
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Hidehiko Yamamoto received his BS, MS and PhD from the Nagoya Institute of Technology. After 12 years of developing production lines for automotive parts at Toyota Industrial Corporation, he moved to Wakayama University, Japan. Currently, he is a Professor at Gifu University, Japan. His fields of interest include production systems, intelligent systems, knowledge learning and virtual manufacturing systems.

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First of all, as the guest editors, we are pleased to thank all those who participated to this special issue of the *International Journal of Product Development*.

This is a special issue on advanced production system, production design and production management. As global competition intensifies, enterprises from all around the world are facing many challenges. This requires innovative ideas in product development, in organisation of this development, and in production engineering to manufacture these products at the lowest cost and with the best quality.

This special issue aims at presenting the state of the art in the fields of production engineering, and promoting further research in the area of developing new products and production lines. It focuses on theories and methods on manufacturing technology, product design, production control, intelligent systems and optimisation systems.

This issue contains high quality papers including a literature review, case studies, modelling papers, and surveys. From all the topics covered, we may cite the followings: partnerships relative to product development, algorithms for job scheduling, a study of maintenance contribution to joint production and maintenance scheduling, designs of cellular manufacturing systems and flexible manufacturing systems, studies on existing tools for production control, a performance research on blast furnaces, an improved technique for inventory control, a new acceptance criterion based on 3D statistical tolerance, a simulation approach to optimise production hidden costs, optimisation of human resources in a department of an hospital, resolution of a 2D packing problem, robot handling and a study case to estimate design effort in product development.

We hope these papers will create ideas for further research, provide guidelines for practitioners and lead to new opportunities for collaborative work. We wish you all a beneficial and enjoyable reading.