Course Companion

IGCSE Business Studies

Every topic handout in one volume

全部专题讲义合集

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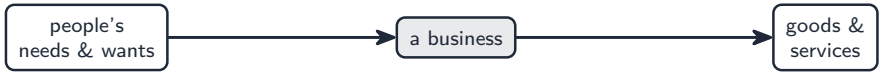
Understanding business activity

IGCSE Business Studies

What business activity is for



Shops competing on a high street: businesses make goods and services to meet people's wants.



Businesses make goods and services to meet people's needs and wants

A **business** 企业 is an organisation that makes **goods** 商品 or provides **services** 服务 for **customers** 顾客.

- Goods are physical things you can touch – bread, phones, cars.
- Services are useful actions done for you – a haircut, a bus ride, a doctor's visit.

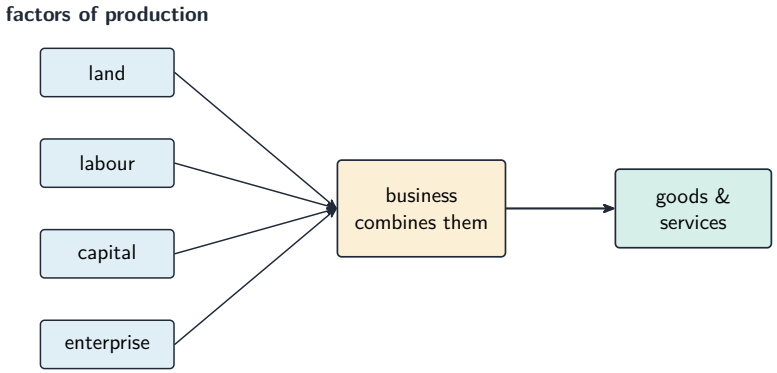
The purpose of business activity is to use **resources** 资源 to make goods and services, so that people's **needs** 需要 and **wants** 欲望 are met.

- Needs are things you must have to live: food, water, shelter, clothes.
- Wants are things you would like but can live without: a holiday, a games console.

Factors of production

To produce anything, a business brings together four **factors of production** 生产要素 – the resources needed to make goods and services.

Factor	What it means	Example
land 土地	natural resources	farmland, water, oil, minerals
labour 劳动力	the work of people	workers, managers
capital 资本	money and the man-made tools bought with it	machines, factories, vehicles
enterprise 企业家才能	the skill to bring the other three together and take risks	the owner's idea and effort



The four factors of production are combined to make goods and services

The economic problem

People's needs and wants are unlimited. But resources are **scarce** 稀缺 – there are not enough of them for everything. This is the **economic problem** 经济问题.

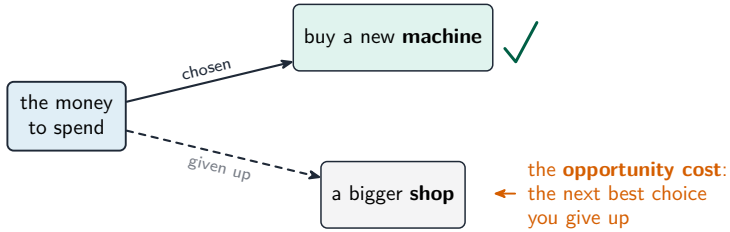
Because resources are scarce, you must always choose. You cannot have everything.

Opportunity cost

When you choose one thing, you give up the next best thing. The **opportunity cost** 机会成本 is the next best choice you give up.

Example: a business has some money and spends it on a new machine. Now it cannot also spend that money on a bigger shop. The bigger shop is the opportunity cost.

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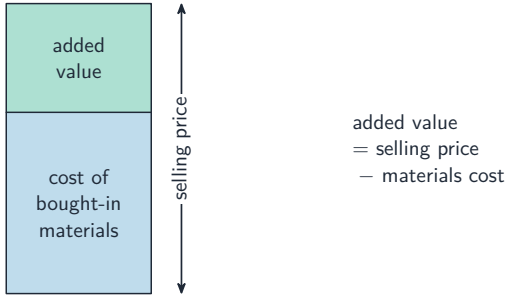


The opportunity cost is the next best choice you give up

Added value

Added value 增值 is the difference between the price a business sells a product for and the cost of the **raw materials** 原材料 bought in to make it.

$$\text{added value} = \text{selling price} - \text{cost of bought-in materials}$$



Added value is the selling price minus the cost of bought-in materials

A business can increase added value by:

- raising the price, often through a strong **brand** 品牌 or better design,
- lowering the cost of materials, for example by finding cheaper suppliers,
- improving the product so customers will pay more.

> **Worked example.** A furniture maker buys the wood and fabric for a chair for £40 and sells the chair for £110. The factory rent is £6,000 a month. Find the added value per chair.

$$\text{added value} = £110 - £40 = £70$$

The rent is a deliberate distractor. Added value counts **only** the cost of the bought-in materials, so rent, wages and other running costs stay out of it - they matter for

profit, not for added value. Subtract only what was bought in to make the product, and never treat added value as if it were profit.

Why businesses succeed or fail

A business is more likely to succeed when it has:

- good **management** 管理 – skilled leaders who plan well,
- enough **finance** 资金 – money to pay bills while it grows,
- a product customers want, and an edge over the **competition** 竞争 (the other businesses selling similar things).

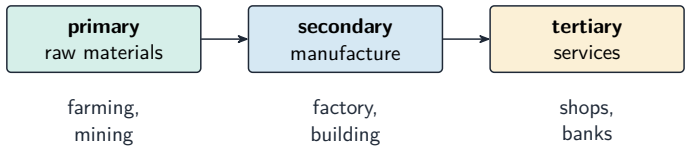
A business may fail and close down when it runs out of cash, manages money badly, or cannot compete. Weak management and poor cash control are the most common causes.

Classifying businesses

The three sectors

We sort all business activity into three groups, by how far the work is from the final customer.

Sector	What it does	Examples
primary sector 第一产业	takes natural resources from the earth	farming, fishing, mining, oil drilling
secondary sector 第二产业	makes goods from raw materials	building, **manufacturing** 制造业, food processing
tertiary sector 第三产业	provides services	shops, banks, transport, tourism



Business activity runs from the primary sector through to the tertiary sector

How the sectors change

The importance of each sector changes as a country grows richer.

- In a **developing economy** 发展中经济体 (a poorer country building up its industry), the primary sector is often large – many people farm.
- As the country grows, the secondary sector grows too.

- In a **developed economy** 发达经济体 (a rich, industrialised country), most people work in the tertiary sector.

De-industrialisation 去工业化 is when the secondary sector shrinks and the tertiary sector grows. This has happened in many developed economies as factories move abroad.

Private sector and public sector

The **private sector** 私营部门 is made up of businesses owned by private people and groups. Most aim to make a **profit** 利润. The **public sector** 公共部门 is made up of organisations owned by the government, which aim to provide a service to the public.

	Private sector	Public sector
Owner	private people and companies	the government
Main aim	usually profit	provide services to everyone
Examples	shops, factories, private firms	state schools, public hospitals, the army

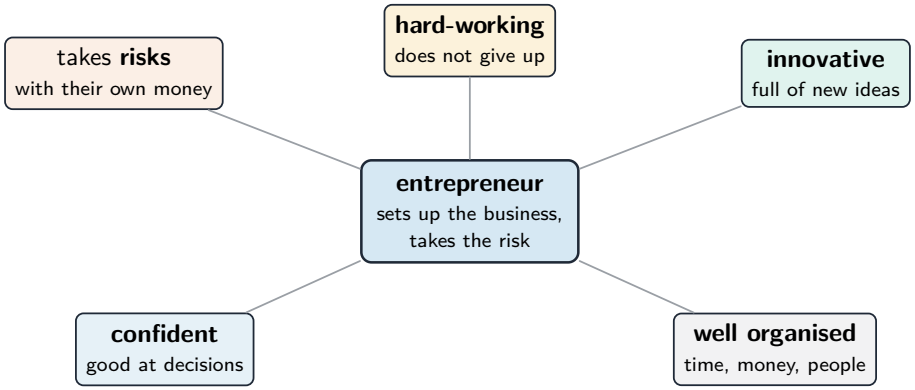
Enterprise, business growth and size

The entrepreneur

An **entrepreneur** 企业家 is a person who sets up a business and takes the risk of running it. Successful entrepreneurs usually:

- are willing to take **risk** 风险 – to risk their own money on a new idea,
- work hard and do not give up,
- are **innovative** 创新 – full of new ideas,
- are confident and good at making decisions,
- are well organised, able to manage time, money and people.

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What successful entrepreneurs are usually like

The business plan

A **business plan** 商业计划书 is a document that describes the business and its future. It usually contains the business idea and objectives, the product, the **market** 市场 it will sell to, who will run it, and a plan for the money.

A business plan has two main uses:

- it makes the owner think carefully and plan ahead,
- it helps the business **raise finance** 筹集资金 – banks and investors want to see a plan before they lend or invest.

Government support for start-ups

A **start-up** 初创企业 is a brand-new business. New businesses create jobs and help the economy grow, so governments often support them with:

- **grants** 补助金 – money given that does not have to be paid back,
- low-interest **loans** 贷款 – money lent on easy terms,
- training and advice for new owners,
- lower taxes in the first years.

Measuring the size of a business

You can measure how big a business is in several ways. Each one has a weakness.

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Measure	How it works	Limitation
number of **employees** 员工	count the staff	a high-tech firm can have few staff but large **output** 产量
revenue 收入 (sales)	the value of everything sold	a firm selling cheap goods may sell a lot yet be small
capital employed 所用资本	the total money invested in the business	hard to compare between different industries

Worked example. Firm A is a software company with 40 employees, revenue of $12 million and capital employed of $3 million. Firm B is a supermarket chain with 600 employees, revenue of $9 million and capital employed of $20 million. Which business is bigger? By **employees** and by **capital employed**, Firm B is bigger; by **revenue**, Firm A is bigger. The answer depends on the measure: software needs few workers and little equipment, while supermarkets need many staff and many buildings. So it is best to use more than one measure, and to compare firms in the **same** industry.

Profit is not a measure of size: a small business can make a larger profit than a big one.

Staying small or growing

Some businesses stay small on purpose: the owner wants to keep control, the market is small, or the product is specialised.

Businesses that want to grow bigger – to achieve **growth** 增长 – can do it in two ways.

- **Internal growth** 内部增长 (also called organic growth): the business grows by itself, by selling more, opening new branches, or adding new products. It is slower but lower-risk.
- **External growth** 外部增长: the business joins with another business. This is faster. It happens through a **merger** 合并 (two businesses agree to join into one) or a **takeover** 收购 (one business buys control of another).

External growth is classified by the kind of business that is joined.

Type	What joins	Example
horizontal integration 横向一体化	two firms at the same stage of the same business	two car makers join
vertical integration 纵向一体化	two firms at different stages of the same business	a car maker buys a tyre maker
conglomerate integration 混合一体化	two firms in completely different businesses	a car maker buys a food company

Vertical integration can go in two directions. **Backward** vertical integration means buying a supplier (a business at an earlier stage); **forward** vertical integration means buying a business at a later stage, closer to the customer.

> **Worked example.** A bakery chain takes over the flour mill that supplies it. Identify the type of integration and explain one benefit and one drawback for the bakery. This is **backward vertical integration**: the bakery has joined with a business at an earlier stage of the same industry. **Benefit:** the bakery is sure of its flour supply, and it no longer pays the mill's profit, so its costs may fall. **Drawback:** running a flour mill needs different skills, so the bakery's managers may run it badly; and if a cheaper supplier appears, the bakery is tied to its own mill.

Mergers and takeovers can also cause problems: the two businesses may have different ways of working (different **cultures**), workers may lose their jobs, and the bigger firm may suffer diseconomies of scale.

