

## Good connections

**Level:** Advanced

**Timing:** 90 minutes plus

**Material needed:** One copy of the student worksheets and Vocabulary record per student; one copy of the interview per student (optional)

**Group size:** Any

### Overview

This lesson plan for both pre-experience and in-work business students is based around an adapted article from *Business Spotlight* Issue 5/2012. The article discusses the importance of social media in today's business world, not only for companies but also for individuals.

The tasks in the worksheets encourage the students to learn and use new business vocabulary and functional language, as well as to practise useful business skills such as discussing, planning and presenting a strategy.

The teacher's notes provide suggestions for teaching and learning strategies as well as ideas on how to present the tasks in the classroom, any necessary answer keys and extension tasks (for in class or as homework).

### Warmer

These questions introduce the topic of social media to students and get them to think about how it could be used in a more professional way.

**Key:**

1. eight are mentioned 2. Facebook; Twitter; LinkedIn; XING; Glassheer; Pinterest; YouTube; Ning

### Key words

This task is divided into two parts. The first part requires the students to put the letters into the correct order to make the key words. The second part requires them to match the words with the definitions. The definitions are in the order that the words appear in the article. This task's parts can be divided up amongst the students who should then talk about their answers.

**Key a:**

1. product launches; 2. enhanced; 3. degraded; 4. workforce; 5. laid off; 6. exude; 7. public

**Key b:**

1. recommendations; 2. charities; 3. do-it-yourself (DIY); 4. apologize; 5. shiftier; 6. employment service; 7. favour

### Understanding the article

The answers to this task will vary from student to student as the information will sometimes need rewording. Get the students to discuss the answers and write them down. Working together on this will encourage them to check each other's spelling, word order, grammar, etc. This task can easily be extended by turning it into a discussion.

**Key:**

1. social media can help you find a job, build useful contacts and promote your business (para 1)
2. receiving regular updates on the business, invitations to events and other promotions (para 3)
3. the mobile nature of the US workforce – people are frequently moving to new jobs in different regions – and the recession (para 5)
4. because it shows that you are confident (para 6)
5. you can connect with people who work for organizations that you are interested in joining and 'follow' a company so you get email notifications when someone is leaving a position; you can have recommendations on your profile from former employers or people you have worked with successfully (paras 7 and 8)
6. because this will indicate to your current employers that you are looking for another job (para 8)
7. because you can get them to put you in touch with people you wouldn't be able to get in touch with normally (para 10)
8. apologize; you should not just take down an offensive post / tweet because it will be archived (para 11)

#### Teaching and learning strategy: why write the answers?

In Business English classrooms, students can often be heard saying that they don't want to waste time on writing during lesson time and that speaking is more important.

Although this is true to many extents, the consequences of teaching this way are that the students' spoken English turns out to be at a higher level than their written English. Of course, talking face-to-face and on the phone is very important in the business world, but so is written communication and unfortunately it is harder to hide your mistakes when they are written down.

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Therefore, getting the students to write down the answers in tasks like this (Task 3), checking them first with other students and then, when they think they have produced an error-free sentence, with you, can be very beneficial. This is not only valuable in their learning progress but also in their everyday business life.

### Multi-word phrases

Ask the students to put the words into the correct order to make phrases from the article. After they have checked that their answers are correct and discussed what they mean, they should try to make their own sentences using the phrases.

#### Key:

1. seen by a wider audience; 2. avoid unwelcome attention; 3. are best avoided; 4. post regular updates; 5. limited only by your imagination; 6. get in touch with; 7. full disclosure and absolute honesty; 8. should not be one-sided; 9. help yourself by helping others; 10. return the favour

### Discussion and web task

Students discuss how certain kinds of businesses might benefit from the use of social media. Ask them whether they have used any of these services or visited these kinds of businesses recently. Did social media play a role in their decision of which business to use / go to?

When finding real examples of these kinds of businesses, it would be useful for the students to look for businesses from English-speaking countries so that they can read the language and posts in English and record any recurring phrases such as 'Like us on Facebook'.

### Planning and presenting a strategy

This group task requires the students to come up with a plan of action to bring their 'company' into the digital age. If appropriate, they could think about the companies that they actually work for. If you would rather keep this non-specific, use one of the businesses mentioned in Task 5 or another type of business of the students' choice. Ask them to present their plan to the groups. If you don't have a large group, the students can present the plan to you (taking on the role of their new CEO).

### Additional reading

For more advanced students, or those with a particular interest in the topic, there is an additional page which contains Margaret Davis' interview with an expert in 'personal branding'.

### Vocabulary record

Here, students should be encouraged to record all the new and useful vocabulary they have learned during the lesson, not only in the form presented in the article, but also in related forms.

### Related topics on onestopenglish

For follow-up lessons on the same or related topics go to the following lesson plans in the Business section on onestopenglish:

Business Spotlight: Should networking sites be banned from work?

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/business/business-spotlight/should-networking-sites-be-banned-from-work/550502.article>

Business Spotlight: End and beginning

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/business/business-spotlight/end-and-beginning/>

Business tasks: Chance and opportunity

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/business/business-tasks/chance-and-opportunity/>