

The business of 'eating with your eyes': Food influencers and marketing

1. Food on your feed

Discuss these questions with a partner:

- Do you follow any food bloggers or influencers on social media? Who?
- Have you ever visited a restaurant or tried a recipe because you saw it online?
- Why do you think photos of food are so popular on platforms like Instagram?
- What makes a food photo "eye-catching"?

2. The language of influence

Match the vocabulary with the correct definitions.

1. Influencer	a. A disadvantage or negative aspect of something.
2. Sponsorship deal	b. To result in something; to convert into.

3. To translate into	c. An agreement where a company pays a person to promote its product.
4. Eye-catching	d. Fairly small, especially when you were expecting more.
5. To get the word out	e. To share information about something with many people.
6. Downside	f. A person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service.
7. Modest	g. Visually attractive or noticeable.

3. Video: The recipe for success

Watch the video about food influencer Stephanie Perez and answer the questions.

1. How does Stephanie make money from her Instagram page? (List two ways)
2. What percentage of her total monthly income comes from her social media work?
3. According to the video, what are two main advantages of social media marketing for businesses compared to traditional advertising?
4. How does Oddfellows Ice Cream Company use social media?
5. What are the three downsides of social media marketing mentioned by Dr. Moore?

[Watch the video on YouTube](#)

4. Vocabulary in context

Complete the sentences with a word or phrase from the box.

popularity

connect

costly

immediate

puns

updated frequently

1. The influencer's captions are full of clever food _____ like "I love you from my head tomatoes."
2. The blogger built on the _____ of her Instagram page to launch a cookbook.
3. Social media allows businesses to _____ directly with their customers and get feedback.
4. When you post a photo, the reach is _____; thousands of people can see it right away.
5. To keep followers engaged, a social media account needs to be _____.
6. Ignoring bad reviews can be very _____ for a restaurant's reputation.

5. Grammar focus: Gerunds and infinitives

We often use **gerunds** (verb + -ing) and **infinitives** (to + verb) in different situations. Understanding when to use each is key.

- Use a **gerund** as the subject of a sentence ("**Tempting** people with photos isn't new."), after a preposition ("She gets paid for **hosting** events."), and after certain verbs (e.g., enjoy, avoid, finish).
- Use an **infinitive** to show purpose ("Use social media **to get** the word out."), after many adjectives ("It's expensive **to advertise**."), and after certain verbs (e.g., allow, want, decide).

Choose the correct form of the verb (gerund or infinitive) to complete each sentence.

1. Influencers enjoy (to share / sharing) their favourite restaurant discoveries.
2. It can be difficult (to build / building) a large following on Instagram.
3. Restaurants use social media (to attract / attracting) new customers.
4. (To take / Taking) good photos is essential for a food blogger.
5. She decided (to launch / launching) her blog after her friends praised her cooking.
6. He is responsible for (to update / updating) the company's social media accounts.

6. Useful phrases for social media strategy

Study these phrases for discussing the pros and cons of social media marketing.

Describing impact and reach:

- "A single post can **translate into** more customers."
- "The **reach that you get** is immediate."
- "It helps you **get your product out there**."
- "She has **built on the popularity** of her page."

Highlighting benefits:

- "It gives you an opportunity to **connect with your customers**."
- "It's a free and immediate form of marketing."
- "It's less expensive than traditional advertising."

Mentioning drawbacks:

- "There is a **downside**."
- "It's very **time-consuming**."
- "The account needs to be **updated frequently**."

- "Negative reviews can be very **costly**."

7. Role-play: Pitching an influencer campaign

Work in pairs. One of you is a restaurant owner, and the other is a marketing consultant. The consultant must persuade the owner to hire a food influencer.

Roles:

- **Restaurant Owner:** You are worried about the cost and risks. You prefer traditional advertising. Ask questions about the price, the results, and what happens if you get negative comments.
- **Marketing Consultant:** You believe an influencer campaign is the best way to attract new, younger customers. Use the phrases from this lesson to explain the benefits (reach, connecting with customers) and address the owner's concerns about the downsides.

Discussion points:

- The cost of hiring an influencer vs. the potential return.
- How to choose the right influencer for the restaurant's brand.
- How an influencer can "get the word out" faster than a newspaper ad.
- How to handle potential negative feedback.

8. Writing: Create a sponsored post

Imagine you are a food influencer who has a sponsorship deal with a local café. Write a short Instagram post (a caption for a photo) to promote their new

signature dessert.

Your post should:

- Describe the dessert in an **eye-catching** way.
- Include a clever food **pun**.
- Encourage your followers to visit the café.
- Use the hashtag #ad or #sponsored to show it's a paid post.