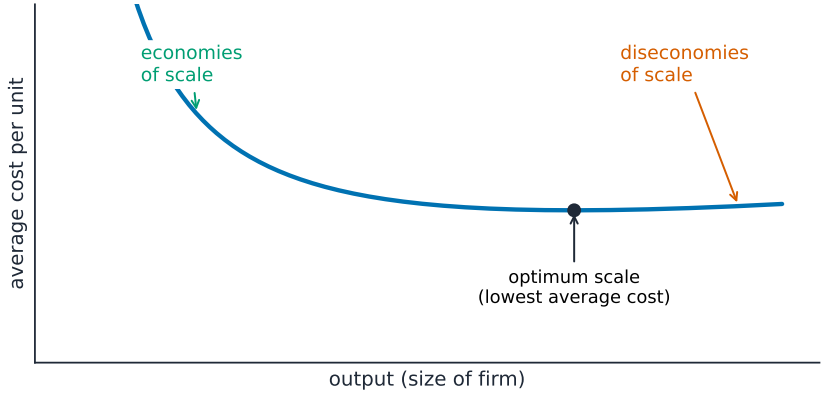
■ Economies and diseconomies of scale

As a business grows, its cost per unit can fall. These savings are called **economies of scale** 规模经济.

Type	How the cost per unit falls
purchasing	buying large amounts of materials brings a lower price
financial	large firms can borrow money more cheaply
managerial	the firm can afford expert managers
technical	the firm can use large, efficient machines
marketing 营销	the cost of **advertising** 广告 is spread over more goods

If a business grows too big, the cost per unit can start to rise again. These are **diseconomies of scale** 规模不经济. They happen because **communication** 沟通 in a huge firm gets worse, workers feel less important and work less hard, and managers find the firm hard to control.

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LRAC: economies → min AC → diseconomies

Average cost per unit falls (economies of scale) then rises (diseconomies of scale) as a firm grows

Types of business organisation



A company headquarters: businesses range from sole traders to giant public limited companies.

Liability

Liability 责任 means who must pay the **debts** 债务 if a business cannot pay them itself.

- With **unlimited liability** 无限责任, the owner is personally responsible for all the debts. If the business fails, the owner may lose personal things, like a house or car, to pay them.
- With **limited liability** 有限责任, the owner can only lose the money they put into the business. Their personal things are safe.

Incorporated and unincorporated

- An **incorporated** 法人 business has a separate legal identity from its owners. The business itself can own things and be taken to court. Its owners get limited liability. Companies are incorporated.
- An **unincorporated** 非法人 business is not separate from its owner in law. Sole traders and partnerships are unincorporated.

The four main types

A **sole trader** 独资企业 is a business owned by one person.

Advantages	Disadvantages
easy and cheap to set up	unlimited liability
the owner keeps all the profit	hard to raise finance
the owner makes all decisions	long hours, no one to share the work
private (accounts stay secret)	the business ends if the owner stops

A **partnership** 合伙企业 is owned by two or more people who share the work, the decisions and the profit. They usually sign a written agreement.

Advantages	Disadvantages
more owners bring more capital	unlimited liability (in most cases)
work and ideas are shared	the profit is shared
easy to set up	partners can disagree
	one partner's mistake affects everyone

A **private limited company** 私人有限公司 (often "Ltd") is owned by **shareholders** 股东, but its shares cannot be sold to the public. The owners are often family and friends.

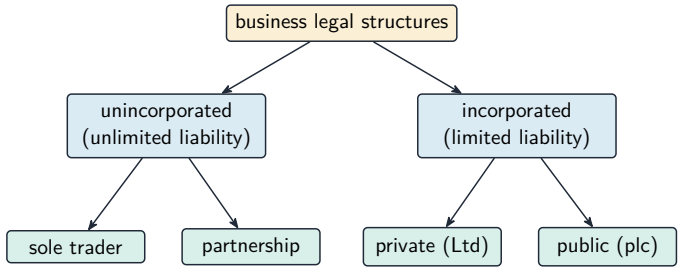
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Advantages	Disadvantages
limited liability	more legal rules and paperwork
easier to raise capital than a sole trader	shares cannot be sold to the public
control stays in a small group	accounts must be shared with the government

A **public limited company** 公众有限公司 (often "plc") is a large company whose **shares** 股份 can be bought by the public on the **stock exchange** 证券交易所.

Advantages	Disadvantages
can raise very large amounts of capital	expensive and complex to set up
limited liability	accounts are fully public
well known, so easy to borrow	anyone can buy shares, so there is a risk of takeover
	the original owners may lose control

Shareholders may receive a share of the profit, called a **dividend** 股息.



Business types split by liability: unincorporated (unlimited) and incorporated (limited)

Worked example. Maria is a sole trader who runs a successful café. She wants $80,000 to open a second café, but her bank will lend only $30,000. Her friend Tom will invest $50,000 if he becomes an owner. Should Maria form a partnership with Tom or a private limited company? Both give Maria the extra $50,000, and Tom shares the work and brings ideas. In a **partnership**, both have **unlimited liability**: if the second café fails, both could lose personal possessions, and Maria is also responsible for Tom's decisions. In a **private limited company**, Maria and Tom are shareholders with **limited liability**, so their personal possessions are safe, but there are more legal rules, and the accounts must be sent to the government. Because opening a second café is risky and needs a large sum, a private limited company is the better choice: the protection of limited liability is worth the extra paperwork. Maria should keep more than half of the shares so that she keeps control.

Other forms of organisation

- **Franchise** 特许经营: a person (the **franchisee** 加盟商) pays to use the name, products and methods of an existing successful business (the **franchisor** 授权商). The franchisee gets a known brand, training and lower risk, but must pay fees and a share of the profit and has less freedom. Many fast-food chains work this way.
- **Joint venture** 合资企业: two businesses agree to share the cost, risk and profit of one project, while staying separate companies.
- **Social enterprise** 社会企业: a business that trades to help society or the environment, not only to make profit. Most of its profit is put back into its social aims.

Public sector organisation

A **public corporation** 国有企业 is a business owned and run by the government, such as a national rail or postal service. Its aims include giving an important service to everyone, not only making a profit.

Business objectives and stakeholder objectives

Business objectives

An **objective** 目标 is a goal that a business aims for. Common objectives are:

- **survival** 生存 – staying in business, especially when new or in hard times,
- profit – earning more than it spends; the main aim of most private firms (a business that aims for a **target level of profit** may accept less than the most possible profit to keep customers happy),
- growth – getting bigger, to be safer and earn more,
- **market share** 市场份额 – the share of total sales in a market that one business holds,
- **customer service** 顾客服务 – keeping customers happy so they come back,

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- social objectives – helping society or the **environment** 环境.

Objectives **change** as a business develops. A new business usually aims to **survive**; once it is established it may aim for **growth** and **market share**; in a recession, survival can become the main aim again. Public sector organisations aim mainly to provide a **service** to everyone, and charities and social enterprises aim to help people, not to make the most profit.

Objectives of a social enterprise

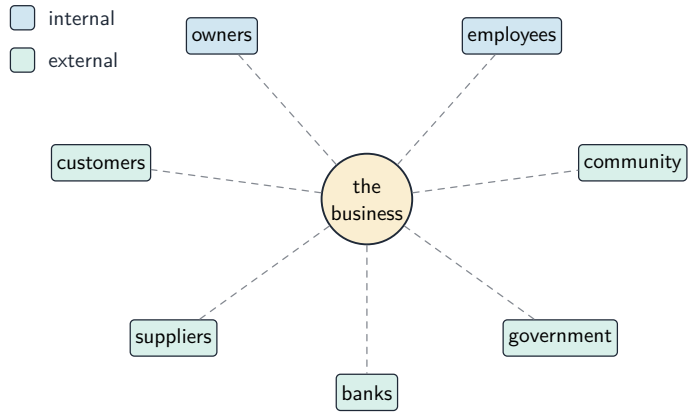
A social enterprise aims for three kinds of objective together:

- economic – earn enough money to survive and grow,
- social – help people, for example by giving jobs to those who find work hard to get,
- environmental – protect the planet, for example by cutting waste.

Stakeholders

A **stakeholder** 利益相关者 is any person or group that is affected by a business or has an interest in it.

Stakeholder	What they usually want
owners / shareholders	good profit and a rising dividend
employees	fair pay, safe work, secure jobs
customers	good quality at a fair price
suppliers 供应商	to be paid on time, and regular orders
government	businesses to obey laws and pay **tax** 税收
local community 当地社区	jobs, but no pollution or noise
banks	to be repaid the money they lent



Internal and external stakeholders all have an interest in the business

Why stakeholder objectives conflict

Stakeholders often want different things, so their objectives can **conflict** 冲突. A business cannot fully please everyone at once.

- Owners want higher profit, but employees want higher pay. Higher pay lowers profit.
- Owners want to cut costs, but the local community wants less **pollution** 污染. Cutting costs may create more pollution.
- Customers want low prices, but suppliers want to be paid more.

Good managers try to balance these different objectives.

> **Worked example.** A chemical company plans to build a larger factory on the edge of a town. Explain how this decision might affect two stakeholder groups, and whether their objectives conflict.

- **Local community:** the factory will create jobs for local people, and local shops will gain customers. But there will be more traffic, noise and possibly pollution, so residents may protest.
- **Shareholders:** a larger factory should raise output and profit, so dividends may rise. But it is expensive to build, so dividends may fall for a few years.

The objectives conflict: shareholders want the **cheapest** factory, while the community wants the **cleanest** and quietest one, which costs more. The company could reduce the conflict by investing in pollution control and by hiring local people, which costs more now but may avoid protests and fines later.

Exam tips

- **Added value** = selling price − cost of bought-in materials. A business raises it with a strong brand, better design, or cheaper materials.
- Know the three sectors: **primary** (extracts raw materials), **secondary** (makes goods), **tertiary** (services). As a country develops, employment shifts from primary towards tertiary.
- **Unlimited liability** (sole traders, partnerships) puts the owner's personal things at risk; **limited liability** (Ltd, plc) limits any loss to the money invested.
- A **stakeholder** is anyone affected by the business, and their objectives often **conflict** – owners want profit, workers want higher pay, the community wants less pollution.
- **Economies of scale** cut the cost per unit as a firm grows; growing *too* big brings diseconomies of scale (cost per unit rises).

Vocabulary card meanings

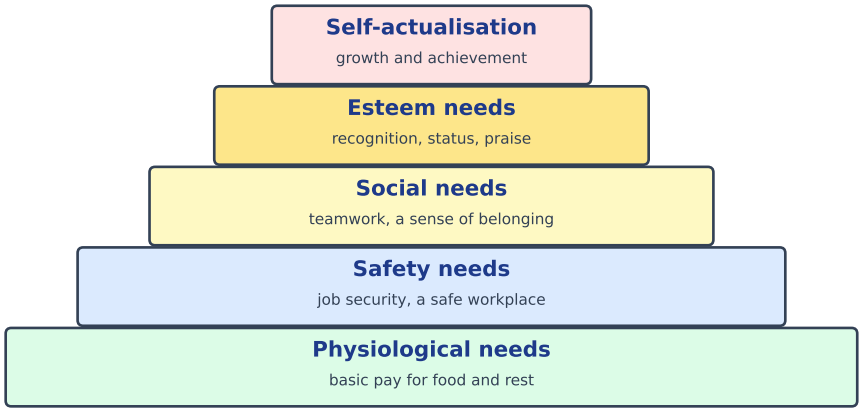
needs: Things required for living, such as food and shelter, kept separate from things people only desire. developing economy: A country whose income and industry are still growing from a lower base. developed economy: A country with high income and established industry. de-industrialisation: A fall in manufacturing's share of employment, of output, or of both. innovative: Introducing new ideas, products, or methods. raise finance: To obtain the money a business needs. loans: Sums borrowed and later repaid, usually with an extra charge. output: The quantity produced in a given period. horizontal integration: Joining with a firm at the same stage of making or selling. vertical integration: Joining with a firm at an earlier or later stage of the same chain. conglomerate integration: Joining with a firm in an unrelated line of business. advertising: Paid messages that promote a product to possible buyers. liability: The legal duty to meet debts or to pay for harm. incorporated: Set up as a company with its own legal identity. unincorporated: Run without a separate legal identity from the owners. franchise: A right to trade under another firm's name and system. franchisee: The person who buys the right to use a firm's name and system. franchisor: The firm that sells others the right to use its name and system.

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People in business

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Why motivation matters



lower needs first; workplaces motivate by matching rewards to the level

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, with workplace examples at each level.



