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<p>Apple Incorporated is the world's largest multinational technology company: It has over 137,000 employees and 510 retail stores in 25 countries. Robust sales of consumer services have made it the most valued company in the world, with a market capitalization of \$1.953 trillion as of August 12, 2020. Apple's brand loyalty is legendary, with a cult-like following of customers who often stand in long lines to buy new products when they are launched.</p> <p>The 10 decision areas of operations management that Apple measures to maximize its operational efficiency and build strategic capabilities are (i) design of goods and services, (ii) quality management, (iii) process and capacity design, (iv) location strategy for stores, (v) layout design and strategy, (vi) job design and human resources, (vii) supply chain management, (viii) inventory management, (ix) scheduling, and (x) maintenance. A dedicated team of senior managers establish and implement a well-calibrated set of metrics that establish different standards, benchmarks, and criteria for productivity in different decision areas.</p> <p>So, what drives Apple's operational excellence? It is not any single decision area mentioned above that stands out in particular, but how well operations and supply chain decisions are intertwined into every other decision that the company makes in its fairly well-controlled ecosystem, ranging from product design to component sourcing, manufacturing, distribution, and retail store design and location. By focusing on a narrow product line, Apple can make each product in larger volumes and get quantity discounts from suppliers. By investing in advanced component material and manufacturing process technologies, coupled with a superior understanding of the markets, Apple can anticipate customer needs ahead of time and give customers what they want through innovative products that competitors cannot easily copy or reproduce.</p> <p>Apple's long-term investments in its processes, supply chains, and human resource practices also make it very resilient in managing its complex multinational supply chains. Even in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Foxconn, Apple's contract manufacturer, was running night shifts at its iPhone factory in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China. While it will not escape completely unscathed, Apple has built contingency plans and managed disruptions in its supply chains better than many of its competitors. Its launch of potential new products like iPhone 12, Apple TV, and an Apple Watch will not occur within the usual time frame of September 2020, but are on track to show up a few weeks later. Despite store closures and inventory shortages, Apple reported on July 30, 2020, that its revenue was the highest that the company has ever reported in its third quarter, up 11 percent year-over-year. And so the juggernaut continues, powered by its vaunted world-class skills and capabilities in operations and supply chain management.</p>		Marks	An An An
<p>Requirement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Apple's best operational practices that help them to have leading market position.</li> <li>Explain the tactics that Apple applied for driving operational excellence.</li> <li>Elucidate Apple's international strategy that was important for long term strategic advantages.</li> </ol>		4 3 3	