

Glossary

Consumer

A person or organization that uses goods or services generated in the economy.

Consumer culture

The idea that the buying of goods or services is a valued cultural activity and that it is not just driven by practical or economic factors.

Craft system

A system of production in which one person completes the entire operation. The skill and experience of the craftsman are the most important elements in making the product.

Division of labor

Each worker performs a different small task to eventually complete a final product. This saves time and reduces the amount of training needed to perform one's job. Division of labor is a key aspect of the assembly line.

Interchangeable parts

Multiple copies of identical parts made by machines that are easily duplicated and quickly assembled into the final product. Interchangeable parts are necessary for mass production.

Market

The people who use goods and services; the consumers.

Marketing

The activities involved in transferring goods from the producer to the consumer, including advertising and selling.

Mass advertising

Advertising that is designed to reach a very large audience. Methods of mass advertising have evolved over time, beginning with ads appearing in mass-circulating newspapers and periodicals and spreading with the advent of radio, billboards, television and the Internet.

Mass consumption

In some parts of the world, the Industrial Revolution made previously scarce goods readily available. The new jobs created by the Industrial Revolution also brought a rise in the income of the middle class. Therefore, more goods were available and more people had greater spending power, so consumption of goods generally increased. This increase is known as “mass consumption.”

Mass production

Goods are produced in large numbers and can be sold at low prices.

Moving assembly line

A system of production in which the work is brought to the workers, generally by conveyor belts, so workers do not have to move around as much. Time is saved and production is faster.

Niche market

A specific, separate group of consumers who want a particular good or service.

Producer

A person or organization that creates economic value or produces goods and services.

Scientific management

Experiments on the processes of work to allow the greatest efficiency. On an assembly line, manufacturing steps are carefully observed and then changed to allow the fastest possible production with as little unnecessary movement as possible.

Skilled workers

Workers with extensive expertise or training.

Unskilled workers

Workers without particular expertise or training. Unskilled workers have not learned to make a final product from start to finish but can quickly and easily be taught to perform a small task on the assembly line.