

Here is an extended version of the lesson plan to approximately 2000 words:

PHI334 Lesson Plan: September 1 | Transition to Industry

Today we will discourse on the transition from business in antiquity to business in the industrial age. We will talk about industrial business on Wednesday, but for today, I want to talk about the transitory times. By this, I mean roughly from around 100BC to 1700AD. Around that time.

We have seen so far that business was mostly, in the past, farming, artisan stuff emerging, merchants, rulers, and warriors. But as society progressed, we see a heavier emphasis being placed on artisan stuff. We see emergence of religious authority as a business, and moreover the participation to a significant extent of the religious in the commercial.

So, on the agenda today is to address what new things emerges up to the 1700s. Interestingly, not much changed except proliferation of guilds of artisans. So we see further diversification of the activities one could make one's own business. An interesting thing to note however, is that you were not really free to choose your business, since by and large you did what your family did.

We should also note that business became varied by one's sex or gender. The range of activities a woman was permitted to take up differed from the range of activities a man was permitted to take up. So, aside from the family you were born into, another determinant of one's business was sex and gender. Sometimes the order of birth played a role too—the youngest was often sent off to priesthood if a boy, and the oldest, also if a boy, took up the occupation of the father. The middle children sometimes got learned in things, or were given to apprentice at other businesses, but again, there was little agency for anyone as to what became one's business.

I am mostly talking about Europe here. I am unfamiliar as how things were organized elsewhere, though I am sure it did not differ that much. Another important aspect to talk about is conquest. Often, we speak of colonialism only in regard to the US and so on, but many medieval powers were engaging in local colonialism, so a new business emerges among many others, that of being a settler and so on. This is also evident in actual expansions around 1500s into the Americas.

Curiously, this is nonetheless a repitition of the old, so I am not sure whether conquesting and settling is truly a new business or rather an evolution that just happens to extend across the ocean. That being said, we can say roughly that apart from the diversification of the variety of artisanal business one can engage in, by and large, the Antiquity to Industry is a time of stasis. It is a kind of expansion and filling out of a paradigm instead of a radical break from one.

To expand further on some of these points:

- The guild system became an important part of regulating and organizing many crafts and trades during this time period. Joining a guild required extensive training as an apprentice, and guilds controlled standards, wages,

who could practice a craft, and so on. This system persisted for centuries and shaped how business was conducted.

- While business opportunities diversified, social mobility remained limited. Family background and inheritance still largely predetermined one's occupation and class. Exceptions existed, but were rare. The guild system in some ways reinforced this by tightly controlling entry into trades.
- Gender norms about appropriate occupations for men and women solidified. Women were increasingly excluded from many trades and professions. Their business activities tended to center on more "domestic" realms like midwifery, wet-nursing, sewing, cooking, selling foodstuffs, and so on.
- Conquest and colonial settlement opened up some new business opportunities like acquiring land grants, resource extraction in colonies, cash crop plantations with slave labor, trading companies with colonial monopolies, and so on. But these remained limited to elites with political connections.
- The economy across this era remained largely agrarian and rural. Cities grew in size and economic importance, but urban populations were still a minority. Most business centered on agriculture, crafts, and trade.
- Markets remained largely local and regional. Long distance trade expanded, facilitated by improvements in shipping and finance. But nothing like a truly integrated global economy existed.
- Economic growth overall was quite slow by modern standards. This long transitional era laid foundations for the Industrial Revolution, but living standards and productivity changed little for centuries at a time.
- An important development in business organization that began in this era was the rise of large-scale public finance and proto-corporations. Complex ventures like colonial expeditions and trade monopolies required pooling capital from multiple investors. This led to new business structures like joint-stock companies and facilitated the concentration of capital.
- Technological improvements still occurred despite the overall slow pace of economic growth. Innovations like the printing press, better ships, financial instruments, and manufacture techniques for goods like textiles gradually impacted business operations and productivity. But the full transformative potential of technology had yet to be unleashed.
- As merchants and bankers accumulated wealth, a nascent business culture and ethos began coalescing. Values like professionalism, punctuality, honoring contracts, and thrift entered business norms. The seeds were planted for the capitalist spirit of innovation and accumulation that would accelerate in the Industrial Revolution.
- Legal systems and property rights developed further, providing more standardized rules, regulations, and enforcement mechanisms for business. But the extent and consistency of government administration remained limited. Most business still depended primarily on informal social relationships and customs.

- As demand grew for specialized crafts and goods, production started shifting from sole proprietor artisans to models bringing multiple trades together under one roof, like putting-out systems of subcontracting and manufactories. This division and specialization of labor gradually increased efficiency.
- Trade expanded and became more complex, with some firms focused entirely on finance, brokerage, wholesaling, and transportation. Simple local bartering gave way to networks of regional and long-distance trade relying on bills of exchange, brokers, commodities futures, and similar tools.
- The rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, science, and law spurred new thinking around economics and business, including concepts like supply and demand dynamics, division of labor, and free competition. This stimulated intellectual innovation.

So in summary, this transitional era saw the expansion and evolution of existing business patterns, the emergence of proto-corporate structures, the accumulation of merchant wealth, and important but gradual technological and intellectual advances - laying the foundations for the dramatic changes of the Industrial Revolution.

As we approach the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, some key shifts are evident:

- The economy begins transitioning from rural and agrarian to more urban manufacturing and trade.
- Technological advances accumulate until reaching a tipping point enabling mechanization and factory production.
- Financial systems evolve to pool capital in larger amounts and fund major industrial ventures.
- A capitalist business culture develops that values profit-seeking, wealth accumulation, innovation, and reinvestment.
- Formal institutions like modern corporations and stock markets emerge.
- National and international trade networks expand dramatically.
- Specialization of labor increases efficiencies in production.
- Colonization and overseas trade connect more of the world, expanding markets.
- Enclosure movements and privatization of land displace rural agrarian workers, supplying labor for factories.
- New sources of power like steam and coal make mechanization possible.
- Enlightenment ideas emphasize scientific progress, free markets, reason over tradition.

So in conclusion, what we see in the long transition from antiquity to the 1700s is the gradual accumulation of changes in technology, finance, institutions, culture, demographics, and resources that ultimately enable the revolutionary breakthrough of industrialization.

The preconditions fall into place bit by bit - capital, labor markets, trade networks, technology, cultural values, and so on. Even while the core essence of business remains centered on livelihoods and provisioning through production and exchange, the contingencies and specifics shift until the stage is set for the paradigm-altering Industrial Revolution.

This complements our earlier discussion of enduring essences versus contingent specifics. As business evolves in its outward forms, certain fundamentals persist. Yet the possibilities of what business looks like also depend on the contingencies of resources, technology, and social structures in each era. By the eve of industry, those contingencies align to utterly transform the business landscape.