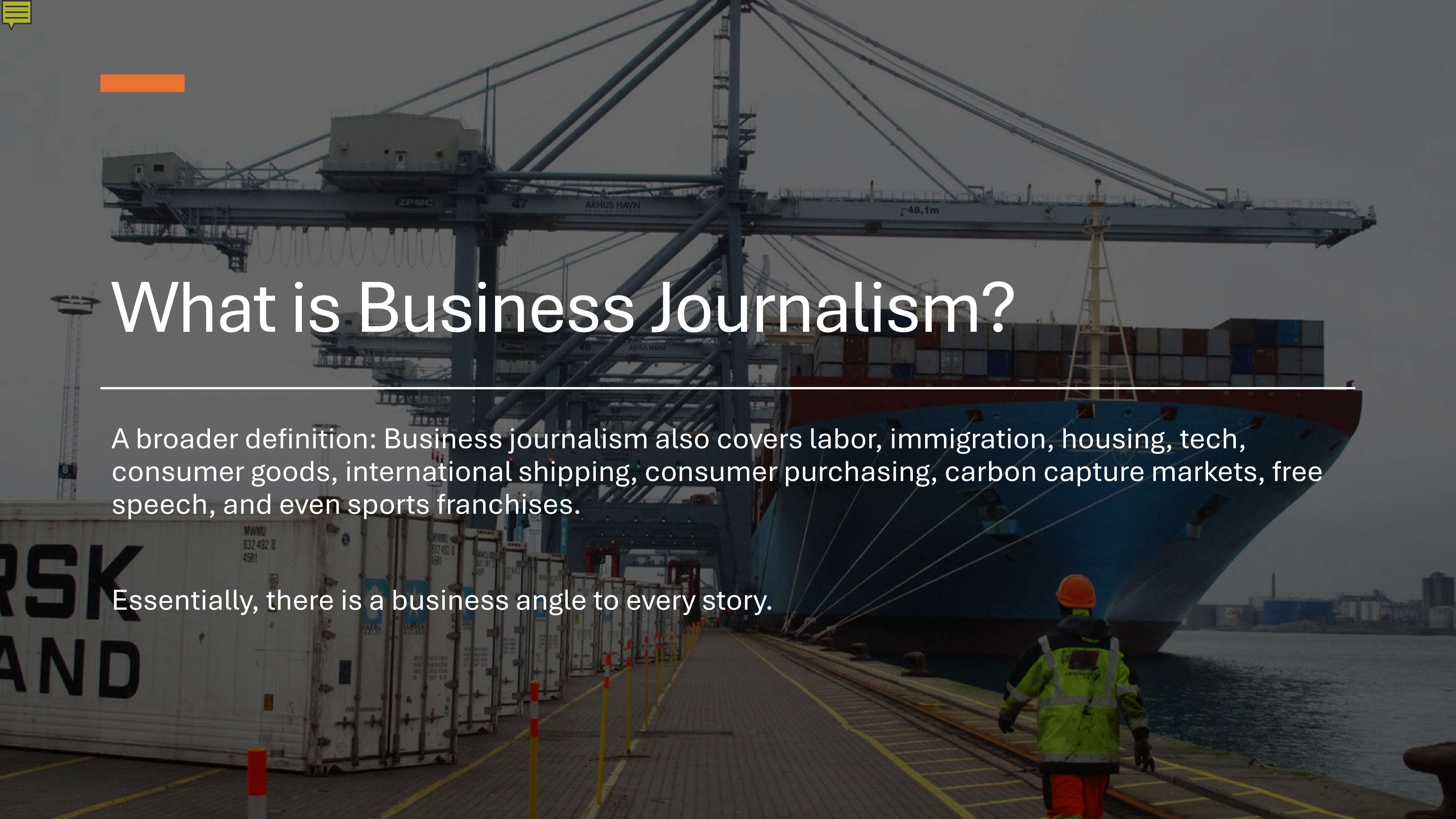
Introduction to Business Journalism

When you hear the term “business journalism,” what do you think of?

What is Business Journalism?

A narrow definition: Business journalism reports on the economy, financial markets, industries, companies, and the policies that shape them.



What is Business Journalism?

