The Order Specification Decoupling Line

This paper discusses the important issue in build-to-order production of separating innovative long term engineering processes from day-to-day variant specification processes, i.e. the processes creating specifications such as bill-of-materials, drawings, text descriptions, routings etc. The paper proposes and discusses the term Order Specification Decoupling Line (OSDL), which is to be used to explain the separation of industrial specifications into some information created prior to order acquisition and some information created during order acquisition and order fulfillment. For instance one may find some welding specifications or product descriptions which are standard for every order, while there may be other specifications, such as bill-of-materials and drawings, which are customized. Through a use of this concept it becomes possible to discuss different levels of OSDL and different variant specification tasks, such as engineer-to-order, modify-to-order, configure-to-order and select to order. It must be emphasized that the paper is more of a research proposal for discussion, than actual conclusive findings.

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