



UNIT 8: BUSINESS APPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Delivery guidance

Approaching the unit

Social media is an invention of the internet age. Nothing like it existed before, but its influence now is huge and it is an exciting, dynamic area.

However, this unit potentially contains a number of challenges. Firstly, learners are likely to know a great deal about social media from their personal use of it, perhaps even more than you do. You need to emphasise that this unit is not about the personal use of social media but about its use by businesses and other organisations. Secondly, it is a rapidly changing area – current social media sites regularly have new features and adjust existing ones. In addition, new social media sites appear regularly, hoping to challenge the dominance of the hugely successful ones.

You will therefore need to keep up with the latest developments, and ensure that amongst the large amount of information available on this topic from the internet, you are using up-to-date sources. (See, for example, the websites listed at the end of this delivery guide.)

This delivery guide does not cover everything that needs to be delivered for completion of this unit but gives examples of delivery methods. You should refer to the specification for full details of all the content that needs to be covered.

Delivering the learning aims

Learning aim A starts with a review of social media sites and their features and considers how organisations use them to promote their services. Learners are likely to be familiar with Facebook™ and Twitter but perhaps less so with the sites that are generally less popular with young people (for example, LinkedIn®). Rather than teaching them about the features of these sites, use their existing knowledge but make sure they focus on the business uses.

If you are able to get a visiting speaker from a local business to talk about how and why they use social media, this would be beneficial. A marketing manager (rather than an IT professional) would be a suitable visitor for this part of the unit, as they tend to implement social media strategies within businesses. Alternatively, you could ask the marketing manager from your own centre. You would need to brief the marketing manager by explaining the purpose of this unit and that your learners are IT learners rather than learning about marketing.

The impact and uses of social media is a 'hot topic' of which learners will have a lot of experience. Therefore, delivery methods such as debates (for example on the negative impacts of social media) and discussions are likely to be effective.

Learning aim B is about planning a social media campaign. There is quite a lot of marketing-related content and you might want to consider asking one of your college/school business studies or marketing lecturers to talk to your learners about marketing basics.

Learning aim B also focuses on understanding clients' social media requirements. This is another opportunity to invite a guest speaker to talk about working with clients. There are a number of possibilities – you could try to find someone from an advertising agency, or ask a marketing manager to talk about what, as a client, they would expect from someone planning a campaign for the company. There is much information available on the internet about planning social media campaigns, from simple hints and tips to detailed case studies.

Learning aim C focuses on implementing the social media campaign plan and reviewing the results. There will need to be a certain amount of simulation, as learners will need to practise posting materials and reviewing data on the posts. You, other learners, and friends or family familiar with social media can be involved. Learners could, for example, set up a private Facebook™ group to allow other learners, friends and family to interact with them without involving members of the public. It is unlikely that your learners will be able to access social media websites at your centre, so much of the practical work associated with this unit will need to be carried out by learners outside the classroom as homework. Try to ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for review and feedback to help develop skills. Learners could demonstrate their ability to set up posts and collect data about their followers by means of screenshots and printouts. Learners could present these to the class for discussion and feedback.

Throughout their practical work, learners should be encouraged to keep a diary, in which they can record their progress, any issues they encountered and how they overcame them. This will be valuable to them when they are writing their evaluation and reflecting on their own performance as part of the second assignment.

High quality, accurate written and verbal communication skills are vital for progression into higher education and in employment. As such, learners should be confident in presenting thoughts and ideas to others, as well as producing well-presented, accurate and appropriate documentation for all stages of a project. Learners must be able to effectively evaluate the success of a project and the factors that contributed to the final outcome, including their own skills, knowledge and behaviours.



