

Marketing English

Instructor guide for high-level ESL learners working in brand, product marketing, growth, content, SEO, lifecycle, marketing ops, demand generation, social, and agency roles

Audience: instructors, marketing English coaches, corporate learning teams, agency trainers, and advanced professional English programs

Focus: high-level professional English for marketing workplaces, including customer insight, positioning, campaign briefs, content, SEO, paid media, lifecycle marketing, analytics, attribution, compliance, brand risk, and realistic marketing dialogue.

Designed for advanced ESL learners who already work in marketing, product marketing, growth, content, brand, marketing operations, demand generation, social, agency, or marketing-adjacent roles.

Teaching stance: marketing English is persuasion under constraint. Learners need to be clear, creative, evidence-aware, compliance-aware, and commercially useful. This course teaches professional language and judgment, not a guarantee that a campaign, channel, claim, or tactic will work in every market.

Purpose and Teaching Position

This EFSP curriculum is for high-level ESL learners working in marketing environments: brand marketers, product marketers, content strategists, SEO specialists, performance marketers, lifecycle marketers, marketing operations staff, demand generation teams, social media managers, agency staff, and marketing-adjacent business partners.

The course is not an introduction to advertising. It trains professional English for marketing work: clarifying strategy, writing usable briefs, giving creative feedback, challenging metrics, explaining attribution, aligning with sales, protecting compliance, and communicating campaign performance under uncertainty.

Core language challenge

Marketing teams compress judgment into short phrases: ICP, persona, positioning, proof point, CTA, ROAS, CAC, MQL, SQL, attribution window, incrementality, creative fatigue, search intent, deliverability, claim substantiation, material connection, and holding statement. Learners need the vocabulary and the conversational habits around it: clarify audience, challenge assumptions, connect metrics to decisions, and protect trust.

Course objectives

- Use marketing terminology accurately in campaign briefs, creative reviews, channel plans, analytics readouts, content planning, product launches, agency meetings, and executive updates.
- Translate vague growth goals into audience, insight, positioning, message, channel, offer, budget, measurement, and decision criteria.
- Discuss brand, content, SEO, paid media, lifecycle marketing, marketing operations, attribution, experimentation, and funnel performance in precise professional English.
- Push back on unclear briefs, unsupported claims, vanity metrics, weak test design, misleading attribution, poor audience fit, and risky compliance shortcuts.
- Participate in realistic marketing dialogues: positioning debates, campaign planning, legal review, sales handoff disputes, agency budget negotiations, social response, and executive performance reviews.
- Write clear marketing outputs: creative briefs, message maps, channel rationales, test plans, campaign readouts, MQL definitions, compliance notes, and stakeholder updates.

Marketing Communication Principles

Start with audience, not tactic

Marketing requests often arrive as tactics: make a video, run ads, send an email, post on social, write a blog. Strong marketing English asks what audience the tactic serves, what problem or desire the audience has, what action should change, and how the team will know whether the work mattered.

Use evidence without killing creative work

- Use 'the insight suggests' when connecting customer research to messaging.
- Use 'the claim needs substantiation' when creative language makes a factual promise.
- Use 'directionally promising but inconclusive' when test evidence is weak.
- Use 'platform-reported' when ad data may not match CRM or finance data.
- Use 'brand risk' when a tactic may create short-term attention but damage trust.

Turn vague marketing requests into answerable questions

Vague request	Stronger marketing question
We need awareness.	Awareness among which audience, for which problem, in which channel, measured by which signal?

Vague request	Stronger marketing question
Make it more premium.	Which brand cue is missing: tone, proof, layout, imagery, offer, or audience fit?
Scale the campaign.	What is the constraint: audience size, creative fatigue, CPA, conversion rate, or lead quality?
Marketing sourced this deal.	Which attribution model, touchpoints, CRM rules, and sales feedback support that claim?

Nomenclature and Jargon

Teach these terms as working vocabulary. Learners should be able to define the term, use it in a realistic sentence, ask a clarification question, and explain the business consequence. Because marketing terms vary by platform, company, funnel model, and reporting setup, learners should ask which definition is being used.

