
Topic Vocabulary >> Lesson 20: Advertising

You may be asked questions about advertising in your country. Read the following IELTS-style questions and answers below and pay attention to the phrases in **bold**. Use the ‘Definitions’ section at the bottom of the page to check the meaning of any phrases you don’t understand.

Part 1-style questions

Examiner: Are there any TV channels in your country that don’t have adverts?

Loraine: No ... they’re all **commercial channels** and **show adverts** all day long ... too many really ... and there’s also a lot of **product placement** going on ... especially in soap operas where they place an item just behind the actors.

Examiner: Do you enjoy watching adverts on TV?

Karin: No ... not really ... I hate **commercial breaks** during a film ... it really spoils the flow ... and during **prime time** viewing they seem to squeeze even more ads in than usual ... **celebrity endorsements** also get on my nerves ... everyone knows they’re only doing it because they’re getting paid.

Examiner: What are the best ways for ordinary people to advertise something they want to sell in your country?

Marianne: The simplest way is to **place an advert** in something like the **classified ads** section of a local paper ... or there’s the Internet of course ... there are lots of sites like eBay where you can **buy and sell** things online.

Part 2-style task

Describe an advert you once saw that was very effective. You should say

- where this advert appeared
- when you saw it
- what it was advertising

and say why you thought it was so effective.

Max: OK ... well this was about 4 years ago ... I was looking for some software to create videos ... one day I got an email from a **mailing list** I’d signed up to ... there was a link in it to a **press release** ... a company had written something about a new product that was similar to what I was looking for ... at the end of the press release there was a link to the **sales page** ... I hadn’t heard of the company but I was interested and clicked the link to the ad what caught my attention immediately were the number of testimonials from people who had

bought the software ... I think testimonials are like the online equivalent of **word of mouth** advertising and are really persuasive ... anyway ... when I got to the bottom of the page there was a great big **call to action** button inviting me to buy ... I was totally persuaded and ended up making a purchase ... what made it so effective I think was the power of those testimonials ... they'd been written by people very much like me ... they'd had a need and the software had obviously turned out to be just what they were looking for ... when you think that this was a newish company they wouldn't have had any **brand awareness** at all ... they probably wouldn't have had much of a budget for advertising ... obviously you wouldn't advertise a product like this through the **mass media** on TV ... they probably didn't even have an **advertising agency** to support them ... and yet they'd managed to create a great deal of **brand loyalty** from previous customers ... I think that was really effective.

Part 3-style questions

Examiner: What is it that makes an advert effective?

Spencer: Well ... when a company **launches a product** they have to consider the Internet ... especially how it can be used to spread the word on **social media** ... so in this context a video that **goes viral** is probably the most effective type of advert you could make.

Examiner: What are the advantages to companies of advertising on the Internet rather than TV?

Stelios: I'd imagine the main advantage is you can reach your **target audience** much more effectively ... if you bring out a **niche product** for example ... or you have a tight **advertising budget** ... you can advertise on particular sites that the people you want to reach visit ... that's not something you can do on TV.

Examiner: What things do advertising companies do that might give it a bad name?

Raol: For me the most irritating is **cold calling** ... we must get two or three of these every day at work ... then there's **junk mail** that gets posted through the letterbox ... and of course the online equivalent of this ... **spam emails** ... I think it's this kind of advertising that tends to annoy people.

Definitions

- **advertising agency**: a company that creates adverts for other companies
- **advertising budget**: the amount of money a company decides to spend on advertising
- **brand awareness**: how well people know a particular brand
- **brand loyalty**: the degree to which people continue to buy from the same brand or company
- **buy and sell**: often used to refer to the buying and selling of items between individuals

- **call to action**: something that encourages someone to take a particular action, such as making a purchase or clicking a link on a website

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- ***celebrity endorsement***: to have a well-known person promote a product
 - ***classified ads***: small advertisements often put in a newspaper or magazine by individuals
 - ***to cold call***: to call someone with the aim of selling something without them asking you to do so
 - ***commercial break***: the short period during TV programmes when advertisements are shown
 - ***commercial channel***: TV channels that make money from showing advertisements
 - ***to go viral***: to quickly become extremely popular on the Internet through social media
 - ***junk mail***: unwanted promotional leaflets and letters
 - ***to launch a product***: to introduce a new product
 - ***mailing list***: a list of names and contact details used by a company to send information and advertisements
 - ***mass media***: large media outlets like TV, newspapers and magazines
 - ***niche product***: a product that is aimed at a distinct group of people
 - ***to place an advert***: to put an advert somewhere
 - ***press release***: something written by a company for newspapers and magazines and websites to share and publish
 - ***prime time***: the time during the viewing schedule when most people watch TV or listen to a broadcast
 - ***product placement***: to advertise a product by using it as a prop in a TV show or film
 - ***sales page***: a page specifically used to promote a product or service
 - ***to show adverts***: to display adverts on TV
 - ***social media***: websites that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
 - ***spam email***: unwanted, promotional email
 - ***target audience***: the people a company want to sell their product or service to
 - ***word of mouth***: recommendations made by individuals to other individuals about a product of service