops being a matter of opinion.

ENTER S-DBR

The Logic That Actually Fixes It

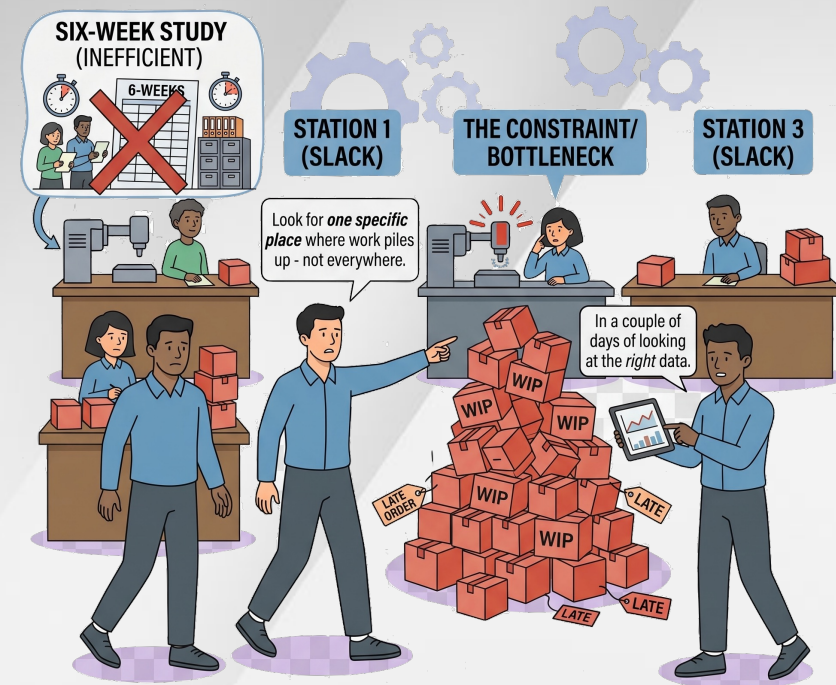
Simplified DBR

Three moves, one at a time.

THE CONSTRAINT

Given, Found, or Chosen

- Hunting for a real internal constraint is only worth it when demand really exceeds capacity
- And sometimes the smartest move isn't finding the constraint at all — it's choosing where to put it
- And that's what S-DBR does — treats the market as the constraint, since most plants already have more capacity than orders.

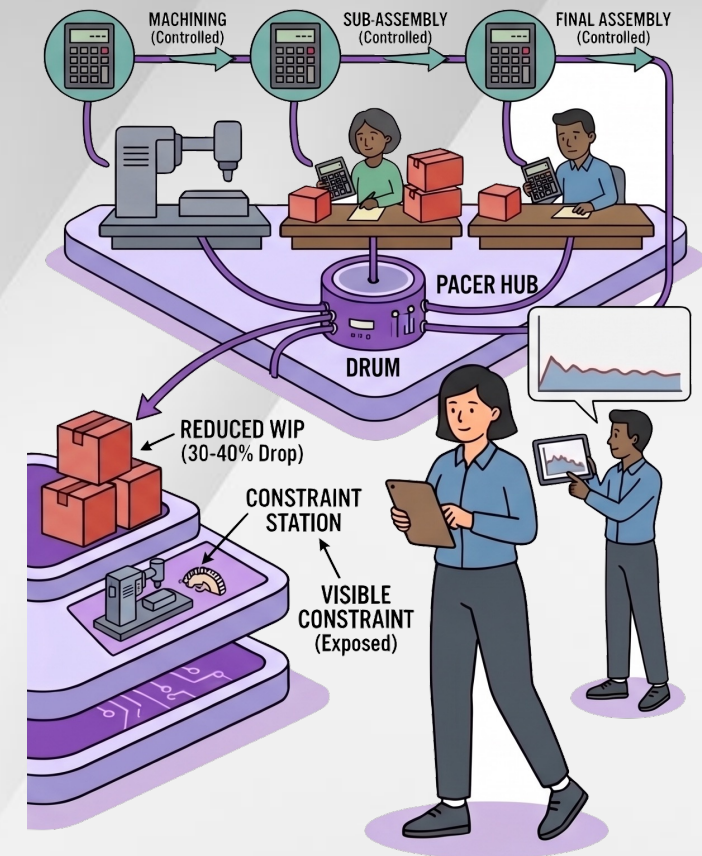


Most days, you already know where it is. The question is what you do about it.