Strategy and customer insight

Term	Working meaning
Segment	A meaningful subset of the market based on shared traits, needs, behavior, or value.
ICP	Ideal customer profile; the type of account or customer most likely to succeed and create value.
Persona	A model of a target user, buyer, or influencer used to guide messaging and content.
JTBD	Jobs to be done; what the customer is trying to accomplish in a situation.
Insight	A non-obvious customer truth or tension that can guide strategy or creative work.
TAM	Total addressable market; the broad revenue opportunity if the product served the whole market.
Positioning	How a brand or product should be understood relative to alternatives.
Value proposition	Specific value promised to a specific audience, supported by proof.

Brand, messaging, and creative

Term	Working meaning
Brand promise	The core expectation a brand creates for customers.
Messaging hierarchy	Ordered structure of headline, value proposition, pillars, proof points, and CTA.
Proof point	Evidence that supports a claim, such as data, customer story, demo, or benchmark.
Tone of voice	The brand's consistent style of expression across channels.
CTA	Call to action; the requested next step for the audience.
Creative brief	Document that guides creative work with audience, objective, insight, message, mandatories, and constraints.
Campaign idea	The central creative concept connecting message, audience, and execution.
Brand consistency	Maintaining recognizable identity, tone, and promise across touchpoints.

GTM and product marketing

Term	Working meaning
GTM	Go-to-market plan for launching or growing a product, feature, offer, or market motion.
Launch tier	Level of launch investment and support based on business impact and complexity.

Term	Working meaning
Buyer journey	Stages a buyer moves through from awareness to evaluation, decision, purchase, and adoption.
Sales enablement	Materials and training that help sales communicate value and move opportunities forward.
Use case	A specific situation where a customer uses the product to solve a problem.
Competitive positioning	How the product is framed against alternatives or status quo.
Objection handling	Language and proof used to respond to buyer concerns.
Win-loss insight	Learning from deals won or lost to improve positioning, product, or sales execution.

Content and SEO

Term	Working meaning
Search intent	The likely goal behind a search query.
SERP	Search engine results page.
Keyword	A word or phrase targeted because people search for it.
Metadata	Page title, description, and other information that helps describe content.
Internal linking	Links between pages on the same site to help users and search engines navigate.
Backlink	A link from another site to your site.
Canonical	Signal indicating the preferred version of similar or duplicate pages.
Content brief	Instructions for a content asset, including audience, intent, angle, claims, proof, and CTA.

Paid media and acquisition

Term	Working meaning
CPM	Cost per thousand impressions.
CPC	Cost per click.
CTR	Click-through rate; clicks divided by impressions.
CPA	Cost per acquisition or action, depending on the defined conversion.
CAC	Customer acquisition cost; total acquisition cost divided by new customers, depending on definition.
ROAS	Return on ad spend; revenue attributed to ads divided by ad spend.
Retargeting	Advertising to people who previously interacted with the brand or site.
Creative fatigue	Declining performance when the audience has seen the same creative too often.

Lifecycle, CRM, and email

Term	Working meaning
Lead	A person or account showing some level of interest or fit.
MQL	Marketing-qualified lead based on agreed fit and engagement criteria.
SQL	Sales-qualified lead accepted or qualified by sales for active pursuit.
Nurture	Planned communication that develops interest or readiness over time.

Term	Working meaning
Segmentation	Dividing contacts or accounts into groups for relevant communication.
Deliverability	Ability of email to reach inboxes and avoid filtering or complaints.
Open rate	Percentage of delivered emails recorded as opened, with known measurement limitations.
Suppression list	List of contacts excluded from campaigns because of opt-out, risk, irrelevance, or policy.

Analytics and measurement

Term	Working meaning
Attribution	Assigning credit to marketing touchpoints for an outcome.
Incrementality	Additional outcome caused by marketing that would not have happened otherwise.
Lift test	Experiment estimating causal impact by comparing exposed and control groups.
Cohort	Group of users or customers sharing a time period, behavior, or trait.
Funnel conversion	Rate at which people move from one stage to the next.
Sourced pipeline	Pipeline credited to marketing as the original source, depending on model.
Influenced pipeline	Pipeline where marketing touched the opportunity, depending on model.
Vanity metric	Metric that looks impressive but does not support a real decision.

Compliance, privacy, and brand safety

Term	Working meaning
Substantiation	Evidence supporting express or implied advertising claims before launch.
Material connection	Relationship such as payment, employment, or free product that may require disclosure.
Disclosure	Clear communication of information needed to avoid misleading the audience.
Consent	Permission or legal basis for certain marketing communications or data use.
Opt-out	Process allowing people to stop receiving certain communications.
Dark pattern	Design that manipulates or misleads users into choices they may not intend.
Brand safety	Controls to reduce placement near harmful or unsuitable content.
Holding statement	Short approved response used while facts are still being confirmed.

