Background

How can social networking sites help companies?

1 Facebook and MySpace are *popular social networking sites on the Internet. Millions of people visit these websites and <u>they</u> make millions of dollars from advertising. People use social networking sites to make friends and now some businesses are asking employees to use <u>them</u> for work. For example, the company *Serena Software* employs nearly 1,000 people. Everyone reads the company news on Facebook and the site also helps internal communication because *Serena Software* employees work in different parts of the world. So one employee in California can quickly contact <u>another</u> in the Sydney office and build a closer working relationship. The company also believes they can *create better teams between the twenty nine offices in fourteen different countries by using social networking sites.

2 Social networking sites are good for your profits because you can *network with clients and tell <u>them</u> about new products. Human Resources *departments also use the sites to help them find out about new employees and recruit them. The sites can also allow more employees to work from home or from any location. Some companies also have lower travel costs because <u>they</u> use the sites for international meetings.

3 Not all companies want employees to visit these sites for two reasons. Firstly, employees might contact friends and plan their social lives during working hours. Secondly, many companies believe there are security problems – you can get computer viruses from the sites and you might not want all your company information available for everyone to read online. But many businesses now believe there are more advantages than disadvantages. As one business owner said, 'If you don't understand the importance of social networking in the business world today, you won't have a business in the future'.

Glossary
create = make something new
departments = parts of a company / organization
network = meet and talk with other business people
popular = liked by many people

Exercises

1 **Work with a partner and discuss these questions.**
1 How does your company use the Internet?
2 How does the Internet help your company?

2 **Read the text quickly. Which paragraph of the text (1–3) describes**
a two disadvantages? _____
b how a company uses a social networking site? _____
c more advantages? _____

3 **Read paragraph 1 of the text again and answer questions 1–3.**
1 What do millions of people visit?
2 Why do people use social networking sites?
3 How many employees does *Serena Software* have?

4 **Paragraph 2 describes the advantages of social networking sites. Number advantages a–e in the order you read about them.**
a increase profits _1_   **d** working from home _____
b online meetings _____   **e** employ new people _____
c advertise new products _____

5 **Paragraph 3 explains why some companies don't want employees to use social networking sites. What are the two reasons?**

6 **Work with a partner and decide what the <u>underlined</u> words in the text refer to? Tick ✓ a or b.**
1 *they* in paragraph 1
  a Facebook and MySpace   **b** millions of people
2 *them* in paragraph 1
  a social networking sites   **b** businesses
3 *another* in paragraph 1
  a website   **b** employee
4 *them* in paragraph 2
  a employees   **b** clients
5 *they* in paragraph 2
  a companies   **b** Human Resources departments

7 **Complete sentences 1–7 with the verbs in the list. Look back at the text to help you if necessary.**

make   visit   tell   read   make   network   recruit

1 I often _____ this website because it has lots of useful information.
2 Social networking sites are a good way to _____ new business contacts.
3 We only _____ new employees with good qualifications.
4 Did you _____ the newspaper this morning?
5 How much money does the company _____ a year?
6 Did you _____ Ryan about the meeting this afternoon?
7 I always go to this conference because I can _____ with new clients.

8 **Look back at the text and choose three words that you could use in your day-to-day work.**

9 **Work with a partner and discuss these questions.**
1 Do you think social networking sites can help your company?
2 Should companies allow staff to use the Internet for personal reasons while at work? Why? / Why not?
3 Are there any rules at your company for using the Internet?