Motivated workers work harder, raising output

Motivation 激励 is the drive that makes people want to work hard. A well-motivated **workforce** 员工队伍 – all the **employees** 员工 in a business – brings real benefits:

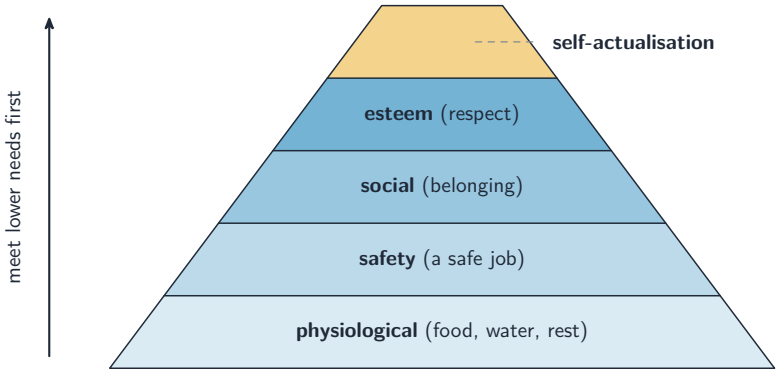
- higher **productivity** 生产率 – each worker produces more,
- lower **absenteeism** 缺勤 – fewer workers stay away from work,
- lower **labour turnover** 员工流动率 – fewer workers leave, so the business spends less time and money hiring and training new staff.

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Motivation theories

Three thinkers explain what makes workers work hard.

Thinker	Main idea
Taylor	Workers are mainly motivated by pay. Pay them more for more work (piece rate) and they work harder.
Maslow	People have a **hierarchy of needs** 需求层次: five levels, from basic pay and safety up to respect and reaching your full potential. You must meet the lower needs before the higher ones can motivate.
Herzberg	Two groups of factors. **Hygiene factors** 保健因素 (pay, conditions, rules) do not motivate, but poor ones cause unhappiness. **Motivators** 激励因素 (achievement and responsibility) truly drive people to work harder.



Maslow's hierarchy: people meet lower needs before higher ones

> **Worked example.** A call centre pays its staff well, but many leave within a year. Staff say the work is boring and repeated, and they are never asked for ideas. Use Herzberg's theory to explain the problem and recommend **two** ways to reduce labour turnover.

Pay is a **hygiene factor**: good pay stops staff being unhappy about money, but it does not motivate them. The call centre lacks **motivators** – the work gives no sense of achievement or responsibility, so staff leave. Two recommendations:

- **job enrichment** – give experienced staff harder tasks, such as handling complaints or training new staff, which brings responsibility and achievement;
- **teamworking** with regular meetings where staff suggest improvements, so they feel their ideas are valued (in Maslow's terms, this meets **esteem** needs).

Either costs little compared with recruiting and training replacements, so the business

should do both. A good answer names the theory, links it to the evidence in the case, and judges which method suits this business.

Financial methods of motivation

These reward workers with money.

Method	What it means
wage 工资	regular pay, often by the hour or week
time rate 计时工资	pay for each hour worked
piece rate 计件工资	pay for each item made
salary 薪金	a fixed yearly amount, paid monthly
commission 佣金	pay based on how much you sell
bonus 奖金	an extra payment for good work
profit sharing 利润分享	workers get a share of the company's profit
fringe benefits 额外福利	extras like a company car, free meals or health care

Worked example. A factory pays a piece rate of £3 per item. Anya makes 210 items in a week. Ben is on a time rate of £12 per hour for a 40-hour week. Who earns more, and what risk does the piece rate carry? Anya earns 210 × £3 = **£630**. Ben earns 40 × £12 = **£480**, so Anya earns £150 more. But paying for each item made tempts workers to rush, so **quality** may fall and more items are rejected - which is why a piece rate usually has to be paired with quality checks. Show the calculation, then judge it: a question that asks who earns more **and** for an evaluation gives marks for the number and for the drawback.

Non-financial methods of motivation

These motivate without extra money.

- **job rotation** 工作轮换 – workers switch between different tasks, so work is less boring.
- **job enlargement** 工作扩大化 – adding more tasks at the same level.
- **job enrichment** 工作丰富化 – giving more challenging tasks and more responsibility.
- **autonomy** 自主权 – letting workers make some of their own decisions.
- **teamworking** 团队合作 – working in small groups.
- **training** 培训 and chances for **promotion** 晋升 – helping workers improve and move up.

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Organisation and management



Managers organise and lead the workforce so the business meets its objectives.

Organisational charts

An **organisational chart** 组织结构图 is a diagram that shows how a business is organised – who reports to whom. It shows several ideas:

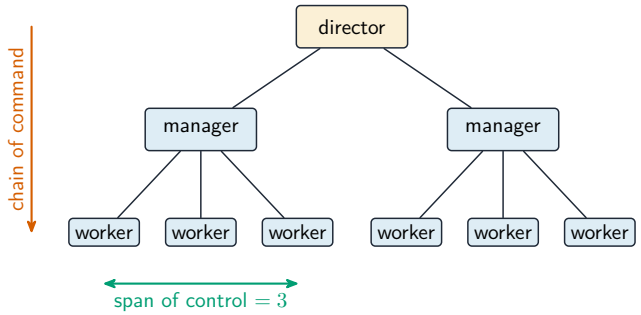
- **hierarchy** 层级 – the levels of staff, from the top down.
- **chain of command** 指挥链 – the line along which orders pass down from managers to workers.
- **span of control** 管理幅度 – the number of **subordinates** 下属 (people directly below) that one manager controls.
- **delayering** 扁平化 – removing one or more levels to cut costs and speed up messages.

A long chain of command (a "tall" structure) slows messages down. A wide span of control gives one manager many people to watch.

Worked example. A business has a managing director, 2 regional managers, 8 store managers (4 under each regional manager) and 80 shop workers (10 in each store). (a) What is the span of control of a store manager? (b) How many levels are in the hierarchy? (c) The business removes the regional managers. Give one advantage and one disadvantage.

(a) **10**: each store manager controls 10 shop workers. (b) **4** levels: director, regional managers, store managers, shop workers. (c) This is **delayering**. Advantage: messages from the director reach the stores faster, and two managers' salaries are saved. Disadvantage: the director's span of control rises from 2 to 8, so each store gets less

attention and support.



An organisation chart shows the chain of command and each manager's span of control

Functions of management

The five main jobs (functions) of **management** 管理 are:

- **planning** 计划 – setting aims and deciding how to reach them,
- **organising** 组织 – arranging people and resources,
- **coordinating** 协调 – making different parts work together,
- **commanding** 指挥 – giving instructions and guiding staff,
- **controlling** 控制 – checking that targets are met.

Leadership styles

A **leadership style** 领导风格 is the way a manager leads people.

Style	How it works	Best when
autocratic 专制型	the leader decides alone and gives orders	a crisis, or with new and untrained staff
democratic 民主型	the leader asks staff for ideas before deciding	staff are skilled and want a say
laissez-faire 放任型	the leader sets goals, then lets staff work freely	creative, expert teams

Trade unions

A **trade union** 工会 is a group of workers who join together to protect their shared interests. A union can bargain for better pay and conditions, support a worker in a dispute, and push for safer work.

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Recruitment, selection and training

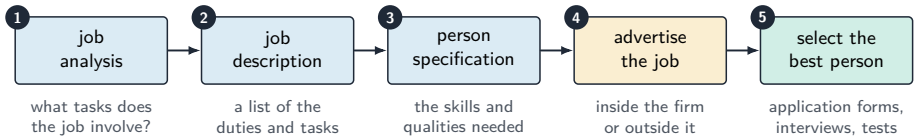


A business must recruit, train and motivate enough people with the right skills.

The recruitment process

Recruitment 招聘 is finding and attracting people to apply for a job. **Selection** 选拔 is choosing the best person from those who apply. The process starts with three documents:

- **job analysis** 工作分析 – studying what the job involves,
- **job description** 工作描述 – a list of the duties and tasks of the job,
- **person specification** 人员规格 – the skills, qualities and qualifications the right person needs.



The steps of recruitment and selection, from analysing the job to choosing the best person

Internal and external recruitment

- **Internal recruitment** 内部招聘 fills the job with someone already in the business. It is cheaper and quicker, and the person is already known, but it brings in no new ideas.
- **External recruitment** 外部招聘 fills the job from outside. It brings new ideas and skills, but it costs more and takes longer.

> **Worked example.** A small bakery needs a new head baker, and one of its own bakers has worked there for six years. Should it recruit internally or externally? **Internally**: the baker already knows the recipes, the equipment and the customers, so no induction is needed, recruitment is cheap, and the promotion motivates the other staff, who see a chance to move up. External recruitment would be better only if no one inside has the skills, or if the bakery wants new products and fresh ideas. The bakery must then fill the baker's old job, which is usually easier to recruit for.

Common selection methods include the **application form** 申请表, the **CV** 简历 (a short summary of a person's education and work history), the **interview** 面试, and skills **tests** 测试.

Training

Training improves workers' skills. There are three main types.

- **induction training** 入职培训 – given to new workers, to learn about the business and their role.
- **on-the-job training** 在职培训 – learning while doing the job, beside an experienced worker.
- **off-the-job training** 脱产培训 – learning away from the workplace, for example at a college.

Type	Benefits	Limitations
on-the-job	cheap; uses real tasks	the trainer stops their own work; bad habits can pass on
off-the-job	expert teaching; no work distractions	costs more; the skills may not fit the exact job

Reducing the workforce

Sometimes a business must cut staff numbers.

- **Redundancy** 裁员 – the job is no longer needed, for example because a machine now does it. It is not the worker's fault.
- **Dismissal** 解雇 – the worker is removed for a good reason, such as breaking rules or poor work.

Most countries have **employment laws** 劳动法 that protect workers. They cover a fair **contract of employment** 雇佣合同, safe conditions, fair pay, and protection from being sacked unfairly.

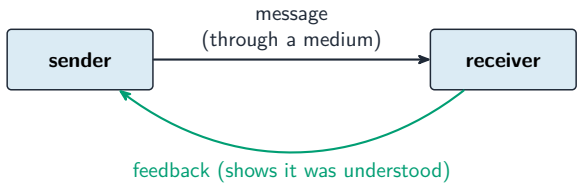
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Communication

Why communication matters

Good **communication** 沟通 means information is sent, received and understood correctly. It helps workers know what to do, cuts mistakes, and makes people feel valued.

The communication process has five parts: a **sender** 发送者, a **message** 信息, a **medium** 媒介 (the way it is sent), a **receiver** 接收者, and **feedback** 反馈 (the receiver's reply, which shows the message was understood).



The message flows from sender to receiver, and feedback confirms it was understood

Types of communication

- **One-way communication** 单向沟通 – information flows in one direction only, with no reply (for example, a public notice).
- **Two-way communication** 双向沟通 – the receiver can reply and give feedback. It is usually better, because it checks understanding.
- **Internal communication** 内部沟通 – between people inside the business.
- **External communication** 外部沟通 – between the business and outside people, like **customers** 顾客 or **suppliers** 供应商.

Barriers to communication

A **communication barrier** 沟通障碍 is anything that stops a message getting through clearly. Common barriers include:

- a message that is too long or unclear,
- a poor medium, such as a weak phone line,
- language differences between sender and receiver,
- a receiver who is not paying attention.

To reduce barriers: keep messages short and clear, choose the right medium, and ask for feedback to check the message was understood.

Exam tips

- Link motivation to its benefits: higher **productivity**, lower **absenteeism**, and lower **labour turnover**.
- Match each theory: **Taylor** (pay / piece rate), **Maslow** (a hierarchy of needs – lower needs before higher), **Herzberg** (hygiene factors stop unhappiness; motivators drive real effort).
- Separate **financial** methods (wage, piece rate, salary, commission, bonus) from **non-financial** ones (job rotation, job enlargement, job enrichment, autonomy).
- On an organisation chart, know the **chain of command** (the line orders travel down) and the **span of control** (how many people report to one manager).
- Distinguish **redundancy** (the job is no longer needed – not the worker's fault) from **dismissal** (the worker is removed for a reason such as breaking rules).

