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经济学经典教材·专业主干课系列

Economics
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MBA微观

经济学

(第二版)

Microeconomics for MBAs:
The Economic Way of

(Second Edition)
Thinking for Managers

理查德·B·麦肯齐 (Richard B. McKenzie) 著
德怀特·R·李 (Dwight R. Lee)

中国人民大学出版社

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理查德·B·麦肯齐

德怀特·R·李 著

MBA Weiguan Jingjixue

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出版说明

入世十年，我国已完全融入到经济全球化的浪潮中。党的十六大确立了“引进来，走出去”的发展战略，使得“国际化”复合型人才的需求不断增加。这就对我国一般本科院校多年来所采取的单一语言（母语）教学提出了严峻挑战，经济类专业双语教学改革迫在眉睫。

为配合高校经济类专业双语教学改革，中国人民大学出版社携手培生、麦格劳－希尔、圣智等众多国际知名出版公司，倾情打造了该套“经济类双语系列教材”，本套教材包括：经济管理类专业开设的核心课程、经济学专业开设的主干课程以及财政金融专业和国际贸易专业的主要课程。所选教材均为国外最优秀的本科层次经济类教材。

我们在组织、引进和出版该系列教材的过程中，严把质量关。聘请国内著名经济学家、学者以及一线授课教师审核国外原版教材，广泛听取意见，努力做到把国外真正高水平的适合国内实际教学需求的优秀教材引进来，供国内广大师生参考、研究和学习。

本系列教材主要有以下特点：

第一，教材体系设计完整。本系列教材全部为国外知名出版公司的优秀教材，涵盖了经济类专业的所有主要课程。

第二，保持英文原版教材特色。本系列教材依据国内实际教学需要以及广泛的适应性，部分对原版教材进行了全文影印，部分在保持原版教材体系结构和内容特色的基础上进行了适当删减。

第三，内容紧扣学科前沿。本系列教材在原著选择上紧扣国外教学前沿，基本上都是国外最流行教材的最新版本。

第四，篇幅合理、价格适中。本系列教材一方面在内容和篇幅上很好地适应了国内双语教学的实际需要，另一方面，低定价策略又避免了国外原版图书高额的购买费用。

第五，提供强大的教学支持。依托国外知名出版公司的资源，本系列教材为教师提供丰富的配套教辅资源，如教师手册、PPT 课堂演示文稿、试题库等，并配套有内容丰富的网络资源，使教学更为便利。

本系列教材既适合高等院校经济类专业的本科教学使用，也适合从事经济类工作和研究的广大从业者阅读和学习。我们在选书、改编过程中虽然全面听取了专家、学者和教师的意见，努力做到满足广大读者的需求，但由于各教材的作者所处的政治、经济和文化背景不同，书中内容仍可能有不妥之处，我们真诚希望广大读者提出宝贵意见和建议，以便我们在以后的版本中不断改进和完善。

中国人民大学出版社

A grayscale image showing the silhouettes of several people in a meeting or classroom setting. One person on the right is holding up a pen or pointer. The image is positioned at the top of the page, behind the title.

Preface

Almost all (if not all) textbooks used in MBA students' first course in microeconomics are designed with undergraduate economics majors or first-year PhD students in mind. Accordingly, MBA students are often treated to a course in intermediate microeconomic theory, full of arcane mathematical explanations. The applications in such standard textbooks deal mainly with the impact of social or government policies on markets with little discussion of how managers can make better decisions within their firms in response to market forces or how market forces can be expected to affect firms' institutional and financial structures.

Much microeconomic theory simply assumes firms into existence without explanation of why they are needed in the first place. Managers and their staff are assumed to do exactly what firms employ them to do – maximize owners' profits – with no discussion of how firms' organizational structures affect incentives and how incentives affect firms' production and profit outcomes.

