



# 1

# First impressions

## Starting point

- 1 Why are first impressions so important in business?
- 2 What gives us a first impression of a company or a person?

## Working with words | Talking about first impressions

- 1 When you want to know more about other companies or about colleagues and clients before you meet them, where do you normally start looking?
- 2 Read this text about online impressions. Which paragraph (1–3) is about ...?
  - a how companies need to make sure their website maintains a visitor's interest \_\_\_\_
  - b how people get their first impression of you or your business by going online first \_\_\_\_
  - c how people looking for work need to check their digital history before applying for a job \_\_\_\_

## VIRTUAL IMPRESSIONS

- 1 These days creating a good impression is more than just shaking hands and presenting a well-designed business card when you first meet someone. That's because before you even attended a meeting with a prospective client or a potential employer, you can guarantee that they've already searched your name, checked to see if your company has a good reputation via online review sites and even searched your personal online history.
- 2 To manage your online profile, start with your company's website. According to researchers at the Missouri University of Science and Technology, it takes under three seconds for an online visitor to start to form an opinion of your brand from the website. The researchers also tracked eye movements and discovered that visitors tend to gain their first impressions from the logo, photographs, menus and, in particular, the opportunity to make contact via social media. In other words, projecting the right kind of online image is not just about looking good, but companies should also make sure their customers can interact with them and start building a relationship.
- 3 Individuals such as freelancers and job-seekers also need to think carefully about their social media image before posting photos and comments online. A recent survey of 450 employers showed that more than 40% had taken a dislike to a potential employee as soon as they'd checked the person's Facebook page. One typical reason for rejection was finding out that the information on the CV didn't match the applicant's online profile. It's a good idea for anyone who is self-employed or looking for a job to think about how they come across to people and to make sure their online profile promotes a positive and truthful image.

### 3 Underline the answers to questions 1–3 in the text.

- 1 What are the different ways we can find out more about companies/people?
- 2 Which parts of a website are especially important to focus on?
- 3 What might potential employers find out about you online? What can you do about this?



- 4 Complete questions 1–8 with the correct verbs from the list. Check your answers by finding the words in **bold** in the article.

*build come create form have manage project take*

- 1 What kind of **impression** would your company like to \_\_\_\_\_ on its website?
- 2 What sort of **reputation** do you or your company \_\_\_\_\_?
- 3 How does your company \_\_\_\_\_ the right kind of **image** through its advertising?
- 4 How important is it to \_\_\_\_\_ your own online **profile**?
- 5 When you meet someone for the first time face-to-face, how do you \_\_\_\_\_ an **opinion** of them?
- 6 How do you think you \_\_\_\_\_ **across** to people you meet for the first time?
- 7 In your line of work, how important is it for you to \_\_\_\_\_ a close **relationship** with customers or clients?
- 8 Do you ever \_\_\_\_\_ an instant **dislike** to someone when you meet them for the first time? What are the reasons?

- 5 Work with a partner. Choose five of the questions in 4 to ask and answer.

- 6 ▶ 1.1 Listen to Zhifu Li, a website designer in Hong Kong, talking about adapting websites to local needs. Answer questions 1–2.

- 1 In what way is website localization like other forms of advertising?
- 2 What differences between Western and Asian websites does Zhifu mention?

- 7 Match each of these adjectives from audio script 1.1 to an adjective with a similar meaning from 1–12.

*expensive ineffective arrogant trustworthy suspicious complex  
functional modest ostentatious successful wary favourable*

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 reliable _____     | 7 practical _____       |
| 2 unsuccessful _____ | 8 complicated _____     |
| 3 showy _____        | 9 simple _____          |
| 4 positive _____     | 10 effective _____      |
| 5 costly _____       | 11 over-confident _____ |
| 6 mistrustful _____  | 12 cautious _____       |

- 8 Work with a partner.

- 1 Which of the adjectives in 7 are positive and which are negative? Explain your choices.
- 2 Using as many of the adjectives as possible, discuss what makes an effective website in your culture.
- 3 What aspects of a website would give a negative first impression?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 1** on page 106.

- 9 Work with a partner. Look at these things which can create a good or bad first impression of a company.

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • uniform                      | • dress code                    |
| • office / business premises   | • website                       |
| • telephone answering system   | • advertisements in the media   |
| • reception area               | • brochures / printed materials |
| • meeting / conference rooms   | • price                         |
| • quality of product / service | • speaking customer's language  |
| • warm greeting                | • reputation                    |

- 1 Which four are the most important and why?
- 2 Choose two of the factors that create a good impression of your company. Explain how.
- 3 Choose two of the factors that are less successful at creating a good impression of your company. How could they be improved?

