

The Me-myself-and-I file: why teams are sharing personal user manuals

Level: Intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Business topics: Teamwork, communication, ways of working, CVs

Business language: Words and phrases related to communication, working preferences, teamwork

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, writing a Manual of Me, discussion

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

Overview: This article discusses the trend of sharing more personal information with colleagues with a Manual of Me as a starting point.

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 from the whole class.

2. Key words

Have students complete the activity individually and compare their answers in pairs. Elicit answers from the whole class.

Ask students to then find the words in the article. Check their understanding of each word by using concept-checking questions. E.g. Is it always positive/negative? Can it be physical or abstract? Etc.

Key:

1. *rank, ranks*
2. *trigger*
3. *adopt*
4. *cohesion*

5. *eliminate*
6. *barrier, barriers*
7. *diminish, have diminished*
8. *particularity, particularities*
9. *tailor, tailors*
10. *advocate*
11. *facilitate*
12. *prescriptive*

3. Understanding the article

Ask students to find the answers individually in the article. Have them compare their answers in pairs or small groups before eliciting answers from the whole class.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>a</i> | 6. <i>a</i> |
| 2. <i>b</i> | 7. <i>a</i> |
| 3. <i>b</i> | 8. <i>a</i> |
| 4. <i>a</i> | 9. <i>b</i> |
| 5. <i>b</i> | |

4. Business language – phrases

- a. Ask students to practise their scanning skills to complete this activity. You could also set it up as a whole-class activity, so students compete against each other to complete the 'race'.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. <i>up</i> | 5. <i>on</i> |
| 2. <i>with</i> | 6. <i>with</i> |
| 3. <i>with</i> | 7. <i>to</i> |
| 4. <i>with</i> | 8. <i>up</i> |

- b. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to complete this activity.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <i>treat with</i> | 5. <i>talk up</i> |
| 2. <i>catch on</i> | 6. <i>cater to</i> |
| 3. <i>set up</i> | 7. <i>struggle with</i> |
| 4. <i>armed with</i> | 8. <i>packed with</i> |

5. Discussion

- a. Put the 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.

6. Wider business theme – writing a Manual of me

- a. Ask students to work in small groups. Ask them to give arguments for their choices and try to reach a consensus. This fuels discussion and interaction; they can still write about different questions in the next step.
- b. If students need more support before they start writing, ask them to discuss their answers in pairs to get them started. They can make notes while talking about their answers and use them to write their manuals. Encourage them to include action verbs in their manuals.

If time permits, ask students to peer edit each other's manuals. Elicit criteria or things to focus feedback on from the class or provide suggestions (e.g., content and answering questions completely, vocabulary, grammar, tone).

- c. Remind students that the manual should be the starting point for discussion. Have students work in small groups and ask each other questions about their texts.

Get students to reflect on the best questions that led to more surprising insights.

If there is time, regroup students and get them to repeat the discussion.