

## The pros and cons of social media marketing

**Level:** Advanced (C1–C2)

**Time:** 60–90 minutes

**Business topics:** social media marketing, start-up business advertising

**Business language focus:** language associated with marketing and advertising

**Activities:** In this lesson, students will:

- read a business article and look at the language necessary to understand and talk about it;
- learn or revise some business idioms;
- discuss aspects of the article in greater depth;
- discuss how to promote and launch a new product using social media marketing.

**Materials:** One copy of the worksheet per student, possible internet access for Exercise 6

**Group size:** All of the tasks can be completed in pairs or groups, so that as much communication as possible takes place in the class. However, this lesson plan can also be used in a one-to-one teaching situation.

This lesson is based on an authentic article, republished here with its full, original text.

The article discusses the pros and cons of social media marketing.

### 1. Warmer

Students say which of the social media websites or apps they use and why they use them. They also suggest other social media platforms that they use and discuss the positive or negative qualities of each one.

**Suggested answers:**

*Whatsapp* – Great for instant messaging, easy to use, supports a variety of media. Could be used for bullying.

*Facebook* – Good for keeping in contact with people who live far away. However, it has lots of advertising.

*Instagram* – Good for sharing pictures, however, these can easily be faked.

*Twitter* – Great for keeping up to date with news from celebrities, friends, etc. However, there is a limit to the number of characters that can be used in each message.

*Tumblr* – Can share things easily, but it has few privacy settings.

*YouTube* – Good for watching and sharing videos, however, you need to be careful of 'fake' news and videos.

### 2. Key words and expressions

Students search for words and expressions in the text and write them next to the definitions while noticing how the words are used in context.

**Key:**

- |                 |                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. caption      | 7. revenue(s)           |
| 2. seed funding | 8. layout               |
| 3. leverage     | 9. venture capital firm |
| 4. millennials  | 10. customer base       |
| 5. harness      | 11. integral            |
| 6. launch       | 12. median              |

### 3. Understanding the article

Students work individually to read the article again and answer the questions. They then compare their answers in pairs.

**Key:**

1. It will charge merchants a selling fee, calculated as a percentage of each transaction.
2. 20% (a fifth)
3. Beauty, wellness and fashion
4. It used an SMS-based ordering service and paid to advertise on Instagram
5. Because the cost of advertising on Instagram has risen
6. Because it is more difficult for businesses' posts to appear automatically in a user's feed

### 4. Business language – idiomatic language

Students locate the expressions in the text as the context will help them to understand how each one is used. They choose the correct definitions and compare their answers

in pairs. Note that a more widely used idiom for number 1 is a *level playing field*. The expression *to go all in* is believed to come from gambling when playing card games such as poker. If you *go all in*, you bet all your money on one game. The expression *tongue-in-cheek* can be used as an adjective, as in a *tongue-in-cheek comment*, or as an adverb, as in *She said it tongue-in-cheek*.

**Key:**

- |      |      |
|------|------|
| 1. a | 4. b |
| 2. b | 5. a |
| 3. a | 6. a |

## 5. Discussion

In small groups, students discuss the questions which pick up on and expand on topics and quotes from the article. Hold a short whole-group feedback session and compare and contrast each group's answers and input.

## 6. Wider business theme – Social media marketing for a start-up business

Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to think of a product or a set of related products that a start-up business could successfully market and sell online. Ask them to consider the factors listed in the instructions and to think of reasons for their choice in each case.

Each pair or group could then present their product to the class and explain their ideas for marketing it. Ask the class to vote on which product they think would be the most successful (apart from their own!).



### One-to-one teaching

This task can be adapted so that the student does the above as homework and then reports back (to you) in the next lesson. They should also be prepared to present their ideas as a marketing strategy.