

纽约时报袖珍MBA英语学习手册系列

POCKET
MBA
SERIES

管理与控制成本—— 成本管理的25个诀窍

TRACKING & CONTROLLING
COSTS
25 KEYS TO COST
MANAGEMENT

穆罕默德·侯赛因博士著

北京大学出版社

纽约时报袖珍MBA



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陈荣 译注

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前言

《纽约时报袖珍MBA英语学习手册》具有很强的实用性，适合各层次商业人士学习，无论是一线经理还是企业决策人士。本系列书的作者均为美国最好的商学院教授MBA课程的博士们，并由麦克·勒维塔斯等一组资深编辑运用其商业出版的专业知识为此系列配备了极有价值的参考资料。

本系列书的特点在于提供了快速学习顶尖MBA课程的参考要点，每本书以25个诀窍的形式对在企业管理专业领域中应用的关键性原理提供了无可比拟的综合表述。本系列书的独特方法是将学术著作变成易学易懂的读物，既可做英语培训教材，又是商业人士理想的MBA英语自学用书。为完成您的MBA学习，请一定买齐全套12本书。

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全套12本书包括：

- 分析财务报表—理解数字的25个诀窍
- 编制商业计划—制定正确商业计划的25个诀窍
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- 管理与控制成本—成本管理的25个诀窍
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- 管理投资策略—进行盈利资本投资的25个诀窍
- 国际化战略—进行跨国经营的25个诀窍
- 领导与远景—激励属下的25个诀窍
- 董事会—建立公司治理结构的25个诀窍

作者简介

穆罕默德·侯赛因博士：在康涅迪格大学教授本科生、MBA、EMBA和博士生课程。是荷兰马斯特里赫特大学欧洲研究所的康大项目主任。著有关于小企业会计和控制体系和如何在康州开办小企业方面的书籍。在《会计》、《组织与社会》、《审计：实践与理论》和《国际会计》等刊物发表过文章。

内容简介

学习成本管理的25个诀窍，了解财务报告和现金流量表如何成为决定企业成败的不可或缺的工具的原因。

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KEY 1

Strategic cost management

There are three main business objectives: make profits, beat the competition, and satisfy customers. It sounds simple, but to achieve the first two you must accomplish the third. Through a sophisticated understanding of the cost structure of the firm, information about those costs is used to develop strategies to produce the highest possible quality at the lowest cost, and, hence, gain a competitive advantage.

According to Shank and Govindarajan (1993), strategic cost management blends three themes: 1) Strategic positioning where a business competes either by having lower costs (cost leadership), or superior products (product differentiation); 2) Value chain analysis, which encompasses both an external focus (supply chain cost analysis and customer chain cost analysis) and an internal focus that extends beyond the manufacturing to include product development at one end and marketing at the other end. I'll get more into these later. 3) Cost drivers that go beyond the traditional thinking of

assuming that the amount of output is the driver of costs.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Firms following each of the two strategies would require different types of costing systems because their focus is different. A cost leader needs to maintain tight control over its costs and continually find ways to reduce them. On the other hand, a product differentiator would require a system that enables it to monitor the frequency and speed of introducing new products and also the efficiency of the product development process, product cycle costs, and marketing costs. It is important to note that a low-cost producer still has to maintain a minimum level of quality if it is to compete. Low cost does not mean cheap products. Customers demand value. On the other hand, customers will not buy inferior products at any price.

A firm that adopts a cost leadership strategy seeks to become the lowest-cost producer in its industry. The cost leader can set prices that enable it to take full advantage of its cost efficiencies. The critical advantage of a cost leadership strategy is that the leader can threaten competitors with a price war if they do not behave.

A cost leader requires information necessary to control as well as lower costs of products and/or processes. Activity-based costing systems are used to identify cost drivers and measure costs accurately. Operating budgets and continuous improvement techniques are used to control and reduce costs. Continuous improvement becomes a way of life. To lower its costs and avoid a price increase, Toyota redesigned the Camry to reduce its number of components and was able to offer it at the prior year price. Shank and Govindarajan (1993) recommend that a cost leader should emphasize the

importance of meeting budgets, the role of product cost as an input to pricing decisions, and the importance of competitors' cost analysis.