Vocabulary card meanings

workforce: All the people employed by an organisation. absenteeism: Staff being away from work when they were expected to attend. labour turnover: The share of the workforce that leaves during a period, whether or not the jobs are filled again. hierarchy of needs: A ranking of human requirements from basic survival up to personal growth. promotion: A move to a more senior job in the same organisation. internal recruitment: Filling a vacancy with someone who already works there. external recruitment: Filling a vacancy with someone from outside the organisation. application form: The official sheet a candidate completes when seeking a job. CV: A summary of education and work history sent to an employer. tests: Tasks used to check what a job applicant can do. dismissal: Ending a person's job, usually because of conduct or capability. employment laws: Statutes that set rights and duties of employers and staff. contract of employment: The agreement that states pay, hours, and duties for a job. sender: The person who starts a message. message: The information a sender wants another person to receive. receiver: The person a message is aimed at. one-way communication: A message sent without an exchange of feedback. two-way communication: An exchange in which the other person can reply. internal communication: Messages that stay inside an organisation. external communication: Messages that travel between the organisation and people outside it, in either direction. communication barrier: Anything that stops a message being understood as intended.

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Marketing

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What marketing does

Marketing 营销 is the work of finding out what **customers** 顾客 want, then making, pricing, selling and promoting products to meet those wants at a profit.

Marketing has several roles:

- find out and satisfy what customers want,
- keep and increase **sales** 销售额 and **market share** 市场份额,
- build **customer loyalty** 顾客忠诚度 so buyers come back again.

Market share is one business's sales as a percentage of the total sales in the market:

$$\text{market share} = \frac{\text{the business's sales}}{\text{total market sales}} \times 100$$

> **Worked example.** A town's ice-cream market has total sales of \$400 000 a year. Cool Cones sells \$60 000 this year, up from \$50 000 last year, when the market total was also \$400 000. Its market share has risen from $50\,000 \div 400\,000 \times 100 = 12.5\%$ to $60\,000 \div 400\,000 \times 100 = 15\%$. If the whole market had grown instead, sales could rise while market share fell, so check both figures.

Why customers matter

Customers bring in the money, so keeping them is vital. Losing customers is costly: the business loses their future spending, and it must spend a lot on **advertising** 广告 to win new ones. It is usually far cheaper to keep a customer than to find a new one.

Niche and mass markets

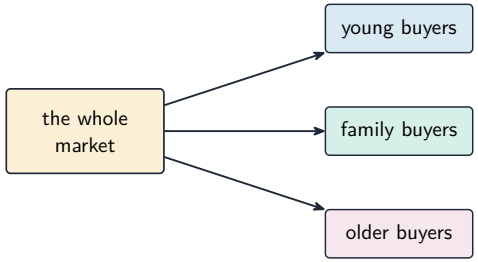
A **market** 市场 is all the buyers and sellers of a product.

- A **niche market** 利基市场 is a small part of a market with special needs, for example left-handed tools.
- A **mass market** 大众市场 is a large market with many similar buyers, for example soft drinks.

Market segmentation

Market segmentation 市场细分 means splitting a market into groups of buyers who share something, such as age, income, gender or location. Its benefits:

- the business can design a product to fit each group,
- it can aim its advertising at the right people,
- it can spot gaps in the market.

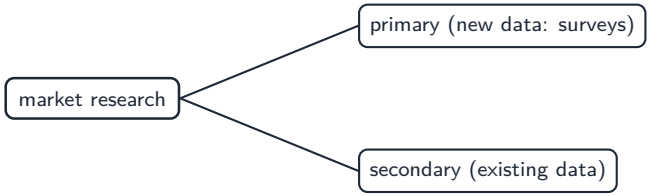


split into segments (here, by age)

Segmentation splits the whole market into groups of similar buyers

Market research

Market research 市场调研 is collecting information about customers, rivals and the market, to help make good decisions.



Primary research collects new data; secondary uses existing data

Primary and secondary research

- **Primary research** 一手调研 (also called field research) collects new information directly, for the first time. Methods include **questionnaires** 问卷, interviews, surveys and tests. It is up to date and fits the exact need, but costs time and money.
- **Secondary research** 二手调研 (also called desk research) uses information that already exists, such as government reports, websites and past sales records. It is cheap and quick, but may be old or may not fit the need.

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Sampling and reliable data

A business cannot ask everyone, so it asks a small group, called a sample. **Sampling** 抽样 must be done with care. If the sample is too small or not typical, the **data** 数据 will not be reliable, and decisions based on it may be wrong.

- In a **random sample**, every person in the target group has an equal chance of being chosen.
- In a **quota sample**, the researcher chooses set numbers from each group, for example 20 teenagers and 20 adults, so that each group is represented.

The accuracy of research also depends on the **questions** (leading questions push people to one answer), on **who** is asked, and on how **up to date** secondary data is.

Using research data

Research results are shown in tables, charts and graphs. You should be able to read them – for example, find the most popular product, or see how sales change over time – and use them to support a decision.

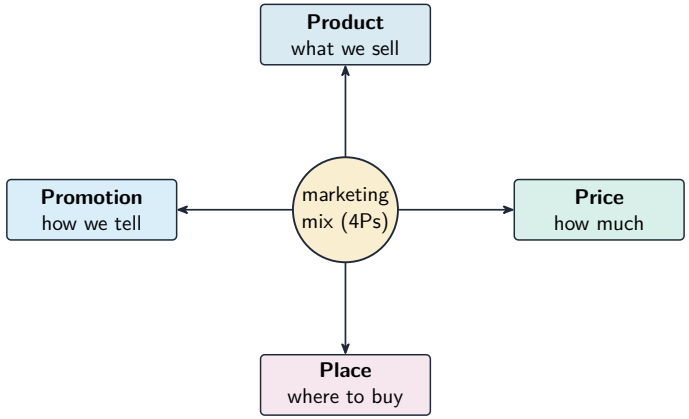
> **Worked example.** A café asks 200 customers which new drink they would buy: bubble tea 90, iced coffee 70, fresh juice 40. Bubble tea is chosen by $90 \div 200 \times 100 = 45\%$, so the data supports adding bubble tea first. But the sample is only the café's **existing** customers, so it says little about new customers the café wants to attract.

The marketing mix



Advertising on giant screens – promotion is one of the four Ps of the marketing mix.

The **marketing mix** 营销组合 is the four main choices a business makes about a product. They are often called the **four Ps**: product, price, place and promotion.

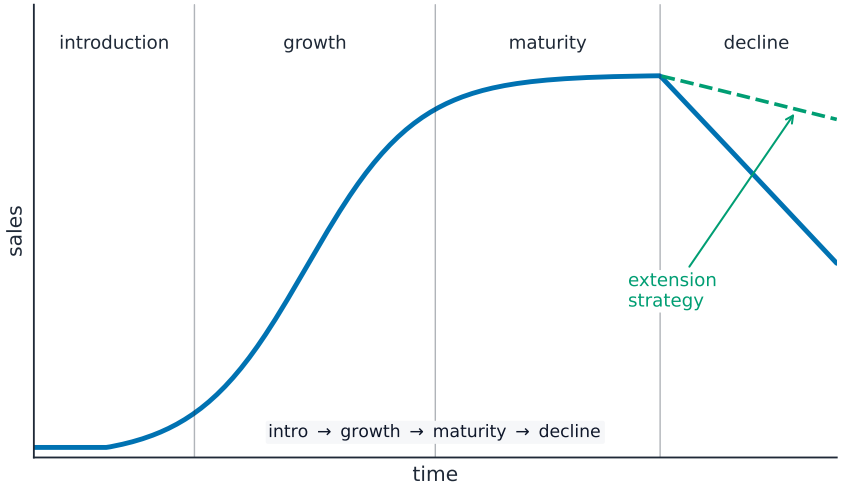


The marketing mix combines the four Ps

Product

The **product** 产品 must meet customers' needs. Two ideas matter here.

The **product life cycle** 产品生命周期 describes the sales of a product over time, in four stages: introduction, growth, maturity and decline. When sales begin to fall, a business can use an **extension strategy** 延长策略 – such as a new design, a new advert, or selling in a new market – to keep the product selling.



Sales of a product over its four life-cycle stages, with an extension strategy in maturity

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A strong **brand** 品牌 (a name, logo and image that customers recognise) and good **packaging** 包装 (the wrapping that protects the product and attracts buyers) both help a product sell. Building a brand is called branding.

Price

The **price** 价格 is what the customer pays. A business can choose from several pricing methods.

Method	How it works
cost-plus pricing 成本加成定价	add a fixed share of profit on top of the cost of making the item
penetration pricing 渗透定价	set a low price to enter a market and win customers fast
price skimming 撇脂定价	set a high price at first for a new, special product
competitive pricing 竞争定价	set a price close to rivals' prices
promotional pricing 促销定价	cut the price for a short time to lift sales
dynamic pricing 动态定价	change the price automatically as demand changes, as airlines do

For cost-plus pricing: if a T-shirt costs \$8.00 to make and the business adds a 25% mark-up, the price is $8.00 + 0.25 \times 8.00 = \$10.00$.

The right price also depends on the cost of making the product, on what customers will pay, on rivals' prices, and on the product's stage in its life cycle.

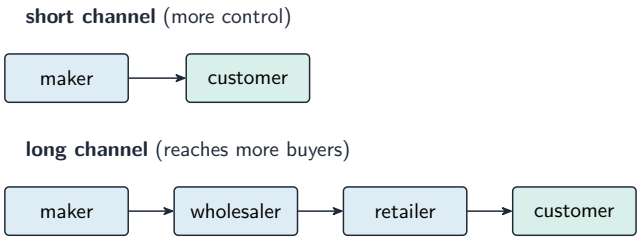
> **Worked example.** One firm launches a smartphone using technology no rival has. Another enters a crowded soft-drinks market. Which pricing method suits each, and why? The smartphone is new and special with no direct competition, so use **price skimming**: charge a high price at first to recover the development cost from customers who must have it, then lower it as rivals catch up. The soft drink faces many established rivals, so use **penetration pricing**: a low price wins customers quickly and buys market share, and it can be raised later. Match the method to the **market conditions** - a pricing strategy is only right or wrong relative to the competition and the product's stage in its life cycle.

Place

Place 地点 is about how and where the product is sold, so it reaches the customer at the right time. The route a product takes from maker to customer is called a **channel of distribution** 分销渠道.

Many channels use a **wholesaler** 批发商 (buys large amounts from makers and sells

smaller amounts to shops) and a **retailer** 零售商 (a shop that sells to the final customer). A business can also sell **directly** 直销 to customers, or online through **e-commerce** 电子商务.



A short channel gives more control; a longer channel reaches more buyers

Promotion

Promotion 推广 means telling customers about a product and persuading them to buy it. It includes:

- **advertising** – paid messages on TV, online, on posters and so on,
- **sales promotion** 促销 – short-term offers like discounts, free gifts, or "buy one get one free".

Technology now plays a big part. The **internet** 互联网 and **social media** 社交媒体 let a business reach many people cheaply, target the right customers, and sell all over the world.

Method	Advantage	Disadvantage
TV advertising	reaches a very large audience	very expensive; suits mass-market products
leaflets and local newspapers	cheap; reach people in one area	easily thrown away; small reach
social media	cheap; can target by age, interest and place; customers can share posts	bad reviews spread just as fast; needs staff time to keep up
sales promotion	gives a quick rise in sales	the rise may end when the offer ends, and it cuts profit per item

Worked example (recommend and justify). Amira runs one small café near a university. She has \$500 to spend on promotion. Should she use social media advertising or a TV advert? Justify your answer.

- *Social media:* cheap enough for her budget; she can target students who live near the café; posts with photos of the food can be shared. But it needs her time to post, and a bad review can spread quickly.
- *TV advert:* reaches far more people, but \$500 would not pay for one, and most viewers live too far away to visit one small café.
- *Decision:* social media, because her customers are local students, who use it a lot, and it fits her budget; the TV audience is mostly wasted on people who will never visit.

The final line must **choose** and give a reason **linked to the case** (local, students, \$500). A two-sided answer with no decision does not earn the evaluation marks.

Marketing strategy



A branded shop window: branding helps a product stand out from rivals.

A **marketing strategy** 营销策略 is a plan that uses the four Ps together to reach the business's **objectives** 目标. The four Ps must fit each other and fit the target customers. For example, a high-price luxury product needs high-quality packaging, expensive shops and image-based adverts.