A broader definition: Business journalism also covers labor, immigration, housing, tech, consumer goods, international shipping, consumer purchasing, carbon capture markets, free speech, and even sports franchises.

Essentially, there is a business angle to every story.

The Big Picture

Business journalism touches every beat — it's how money, power, and people intersect.

Similarities and Differences

Business journalism is not daily journalism, though they often can and do cover the same stories. But there are distinct differences between the two.

The Similarities

Business reporting has several similarities to daily reporting, including:

- Both require accuracy, clarity, balance, and verification.
- Both demand strong news judgment and a strong news peg: what matters now, and why.
- Both value human sources as much as documents and data.

The Differences

But there are also multiple difference between the two, including:

- The complexity of the subject matter
- Audience expectations
- Specialized sourcing
- An emphasis on the impact of issues
- Tone/Voice

The Complexity of the Subject Matter

Helping readers understand intricate data and complex transactions of business requires reporters to translate difficult ideas and financial tools into approachable language. It also requires reporters be able to:

- Read and analyze earnings reports
- Dig through SEC filings
- Identify economic indicators
- Spot market trends
- Recognize innovation in the market and industry

Audience Expectations

While there is significant overlap, writing for business-focused readers is different than writing for a general audience. They expect an extra layers of information.

General Expectations:

1. Clarity
2. Accuracy
3. Objectivity
4. Relevance

Business Reader Expectations:

1. Industry expertise
2. Data-driven analysis
3. Actionable insights
4. Broader economic impacts

Specialized Sourcing

Business reporting requires more than lurking around c-suite offices. It requires an understand of the business community as a whole and the data and reports they traffic in. Sources can include:

1. Analysts
2. Economists
3. Licensing documents
4. Government filings
5. Court records
6. Trade associations
7. Shareholder reports

Viewing Stories Through An Impact Lens

Business readers what to understand how a particular story is going to influence both their own interests and the broader economy. Reporters should always ask how an issue affects workers, consumers, investors, and the broader economy.

Voice And Tone

Business writing is typically more restrained than what appears in standard legacy media, with a few notable exceptions (see the Morning Brew newsletters). The tone is more analytical, less conversational.

- Daily news: *“Storm slams Midwest, leaving thousands without power.”*
- Business: *“Midwest utilities face $40M in storm-related damages, potentially raising rates.”*

Case Study

The *Des Moines Register* and the *Des Moines Business Record* often cover the same story, like these two pieces on the redesign of the Des Moines Area Rapid Transit (DART) network.

- *Business Record* version
- *Des Moines Register* version

Case Study

How does the lede differ?

What details are emphasized in each?

What's the intended audience takeaway?

How does the voice shift?

Your Turn

Using the information from following fictional press release to write two different short stories, one in a daily news voice and the other in a business news voice. Your stories should be no more than three paragraphs long. These are both to be quick news briefs rather than complete stories.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TechCorp Announces Workforce Restructuring to Accelerate Shift Toward Cloud-Based Services

Des Moines, Iowa — TechCorp today announced a restructuring of its Des Moines operations that will impact approximately 500 employees. The changes affect multiple departments, including engineering, customer service, and marketing.

TechCorp currently employs more than 1,200 people in central Iowa. Company leaders emphasized that the restructuring is designed to better align staffing with the company's long-term strategic vision while allowing for increased investment in high-growth business areas.

"While today's decision is difficult, this restructuring allows us to invest in high-growth areas and secure TechCorp's long-term future," said Maria Jensen, Chief Executive Officer of TechCorp. "We are deeply grateful for the contributions of our departing colleagues and are committed to supporting them during this transition."

The layoffs are a part TechCorp's transition from traditional software development to advanced cloud-based data services.

Local economists note that this represents one of the largest single-day job reductions in the Des Moines metro in recent years, with potential ripple effects on housing, consumer spending, and small businesses. Despite the impact, TechCorp believes its renewed focus will position the company to deliver more value to clients and the community in the years ahead.

About TechCorp
TechCorp is a leading provider of innovative technology solutions, serving clients nationwide with software, data analytics, and cloud-based services. Headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, TechCorp has been recognized for its commitment to innovation, customer success, and community investment.