A firm following a differentiation strategy seeks to make customers perceive that its products are superior to its competitors' and willingly pay prices high enough to offset the cost of differentiation. Cooper (1994) noted that a sustainable competitive advantage of a differentiating strategy requires barriers to imitation, which is not always possible in the current competitive environment. The president of Codman & Shertleff, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson that specializes in surgical implements, lamented (Simon, 1987):

"In the past, we concentrated on producing superior quality goods, and the market was willing to pay whatever it took to get the best. But the environment has changed; the shift has been massive. We are trying to adapt to a situation where doctors and hospitals are under severe pressure to be more efficient and cost-effective."

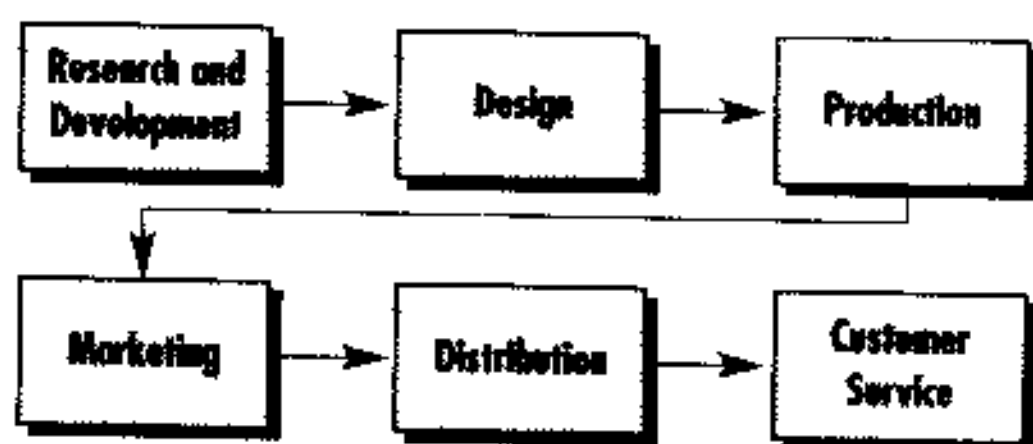
Reverse engineering and the fast reaction of lean enterprises to competitors' new products make competitive advantage temporary. To defend its position, a differentiating firm is forced to introduce new products quickly. But customers may not be ready to replace their equipment and they may not be willing to pay a premium. A good example is Intel's Pentium processor. The period between generations of chips is getting shorter; Intel is having a difficult time convincing the market of the need for the enhanced capabilities of its new chips and has to settle for lower prices (*Business Week*, March 22, 1999).

To meet the challenges of smaller volumes and lower prices, these firms need information to balance the need for R&D and control of R&D costs.

THE VALUE CHAIN

Porter (1985) coined the term the value chain to describe the set of value-creating activities from the extraction of raw materials to delivery of the final product to the customer. So the value chain extends beyond the boundaries of the firm to encompass its suppliers and distributors. For a firm to be competitive, it must have an efficient value chain. The recent success of Chrysler can be attributed to its ability to increase the efficiency of its internal and external value chains. The result is a decrease in the cost of developing a new model by 40 percent and a reduction in the time it takes to bring a new model to market from 234 weeks to 160 weeks (Dyer, 1996). The external components of the value chain will be discussed in Key 19.

The internal value chain extends from research and development to customer support (see chart). In the past, firms concentrated on controlling production cost because it represented the largest portion of its total cost. However, shorter product life cycles, product variety and demanding customers have increased the proportion of the costs of activities upstream and downstream from production.