Legal controls on marketing

Many countries have **legal controls** 法律管制 that protect buyers:

- **consumer protection** 消费者保护 laws stop the sale of unsafe or faulty goods,
- rules ban **misleading** 误导 promotion – adverts that lie about what a product can do.

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Selling in other countries

A business can grow by entering an **international market** 国际市场 in another country.

- Opportunities: many more customers, higher sales, and spreading risk across markets.
- Problems: different languages and tastes, higher transport costs, foreign laws and **tariffs** 关税 (taxes on imports), and strong local **competition** 竞争.

Ways to reduce these problems:

- a **joint venture** with a local business, which already knows the customers, the laws and the language;
- **licensing** or **franchising**, so a local firm makes or sells the product under the brand and pays a fee;
- **changing the product** for local tastes, for example a different flavour or a smaller pack size;
- doing **market research** in the new country before entering it.

Exam tips

- Learn the **four Ps** of the marketing mix – product, price, place, promotion – and remember they must fit each other and the target customer.
- **Primary** research collects new data (surveys, questionnaires; up to date but costly); **secondary** research uses existing data (cheap and quick but may be out of date).
- Know the **product life cycle** (introduction, growth, maturity, decline) and that an **extension strategy** revives falling sales.
- Match the pricing methods: **penetration** (low, to enter a market), **skimming** (high, for a new product), plus cost-plus, competitive, promotional and dynamic pricing.
- A **niche market** is small and specialised; a **mass market** is large, with many similar buyers.
- For a "recommend" or "justify" question, compare at least two options, then **make a decision** and give a reason linked to the business in the case.
- Show the working in calculations: write the formula, then the numbers, then the answer with its unit ($ or %).

Vocabulary card meanings

sales: The value of what customers have bought in a period. customer loyalty: Customers returning to buy from the same firm again. market segmentation: Dividing buyers into groups with similar wants. product: The good or service a firm offers to buyers. extension strategy: A plan to keep demand going after growth has slowed. packaging: The wrapping and design that protect a product and present it. price: The amount of money asked for one item. place: Where and through which channels buyers can obtain a product. channel of distribution: The path a product takes from the maker to the final buyer. wholesaler: A business that buys in bulk and sells on to shops. retailer: A shop that sells to the final customer. direct selling: Selling to the final customer with no wholesaler or retailer in between. e-commerce: Buying and selling over the internet. promotion (marketing): Activities that tell customers about a product and try to persuade them. internet: The global network used to send data between computers. legal controls: Laws that limit what firms may do. consumer protection: Laws that stop firms misleading or harming buyers. international market: Buyers and sellers in other countries.

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Operations management

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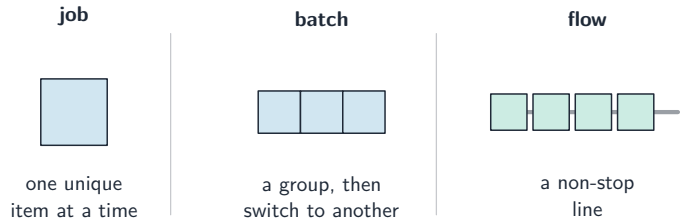
Methods of production

Production 生产 means turning materials and **labour** 劳动力 into finished goods and **services** 服务. There are three main methods.



A car assembly line: making many identical products on a moving line

Method	What it is	Good for	Drawback
job production 单件生产	making one item at a time, to order	special, one-off items: a wedding cake, a ship	slow and costly per item
batch production 批量生产	making a group of the same item, then switching to another group	bakeries, clothes in different sizes	machines stand idle while switching
flow production 流水线生产	making goods non-stop on a moving line	mass-made goods: cars, drinks	costly to set up; work can be boring



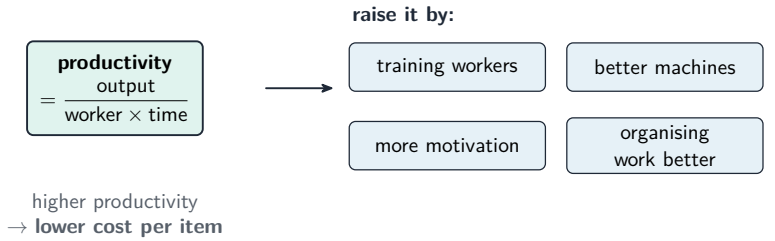
The three methods of production

> **Worked example.** A furniture business makes made-to-measure kitchen tables, and also makes a standard dining chair in three colours. Which method should it use for each? The tables are **job production**: each one is built to a customer's own size and design, so it cannot be made in advance. The chairs suit **batch production**: it can make 200 white chairs, then reset the paint line and make 200 black ones. **Flow production** would only pay if it sold one chair design in very large numbers every day, because a moving line is costly to set up.

Productivity

Productivity 生产率 measures how much each worker or machine produces in a set time. Higher productivity lowers the cost per item. A business can raise productivity by:

- training workers,
- using better machines and **technology** 技术,
- improving **motivation** 激励,
- organising the work better.



Productivity is output per worker in a set time; raising it lowers the cost per item

> **Worked example.** A bakery has 10 workers who make 400 loaves a day. Each worker is paid £80 a day.

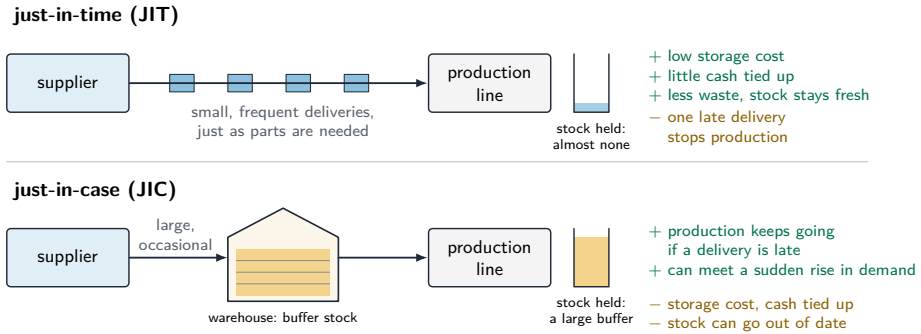
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- Productivity = 400 ÷ 10 = 40 loaves per worker per day; labour cost per loaf = £800 ÷ 400 = £2.00.
- After training, the same 10 workers make 480 loaves: productivity = 48 loaves per worker, a rise of 8 ÷ 40 × 100 = 20%.
- Labour cost per loaf = £800 ÷ 480 ≈ £1.67, so each loaf is cheaper to make. The bakery can lower its price or keep the price and earn more profit per loaf, but only if it can sell the extra 80 loaves.

Lean production and just-in-time

Lean production 精益生产 means cutting all waste – wasted time, materials, space and effort – while keeping quality.

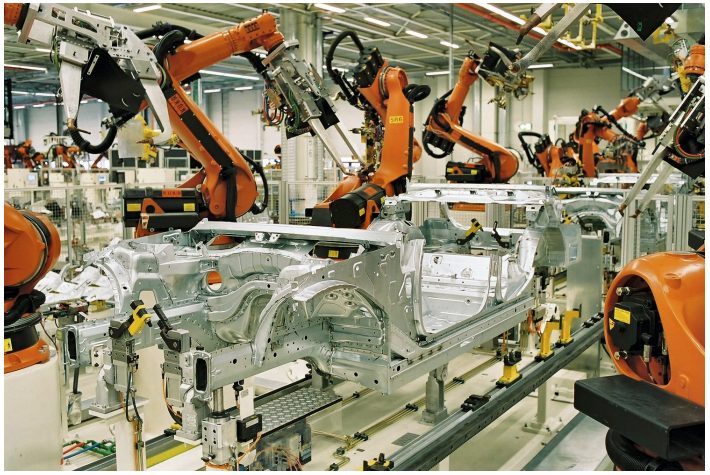
One key method is **just-in-time** 准时制 (JIT). With JIT, materials arrive just as they are needed, and finished goods are sold quickly, so the business holds very little **inventory** 库存 (its stock of materials and goods). This saves storage cost, but one late delivery can stop production. Good management of inventory keeps enough stock to meet demand, but not so much that money is tied up or goods go out of date.



Just-in-time holds little stock with frequent deliveries; just-in-case holds a buffer of stock

Technology in production

Technology has changed production. **Automation** 自动化 (machines and robots doing tasks), computer design and online ordering all make production faster, cheaper and more exact. But machines cost a lot to buy and can replace workers' jobs.



Automation: industrial robots weld and assemble car bodies – faster and more exact than by hand, but they cost a lot and replace some workers

Costs, scale and break-even

Types of cost

A business has different kinds of **cost** 成本.

- **fixed costs** 固定成本 do not change with output – rent, salaries, insurance. You pay them even if you make nothing.
- **variable costs** 可变成本 change with **output** 产量 – materials, and pay for each item made. More output means more variable cost.
- **total cost** 总成本 is fixed costs plus variable costs.
- **average cost** 平均成本 is the total cost divided by the number of items made.

$$\text{total cost} = \text{fixed costs} + \text{variable costs}$$

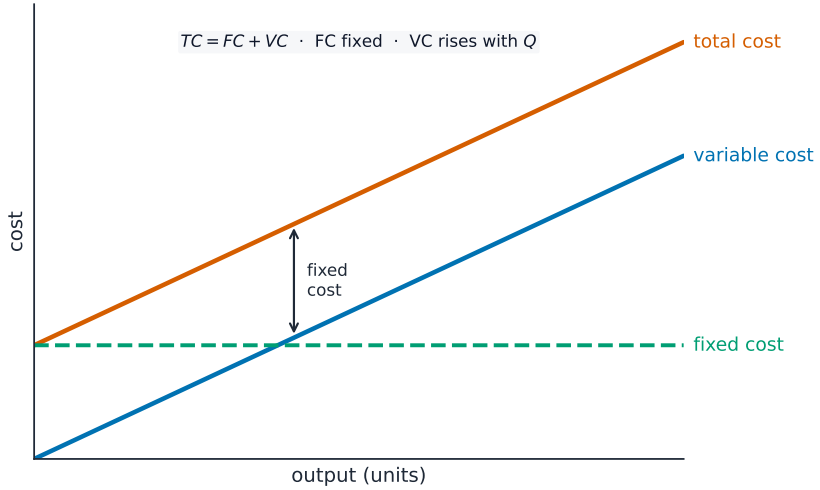
$$\text{average cost} = \frac{\text{total cost}}{\text{output}}$$

Worked example. A factory has fixed costs of £8,000 and variable costs of £2 per unit, and makes 1,000 units. Find the total cost and the average cost per unit.

$$\text{total cost} = £8\,000 + (1\,000 \times £2) = £10\,000$$

$$\text{average cost} = \frac{£10\,000}{1\,000} = £10 \text{ per unit}$$

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Total cost = fixed cost + variable cost; only variable cost rises with output

Revenue and profit

Revenue 收入 is the money a business gets from selling its products.

$$\text{total revenue} = \text{price} \times \text{quantity sold}$$

Profit 利润 is what is left after all costs are paid.

$$\text{profit} = \text{total revenue} - \text{total cost}$$

> **Worked example.** The same factory sells all 1,000 units at £15 each. Find its total revenue and its profit.

$$\text{total revenue} = £15 \times 1\,000 = £15\,000$$

$$\text{profit} = £15\,000 - £10\,000 = £5\,000$$

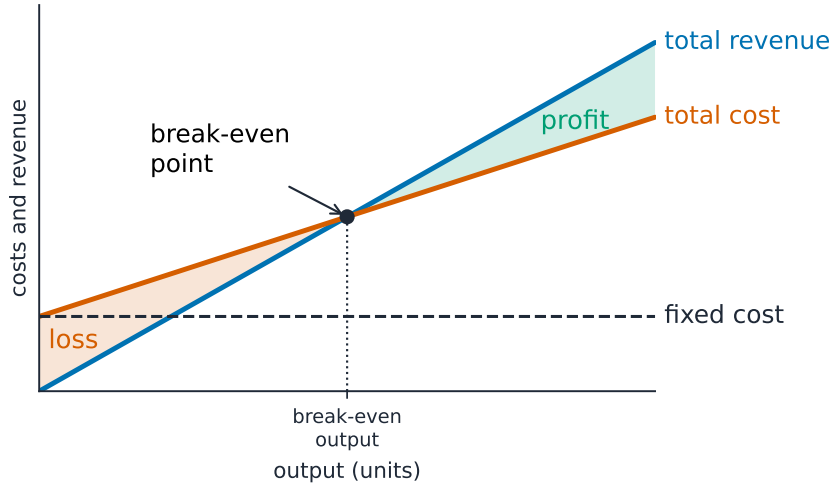
Break-even

Break-even 盈亏平衡 is the output or sales level at which total revenue equals total cost, so the business makes no profit and no loss. Below it the business makes a loss; above it, a profit.