THE RELEASE CONTROL

The Rope: What Enters, and When

- Release isn't free just because a job is ready to start.
- In S-DBR, release is tied to the constraint's pace instead — work doesn't enter the system faster than the constraint — the market — can absorb it.
- WIP drops, often by 30 to 40 percent, because work stops piling up in front of resources that were never the problem.
- Lead times fall with it, and the real cause of delay stops hiding behind unnecessary work in process.



Releasing work faster doesn't get it done faster.

BUFFER MANAGEMENT

One Number Replaces the Meetings

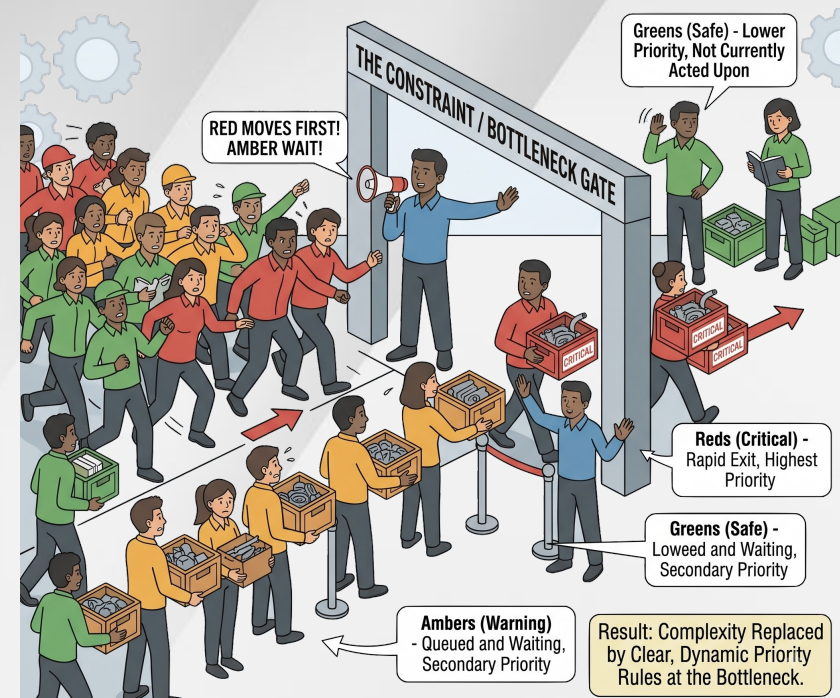
Buffer status turns how much of the time buffer is consumed into a simple traffic light — three zones, one glance, no debate.

 Burning through buffer faster than expected. Worth a look, put your plan B into action.

 Buffer significantly consumed. At risk — act now, starting with the constraint.

 Progressing normally. No action needed.

Red moves first. Amber is watched. Green is left alone.