Learning aim	Key content areas	Recommended assessment approach
<p>A Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which organisations promote their products and services</p>	<p>A1 Social media websites</p> <p>A2 Organisational uses of social media for business purposes</p> <p>A3 Risks and issues</p>	<p>A report that explores how an organisation can use social media to raise its profile and promote products and services.</p>
<p>B Develop a plan to use social media in an organisation to meet its business requirements</p>	<p>B1 Social media planning processes</p> <p>B2 Organisational requirements</p> <p>B3 Content planning and publishing</p> <p>B4 Developing an online community</p> <p>B5 Developing a social media policy</p> <p>B6 Reviewing and refining plans</p>	<p>Documentation showing the planning, preparation and implementation of the use of social media in an organisation which meets identified business requirements.</p> <p>Established social media pages dedicated to the organisation which fulfil the requirements given in the plan, accompanied by supporting documentation.</p>
<p>C Implement the use of social media in an organisation</p>	<p>C1 Creating accounts and profiles</p> <p>C2 Content creation and publication</p> <p>C3 Implementation of online community building</p> <p>C4 Data gathering and analysis</p> <p>C5 Search engine optimisation</p> <p>C6 Skills, knowledge and behaviours</p>	<p>Statistical data generated by social media websites, including an analysis of how it was used to optimise the use of social media.</p> <p>A report showing the assessment of search engine rankings.</p> <p>A report evaluating the use of social media in an organisation against the plan, showing how well it meets the business requirements.</p>

Assessment guidance

This is an internally assessed unit and learners will need to complete internally devised and marked assignments to cover the learning aims.

For learning aim A, learners are likely to need to produce a report covering the criteria, although, given the unit topic, electronic delivery (such as via a blog or wiki) might be more relevant. Learners may want to refer to various internet-based examples of how businesses have used social media, and these could be linked to a blog, wiki or other type of electronic document. Some form of audio or visual evidence would also be acceptable and would allow learners to develop their creativity, provided the information is communicated in a clear and detailed manner using appropriate language.

With so much material available on social media on the internet, remind learners about plagiarism. Linking to websites and citing fully referenced quotations is acceptable, but copying and pasting text directly from an internet source is definitely not.

Learning aims B and C will be assessed together. Learners should be equipped with a range of skills and knowledge before starting the assignment – do not use the assignment to teach the content. Selecting a suitable scenario for the social media campaign may need some thought. It is probably unwise to give learners too much detail in the scenario as this will restrict learner choice and may result in learners producing very similar work. Rather than suggesting that learners develop a social media campaign for a specific organisation, you could ask learners to develop a campaign for a local charity or organisation of their own choice. Alternatively, you could give them a small range of different organisations (perhaps four or five of them) to choose from. Each learner needs to plan and implement an individual campaign and it is unlikely that you will be able to use real-life examples, so there will need to be a certain degree of simulation. Learners will need a 'client' to help them understand the requirements of the campaign, and this is likely to be you. Learners will also need an online 'audience' to respond to their campaign posts. Although it may limit the realism, it is probably best if learners largely perform this role for each other. Encourage them to play their roles as realistically as possible, responding to posts as they would in real life. Given the simulated nature of the task and the limited time available to post and respond to comments, the data available for analysis might not be very realistic. However, learners should still be able to comment on and evaluate the information.

Since learners will need to post their material on social media sites that are publically accessible, they will be able to see what everyone else has posted (this is necessary in order to play the role of audience for the process). You will therefore need to stress to learners that plagiarism is not allowed and they must not copy what other learners have done.



Getting started

This gives you a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the recommended assessment approach in the specification.

Unit 8: Business Applications of Social Media

Introduction

Given the dynamic nature of this topic there are plenty of opportunities for research. Learners can also draw on their personal experiences as the 'audience' for an organisation's social media promotions. Make sure, however, that you remind learners that this unit is not about the personal use of social media. It is unlikely that learners will be able to access social media websites from your centre, so much of the practical work and data gathering will need to be carried out by learners outside the classroom as homework/independent study.

