

5.1: Why It Matters- Role of Business

Why discuss the role of business in society?

Are you up for a challenge as you start this course?

As you embark on your study of business, you may be thinking that so much of what you will learn in school isn't applicable to your career or future—you may not be planning on going into business, for instance, you may want to be an academic, a therapist, a chef, a media specialist—surely you don't need to know about business then. Here's a challenge that may change your mind.



Figure 5.1.1: Soup Cycle. (Travis, [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/wittcogmbh/6804429230/) CC BY: Attribution)

Stop what you are doing and take a minute to look around you. What do you see? Perhaps you see your living room, where you're sitting at your desk doing your homework. You might be at a local coffee shop, hanging out with some friends who are going to help you study. Or maybe you're sitting on the beach, reading this on your tablet or phone while you listen to the sounds of the ocean and children playing in the sand.

Now, look around again but this time consider everything within your view and ask yourself what all of these things have in common? If you said that they are *all* the product of business, then you're right! How can that be, you ask? The *products of businesses* are everywhere, in everything we touch, we eat, we see, we smell, and we feel. Not always directly, of course, but in one way or another the evidence of a business is there. It's like the air that we breathe—mostly invisible, but always present.

The next part of the challenge is this: As you work through this first section, keep trying to think of something, *anything*, that you can say with certainty has *no* relationship to business. We will check back later and see what you came up with!

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