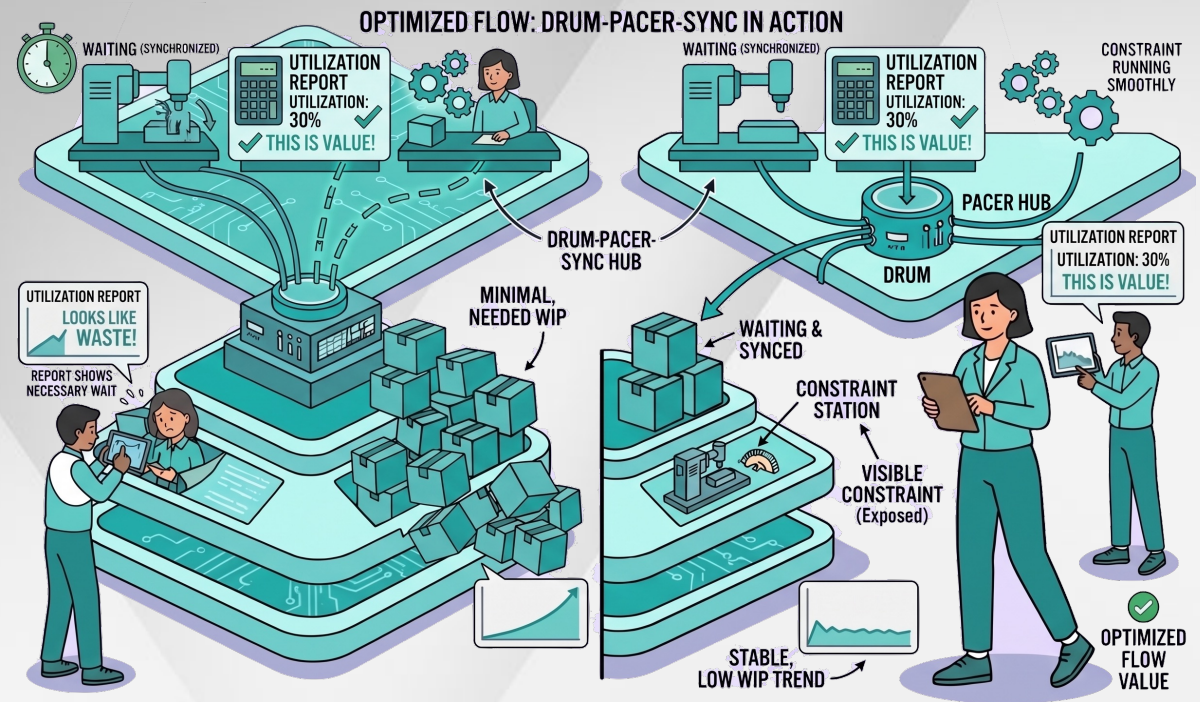


THE HARD PART

The Hardest Habit to Break

Utilization.

- A feeder that can run faster than the constraint will show idle time on a utilization report — and idle time looks like waste.
- **It isn't.** If the constraint is running smoothly, that resource is exactly where it should be: waiting, not building inventory nobody's asked for yet.



"Tell me how you measure me and I'll tell you how I'll behave" — Eliyahu M. Goldratt.