Learning aim A – Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which organisations promote their products and services

- Much of the delivery of this learning aim is likely to be based on research into how different organisations have used social media. Due to the dynamic nature of social media, you will need to research current examples to help support your learners. Try to find examples from a wide range of organisations (for example large, small, local, national and international) offering different types of product and services and using social media in different ways (including different social media sites). For example, Toyota and Butlins, Domino's Pizza, Tesco, Nando's, Three Mobile, Nike and Redbull could give you some interesting case studies. Each of these have had, and continue to have, a successful social media presence.
- Give learners opportunities to visit the websites listed in the Resources section of this guide, which contain information about the use of social media for business and marketing purposes.
- Some of the marketing concepts in this unit may be unfamiliar to learners, for example the idea of a target audience. Ask the learners to look at some common print or TV advertisements and discuss what kinds of people they think they are aimed at. List a number of target audiences (in terms of age, gender, education level, etc) and have learners think about the type of material that would appeal to each audience.
- One way in which you can help learners develop the evaluative skills required for the higher grades is to set them a project to research. Ask them to select their favourite social media campaign and then present it to the group, giving reasons why it is their favourite. It is important to remind learners that they need to choose their favourite campaign, not their favourite product, and that they must give clear, detailed reasons as to why it is their favourite. They could also compare their favourite campaign with their least favourite, showing how one engages their interest while the other fails to, and discuss why this is.
- Work with learners to develop their analytical and evaluative skills. Explore different work-based contexts and give learners opportunities to consider the requirements of each scenario.
- If you can arrange a guest speaker, this could be very beneficial for learners. The ideal speaker could be from a small, young company that has used social media to promote its products or services. Alternatively, if your centre has a marketing manager, they may be able to talk to your learners about how they have used social media to attract young people to the college. If you cannot get someone to visit in person, see if it is possible for them to use Skype™ to give a remote presentation and answer learners' questions. Brief the speaker on the sort of topics

they should cover, for example, how they use social media, what they find effective (and ineffective) and the risks and issues of the use of social media.

Learning aim B – Develop a plan to use social media in an organisation to meet its business requirements

- Learners should be equipped with a range of skills and knowledge before starting the assignment – do not use the assignment to teach the content.
- If possible, arrange a guest speaker to talk to learners about marketing using social media, and about how to identify and engage a target audience. You may be able to swap a lesson with a business studies tutor, who can explain some of the basics of marketing in return for you talking to their learners about an IT topic. Alternatively, try to find a marketing manager or someone from an advertising agency to talk to learners, either in person or remotely. Brief your speaker carefully about what should be covered, and ask your learners to prepare questions to make the most of the session.
- Learners can develop their planning skills and practise creating engaging content using a case study project. One potential source of case studies could be as follows: each jobcentre (DWP) in the UK has a partner provider business mentoring service that gives business support to new business start-ups on the government's NEA (New Enterprise Allowance) initiative. This will mean a potential pot of new business start-ups where learners could be engaged in helping the individuals with their social media for business strategies. For example, someone starting out as a technical author, taxi driver, catering service, etc. Working in small groups, either give learners, or ask them to select, a social media campaign to plan. Each group needs to use a different case study. There is a wide range of possibilities in terms of case studies. The campaign could be to raise awareness of an organisation, to promote a newly founded organisation, or to promote a specific product or service. The organisation needs to be imaginary but it does not have to be a commercial company. It could be a charity, interest group or society, sports team, music group/band, or other non-commercial organisation. However, it should not be an individual. This project will be invaluable preparation for the final assessment, so encourage learners to take notes and make sure that all group members are fully engaged in the process.
- Learners must obtain feedback on their final projects, so you will need to organise an activity that enables them to practise giving and receiving feedback. To help develop learners' reviewing and evaluating skills, try to organise a review panel for the end of the delivery of learning aim B. This gives learners an opportunity to present their social media campaign plan to a panel of people. Getting the panel together is the main challenge – you need to find either subject experts or members of the public who use social media. For example, you could ask one or two second-year learners to join the panel, or any adult who is a regular social media user. In terms of experts, a member of the business studies tutoring team or a local businessperson could fit the bill. Ask the groups to produce a short presentation of their plan that focuses on their target audience and how they will engage with them. The review panel will give feedback on the plan and suggest improvements. It is important that learners listen carefully and take notes so that they get the maximum benefit from the process.
- Learners often struggle to understand how to justify the decisions they make. One way you can help them to develop these skills would be to hold a university style 'viva' with each group. Go through their social media plans asking questions about why the group chose the various activities in their plan and ask them to explain how the decisions that they made relate to the purpose of the plan and the business requirements.

