

TOEFL Listening Lesson 20

Setting: A college-level Marketing class.

Questions

1. What is the main topic of the discussion?

- A) The differences between traditional and online advertising
- B) How social media influences purchasing behavior
- C) The best platforms for starting a social media business
- D) The dangers of social media addiction

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- C) She ordered a meal kit service after reading online reviews.
- D) She signed up for an online class advertised on Facebook.

3. According to the professor, what term describes the one-sided relationships people form with influencers?

- A) Influencer marketing
- B) Emotional branding
- C) Parasocial interaction
- D) User-generated content

4. Why does the professor mention user-generated content?

- A) To explain how brands use customer posts to advertise
- B) To show how companies create fake reviews
- C) To suggest that influencers are losing credibility
- D) To criticize brands that don't invest in professional marketing

5. Why does the professor ask about algorithms?

- A) To show that companies misuse customer data
- B) To explain how personalized feeds influence buying decisions

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Script

Professor: Today we're going to talk about the influence of social media on purchasing decisions. Let's start with a simple question—how many of you have bought something recently because you saw it on social media?

Female Student: Definitely. I bought a skincare product after seeing it in a TikTok video that went viral.

Male Student: Same here, but for me it was sneakers. I kept seeing ads

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Why do you think that's so effective?

Female Student: It feels more genuine, I think. Like, when an influencer you trust recommends something, it's not like a regular commercial.

Professor: Exactly. This is called parasocial interaction—it's a kind of one-sided relationship where consumers feel personally connected to influencers. Even though the influencer doesn't know them, consumers trust their recommendations almost like they would a friend's.

Male Student: But aren't some of those reviews paid for? How do consumers know what's real?

Professor: That's a great point. Transparency is a big issue. That's why many countries now require influencers to disclose when a post is sponsored. Yet, studies show that even when people know a post is an ad, the emotional connection often still has an effect.

Female Student: I guess it's the story behind the product that matters. Like when they share how they use it in their everyday life.

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Male Student: Flash sales and limited-time offers? Like those countdown timers you see?

Professor: Right—creating a sense of urgency is very effective. Another strategy is user-generated content—encouraging customers to post about a product themselves. Can anyone think of an example?

Female Student: Maybe those coffee shops that have Instagrammable drinks and spaces? They basically get free advertising when people post pictures.

Professor: Exactly. The aesthetic appeal prompts people to share their experience, spreading brand awareness organically. Now, what about algorithms? How do they play a role?

Male Student: They keep showing you similar products once you click on one, so you're constantly reminded about it.

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strategies have led to viral success—and sometimes, backlash.

Answers

1. What is the main topic of the discussion?

Correct Answer: B) How social media influences purchasing behavior

2. What example does the female student give about purchasing something because of social media?

Correct Answer: B) She purchased a skincare product after seeing it in a viral TikTok video.

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Answer: A) To explain how brands use customer posts to advertise

5. Why does the professor ask about algorithms?

Correct Answer: B) To explain how personalized feeds influence buying decisions