

# Digital Marketing Strategies – What You Should Know!

*Activity*

**Resource:** Wallet Wellness

**Grade(s):** 7 8

**Division(s):** Intermediate

## Cross-Curricular Expectations

### **H&PE**

- A1. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills
- D2. Making Healthy Choices: Demonstrate the ability to apply health knowledge and social-emotional learning skills to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions relating to their personal health and well-being

### **Math (Social-Emotional Learning)**

A1. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills and the Mathematical Processes: Apply, to the best of their ability, a variety of social-emotional learning skills to support their use of mathematical processes and their learning in connection with the expectations in the other five strands of the mathematics curriculum

### **Math (Financial Literacy)**

Consumer and Civic Awareness:

- Grade 7 - F1.4: Identify various societal and personal factors that may influence financial decision-making and describe the effects that each might have

- 
- Grade 8 - F1.5: Compare various ways for consumers to get more value for their money when spending ... and determine the best choice for a different scenario

## Language

Media Literacy – Grades 7 and 8

- A2.4 – Media Literacy: Forms, Conventions, and Techniques: Evaluate the use of the various forms, **conventions**, and techniques of **digital** and **media texts**, consider the impact on the audience, and apply this understanding when analyzing and creating texts
- A2.5 - Media, Audience, and Production: Demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships between the form, message, and context of texts, the intended and unintended audience, and the purpose for production

## Geography

Inquiry - Development and Quality of Life Issues – Grade 8:

B2.1 - Formulate questions to guide investigations into issues related to global development and quality of life from a geographic perspective (*e.g., implications of fair trade; social, political, economic, and/or environmental considerations*)

## Activity Description

Students learn to identify marketing strategies used by businesses to influence their spending decisions.

## Learning Goals

- I can identify common marketing strategies and how they influence spending.
- I can distinguish between fair strategies and manipulative strategies.
- I can develop strategies to make informed decisions about spending.

## Materials

- Calculator
- Chart paper (for group work)

- Markers
- Marketing Strategies List

## Key Concepts

Marketing strategies

## Prior Knowledge and Skills

- Basic understanding of budgeting, spending, and saving
- Basic operation with decimals
- Percentage calculations and comparisons
- Simple interest rate calculations
- Multi-step problem solving
- Data analysis and interpretation
- The term “surcharges”
- The term “fees”
- The term “debt”
- The term “interest rates”
- The term “subscriptions”

## Minds On

- Through a whole class discussion, explain to students that marketing strategies are ways companies influence consumers into buying products. Use the following teacher prompts to generate a list of marketing strategies that students are aware of/familiar with:
  - “Imagine yourself at a shopping centre, a plaza, or a street of local stores. You spot a familiar store, restaurant, or service. What attracts your attention first? Are there posters or signs? What do they say? What might influence your decision to enter the store? What might encourage you to buy something there? Let’s generate a list of marketing strategies used to encourage spending.”

- “Imagine shopping online. What attracts you to a website or app? Are there banners, pop-up windows, or ads? What do they say? What might encourage you to buy something from this site? Let’s add to our list of marketing strategies used to encourage spending.”
- Record students’ responses on a whiteboard, chalkboard, or chart paper. Sample student responses may include:
  - “Buy one, get one deals”
  - “Percentage off deals”
  - “Bundle deals”
  - “Free item with purchase deals”
  - “Brand awareness (reputations of some brands)”
  - “Social media and influencer marketing (a brand uses an influencer to leverage its products online to influence their audience)”
  - “Loyalty programs”
  - “Seasonal promotions”
  - “Limited time deals”
- Explain to students that marketing strategies can be grouped into different categories: Fair Marketing Strategies and Manipulative Marketing Strategies.
  - **Fair Marketing Strategies:** are honest, transparent methods that help customers make informed decisions, where customers feel aware of details and in control of their decisions.
  - **Manipulative Marketing Strategies:** use psychological tricks, deception, or pressure to get people to buy things they might not need or can't afford, where the customer may feel pressured or regret the decision afterwards.

## Action

- In groups of 3–4, have students review the Marketing Strategies List (refer to Materials) to learn about different kinds of marketing strategies.

- After reviewing the Marketing Strategies List, have students create a T-Chart for sorting the strategies into two categories: Fair Marketing Strategies and Manipulative Marketing Strategies.
- On the marketing strategies sorting T-Chart, have groups record each strategy in the corresponding column of the chart.
- Sorting activity answer key:
  - Examples of Fair Marketing Strategies
    - Brand awareness
    - Social media/influencer marketing
    - Loyalty programs
    - Seasonal promotions
    - Bundles
    - Discounts
    - Email marketing
    - Free with purchase
    - Buy one, get one free/half price
  - Examples of Manipulative Marketing Strategies
    - Limited time deals (false scarcity: e.g., “only 3 left!” or “only 24 hours left!”)
    - Hidden fees (surcharges for processing, extra baggage cost, service fees)
    - Subscription traps
    - Debt targeting (specifically advertising to people who are already in debt and might be desperate)
    - Payday loan marketing (advertising high interest loans to people who do not have the income to support their life but need money fast)

## Consolidation

- Review Teacher Reference Notes in advance of the consolidation.
- Lead a discussion on how you can recognize harmful marketing practices and how a person can try to avoid falling into the traps. During the discussion, have students explain how they differentiated between the two practices (fair marketing strategy and manipulative marketing strategy).

## Debrief

- With students, co-create a tip sheet of key factors to be aware of to determine if a marketing strategy is harmful.
- In the tip sheet, include a list of questions a person might ask themselves in order to avoid being manipulated by harmful marketing strategies. Sample student responses may include:
  - “Do I really need this or just want it?”
  - “What is the TRUE total cost?”
  - “Have I compared at least two other options?”
  - “Am I being pressured to decide quickly?”
  - “Can I afford this without borrowing money and going into debt?”

## Extended Learning

To extend the learning of this activity, consider completing the [Marketing MythBusters](#) activation or the [Smart Swipe](#) activation.

## Teacher Notes

### Equity Considerations

- Be sensitive to students who may be experiencing financial insecurity.
- Emphasize that being influenced by marketing is normal and not a personal failing.
- Focus on empowerment rather than shame.
- Share with students how marketing strategies may vary across cultures or regions (e.g., highlight representation and diversity within advertising, such as gender stereotypes, cultural symbols, and

accessibility). Encourage students to analyze how different groups are targeted or excluded in marketing campaigns.

## Why do we need to know this?

- Marketing strategies are a deliberate business strategy intended to influence buyer decisions.
- The "difficult to cancel" policy generates significant revenue for businesses.
- Companies make cancellation intentionally difficult to discourage customers from walking away or completing the cancellation process.
- If it's too good to be true, it probably is. Comparison shopping can help you see what the market value is to know if the cost is realistic. If not, you may be missing the restriction. Make sure to read the fine print.
- If you don't calculate before you commit, you may get stuck with a product or service you don't want.

## Strategies to Make Informed Choices

- Always calculate the true total cost of purchases.
- Take time to think before making purchases, especially with "limited time" offers.
- Research alternatives and read fine print.
- Be especially cautious of marketing targeted at young people.
- Create a budget and stick to it to avoid impulse purchases.
- Protect yourself from subscription traps by reading the fine print and knowing what you are committing to.
- Question "easy payment" options that offer to set up a payment for you as these might cost you more or be hard to cancel.
- Recognize psychological manipulation (tricks that make you feel like you are getting a good deal or making a good decision).
- Build financial literacy and knowledge (e.g., understanding interest rates, credit scores, rights as a consumer, protections).