Each item sold gives an amount towards covering the fixed costs. This amount is the selling price minus the variable cost of one item (sometimes called the **contribution** 贡献 per unit).

$$\text{break-even output} = \frac{\text{fixed costs}}{\text{selling price per unit} - \text{variable cost per unit}}$$

A **break-even chart** 盈亏平衡图 plots total cost and total revenue against output. The two lines cross at the **break-even point** 盈亏平衡点.



The break-even point is where total revenue equals total cost – left of it is loss, right of it is profit

The **margin of safety** 安全边际 is how far the actual output is above the break-even output.

$$\text{margin of safety} = \text{actual output} - \text{break-even output}$$

> **Worked example.** A product sells for £15 with a variable cost of £5 per unit, and the firm's fixed costs are £8,000. Find the break-even output, and the margin of safety if the firm actually makes 1,200 units.

The contribution per unit is £15 − £5 = £10, so

$$\text{break-even output} = \frac{£8\,000}{£10} = 800 \text{ units}$$

$$\text{margin of safety} = 1\,200 - 800 = 400 \text{ units}$$

A large margin of safety is safer, because sales can fall a long way before the business makes a loss.

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Limits of break-even analysis. The simple model assumes that all output is sold, selling price and variable cost per unit stay constant, and fixed costs remain unchanged within the stated period and capacity. Discounts, waste, extra equipment or changing demand can alter the result, so break-even is a planning guide rather than a guarantee of sales or profit. If contribution per unit is zero or negative while fixed costs are positive, there is no break-even sales quantity in this model.

Achieving quality

Why quality matters

Quality 质量 means a product is good enough for what **customers** 顾客 need. Good quality:

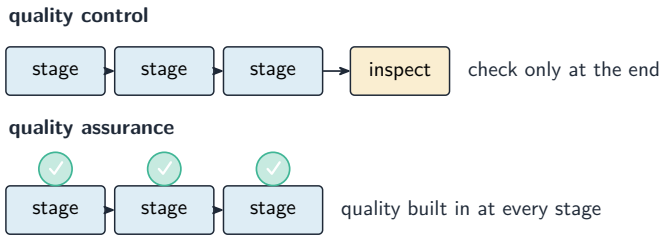
- builds a strong **brand** 品牌 and **customer loyalty** 顾客忠诚度,
- means fewer returns, complaints and wasted materials,
- lets a business charge a higher price.

Poor quality loses customers and damages the brand.

Quality control and quality assurance

There are two main ways to manage quality: **quality control** 质量控制 and **quality assurance** 质量保证.

	Quality control	Quality assurance
When	check at the end	build in quality at every stage
Who	inspectors check finished goods	every worker is responsible
Idea	find and remove faulty goods	stop faults from happening at all



Quality control checks at the end; quality assurance builds quality into every stage

Total quality management (TQM) takes quality assurance further: every worker, in every department, aims to get things right the first time and to satisfy the customer, including the "internal customer" (the next worker in the process).

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Worked example. A juice factory finds that 1 bottle in 50 has a loose cap, and customers are complaining. With **quality control**, inspectors at the end check bottles and throw away the faulty ones; this catches many faults, but the juice and bottles are wasted and some faults still get through. With **quality assurance**, the workers who fit the caps check each stage and the cause (a worn machine part) is found and fixed, so fewer faults happen at all. Quality assurance costs more in training at first, but it cuts waste and protects the brand.

Location decisions



Where a business locates – like this distribution centre – affects its costs and service.

Locating a business

Where a business sits affects its costs and its sales. A **manufacturing** 制造业 business (one that makes goods) looks at:

- nearness to **raw materials** 原材料, because heavy or bulky materials cost a lot to move,
- nearness to customers and the **market** 市场,
- the cost and size of the land,
- a supply of suitable labour,
- good transport links,
- government grants offered in some areas.

A **service** business (one that sells services, such as a shop or a hair salon) looks more at being close to customers, passing foot traffic, nearby shops, and the rent.

Worked example. A firm that bottles spring water is choosing between two sites.

	Site A: next to the spring, in the hills	Site B: on the edge of a big city
raw material	water is on site	water must be brought in by tanker
customers	150 km from the main market	close to shops and customers
land and wages	cheap land, few workers nearby	dearer land, many workers
transport	one narrow road	motorway links

The raw material is the product itself. At Site B the water would travel by tanker every day **and** then again as bottles; at Site A it is bottled where it comes out of the ground and moves only once, and the land is cheaper. **Site A** is the better choice, as long as the road can take the delivery lorries and the firm can find enough workers. A café owner would decide the other way: being near customers matters more than anything else.

Locating in another country

A business may produce or sell abroad in order to reach new customers and bigger markets, pay lower wages or rent, get nearer to raw materials, or avoid **tariffs** 关税 (taxes on imports) by making goods inside the country. But it must then deal with different laws, languages and customs, and follow the **legal controls** 法律管制 of both countries.

Exam tips

- Match the production methods: **job** (one-off items to order), **batch** (a group, then switch to another), **flow** (non-stop mass production on a line).
- Learn the formulas: total cost = fixed + variable; average cost = total cost ÷ output; total revenue = price × quantity; profit = total revenue − total cost.
- **Break-even output** = fixed costs ÷ (selling price − variable cost per unit). How far actual output is above break-even is the **margin of safety**.
- Break-even analysis assumes everything made is sold at one fixed price and cost, so it is only a guide.
- **Quality control** checks finished goods at the end; **quality assurance** builds quality in at every stage.

Vocabulary card meanings

break-even chart: A graph that shows where income meets total costs.

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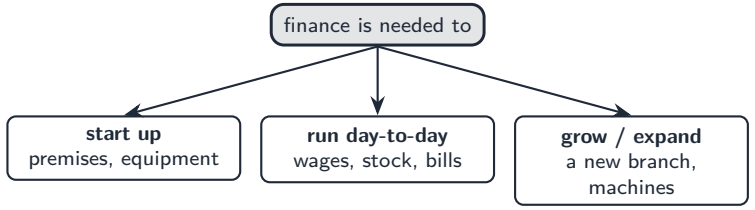
Financial information and decisions

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Why businesses need finance



Banks are a key external source of business finance, through loans and overdrafts.



Finance is needed to start up, to run day-to-day, and to grow

Finance 资金 means the money a business needs. A business needs finance to:

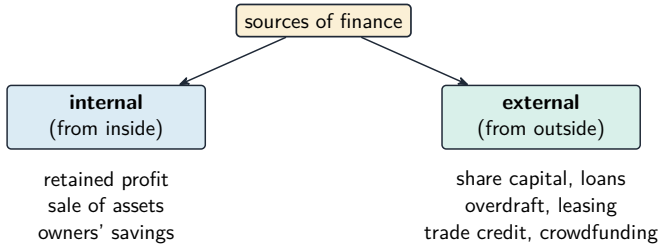
- start up – **start-up capital** 启动资金 to buy equipment and stock before it earns anything,
- grow – money for **expansion** 扩张, such as new shops or machines,
- run day to day – **working capital** 营运资金 to pay wages and suppliers while waiting for customers to pay,
- survive a **cash-flow** 现金流 problem, when more money is going out than is coming in.

Sources of finance

Finance can be **short-term** 短期 (paid back within a year) or **long-term** 长期 (over several years). It can come from inside the business (internal) or from outside (external).

Source	Internal / external	Notes
retained profit 留存利润	internal	profit kept in the business, not paid out
sale of **assets** 资产	internal	selling things the business no longer needs
owners' savings	internal	the owners' own money
bank **loan** 贷款	external	borrowed money, repaid with **interest** 利息 over time
bank **overdraft** 透支	external	the bank lets the account go below zero, for short-term needs
issuing new **shares** 股份	external	only for limited companies; raises money but shares out control
debentures 债券	external	long-term loans to a company that pay interest
leasing 租赁	external	renting equipment instead of buying it
hire purchase 分期付款	external	buy now and pay in monthly parts
trade credit 贸易信贷	external	pay suppliers later, for example after 30 days
microfinance 小额信贷	external	small loans for tiny businesses in poorer areas
crowdfunding 众筹	external	many people each give a small amount, often online
government **grants** 补助金	external	money from the government that need not be repaid

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Sources of finance come from inside the business (internal) or outside it (external)

Choosing a source

The best source depends on how much money is needed and for how long, the cost (interest and fees), the size and legal type of the business (only companies can sell shares), and how much risk and control the owners will accept.

Need	Suitable sources	Why
a short gap in cash (wages due before customers pay)	overdraft, trade credit	short-term, flexible; pay interest only on what is used
new machinery or vehicles	bank loan, leasing, hire purchase	spread the cost over the years the asset is used
a new factory, or a big expansion	retained profit, share issue, long-term loan	a large amount for a long time

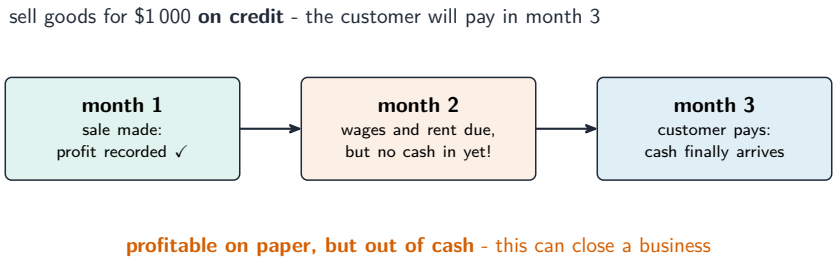
Worked example. Ahmed is a sole trader who owns a small printing shop. He needs $6,000 for a new printer. Suggest two sources of finance and recommend one. A **bank loan** gives the full $6,000 now, repaid over three years, but Ahmed must pay interest and, as a sole trader, he has unlimited liability for the debt. **Leasing** the printer means paying a monthly fee instead of buying, so he needs no large sum now and the leasing company repairs it, but he never owns it and the total cost is higher. As a sole trader he **cannot** sell shares. Recommendation: leasing, because his business is small, he keeps his cash for day-to-day running, and printers soon go out of date, so not owning it is less of a problem.

Cash flow and working capital

Cash is not the same as profit

Cash 现金 is the money a business can use right now. **Profit** 利润 is **revenue** 收入 minus costs over a period. A business can be making a profit yet still run out of cash – for example, if customers have not paid yet. Running out of cash can force even a

profitable business to close.



Credit sales can affect profit before payment arrives; sales revenue is not itself profit.

The cash-flow forecast

A **cash-flow forecast** 现金流预测 predicts the money coming in and going out each month. It uses:

- **inflows** 流入 – money coming in (sales, loans),
- **outflows** 流出 – money going out (wages, rent, materials),
- **net cash flow** 净现金流 – inflows minus outflows,
- **opening balance** 期初余额 – the cash held at the start of the month,
- **closing balance** 期末余额 – the cash held at the end of the month.

$$\text{net cash flow} = \text{inflows} - \text{outflows}$$

$$\text{closing balance} = \text{opening balance} + \text{net cash flow}$$

Worked example. A shop expects inflows of £12,000 and outflows of £9,000 next month, and starts the month with £2,000 in the bank. Find the net cash flow and the closing balance.

$$\text{net cash flow} = £12\,000 - £9\,000 = £3\,000$$

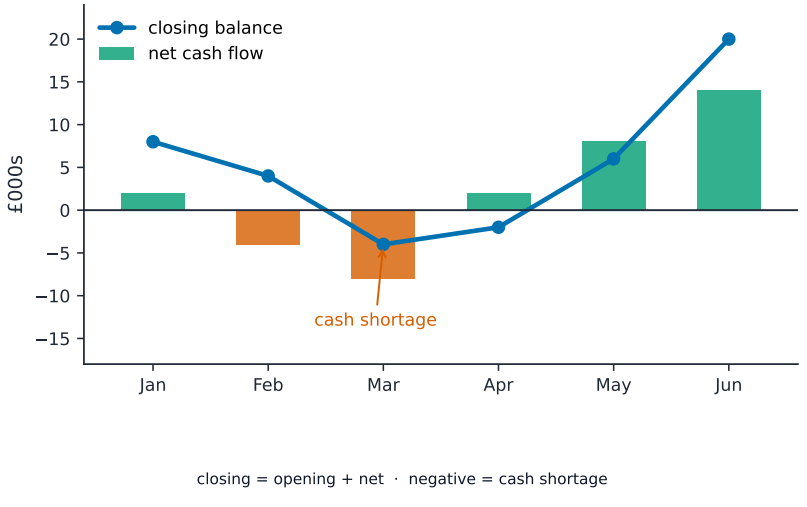
$$\text{closing balance} = £2\,000 + £3\,000 = £5\,000$$

Exam questions often give a forecast with gaps to fill in. Work across each month: closing balance = opening balance + net cash flow, and that closing balance becomes the **next** month's opening balance.