Instructor Module Plans

Module 1. Marketing Strategy: Audience, Insight, Problem, Outcome (90 minutes)

Marketing conversations often fail because the team jumps to tactics before agreeing on audience, problem, insight, desired behavior, and business outcome.

Learning objectives

- Distinguish goal, audience, segment, ICP, persona, insight, problem, offer, and channel.
- Ask strategy questions that turn vague requests into usable briefs.
- Explain the difference between awareness, demand, pipeline, retention, and brand equity goals.

Core concepts

- Audience: the group being addressed; segment: a meaningful subset; ICP: the best-fit customer profile; persona: a useful humanized model, not a stereotype.
- Insight: a tension or truth about the customer that can guide message, offer, and creative.
- Outcome: the measurable behavior or business result the campaign is designed to influence.

Activities

1. Brief triage: learners diagnose a vague campaign request and identify missing strategy elements.
2. Audience split: learners separate buyer, user, influencer, approver, and blocker in a B2B scenario.
3. Outcome ladder: learners map awareness, engagement, lead, pipeline, revenue, retention, and advocacy goals.

Learner outputs

- Marketing strategy question bank.
- Audience and outcome map.
- Brief clarification email.

Facilitator note

When learners jump to a tactic or metric, ask: who is the audience, what insight supports it, what proof is needed, which channel is appropriate, what decision will the metric inform, and what compliance or brand risk exists?

Module 2. Positioning, Messaging, Brand Voice, and Proof (90 minutes)

Strong marketing language says who the product is for, what problem it solves, why it is different, and what proof supports the claim. Weak marketing language only sounds positive.

Learning objectives

- Use positioning and message architecture terms accurately.
- Write value propositions, proof points, CTAs, and objection-handling language.
- Distinguish brand voice from vague preference or personal taste.

Core concepts

- Positioning: the strategic place a product, service, or brand should occupy in the customer's mind relative to alternatives.
- Value proposition: the specific value promised to a specific audience, supported by proof.
- Proof point: evidence that makes a claim credible, such as data, customer story, demo, benchmark, or third-party validation.

Activities

1. Message rewrite: learners turn generic copy into audience-specific value propositions.
2. Proof audit: learners identify claims that need evidence before publication.
3. Creative feedback drill: learners give feedback based on brief, brand voice, audience, and objective instead of taste.

Learner outputs

- Messaging hierarchy.
- Proof point checklist.
- Creative feedback phrase bank.

Facilitator note

When learners jump to a tactic or metric, ask: who is the audience, what insight supports it, what proof is needed, which channel is appropriate, what decision will the metric inform, and what compliance or brand risk exists?

Module 3. Campaign Briefs, GTM Planning, and Cross-Functional Alignment (90 minutes)

Campaigns sit between strategy and execution. Learners need language for goals, target audience, offer, channel mix, timeline, assets, sales handoff, launch tier, dependencies, and decision rights.

Learning objectives

- Write and discuss a campaign brief with enough detail for creative, channel, sales, and analytics teams.
- Run alignment conversations among product, sales, legal, customer success, and agency partners.
- Use tradeoff language when timeline, budget, quality, compliance, and scope conflict.

Core concepts

- GTM plan: coordinated plan for bringing a product, feature, offer, or campaign to market.
- Launch tier: level of investment and cross-functional support based on expected business impact.
- Sales enablement: materials, messaging, training, and tools that help sales use campaign demand effectively.

Activities

1. Brief build: learners create a campaign brief from a messy stakeholder request.
2. Alignment meeting: learners negotiate scope, timeline, and dependencies across teams.
3. Launch readiness check: learners decide whether to launch, delay, or reduce scope.

Learner outputs

- Campaign brief template.
- GTM alignment script.
- Launch readiness checklist.

Facilitator note

When learners jump to a tactic or metric, ask: who is the audience, what insight supports it, what proof is needed, which channel is appropriate, what decision will the metric inform, and what compliance or brand risk exists?

Module 4. Content, SEO, Thought Leadership, and Editorial Judgment (90 minutes)

Content marketing is not filling a calendar. Good content connects audience intent, search behavior, expertise, brand credibility, distribution, and conversion path.

