

The pros and cons of social media marketing

Level: Intermediate (B1–B2)

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, 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. However, it can be used for bullying.

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

Instagram – Good for sharing pictures, however these can be heavily edited/faked.

Twitter – Good for keeping up-to-date with news from celebrities, friends, etc. However, it can only show short messages.

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

YouTube – Good for sharing and watching 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. Tell students that they may need to change the form of the word that they find in the text.

Key:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. <i>post</i> | 8. <i>influencer</i> |
| 2. <i>start-up</i> | 9. <i>peddling</i> |
| 3. <i>parent company</i> | 10. <i>customer base</i> |
| 4. <i>seed funding</i> | 11. <i>venture capital firm</i> |
| 5. <i>unicorn</i> | 12. <i>buzz</i> |
| 6. <i>millennials</i> | 13. <i>algorithm</i> |
| 7. <i>fad</i> | 14. <i>feed</i> |

3. Understanding the article

Students work in pairs and decide if the statements are true or false. They correct the false statements.

Key:

1. *True.*
2. *True.*
3. *False. They will be charged a selling fee, calculated as a percentage of each transaction.*
4. *False. Instagram makes up a fifth (20%) of Facebook's advertising revenues.*
5. *True.*
6. *False. It was paying \$30,000 a day.*
7. *False. The most expensive is LinkedIn.*
8. *True.*

4. Business language – Verb + noun collocations

A Students match the words in the left-hand column with those in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text. They then check their answers by looking in the text and seeing the phrases in context.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>d</i> | 4. <i>b</i> |
| 2. <i>e</i> | 5. <i>a</i> |
| 3. <i>f</i> | 6. <i>c</i> |

B Students use words from the phrases in part A to complete the sentences.

Key:

1. *engage*
2. *business*
3. *charge*
4. *raise; launch*
5. *reduce*

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 advertising

Ask students to open a social media website on their computer or a social media app on their smartphone. Ask them to make a list of the first five advertisements they see on the platform and how attractive or effective each advertisement is on a scale from 5 to, and think why.

They then compare their findings with the rest of the class. Ask students to decide which advertisement was the best and which was the worst and to give reasons for their opinions.



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.