That is to say, little is written in standard textbooks used in MBA courses about exactly how real-world firms pursue the goal of profit maximization. And that void in microeconomics textbooks is a real problem for MBA students, for an obvious reason: MBA students have typically come back to school to learn how to improve their management skills, which involves learning about how they can improve their ability to extract more profits from the scarce resources available to the firms where they work (or the firms where they expect to move after graduation). They do not come back to school to become economic theorists. Standard microeconomic textbooks are of little value to MBA students in helping them achieve their career objectives.

MBA students stand a quantum leap apart from undergraduate students, who typically have little idea of what they want to do with their lives, and have far less real-world business experience to which they can relate. MBA students also are sacrificing far more by attending school than undergraduates and must get value for their time spent reading textbooks and attending class because of the cost of their education, in terms of both their tuition payments and the valuable work opportunities they have to set aside.

Microeconomics for MBAs breaks dramatically from the standard textbook mold. As the title suggests, we have designed this textbook with only MBA students in mind. In Part A of every chapter, we cover standard microeconomic theory in an accessible way, and we provide an array of applications to government policies which MBA students need to understand. After all, managers everywhere face the constraints of government-imposed laws and regulations that are ever-changing, and managers must work to maximize their firms' profits within those constraints. Moreover, professors in marketing, finance, accounting, strategy, and operations research who teach first- and second-year elective courses in MBA programs will expect their students to have a firm grounding in conventional microeconomic theory.

To help students learn the material covered in these pages and lectures, we have provided a set of video modules posted on the Internet that deals with three classes of topics*:

- (1) basic economic concepts that all MBA students should understand at some level upon entering their programs of study
- (2) concepts, principles, and modes of analysis that are often hard to comprehend the first time they are presented in text or lectures
- (3) topics that have a high probability of being covered in examinations.

Of course, these videos can be stopped at any time to allow for note taking, and can be replayed repeatedly.

In Part B of every chapter, we go where other microeconomics textbooks seldom, if ever, go with such completeness. We drop the usual assumption that firms exist and that they automatically maximize owners' profits by simply following maximization rules. Instead, we bring to the forefront of our analysis a crucial problem that firms face. This problem (dubbed the "principal-agent problem" within the economics profession and in this textbook) is that both owners and workers are more interested in pursuing their own well-being than someone else's well-being.

Owners ("principals") want to maximize their income stream and wealth through the firms they create by getting the most they can out of their employees. Similarly, managers and line workers (the owners' "agents") seek to maximize some combination of income, on-the-job perks, and job security, which are often in conflict with maximizing profits for the firm's owners. Without effective firm policies that align the incentives of owners and workers (for their mutual benefit), the work in a firm can be a self-destructive tug of war, with the demise of the firm virtually assured in competitive markets.

* 所有网上相关资源, 剑桥大学出版社并未给予中国人民大学出版社, 因而请读者直接登录本书在剑桥大学出版社的网站 www.cambridge.org/micro4mbas 注册下载。

In this textbook, we focus MBA students' attention on thinking through the complex problems of getting incentives right. This is mainly because there is as much (maybe more) profit to be made from creatively structuring incentives as there can be made from creatively developing products for sale.

Getting hourly and monthly pay systems right is obviously an important means of aligning the interests of owners and managers. However, we also explain how firms' organizational structure, in terms of both people and finances, can affect the alignment of owners' and workers' incentives. And make no mistake about it, both owners and their employees have a stake in finding the right alignment. Workers' jobs can hang in the balance. Owners' investments can hang just as precariously on a cost-effective, balanced alignment of incentives.

Accordingly, this book places a great deal of emphasis on a field within economics that has grown rapidly in professional prominence, especially as the subject relates directly to the business world – and MBA programs: *organizational economics*, which is the study of the design of firms' organizational and financial structures using the analytical tools of microeconomic analysis. The mode of thinking presented in these pages is crucial for managers – MBAs – who want to move up their corporate hierarchy or create successful companies of their own.