Learning objectives

- Discuss SEO, content strategy, editorial calendars, keyword intent, internal linking, metadata, and content quality.
- Explain when a piece is meant to educate, rank, convert, nurture, or support sales.
- Push back on thin content, keyword stuffing, unsupported claims, and content that lacks a distribution plan.

Core concepts

- Search intent: what the searcher likely wants to accomplish, such as learn, compare, buy, or troubleshoot.
- Content quality: usefulness, clarity, relevance, credibility, originality, and alignment with audience need.
- Distribution: the plan for how the audience will actually find or receive the content.

Activities

1. Intent mapping: learners match keywords to audience stage and content format.
2. SEO/legal review: learners revise a claim-heavy article so it remains useful and compliant.
3. Editorial critique: learners identify whether a content idea has audience, angle, proof, and distribution.

Learner outputs

- Content brief.
- SEO intent map.
- Editorial feedback script.

Facilitator note

When learners jump to a tactic or metric, ask: who is the audience, what insight supports it, what proof is needed, which channel is appropriate, what decision will the metric inform, and what compliance or brand risk exists?

Module 5. Paid Media, Performance Marketing, and Attribution (90 minutes)

Performance marketing requires disciplined language around targeting, bidding, budget, CPA, CAC, ROAS, incrementality, attribution windows, landing-page quality, and diminishing returns.

Learning objectives

- Use paid media metrics and channel terms accurately.
- Explain why platform-reported conversions may not equal business impact.
- Discuss budget shifts, testing, audience saturation, creative fatigue, and incrementality.

Core concepts

- Attribution: assigning credit to touchpoints, channels, or campaigns for an outcome.
- Incrementality: whether marketing caused additional outcomes that would not have happened otherwise.
- ROAS vs profit: revenue return on ad spend does not automatically include margin, overhead, retention, or customer quality.

Activities

1. Metric debate: learners compare CPA, CAC, ROAS, LTV, payback, and pipeline quality.
2. Attribution dispute: learners explain why last-click, platform, and CRM numbers disagree.
3. Budget recommendation: learners decide whether to scale, pause, or test a paid channel.

Learner outputs

- Paid media readout template.
- Attribution explanation script.
- Budget recommendation memo.

Facilitator note

When learners jump to a tactic or metric, ask: who is the audience, what insight supports it, what proof is needed, which channel is appropriate, what decision will the metric inform, and what compliance or brand risk exists?

Module 6. Lifecycle, CRM, Email, Marketing Ops, and Sales Handoff (90 minutes)

Lifecycle marketing depends on definitions and trust. Marketing and sales must agree on lead stages, qualification criteria, nurture logic, consent, deliverability, handoff, and feedback loops.

Learning objectives

- Use lifecycle terms such as lead, MQL, SQL, nurture, segmentation, suppression, deliverability, and UTM accurately.
- Discuss email metrics with caveats, including open-rate limitations and click-quality questions.

- Negotiate MQL criteria and sales follow-up expectations without turning the meeting into blame.

Core concepts

- Lifecycle stage: a shared category for where a contact or account sits in the marketing and sales process.
- MQL: marketing-qualified lead, usually based on fit and engagement criteria that sales agrees are worth follow-up.
- Deliverability: whether emails reach inboxes and avoid filtering, complaints, and reputation damage.

Activities

1. Lead-definition workshop: learners define MQL and SQL for a sample B2B company.
2. Email readout: learners explain open rate, click rate, unsubscribe rate, and conversion rate with caveats.
3. Sales handoff role-play: learners respond when sales says the leads are low quality.

Learner outputs

- Lifecycle definition table.
- Email performance readout.
- Marketing-sales feedback script.

Facilitator note

When learners jump to a tactic or metric, ask: who is the audience, what insight supports it, what proof is needed, which channel is appropriate, what decision will the metric inform, and what compliance or brand risk exists?

Module 7. Analytics, Experimentation, Funnel Reporting, and Executive Readouts (90 minutes)

Marketing analytics is not only reporting numbers. Learners must explain source, definition, confidence, attribution, sample size, funnel movement, and what the business should do next.

Learning objectives

- Discuss dashboards, KPIs, funnel conversion, cohort analysis, A/B tests, lift, sample size, and statistical caution.
- Separate vanity metrics from decision metrics.
- Present executive readouts that connect activity, learning, pipeline, revenue, and next action.

