



The House Advantage: Playing the Odds to Win Big In Business

By Jeffrey Ma

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As part of the notorious MIT team depicted in Ben Mezrich's now classic *Bringing Down the House*, Jeff Ma used math and statistics to master the game of blackjack and reap handsome rewards at casinos. Years later, Ma has inspired not only a bestselling novel and hit movie, but has also started three different companies. *The House Advantage* reveals Ma's cutting-edge mathematical insights into the world of statistics and makes them applicable to a wide business audience. He argues that numbers are the key to analyzing nearly everything in the world of business, from how to spot and profit from global market inefficiencies to having multiple backup plans in anticipation of every probability. Ma's stories and business lessons are as intriguing as they are universally applicable.

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The House Advantage: Playing the Odds to Win Big In Business By Jeffrey Ma Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Ma, the math whiz and subject of Ben Mezrich's bestselling *Bringing Down the House*, turns his savvy to business. A former professional card counter on the MIT blackjack team, Ma used statistics to beat the game, and his enthusiasm for the power of data and for overcoming emotion to make the best decisions proves persuasive. Though his lessons aren't particularly new, his methods and thrilling stories of card counting in Vegas gives his book a compelling boost. He instructs leaders to recall that past performance, like a dealt blackjack hand, has an impact on the future; to avoid groupthink and a hot hand, or overconfidence, at all costs; and to prioritize what the data says. Even those who do not consider themselves math types can benefit from posing business issues as follows: a simple question helps focus a complex mathematical model and that complex mathematical model helps solve a very important business problem. It's a spirited—if simplified—approach to decision making. (*July*)

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Review

"Praise for *The House Advantage*: "

"From the minute I met Jeff Ma, I knew that my life was about to change; a mathematical genius who had turned Vegas upside down with a system that has since made him an international sensation, Jeff taught me more about money in a single neon-laced weekend than I could ever learn from a library full of CEO biographies. A perfect companion to *Bringing Down The House*, Jeff's book opens a window into a world where high-level statistics mingle with heart-pounding gambling tales. To put it simply- this is a business book like no other you've ever read before." - From the Foreword by Ben Mezrich, NY Times Bestselling author of "*Bringing Down The House*" and "*The Accidental Billionaires*"

"Few things like experiencing the ups-and-downs of beating the casinos at blackjack can better equip one to understand risk and reward in visceral and concrete way. "*The House Advantage*" is an efficient and enjoyable read that reflects Jeff's nuanced understanding about how to run the numbers in a real-world context. " - Nate Silver, Statistician and Founder of FiveThirtyEight.com "Jeffrey Ma has written a work of philosophy in the guise of a business book... "*The House Advantage*" is an urbane blend of human observation and math smarts, business sense and common sense." - William Poundstone, author of "*Priceless: The Myth of Fair Value (and How to Take Advantage of It)*" ""*The House Advantage*" sets the standard for explaining how the use of data and analysis is revolutionizing how businesses and sports teams will be successful in the future. Jeff uses his unique combination of theory and business savvy to illustrate this important trend in a way that is packed with entertaining stories and practical examples to get started. Sports and business executives ignore this ground-breaking book at their peril." - Daryl Morey, General Manager of the Houston Rockets"" "Read Jeff's book if you want to understand what analytics can do for your business. His gambling and sports analogies tie well to business themes and reveal sound analytical thinking. Going on your gut just doesn't cut it today." - Dr. Jim Goodnight, CEO of SAS "There's nobody else on earth who could have written this book." - Rob Neyer, ESPN.com "Since graduating from MIT, Jeff Ma has excelled in professions as diverse as card-player, options trader, and internet entrepreneur. His experiences make for an absorbing read about the indisputable role of statistics and objective analysis in the making of smarter business decisions. Jeff's story is compelling evidence as to why leaders in every field should believe in "*The House Advantage*." - Billy Beane, General Manager of the Oakland Athletics "Praise for Jeff Ma: " "Finding the statistical kernel that tells a truer story seems to be Ma's speciality" - Justin Berton, "*San Francisco Gate*" "So, who is Jeff Ma? He's a charming, intelligent guy who has gone through all of the ups and downs of the "*City of Sin*" and lived to tell his tale." - Brian Tallerico,

Deadbolt.com

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About the Author

Jeffrey Ma was a member of the MIT blackjack team, which utilized sophisticated card-counting strategies to beat casinos at blackjack worldwide in the mid-1990s, and was the basis for the main character of the book *Bringing Down the House* and the film *21*. He has been the technology lead for two internet startups and was an options trader on the Chicago Board of Options Exchange. He co-founded PROTRADE, a sports stock market website, and consults for professional sports teams including the Portland Trail Blazers and the San Francisco 49ers. He lives in San Francisco, CA.

Users Review

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Katie Mueller:

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