On the publisher's website for *Microeconomics for MBAs* (www.cambridge.org/micro4mbas), we have provided “Perspectives” for each chapter that are highly recommended short discussions of topics related to themes in the chapters. These perspectives provide a new or different take on a business or policy issue; they can be easily streamed or downloaded by students taking longer (ten- and fifteen-week) courses. For example, everyone *knows*, don't they, that the “first mover” in any market has a competitive advantage. In the Perspective for Chapter 8, we discuss a startling observation made by management scholars: there is no first-mover advantage. Indeed, second and third movers frequently have competitive advantages, not the least of which is that they don't have to incur the costs of identifying and proving the profitability of product markets.

For longer courses, we have provided online more than two dozen “Readings” assigned to the different chapters that extend the theories and array of applications covered in the chapters. These readings can also be easily streamed and downloaded for extended reading assignments. For example, for chapter 1, we have posted the classic short article on “I, pencil,” in which Leonard Read cogently observes that no one in the world knows how to make pencils totally from scratch, yet millions of pencils are produced at low cost every year. In chapter 7, we take up “opportunistic behavior.” Online we have posted a discussion of a particular form of opportunistic behavior known as “the last-period

problem,” which covers why the problem emerges and how it can be mitigated by firm policies.

Each chapter ends with two sections. The first ending section offers practical advice that emerges from the discussions of theory and studies covered in the chapter. The second ending section, which we have dubbed “the bottom line,” contains listings of “key takeaways” – succinct statements of the most important lessons to be drawn from the chapter. We understand that MBA students, you included, face serious time constraints, especially when you are working full time and have family responsibilities. “The bottom line” section is designed to focus your attention when reviewing the material covered in the chapter, with the hope that your study time will be more productive.

The scholarly and policy literature in economics and management relating to most of the topics considered in this volume is massive. We have tried to give credit where credit is due, especially when “classic,” path-breaking treatments by distinguished scholars are concerned, but we have tried to hold references and footnotes in check in order that the flow of the argument is not constantly disrupted. Still, our references section at the end of the book is extensive. To smooth out the flow of the core material, we have relegated topics that will be only selectively used in classes to footnotes and to online readings.

Many textbook authors and their publishers play the development of their course books “safe” by taking up only those topics that have become fixtures in the profession’s “conventional wisdom.” We see such an approach as sucking the life out of a discipline and its treatment in textbooks. Topics that have not yet been fully settled through decades of professional debate can give life to a discipline, demonstrating to students that disciplines have an organic quality and are constantly evolving. As a consequence, you can expect many topics in this book to spark lively, and instructive, debates among student team members and between class members and professors in class. That is how we want the book to be received.

We have appended to each chapter a series of review questions that we expect will activate discussions within your student teams. In addition, we have set up a website for the book on which we will post additional readings for extended courses, as well as interesting pointers and puzzles that have occurred to us since the book went to press. We also expect to post on the website video commentaries on management issues and related economic policies that are bound to arise while you are reading this book and taking your course.

You may be interested in knowing that we – the authors of this book – have between us more than eighty years of university teaching experience, with most of our teaching careers spent in business schools. For the last twenty or so years, we both have taught *only* MBA students. That should tell you that we have a pretty

good fix on our readers and their interests, not the least of which is to have a course of study that is intellectually challenging as well as having practical application.

We fully understand that MBA students don't want to be loaded down with current business "facts," if for no other reasons than "facts" can easily become dated as modern business never stays still. What students want are some good economic and business "principles" that will help them cut through the myriad facts and events business people encounter each day and that change with passing days and weeks. In no small way, the purpose of this textbook, and our classes (or any other business course worthy of academic respect), is to explore ways to *think* creatively about how business is done and can be done better, not to actually *do* business. In this regard, we take to heart an observation made by the late economist Kenneth Boulding:

It is a very fundamental principle indeed that knowledge is always gained by the orderly loss of information; that is, by conducting and abstracting and indexing the great buzzing confusion of information that comes from the world around us into a form we can appreciate and comprehend. (1970, 2)

The way of thinking we take up in class, and that which Professor Boulding had in mind, is necessarily abstract – that is, without the clutter of many business details. We approach thinking with abstractions principally because no one's brain is sufficiently powerful to handle all the complex details of everyday business life. In no small way, productive thought requires that the complexity of business life be reduced enough to allow us to focus on the few things that are most important to the problems at hand and find meaningful relationships between those things. That is why Professor Boulding insists that knowledge can so often (if not "always") be gained only "by the orderly loss of information."

