An Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system attempts to automate and integrate most, if not all, of the back end functions and processes within an enterprise. Its basic architecture relies on traditional enterprise practices, particularly those from manufacturing, which are strongly based on forecasts of demand/sales. More recent manufacturing approaches are based on the Lean philosophy which adopts a different view, particularly in regard to inventory management.

Imagine that you are the CIO of a manufacturing company and your CEO has asked your advice about ERP and Lean manufacturing. Specifically he has asked for a (research) paper of approximately 2,500 words on the topic :‘Is ERP compatible with Lean?’ At a minimum you should address the following issues:

* A brief description of ERP, its major components and how it is designed to support the enterprise. (15marks)
* A brief description of Lean principles and how they are designed to support the enterprise. (15marks)
* Compare and contrast the two approaches 50 (marks)
  + To what extent are the two approaches compatible?
  + If they are not totally incompatible, how might they be harmonized?
* The CEO has received approaches from SAP and Oracle to present their sales pitches for a ERP system. He is also aware of some of the more unsuccessful ERP implementations and wishes to minimize his risk. What actions do you recommend that he take to maximize his chances of a successful ERP implementation (15marks)

Format, 5marks

The paper should be approximately 2500 words, with a Executive Summary, Introduction, Body and Conclusion. It should be, fully referenced with a complete Bibliography. The Executive Summary and Bibliography are not included in the word count. Read widely. NOTE: Although I am not necessarily a fan of Wikipedia, their entry under Lean Manufacturing offers a reasonable overview and **point of departure** for your research.