

Reading and Note-Taking Assignment: How Small Businesses Turn Social Media Attention into Income

I chose to analyse the article *If you post it, they will come: The businesses turning likes into livelihoods*, written by Elliot Deady and published by BBC News in October 2025. The piece looks at how small, independent firms across Essex and further afield have used social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram and Facebook to find new customers and grow their sales. For my business studies, this is really useful because it shows real examples of how modern marketing works for businesses that don't have big budgets or dedicated advertising teams. In this assignment, I will summarise what I read, explain the key points I noted down, link them to what I have learned in class, and give my own thoughts on what this means for small businesses today. All the information comes from this source, and I have put everything into my own words to show my understanding.

About the Source and My Reading Process

Before writing anything, I read the article through three times to make sure I understood it fully. First I just read it to get the main idea: that social media isn't just for fun – it can be life-changing for small shops and services. Next, I went through it again and made notes on each different business mentioned, the facts and figures given, and what the owners said themselves. Finally, I grouped my notes together to see what lessons these examples had in common, and what problems or downsides were also mentioned. The article is based on interviews with business owners and industry experts, so it

is primary research gathered by the journalist, rather than just opinions or second-hand information (Deady, 2025).

Case Studies: The Businesses in the Article

The article focuses on businesses in different industries, and I have summarised each one from my notes below:

Honywood Sandwich Shop

This sandwich shop is in Basildon, tucked away on an industrial estate where you wouldn't expect lots of passing trade. Owner Murat Mutlu told the reporter he was shocked when people started travelling up to three hours just to try his chicken burger – and he hadn't even paid for any adverts. The attention started when one of his regular customers posted a video about the shop online, and other people saw it and decided to visit. Mutlu employs nine people, and says he still gets local customers for breakfast and lunch on weekdays, but the viral posts have brought in visitors from all over the region too (Deady, 2025).

Other Food and Drink Businesses

The article also mentions a few more food businesses that got popular online:

- Binley Mega Chippy saw its sales go up ten times over after videos of it were shared widely.
- Ben Newman, who works at a chip shop and calls himself “Spudman”, posted clips of how he fills his jacket potatoes. These went viral, and brought lots of new people to his shop.
- Destiny Harold, known online as the “Chip Shop Diva”, became well-known after appearing in videos from her workplace, which helped bring in more customers for her family's fish and chip shop (Deady, 2025).

Krystals Boutique

Kristy Chamberlain runs a shop selling prom dresses in Leigh-on-Sea. She started posting on TikTok about 18 months before the article was written, after her son suggested she try it. Her team doesn't just post photos of dresses for sale – they make short videos about funny things that happen at work. These have been viewed millions of times, and now teenagers travel from places like the Channel Islands and even Cyprus to buy from her. Chamberlain says customers tell her they are only making the trip to visit her shop, and have no other reason to come to the area (Deady, 2025).

Lindy Loo's Boutique

Linda Hunter sold clothes at markets for 46 years, but switched to running her business fully online during the coronavirus pandemic. She uses Instagram to show her stock, and now sends orders all over the UK and as far as Australia. She works from a warehouse near Epping, and admits that running her business this way takes up almost all her time – she joked “This has taken over my life” when speaking to the journalist. The article notes that government data says more than 200 million businesses around the world now use Instagram to find customers (Deady, 2025).

Little Love's Pamper Bus

Chloe Huggins and Ross Bliss set up their mobile children's pamper party service in December 2024. They post videos of their converted bus and the parties they run on TikTok, Instagram and Facebook. In less than a year, their content had been seen about 45 million times, and they got enquiries from people in the USA and the Bahamas. They had originally planned this as something to do at weekends

alongside their other jobs, but now they run it full-time and have bookings almost every single day (Deady, 2025).

What I Learned: Key Business Lessons

From reading the article and organising my notes, I noticed several things that all these businesses did right, which matches what we have talked about in my business lessons:

Being real works better than selling

Marketing expert Faye Martin explained that people can tell straight away when something is just an advert, and they don't like being "sold to". Instead, people prefer to buy from people – so showing what the business is actually like, or sharing funny or relatable moments, works much better. This is called "authenticity", and every business in the article used this approach: they didn't use fancy scripts or professional ads, just real clips of what they do every day (Deady, 2025).

Social media levels the playing field

Small businesses usually can't afford big billboards or TV adverts. But posting on social media is free, and figures from the article show around 1.5 million UK businesses already use TikTok. This means a small shop in a quiet town can get just as much attention as a big national company, if their content connects with people (Deady, 2025).

What customers say matters most

For Honeywood Sandwich Shop, the growth didn't come from posts the business made – it came from videos their customers shared.

This is “word-of-mouth” marketing, which we know is the most trusted kind because people believe what other customers say more than what a business says about itself (Deady, 2025).

Location doesn’t have to be a problem

Lots of these businesses are in places you wouldn’t usually go out of your way to visit – industrial estates, small seaside towns, or off the main road. Social media means they don’t have to rely on people walking past; they can reach anyone, anywhere (Deady, 2025).

Things I Noticed That Aren’t Always Mentioned

While the article focuses on how well these businesses are doing, I also picked up on some difficulties they face, which are important to think about:

- Keeping up with demand: Going viral can bring too many customers too fast. You might run out of stock, not have enough staff, or struggle to keep up with orders – and if you can’t deliver, people will stop recommending you.
- It takes a lot of time: Most of these owners don’t have someone to do their social media for them, so they have to film, edit and post on top of all their other work. Linda Hunter’s comment about it taking over her life shows how hard this can be.
- You depend on the platforms: If TikTok or Instagram change their rules, or if people start using a different app instead, these businesses could lose their main way of getting noticed very quickly.
- Viral attention might not last: Just because you are popular now doesn’t mean people will keep talking about you. Businesses still need to give good service and great products to keep customers coming back (Deady, 2025).

Conclusion

Reading this article has helped me understand that social media is more than just a trend – it is a really important tool for small

businesses. It gives them a way to compete with bigger companies, reach customers they could never have found otherwise, and show people what makes them special. But it isn't an easy fix: you have to be yourself, keep putting in the work, and make sure you can handle the growth when it comes. These examples have shown me that for small businesses, connecting with people online is just as important as the product or service you sell.

References

Deady, E. (2025) If you post it, they will come: The businesses turning likes into livelihoods. Available

at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm2701py5npo>