Without thinking, many business people often spurn theory on the grounds that it lacks practical value. We insist, "not so at all." The abstract way of thinking that we shall develop in this textbook has a very practical, overriding goal, which is to afford students more *understanding* of the business world than they could have if they tried some alternative approach – that is, if they tried to keep the analysis cluttered up with the "buzzing confusion" of facts MBA students leave behind in their workplaces when they set out for class.

There is another highly practical goal to be achieved by theory (or rather thinking with the use of theory). If people can *think* through business problems in some organized way, albeit abstractly, they may be able to avoid mistakes when they actually go out and do business. In economic terms, business mistakes imply a regrettable misuse and loss of firm resources – and firm

profitability! *Thinking* before doing offers the prospect of reducing waste in doing business.

If this textbook, and our classes, are about *thinking* (not doing), then we – Richard McKenzie and Dwight Lee and students' other professors – have some justification for being in front of our classes. Also, if the course is about the thinking process, there must be some method for thinking through problems, business-related or otherwise. The development of that *method* is the focus of our classes and this textbook. Our goal in this volume is to develop *the economic way of thinking* in the context of a host of problems that MBA students, as current and future managers of real-world firms, will find relevant to their career goals.

We understand that some readers may worry about our emphasis on theory because they may have read theory-grounded books that seemed sterile or irrelevant, mainly because of the heavy reliance on highly technical mathematics or complicated charts. That will not be the case in this book. The first principle of economics that has guided this work is one that many readers will appreciate: *Keep the theory as simple as possible and illustrate it with real problems*. We hold to the firm belief that the first principle in any course in principles of economics should be economy in the principles that are covered. The value of a textbook or course should be judged by what can be done with the principles developed, not by how many principles are developed.

This book carries the subtitle *The Economic Way of Thinking for Managers* for a very good reason: In the following pages, we bring together a host of large and small ideas that economists have developed over the past several decades that have transformed the way we must think about the way the business world works. Readers' reactions to large and small ideas will, we expect, have changed radically by the time they have read the last words of this volume. Two of those large questions are:

- How should organizations and incentives be structured to best encourage profit maximization?
- How does the competition in the market for goods and in the market for corporate control discipline executives?

The small questions that can be addressed from studying this volume are no less important and can be just as intriguing:

- Should used cars really be expected to be “better deals” than new ones (as so many people seem to think)?

- If competitive markets are expected to “clear” (with quantity demanded equaling quantity supplied), why are so many queues observed in grocery stores and at concerts?
- If queues are not mutually beneficial to buyers and sellers, then why aren’t they eliminated?

Readers who think that these questions have simple, obvious, pat answers need to read on.

We expect that readers will end this book the way our students end our courses: changed for life in the way they see the business world around them. But then that is what MBA students typically want – or should want – from every course in their MBA programs. Readers have our best wishes for the journey of a lifetime.

This book was developed over the past two decades as we taught our microeconomics courses for our MBA students at our respective universities. Our students have made innumerable and invaluable suggestions for improvement in the book, and we are indebted to them. We are also indebted to Oxford University Press for allowing us to draw freely from our previously published book with the Press, *Managing Through Incentives*. All excerpts from that book have been substantially revised and updated for inclusion in this textbook.

