

1. An information flow focuses on “what” information is being moved, while an information “system” is concerned with the “how.” For example, kanban (Chapter 13) is a type of information system that, similar to MRP (another type of information system), helps manufacturers determine when to produce parts. Information systems do not have to be computerized—they can be paper-based or even communicated verbally.
2. An argument can be made for either view, although *most* practitioners suggest tackling routine decision making and transactional requirements first. For one thing, they are easier to do and provide immediate payoffs. For another, these systems provide data that can be fed into higher-level planning systems.
3. Answers will vary. While many of the features are similar, the differences between manufacturing and service operations dictate some differences between system capabilities.