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	April ($)	May ($)	June ($)
total inflows	7,000	5,000	9,000
total outflows	6,000	8,000	6,500
net cash flow	1,000	**-3,000**	**2,500**
opening balance	1,500	**2,500**	**-500**
closing balance	**2,500**	**-500**	**2,000**

Worked example. Complete the figures in bold above, then explain what the forecast shows. The business is forecast to have **-$500** at the end of May: it will not have enough cash to pay all its bills that month. It could arrange an **overdraft** of at least $500 for May, delay buying some materials until June, or ask a supplier for more time to pay. The shortage is small and short, because cash recovers in June, so an overdraft is the most suitable solution.



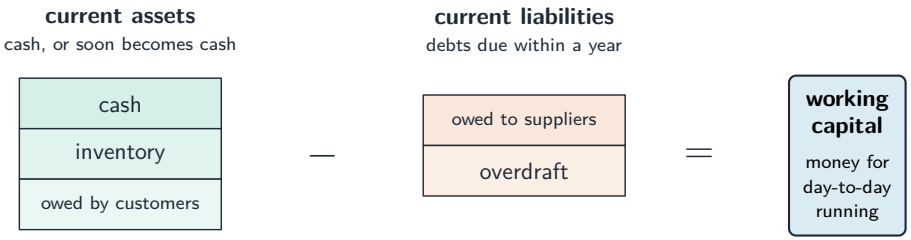
A cash-flow forecast tracks the closing balance each month, warning of a shortage early

Working capital

Working capital is the value of **current assets** 流动资产 minus **current liabilities** 流动负债. It supports day-to-day operations. Current assets include cash, stock and money owed by customers. Current liabilities include short-term debts, such as amounts due to suppliers. It is not the cash balance: stock must be sold and customers must pay before those assets become cash. A business with positive working capital can still struggle to pay a bill due today.

$$\text{working capital} = \text{current assets} - \text{current liabilities}$$

To overcome cash-flow problems, a business can arrange an approved overdraft, negotiate later supplier payments, ask customers to pay sooner, sell spare assets, or cut non-essential spending. Consider the amount and timing of the gap, interest or discounts, supplier agreement and the effect on future sales or production. A forecast is an estimate and should be updated when actual receipts or payments differ.



Working capital: current assets minus current liabilities

Income statement

An **income statement** 损益表 shows how much profit a business made over a period, usually a year.

Line	Meaning
revenue	value of sales in the period, including credit sales not yet paid for
cost of sales 销售成本	the cost of making or buying the goods that were sold
gross profit 毛利润	revenue minus cost of sales
expenses 费用	other running costs: shop rent, office salaries, advertising
profit for the year 年度利润	gross profit minus expenses

$$\text{gross profit} = \text{revenue} - \text{cost of sales}$$

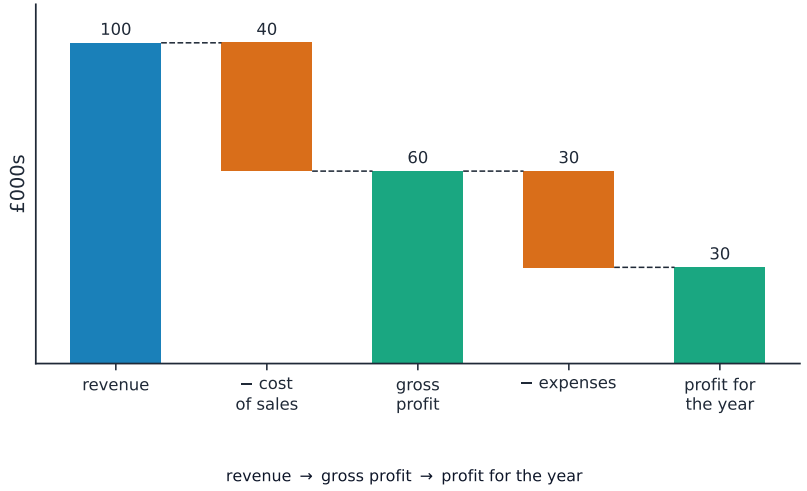
$$\text{profit for the year} = \text{gross profit} - \text{expenses}$$

Worked example. A business has revenue of £200,000, cost of sales of £120,000 and expenses of £50,000. Find its gross profit and its profit for the year.

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$$\text{gross profit} = £200\,000 - £120\,000 = £80\,000$$

$$\text{profit for the year} = £80\,000 - £50\,000 = £30\,000$$



A separate example (£000): revenue 100 − cost of sales 40 = gross profit 60; expenses 30 leave profit 30.

Profit rewards owners for taking business risks. **Retained profit** is profit kept after distributions to owners, such as **dividends** 股息. It provides internal finance for equipment or expansion. A company with £30,000 profit that pays £12,000 in dividends retains £18,000. This does not prove £18,000 is spare cash: funds may be tied up in stock, customer debts or equipment.

Higher revenue does not guarantee higher profit. Compare equal periods: if revenue rises by £20,000 but cost of sales and expenses together rise by £24,000, profit falls by £4,000. Investigate the reasons before cutting spending that may support future sales. Unsold stock is not all charged as cost of sales; do not deduct a production cost again as another expense.

Income statements are used by **stakeholders** 利益相关者: owners compare rewards and reinvestment, managers investigate changing costs, and lenders judge whether earnings may support repayments. Lenders also need cash-flow and existing-debt information; past profit cannot guarantee future repayments.

Statement of financial position



A stock exchange: public limited companies raise finance by selling shares to investors.

A **statement of financial position** 财务状况表 (also called a balance sheet) shows what a business owns and what it owes (its **liabilities** 负债) on one day.

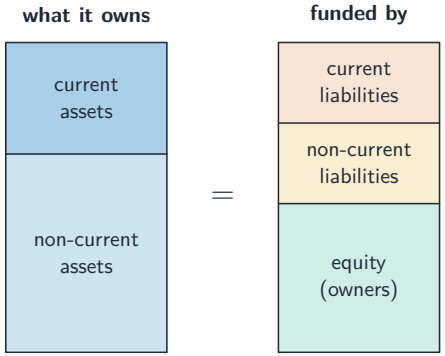
- **non-current assets** 非流动资产 – things kept for the long term: buildings, machines.
- **current assets** – short-term items: **inventory** 库存, money owed by customers, and cash.
- **current liabilities** – debts due within a year: an overdraft, money owed to suppliers.
- **non-current liabilities** 非流动负债 – debts due after more than a year: a long-term loan.
- **owners' equity** 所有者权益 – the owners' recorded stake: assets minus liabilities. It includes owners' investment and profit kept in the business.

The statement helps users see which assets the business has and how they are financed. Recorded equity is not a guaranteed selling price for the business. A lender examines existing borrowing; a supplier checks current debts and resources before offering credit. Both need due dates and a cash-flow forecast to judge payment ability.

Interpretation example. A shop has £84,000 of non-current assets, £18,000 stock, £12,000 owed by customers and £6,000 cash: total assets £120,000. Supplier debts £24,000 plus a long-term loan £46,000 make liabilities £70,000, leaving equity £50,000. Only £6,000 is cash now. Stock may sell slowly and customers may pay late, so the asset total does not prove the shop can pay £24,000 today.

A new £10,000 cash loan increases assets and liabilities by £10,000 each; equity is

unchanged. Selling surplus stock at its recorded cost converts stock into cash without increasing total assets or profit. Selling needed stock or essential machinery may harm future trading. A loan with instalments due within a year and later has both current and non-current parts.



The two sides always balance: assets equal liabilities plus equity

Analysis of accounts

You can judge a business by working out **ratios** 比率 from its accounts. A ratio compares two figures.

Profitability ratios

Profitability 盈利能力 ratios show how good a business is at making profit.

$$\text{gross profit margin} = \frac{\text{gross profit}}{\text{revenue}} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{profit margin} = \frac{\text{profit for the year}}{\text{revenue}} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{ROCE} = \frac{\text{profit}}{\text{capital employed}} \times 100\%$$

- **gross profit margin** 毛利率 – gross profit as a percentage of revenue.
- **profit margin** 利润率 – profit for the year as a percentage of revenue.
- **return on capital employed** 资本回报率 (ROCE) – profit as a percentage of the **capital employed** 所用资本 (money invested). It shows how well the investment is used.

A higher percentage means more profit for each pound of sales or capital, using comparable figures. It does not guarantee a better future result: cutting quality or essential

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maintenance may raise profit now but harm future trading. Compare similar businesses and equal periods, and investigate the causes of changes.

> **Worked example.** The same business (revenue £200,000, gross profit £80,000, profit for the year £30,000) has capital employed of £150,000. Find its three profitability ratios.

$$\text{gross profit margin} = \frac{80\,000}{200\,000} \times 100\% = 40\%$$

$$\text{profit margin} = \frac{30\,000}{200\,000} \times 100\% = 15\%$$

$$\text{ROCE} = \frac{30\,000}{150\,000} \times 100\% = 20\%$$

Liquidity ratios

Liquidity 流动性 ratios help judge a business's ability to pay its short-term debts.

$$\text{current ratio} = \frac{\text{current assets}}{\text{current liabilities}}$$

$$\text{acid test ratio} = \frac{\text{current assets} - \text{inventory}}{\text{current liabilities}}$$

- the **current ratio** 流动比率 compares current assets with current liabilities. A ratio of 1.5:1 means £1.50 of current assets per £1 of current liabilities. A value around 1.5–2 is a common guide, not proof that every business can pay bills on time.
- the **acid test ratio** 速动比率 is stricter: it leaves out inventory, because inventory is not yet sold and may be slow to turn into cash. The remaining assets can still include unpaid customer debts.

> **Worked example.** A business has current assets of £40,000 (including £10,000 of inventory) and current liabilities of £20,000. Find its current ratio and acid test ratio.

$$\text{current ratio} = \frac{40\,000}{20\,000} = 2.0$$

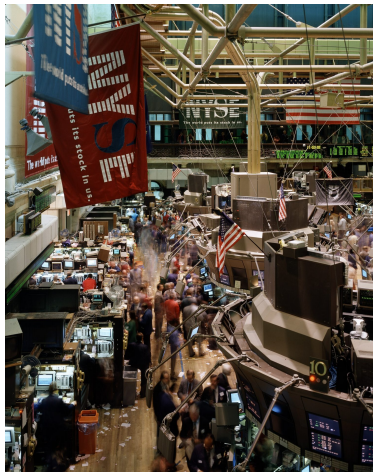
$$\text{acid test ratio} = \frac{40\,000 - 10\,000}{20\,000} = 1.5$$

A ratio has a meaning even without a comparison; a judgement needs context. Suppose current assets are £36,000, stock £18,000 and current liabilities £24,000. Current ratio is 1.5:1 and acid test 0.75:1. If later current assets are £48,000, including stock £36,000, customer debts £6,000 and cash £6,000, with liabilities unchanged, the ratios become 2:1 and 0.5:1. The higher current ratio hides weaker cover without selling stock.

Check the quality and saleability of stock, customer payment dates and bill due dates. A very high current ratio may suggest excess stock or idle cash. A business with fast cash sales can operate differently from one with slow-selling stock. Neither ratio is a guarantee about payment timing.