In redeveloping this textbook for the second edition, we continued to listen to the advice of our students and to professors who used the first edition of this textbook around the world. We note the following major changes:

- First and foremost, we have sought to update the book to account for new research findings and recent world economic events, including the recession that emerged from the meltdown of the housing mortgage-backed securities markets. Readers will find far more attention given to the “moral-hazard problem” (to be explained in the book) that is bound to emerge when business ventures are highly leveraged. In various chapters of this new edition, we explain how the moral hazard and leverage have been at the foundation of the financial and economic turbulence that began to emerge in late 2007 and continued as this new edition went to press.
- Second, with the added material, we have taken pains to economize on examples. Again, we understand that MBA students are hard pressed to find time to do the reading for their courses.
- Third, microeconomics courses in MBA programs vary in length, from five to fifteen weeks. We have sought to make the book more flexible. We have included enough material in the twelve chapters to take up more than a quarter-length course. With the addition of the available online perspectives and readings, we have provided enough material for a full semester-length course. Short

courses of five and seven weeks can be developed by covering the first four chapters, plus some combination of chapters 6, 7, 9, and 10 (which will cover competitive product and labor markets and monopoly product markets with attention to pricing strategies under markets for “normal” and “network” goods).

- Fourth, we understand that the microeconomics course is a prerequisite for second-year courses in global business and foreign residentials. In the first edition, international economics was literally at the back of the book. In this edition, we have placed international topics in chapter 5 where we note the interplay of environmental and international economic forces in an ever more integrated world economy.
- Fifth, most courses remain organized around a printed textbook. With all students having ready access to the Internet, we have made the printed textbook a component – albeit an important one – in a broader course-delivery system that relies heavily on the delivery of the full sweep of course materials through the Internet. Accordingly, professors will find a wealth of easily accessible resource materials on the publisher’s website for the textbook. The materials include:
 - “Perspectives” for each chapters (see the list of perspectives that follows this preface)
 - additional “readings” (see the list of topics covered in the list of further readings online that follows this preface): the online readings will allow for continuing updating of the course materials as readings on current economic and management topics become available after the second edition of the textbook is released
 - fifty-eight video modules that students can stream or download to their computers (see the list of topics covered on the website)
 - student self-tests for each chapter
 - a testbank of over 1,500 multiple-choice questions that can be accessed by adopting instructors
 - an electronic version of the textbook that can be downloaded to laptops and electronic readers (such as the Kindle)
 - video and print commentaries on current economic and management topics that will be written and posted by the authors as the textbook is used through the years of the second edition
 - an electronic “room” in which users of the textbook from different universities around the world can interact with each other and the authors on a continuing basis.

Throughout the revision, we have kept our eye on the key distinguishing feature of the book: it is designed specifically for MBA students. We have tried to fortify that feature by making sure that discussions of organizational and incentive issues in the second half of each chapter draw on the economic principles developed in the first half.

Online
Perspective

Additional material online

Perspectives provide a new or different take on a business policy or issue related to themes in the chapters. These are listed between Parts A and B of each chapter and are referred to at relevant points in the text.

R

Readings offer more on the theory and range of applications covered in the chapters and are referred to throughout the book. A list of appropriate readings is provided at the end of each chapter.

V

Video modules feature the authors and reinforce your understanding of:

- basic economic concepts that all MBA students should understand at some level upon entering their programs of study
- concepts, principles, and modes of analysis that are often hard to comprehend the first time they are presented in text or lectures
- topics that have a high probability of being covered in examinations.

Review questions are multiple choice questions for each chapter that students can use to test whether they have understood the material covered.

Video and print commentaries about current topics in economics and management and links to useful newspaper and journal articles provide up-to-date exposure to how microeconomic theory is relevant in our day-to-day world. New commentaries will be posted at intervals.

For instructors we
also provide:

Multiple choice questions: a testbank of 1,500 questions and answers that instructors can set for their students.

Solutions to selected review questions at the ends of chapters.

Figures and tables from the book that instructors can incorporate into lecture slides and presentations.

- This book is now more flexible for courses of different lengths.

Our suggested use:

For 10+ week courses

Use all twelve chapters

For 7 week courses

Use chapters 1–4/5, as well as chapters 6, 7, 9, and 10

For 5 week courses

Use chapters 1–5 and chapter 10

RESOURCES
Perspectives
Readings
Video modules
Newspaper & journal articles
Video commentaries
Written commentaries

STUDENTS
Self-test multiple choice questions

LECTURERS
Testbank
Solutions to review questions
Figures
Tables

Microeconomics problems that are simple and...