Learning aim C – Implement the use of social media in an organisation



Learning aim C focuses on learners implementing the plan that they have created and analysing the results.

- Learners need to understand and implement connections between an organisation's social media presence, and their website and other media. This is both in terms of having consistent branding across all their media (for example styles, fonts, colours and logos) and in the links between the website and social media sites (and *vice-versa*). To demonstrate this, learners will need to set up a web page/website for the imaginary organisation for which they are running the social media campaign project. Alternatively, they could further help the New Enterprise Allowance start-ups mentioned in learning aim B. If learners are also completing the website development unit (*Unit 15: Website Development*), then it may be possible to link the two. Alternatively, learners can set up a simple website using, for example, Google's Blogger blog page creation tools. They can also use this site to investigate the use of Google Analytics™.
- Given the practical nature of this learning aim, it makes sense for learners to develop these skills by continuing with the social media campaign they started in learning aim B. Any unused examples from the previous list could be considered, such as Toyota and Butlins, Domino's Pizza, Tesco, Nando's, Three Mobile, Nike and Redbull which could all give learners some interesting case studies. Each of these have had, and continue to have, a successful social media presence. Using a simulated activity requires learners to take the role of social media users interacting with the posts made by other groups. This, of course, will limit the realism of the project, but given the timescales and the nature of the exercise there is not really an alternative. Brief the learners carefully on how to run the simulation, asking them to, as far as possible, behave as they would if it were a real activity. Also, set some ground rules about how they will be expected to interact with the imaginary organisation. This project is a very important 'practice run' for the live assessment and gives you an opportunity to iron out any issues that might occur with the simulation of a real-life social media campaign.
- As already mentioned, developing skills for reviewing and evaluating the process and outcomes is important for obtaining higher grades and for progression to higher education. Once the social media campaign project is complete, ask learners to prepare a presentation on what went well, what did not go so well and how they might change things if they were to repeat the process. This will also help prepare learners for the final assessment. Encourage the whole class to comment on each group's project and to give constructive criticism. Bear in mind that for some criteria learners have to optimise their social media content, so this is something that they need to consider. Feedback from others should help them see how to do this effectively.
- Learners will also need to develop evaluative skills for comparing what they have done in terms of planning and using social media with business requirements to check that their campaign is fit for purpose. Learners will probably benefit from some coaching to help them identify and understand the requirements of a business or organisation. Many of the activities that the learners will be carrying out will be simulated rather than real, so you will need to make the requirements of the imaginary organisations clear to the learners. Group discussions with feedback and guidance from you will help learners develop the required skills to carry out this kind of evaluation.
- Both Twitter and Facebook™ give quite a lot of information about their data collection and analysis tools (Facebook Insights and Twitter Analytics) on their help pages, which learners can work through. There is also a lot of information available about these tools elsewhere on the internet, including a number of video guides on YouTube or other video-sharing websites, which learners may find helpful. The same is true for Google Analytics.

- It will benefit learners to maintain a diary or take notes as they complete the various practical activities in the lessons relating to this learning aim. They should also note the comments that their peers make when they give feedback.
- In contrast to *Unit 7: IT Systems Security and Encryption* where the skills, knowledge and behaviours should be discussed by the group from an internal perspective (within the organisation), in this unit they will consider this looking outward or externally - at customers, the public and other external stakeholders. Learners should understand that large parts of computing are about process, documentation and professionalism. You should discuss what it means to be professional and why this is important in the industry.
- Ensure that learners understand how to fulfil the assessment criteria for the pass, merit and distinction grades.

Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Computing (NQF):

- *Unit 9: The Impact of Computing*
- *Unit 15: Website Development*

Resources

In addition to the resources listed below, publishers are likely to produce Pearson-endorsed textbooks that support this unit of the BTEC Nationals in Computing. Check the Pearson website (<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/published-resources.html>) for more information as titles achieve endorsement.

Websites

- www.socialmediaexaminer.com
Social Media Examiner is a blog site with many up-to-date articles about using social media for business purposes.
- www.socialmediatoday.com
Social Media Today also focuses on social media marketing for business.