MY INTERPRETATION

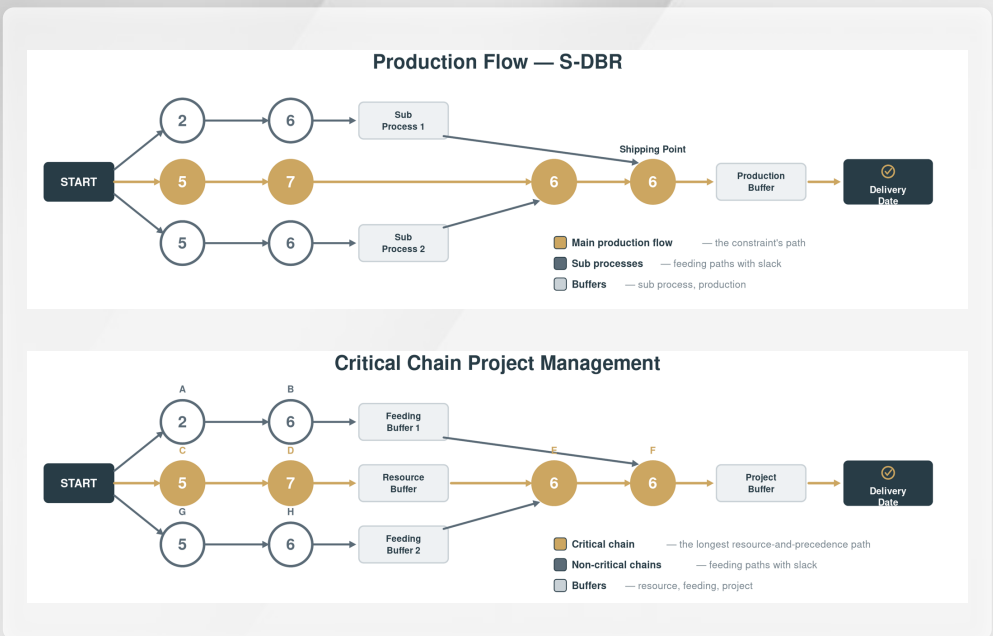
A Production Floor IS a Project Network

Take your production floor. Replace the word “work centre” with “task.” Nothing about the logic changes — only the label.

(My own reading of the connection — not something stated explicitly in the literature.)

-  **The pace-setter** — in CCPM, that's the critical chain, or main flow.
-  **The feeding lines** — in CCPM, feeding paths, or sub-processes.
-  **The buffer** — protects the pace-setter from variability — same word, either side. Chain 30 tasks at 95% on-time each, and the project lands on time only ~21% of the time.

It's the same network. Only the label's different.



THE THREE ELEMENTS, MAPPED

Same Three Moves, Two Vocabularies

	Manufacturing (S-DBR)	Projects (CCPM)
The Constraint	Drum — the constraint, or market demand	Critical chain — the longest resource-and-precedence path
Protection	Time buffer before the constraint, and at shipping	Feeding buffers, plus a project buffer at the end
Release control	Rope — work released to match the drum's pace	Staggered starts, gated by resource availability

RECAP

Six Things, Three Moves

01



Avoid Local Optimization

Optimize every part on its own and the whole system gets worse. The slowest link sets the pace, not the average.

02



Know your System

One thing sets the speed of the whole system: the constraint, or the critical chain. Nothing else matters as much.

03



Establish a Release system

Tie what enters the system to the constraint's own pace — not the moment work is ready. WIP and lead time drop together.

04



Use a Time Buffer to protect the System

Identify the pace-setter and protect it with a buffer — the core of both Drum-Buffer-Rope and Critical Chain.

05



Use Buffer Management as a Decision Tool

Buffer status — red, amber, green — or call it the fever chart if you're running CCPM. No more gut-feel expediting, no more status meetings.

06



Get Rid of the Hardest Habit

Stop chasing utilization and multitasking. Single-task the pace-setter instead — it's the last habit to break.

KNOW THE BOUNDARIES

Where the Mapping Actually Strains



S-DBR

The drum isn't always inside the plant. When a plant has more capacity than orders, the real constraint is the market — and the drum shifts to protecting customer delivery commitments instead of a machine.



CCPM

The critical chain doesn't have that option. It's always structural — the longest resource-and-precedence path through the tasks you've defined. There's no version of CCPM where the constraint quietly steps outside the plan.

The drum can leave the building. The chain never does.

SO WHY ISN'T THIS A COINCIDENCE?

It's Not a Coincidence

Any system made of interdependent steps, running under variability, needs the same three moves — whatever the steps are called:



**Find what paces
the whole system**



**Protect it with time,
not busywork**



**Control what enters
so it never overwhelms
the pace-setter**

The label changes. What you have to look for doesn't.



Call it a task or a work centre — the question underneath is the same:

Where is the constraint — and is everything else subordinated to it?

Ask it on the shop floor, and you're running S-DBR. Ask it of a project network, and you're running CCPM.

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BIO

Thirty years inside real businesses — shop floors, distributors, a paper brand built from scratch, a corporate turnaround, and a national retailer scaled from €80M to €210M — before founding his consultancy in 2012. He found Theory of Constraints already recognizing what he'd been watching since 1981 and works hands-on with management teams to find the constraint and make the fix hold.

CONTACT

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