An introduction from the author...

Bonus Commentary #2 - The Misguided...

- End-of-chapter review questions and self-test multiple choice questions will appeal to students with a variety of learning styles.
- Fifty-eight video modules revise key concepts covered in the text.

How to use this site...

VIDEO MODULES

Feature the authors and reinforce your understanding of basic economic concepts that all MBA students should understand at some level upon entering their programs of study.

READINGS

Offer more on the theory and range of applications covered in the chapters and are referred to throughout the book.

Online
Perspective

PERSPECTIVES

Provide a new or different take on a business policy or issue related to themes in the chapters.

VIDEO AND PRINT COMMENTARIES

About current topics in economics and management and links to useful newspaper and journal articles provide up-to-date exposure to how microeconomic theory is relevant in our day to day world.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

A testbank of 1,500 questions and answers that instructors can set for their students.

SOLUTIONS TO SELECTED REVIEW
QUESTIONS

At the ends of chapters.



Online perspectives by chapters

(Accessible at www.cambridge.org/micro4mbas)

- 1 The tragedy of the anticommons
- 2 Evolutionary foundations of cooperation
- 3 Why queues?
- 4 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and economists' supply and demand curves
- 5 The travels of a T-shirt in a global economy
- 6 Common concerns relating to the law of demand
- 7 A reason for corporations: cost savings
- 8 The myth of the first-mover advantage
- 9 The Innovator's Dilemma
- 10 The QWERTY keyboard – a case of lock in?
- 11 The value of “mistreating” customers
- 12 Why professors have tenure and businesspeople don't



Further readings online

(Accessible at www.cambridge.org/micro4mbas)

- 1.1 "I, pencil," by Leonard E. Read
- 2.1 Disincentives in poverty relief
- 2.2 Management snooping
- 2.3 Risk taking, risk aversion, and firm ownership
- 2.4 "The mathematics of voting and political ignorance," by Gordon Tullock
- 3.1 Price competition in the short run and the long run
- 4.1 Key econometric findings on the effects of the minimum wage
- 4.2 The role of "hostages" in business
- 5.1 The law of comparative advantage and trade between China and the United States
- 5.2 The cases for and against free trade
- 5.3 Bastiat's satirical case for free trade: "A petition"
- 5.4 Spam as a pollution problem
- 5.5 The downside and upside of capital mobility
- 6.1 Indifference curves and budget lines
- 6.2 Covering relocation costs of new hires
- 7.1 The last-period problem
- 7.2 The franchise decision
- 7.3 Cutting health care costs through medical savings accounts
- 8.1 Choosing the most efficient resource combination, isoquant and isocost curves
- 9.1 Contestable markets
- 10.1 Marginal revenue curve – a graphical derivation
- 10.2 The Microsoft monopoly
- 10.3 The "endowment effect" and pricing
- 11.1 The special case for regulating banking
- 11.2 Hostile takeover defenses
- 11.3 Antitrust laws in the United States
- 12.1 Incentives in the Irvine Company rental contracts

- 7.2 Firm size
- 7.3 Quasi-rent
- 7.4 Make-or-buy decisions
- 7.5 Franchising agreements
- 8.1 Firm cost structure
- 8.2 Long-run cost structure
- 8.3 Long-run production
- 8.4 CEO compensation
- 9.1 Production in perfect competition
- 10.1 Monopoly production
- 10.2 Inefficiency of monopolies
- 10.3 Price discrimination part 1
- 10.4 Price discrimination part 2
- 10.5 Monopoly profits and taxation
- 10.6 Public choice – rent seeking
- 10.7 Durable goods monopoly
- 11.1 Monopolistic competition
- 11.2 Price leadership
- 11.3 Cartels
- 11.4 Natural monopolies
- 12.1 Competitive labor markets
- 12.2 Monopsony labor markets
- 12.3 Labor economics
- 12.4 Two-part pay packages
- 12.5 Ten major lessons