Who uses account analysis

- **internal users** (owners and managers) compare margins and ROCE over time, investigate costs, and assess prices or investment. Falling gross margin can reflect buying costs, selling prices or product mix; it does not identify one cause on its own.
- **external users** such as banks, suppliers and investors use the accounts to decide whether to lend, offer credit or invest. They also need forecasts, existing debts and repayment dates. Ratios use past or dated data and leave out factors such as service quality and customer loyalty.



Ratios support a judgement; check their dates, the business context and future cash needs.

Exam tips

- **Cash is not profit**: a profitable business can still run out of cash if customers pay late. Watch the closing balance on a cash-flow forecast.
- Separate **internal** sources (retained profit, sale of assets, owners' savings) from **external** ones (bank loan, overdraft, shares, leasing, trade credit).
- Key formulas: net cash flow = inflows − outflows; closing balance = opening balance + net cash flow; working capital = current assets − current liabilities.

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- Profitability ratios (gross margin, profit margin, ROCE) are percentages; current and acid-test ratios are numbers or ratios to 1. Compare like periods and businesses. A higher current ratio can hide growing unsold stock; check the acid test and cash timing.
- Only limited **companies** can raise money by issuing **shares**; a sole trader or partnership cannot.

Vocabulary card meanings

cash-flow: Money moving into and out of a firm over time. short-term: Covering a brief period, such as weeks or months. long-term: Covering years rather than weeks. loan: A sum borrowed now and repaid later, usually with interest. debentures: Long-term loans to a company, often secured on its assets. leasing: Paying to use an asset without owning it. hire purchase: Paying for an asset in instalments and owning it at the end. crowdfunding: Raising money from a large number of small contributors. return on capital employed: Profit compared with the long-term capital used in the business. acid test ratio: A check of whether short-term assets, excluding stock, cover short-term debts.

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External influences on business activity

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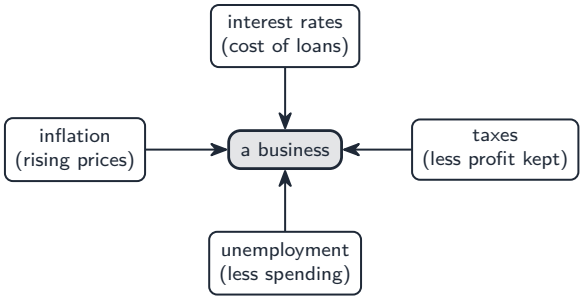
External influences

Every business is affected by **external influences** 外部影响 – things outside the business that it cannot control, such as the economy, the law and the environment. A good business watches these and plans for them.



Government and laws shape every firm: tax, interest rates and regulation are external influences

Economic issues

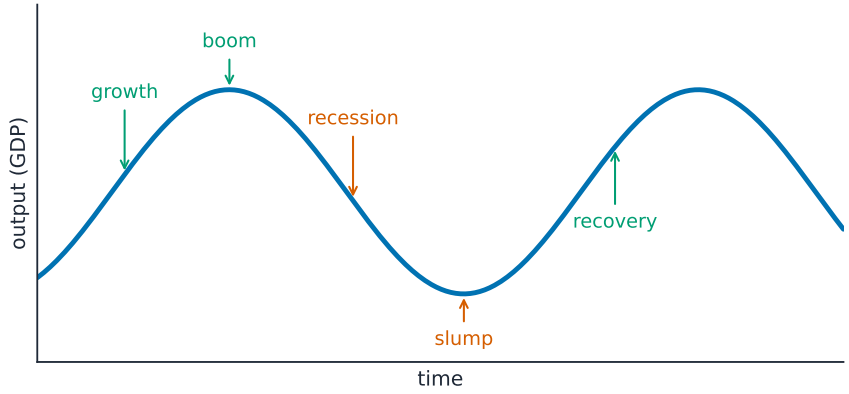


Interest rates, taxes, unemployment and inflation all affect business

The business cycle

The economy does not grow at a steady pace. It moves in a repeating pattern called the **business cycle** 经济周期, with these stages.

Stage	What happens	Effect on business
growth 增长	the economy is rising; people spend more	sales and profit rise; firms expand and hire
boom 繁荣	spending is very high	prices and wages rise; shortages appear
recession 衰退	spending falls; the economy shrinks	sales and profit fall; firms cut jobs
slump 萧条	a deep, long recession	many firms close; high **unemployment** 失业
recovery 复苏	spending starts to rise again	sales slowly improve



growth → boom → recession → slump → recovery

The business cycle moves through growth, boom, recession, slump and recovery

In hard times a business may cut costs, lower prices, or sell cheaper products.

Government economic aims and how they affect business

Governments try to keep the economy healthy. Their main aims are stable prices, plenty of jobs, steady growth, and a stable currency. To manage the economy, a government uses or watches several economic factors. Each one affects every business.

Economic factor	What it is	Effect on business
taxation 税收	money the government takes from incomes and sales	higher tax leaves people with less to spend, and cuts business profit
interest rates 利率	the cost of borrowing money	higher rates make loans dearer, so firms borrow and invest less, and customers spend less
inflation 通货膨胀	a general rise in prices	costs rise; if wages chase prices, the country's goods can become too dear
unemployment	the number of people without work	high unemployment lowers sales, but workers are easier to hire
exchange rates 汇率	the price of one currency in another	a change makes imports and exports cheaper or dearer (see below)

To reach these aims, a government changes its policies:

- **fiscal policy** 财政政策 – changing taxes and government spending. Lower taxes, or more spending on roads and schools, raise demand.
- **monetary policy** 货币政策 – changing interest rates (usually done by the central bank). Lower interest rates make borrowing cheaper, so spending rises.
- **supply-side policy** – making the economy more productive, for example by training workers or cutting red tape.

> **Worked example.** The central bank raises interest rates from 2% to 5%. Explain **two** effects on a business that sells furniture, and how it might respond.

- **Customers spend less.** Many people buy furniture with loans or credit, so dearer borrowing cuts demand, and households with mortgages have less money left to spend. Sales and revenue fall.
- **Costs rise.** If the business has a bank loan, its interest payments go up, which cuts profit, and it may delay plans to open a new shop.

It might respond by offering interest-free credit, promoting cheaper ranges, or cutting stock levels. The effect is greater for a firm selling **expensive**, non-essential goods bought on credit, such as furniture, than for one selling everyday food.

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Environmental and ethical issues

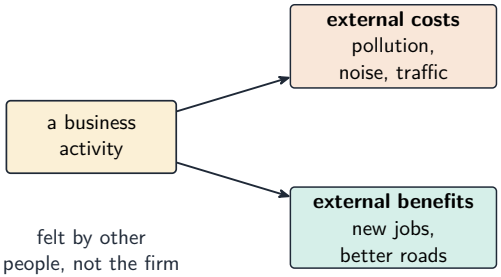


Business activity can harm the environment, raising ethical questions for firms and governments.

External costs and external benefits

When a business acts, other people can gain or lose.

- **external costs** 外部成本 are costs paid by other people or by society, not by the business – for example **pollution** 污染, noise and heavy traffic.
- **external benefits** 外部收益 are gains for others – for example new jobs and better roads.



A business activity can create external costs and external benefits felt by other people

A government can reduce external costs with **laws** (limits on pollution or noise, with fines for breaking them), **taxes** on pollution, and **subsidies** for firms that use cleaner methods.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development 可持续发展 means meeting today's needs without harming the ability of future people to meet their own needs. A business can harm the **environment** 环境 – through waste, pollution, and using up resources – or protect it, through recycling, clean energy and less packaging.

Pressure groups

A **pressure group** 压力团体 is a group that tries to influence businesses and governments, for example to cut pollution. Pressure groups use the media, protests and boycotts. A business may change its behaviour to avoid bad publicity.

Ethics and profit

Ethical behaviour 道德行为 means doing what is morally right, even when no law forces it – for example fair pay, safe products, and no child labour. Acting ethically can cost more in the short term, so it may **conflict** 冲突 with profit. But it can also win loyal customers and a good name, which raise profit in the long term.

Business and the international economy



Shipping containers: businesses trade with the wider international economy.

Globalisation

Globalisation 全球化 is the growing trade and movement of goods, money and people between countries, so the world acts more and more like one single market. It has grown because of cheaper transport, better communication, the internet, and fewer trade barriers such as **tariffs** 关税 (taxes on imports).

Globalisation matters to every business, because it brings both **opportunities** and

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threats:

- opportunities – new markets abroad to sell to; cheaper materials and parts from other countries; the chance to produce where costs are lower;
- threats – more competition at home from foreign firms, which may be cheaper; workers may move to firms abroad that pay more.

A government may protect home firms with **tariffs**, **quotas** (limits on the number of imports) or subsidies, but this can raise prices for consumers.

Multinational companies

A **multinational company** 跨国公司 has operations – factories, branches, or offices – in more than one country. (Simply exporting to other countries is not enough; the firm must actually operate there.)

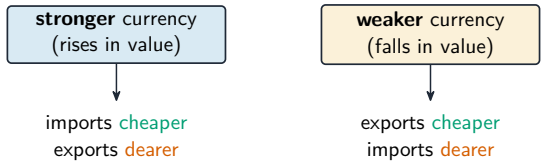
Benefits to a country	Drawbacks to a country
new jobs and training	profits may be sent out of the country
investment and new technology	local firms may be forced out of business
more choice and lower prices	resources may be used up, or the area polluted
more tax paid to the government	a large firm can have too much power

Exchange rates and trade

An exchange rate is the price of one currency in another. A change affects businesses that **import** 进口 (buy from abroad) and those that **export** 出口 (sell abroad).

- If the currency gets **stronger** (rises), exports become dearer for foreign buyers, so they sell less, while imports become cheaper.
- If the currency gets **weaker** (falls), exports become cheaper and sell more, while imports become dearer.

A useful memory aid is SPICED: **S**trong **P**ound → **I**mports **C**heaper, **E**xports **D**earer.



SPICED: **S**trong **P**ound ⇒ **I**mports **C**heaper, **E**xports **D**earer

How a stronger or weaker currency changes the price of imports and exports

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Worked example. A UK firm exports a machine priced at £20,000. The exchange rate moves from £1 = 1.50 USD to £1 = 1.20 USD. What happens to the price a US buyer pays, and is that good for the exporter? Convert the UK price at each rate: at the old rate 20,000 × 1.50 = **30,000 USD**; at the new rate 20,000 × 1.20 = **24,000 USD**. The pound has **weakened**, so the machine is 6,000 USD cheaper abroad and the firm should sell more - good for an exporter. Check it against SPICED: a weak pound is the reverse of it, so exports are cheaper. Convert the **actual figures** rather than only reciting the mnemonic, and notice that the UK price never changed at £20,000 - it is the **foreign** price that moves.

Worked example (an importer). A UK café buys coffee beans from Brazil for 50,000 Brazilian reais each year. The exchange rate falls from £1 = 6.0 reais to £1 = 5.0 reais. How much more does the café pay in pounds, and what can it do? At the old rate it paid 50,000 ÷ 6.0 = **£8,333**; at the new rate 50,000 ÷ 5.0 = **£10,000**. The weaker pound makes its imports **£1,667 dearer**. It could raise its prices (but customers may go elsewhere), accept a lower profit, or look for a supplier at home. A weaker currency helps exporters but hurts importers.

Exam tips

- Learn the **business cycle** (growth, boom, recession, slump, recovery) and how each stage changes sales, profit and jobs.
- Trace each economic factor to the business: higher **interest rates** → dearer loans, so less borrowing and spending; higher **tax** → people have less to spend; **inflation** → higher costs.
- **External costs** (pollution, noise) fall on other people, not the business; **external benefits** (new jobs, better roads) help others.
- Use **SPICED** for exchange rates: **S**trong **P**ound → **I**mports **C**heaper, **E**xports **D**earer.
- **Ethical behaviour** can cost more in the short term (so it may conflict with profit), but it can win loyal customers and a good name that raise profit later.

Vocabulary card meanings

external influences: Forces outside the firm, such as the economy or the law. slump: A deep fall in spending, output, and jobs. external benefits: Gains that fall on a third party outside the deal between buyer and seller. ethical behaviour: Conduct judged right, not only legal.