For example, the shorter life cycle means that development costs have to be recovered over a smaller volume and results in a higher development cost per unit. The increase in extended warranties and channels of distribution (e.g., discount

clubs such as Sam's Club, discount outlets, specialty stores and mail-order retailers) have increased the marketing costs. For example, in a case about the Swedish firm Kanthal, Kaplan (1989) reported that its marketing expenses equal 34 percent of its total costs, while its manufacturing labor represented only 19 percent. A firm cannot afford to neglect the control of 34 percent of its costs! More importantly, Kanthal found that the 5 percent most profitable customers provided 150 percent of its profits and the 10 percent least profitable customers lost 120 percent of the profits. Controlling marketing and customer support costs is critical to profitability.

STRATEGIC COST DRIVERS

Traditional cost systems assume that costs are driven primarily by volume: the more you produce, the higher your costs. Volume drivers such as units of output, labor hours or machine hours are used to allocate indirect cost to products and services. This assumption is no longer valid. In modern complex firms that produce and sell a variety of products or services, there are many factors that drive costs. In many cases the relationship between costs and costs drivers may not be apparent, and in most cases the cost drivers are the result of long-term decisions. Shank and Govindarajan (1993) classify strategic cost drivers into two groups: structural and executional cost drivers. There are five structural cost drivers:

- 1** Scale is the size of investment in research and development, manufacturing, and marketing resources.
- 2** Scope is the level of vertical integration, which is when a firm performs activities required for the production of a product internally rather than outsourcing.

- 3** Experience is the number of times the firm has done the activity.
- 4** Technology is the process technologies used in each step in the firm's value chain.
- 5** Complexity is the variety of products or services offered by the firm.

The executional drivers include:

- ◆ Work force involvement in continuous improvement.
- ◆ Total quality management.
- ◆ Capacity utilization, given the scale investment.
- ◆ Plant layout efficiency.
- ◆ Product configuration. Is the design or formulation effective?
- ◆ Exploiting linkages with suppliers and customers.

Managing these cost drivers requires strategic long-term decisions. Shank and Govindarajan note that cost control would require minimizing structural drivers and maximizing executional drivers.

Traditional cost management systems are not capable of providing business managers with information necessary to manage efficiently in the current globally competitive environment. Strategic cost management that integrates strategic positioning, value chain analysis and strategic cost drivers is what is needed.

KEY 2

Understanding costs and cost behavior

A cost is simply the sacrifice or commitment of resources of an organization in exchange for a current or future benefit. Proper classification of costs is important for measuring, analyzing, communicating and controlling those costs. Costs can be classified in several different ways. Before we can classify costs, we have to identify the object whose cost we are classifying. The following are definitions of cost terms that help cost classification, measurement, communication and control:

Cost object: An item or activity for which separate cost measurement is desired (e.g. products, services, activities, departments, customers).

Cost is the monetary value of goods and services expended to obtain current or future benefits.

Capitalized costs are plant, equipment, trucks; expensed costs are cost of goods sold, marketing expenses, etc.

Expenses are either costs for which benefits expired in the current period (such as cost of goods sold), or costs whose benefits cannot be matched easily with the products or services of another period (such as advertising).

Cost driver: Any factor that affects costs. A change in the cost driver will cause a change in the total cost of a related cost object. Examples of cost drivers include units produced, labor hours, invoices processed.

Direct cost: Cost that can be traced to a specific cost object.

Indirect cost: Cost that cannot be traced to a specific cost object. Examples of indirect costs are utilities, repairs and maintenance. These costs are allocated to cost objects using cost-allocation methods. These are explained in Key 4.

COSTS IN MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS

Product costs are associated with manufacturing and include direct material costs, direct labor cost, and manufacturing overhead.

Direct materials + Direct labor = Prime costs

Direct labor + Manufacturing overhead =
Conversion costs

Period costs are costs treated as expenses in the period in which they are incurred because they cannot be associated with the manufacture of products. Selling and administrative expenses are period costs.

Production volume is the measure, such as number of units, of various products manufactured in a time period.