

2.2.3: The Italian Renaissance

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how the Italian Renaissance affected the progression of management theory.

In the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, Europeans went on a series of military expeditions to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims. These expeditions, called the Crusades, brought wealth and technological advances into Europe from the Muslim world.⁸

In the 14th century, a movement of cultural change and astounding achievements in all spheres of life began in northern Italy. The **Italian Renaissance** saw the reintroduction of classical knowledge and the emergence of new knowledge and learning, much of which had economic and business implications. The emergence of the basic printing press allowed for these ideas and knowledge to spread throughout Europe. The combination of these factors led to the creation of new wealth as a new emphasis on trade and wealth creation developed. In Italy, we see the emergence of modern enterprise and the emergence of the need for people to run these new enterprises. As Muldoon and Marin⁹ write:

Their industrious countrymen were improving mining operations and developing the shipping and banking industries, which created the underlying conditions for the migration of the Italian Renaissance's commercial and intellectual culture from its native Italian soil (Haynes, 1991). The increasing scope and complexity of these commercial activities may well have prompted such inventions as double-entry bookkeeping and motivated companies to hire business managers to coordinate and direct their operations (Witzel, 2002).

Organizations called corporations developed to carry out these commercial activities, not only within a country, but among many countries. The first multinational corporations were located in Italy but had branches across Europe. The Florence Company of Bardi was a multinational bank that provided loans to various kings, including Edward III of England.¹⁰ As their commercial enterprises flourished, the Italians provided manuals for merchants, which spread the ideas of commerce throughout Europe.

Concept Check

1. What was the Italian Renaissance?
2. What managerial legacy did it leave?

References

8. Ruggiero, Guido. *The Renaissance in Italy: A Social and Cultural History of the Rinascimento* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).
9. Muldoon, J., & Marin, D. B. (2012). John Florio and the introduction of management into the English vocabulary. *Journal of Management History*, 18(2), 129-136.
10. Haynes, M.S. (1991), *The Italian Renaissance and Its Influence on Western Civilization*, University Press of America, New York, NY.

This page titled **2.2.3: The Italian Renaissance** is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [OpenStax](#) via [source content](#) that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

- **3.3: The Italian Renaissance** by [OpenStax](#) is licensed [CC BY 4.0](#). Original source: <https://openstax.org/details/books/principles-management>.