Core concepts

- KPI: a metric tied to a strategic objective or decision, not just any available number.
- A/B test: a controlled comparison that requires a clear hypothesis, sufficient sample, and decision rule.
- Sourced vs influenced pipeline: different ways to describe marketing's relationship to sales opportunities.

Activities

1. Dashboard cleanup: learners remove vanity metrics and add decision metrics.
2. Test readout: learners explain an inconclusive A/B test without pretending there is a winner.
3. Executive summary: learners write a one-page campaign readout for CFO and CRO audiences.

Learner outputs

- Analytics readout template.
- Experiment design worksheet.
- Executive marketing update.

Facilitator note

When learners jump to a tactic or metric, ask: who is the audience, what insight supports it, what proof is needed, which channel is appropriate, what decision will the metric inform, and what compliance or brand risk exists?

Module 8. Compliance, Privacy, Claims, Influencers, Brand Safety, and Crisis Response (90 minutes)

Marketing teams need persuasive language that stays truthful, substantiated, permission-aware, and brand-safe. Under pressure, the best marketers can protect both growth and trust.

Learning objectives

- Use compliance language for claim substantiation, endorsements, disclosures, consent, opt-out, privacy, and brand safety.
- Push back on risky copy, dark patterns, undisclosed incentives, fake urgency, and unsupported testimonials.
- Respond to social backlash or reputational risk with calm, approved, audience-aware language.

Core concepts

- Claim substantiation: evidence supporting express or implied advertising claims before they are made.
- Material connection: a relationship such as payment, employment, or free product that may need clear disclosure in endorsements.
- Crisis response: coordinated communication that names known facts, avoids speculation, and protects customers and trust.

Activities

1. Compliance review: learners revise ad copy with unsupported claims and unclear disclosures.
2. Influencer disclosure role-play: learners explain why a creator must disclose compensation or free product.
3. Social response simulation: learners draft holding statements, internal updates, and escalation notes.

Learner outputs

- Marketing compliance checklist.
- Influencer disclosure script.
- Crisis response language bank.

Facilitator note

When learners jump to a tactic or metric, ask: who is the audience, what insight supports it, what proof is needed, which channel is appropriate, what decision will the metric inform, and what compliance or brand risk exists?

Assessment and Coaching

Pre-course diagnostic

- Learner explains their marketing role in 90 seconds, including audience, channels, metrics, stakeholders, and highest-risk conversations.
- Learner defines twelve marketing terms and uses six in realistic workplace sentences.
- Learner handles a short role-play: a senior stakeholder asks for a campaign with unclear audience and unrealistic timeline.

Performance rubric

Skill	Developing	Proficient	Strong
Terminology	Recognizes terms but uses them loosely.	Uses marketing terms accurately in context.	Defines terms, asks which reporting model applies, and adjusts by audience.
Strategic clarity	Accepts vague requests as given.	Clarifies audience, objective, insight, channel, and success metric.	Turns ambiguity into a brief that teams can execute.
Measurement	Reports metrics without caveats.	Explains source, definition, confidence, and business impact.	Connects measurement to budget, message, channel, or sales action.
Cross-functional communication	Gets pulled into taste or blame debates.	Uses brief, criteria, and shared definitions.	Guides stakeholders toward decision and accountability.
Compliance and trust	Misses unsupported claims or risky disclosures.	Flags claim, consent, endorsement, and brand-safety issues.	Protects growth and trust under pressure with calm escalation.

Capstone simulation

Learners lead a campaign planning and performance review for a product launch. The brief is vague, product wants feature-heavy messaging, legal rejects a claim, paid media shows strong platform ROAS but weak CRM quality, sales rejects MQLs, and social feedback turns negative. The learner must clarify strategy, revise messaging, explain measurement, align stakeholders, and write an executive update.

Source orientation for instructors

- Federal Trade Commission advertising and marketing guidance, including claim substantiation, endorsements, reviews, testimonials, and CAN-SPAM guidance.
- Google Search Central SEO Starter Guide and Search Essentials for search, content quality, and technical SEO language.
- Google Ads attribution documentation for conversion credit and attribution-model vocabulary.
- HubSpot lifecycle-stage documentation for lead stage, funnel, and marketing-sales alignment language.
- Mailchimp guidance on open rates, click rates, and email reporting limitations.
- Platform, CRM, analytics, legal, privacy, and brand guidelines used by the learner's own organization.