BUSINESS NEWS LESSONS

Looking to be found: companies try to be part of our new AI search habits

one**stop**english

Level: Advanced (C1–C2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Overview: This article discusses the increase of popularity of AI searches and how ad agencies are helping their clients adapt to this new trend.

Business topic: Marketing, innovation and technology, the future of work

Business language: Reduced relative clauses

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, making a business case for an AI-friendly website

Groups: Whole class, pairs, small groups, one-to-one

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1. Warmer

a. Ask students to discuss the questions in small groups. Monitor and write any useful vocabulary on the board. Elicit the main ideas that arise from the discussion with the whole class.

2. Reading for gist

a. Have students skim the article and choose the main idea. Then, ask students to scan for phrases that support their answer.

Key:
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3. Key words

a. Have students match the key words to the definitions and examples individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Elicit answers from thewhole class.

Key:
1. brand
2. search engine optimisation
3. pose a threat
4. large language models
5. influencer
6. text prompts
7. ranking
8. rival
9. seed funding
10. cannibalise
11. co-founder
12. contradiction
13. monopoly
14. credibility
15. nuanced

4. Understanding the article

a. Ask students to read the statements and then find the relevant parts of the article in order to determine if the statements are true or false. Encourage students to not only correct the false statements but also be ready to explain what supports the true statements. Have them share their answers in pairs or small groups before eliciting answers from the whole class.

Key:
1. False. Profound and Brandtech are helping clients appear in AI chatbot answers.
2. True
3. False. AI chatbots are commonly used (80 per cent of consumers) in place of traditional search engines.
4. True
5. False. Alphabet announced its core search business increased by 10 per cent to $50.7 billion US dollars.
6. True
7. True
8. True
9. False. Users are being more nuanced and precise in the questions they are asking.
10. False. LLMs understand more content, so it is much harder to use SEO to target them.

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5. Business language – reduced relative clauses

a. Encourage students to go beyond matching the sentences to the rules as it will be easy for them to see which sentences use a present participle (-*ing*) and which ones use a past participle (-*ed* or irregular). Ask them to consider how the relative clause would be if it were not reduced, i.e. it would need a relative pronoun (*which*, *who*, etc.), and it might need an auxiliary verb, e.g. *to be*. Point out that a present participle is used for a sentence in the active voice whether or not that sentence is in the continuous. It might be helpful to put the relative clauses on the board, so they can see the difference between a reduced relative clause and a full relative clause. *(1. Advertising groups want to help brands appear in AI searches, **which marks** a new era of 'Search Engine Optimisation'. /*
*2. Brands want to be able to track common queries **which are related** to their industry. /*
*3. Research shows 80 per cent of consumers now use AI results for at least 40 per cent of searches, **which reduces** organic web traffic by up to 25 per cent. / 4. Agencies want to help their clients appear within the results **which are generated** by AI services. / 5. The technology creates a ranking of brands, **which allows** agencies to advise the brands on how to be mentioned by the LLMs.)*

Key:
1. *A*
2. *B*
3. *A*
4. *B*
5. *A*

b. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to complete the task. Encourage students to notice the words that are no longer necessary in a reduced relative clause. Point out that both sentences 1 and 5 are in active voice and use a present participle even though only 5 is written in the continuous tense.

Key:
1. *The agency presenting the most cost-effective marketing strategy will win the proposal.*
2. *Those invoices sent last week have still not been paid.*
3. *The staff recruited last week are very professional.*
4. *Employees attending the workshop will receive a certificate.*
5. *The consultant reviewing our supply chain process specialises in logistics.*
6. *Any product manufactured in our Asia branch has a lower production cost.*

6. Discussion

a. Put students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

7. Wider business theme – making a business case for an AI-friendly website

a. Explain that students are going to present a business case for why a company should adapt a website to maximise it for AI search results. They will begin by exploring possible arguments for and against the use of AI searches instead of traditional internet searches. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups and categorise the pro and con arguments in the table. It is possible that an argument could appear in multiple categories (e.g. *Users clicking through to company websites helps small businesses as well as traffic in general*). However, there should be two in each category. Have students discuss the ideas and explore how something that is a pro for an AI search might be a con for a traditional internet search or vice versa. Monitor and write any useful vocabulary on the board. When you go through answers, brainstorm any other possible pros and cons and have students add them to the table.

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Helps small businesses	Quality of information	Searches specific to customers	Traffic
1. Small companies with good content appear in results without having to pay for Search Engine Optimisation. (+) 2. Location-based searches help small businesses attract customers who live nearby. (+)	4. AI doesn't have do live searches so may provide outdated or inaccurate information about a company. (-) 3. The top results are often influenced by ads sponsored links. (-)	2. AI can explain or recommend search results for users with very nuanced needs. (+) 4. Search results show many similar offerings and are not specific for customers. (-)	3. AI answers user questions without sending traffic to the original site. (-) 1. Users often click through to company websites. (+)

b. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to make a business case for an AI friendly website. If students are unclear about the idea of a business case, explain that a business case is simply a proposal explaining why it is good to do a project or task. Have them go through the pros and cons as well as any others that the class came up with, and select the best arguments for adapting the website to maximise it for AI search results. The company website they choose can be a generic one or it can be a specific one, e.g. the company they work for. Have students explain the benefits of AI searches and what needs to be taken into consideration.

c. Ask students to present their ideas to the class. Encourage students to use the Useful language provided. If this task is graded, get students to record and send their presentations. Compare the ideas and see which approaches the class believe are the most effective for getting a company to appear in the answers of an AI search. This could be extended to a formal proposal if written practice was required.

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