79% · ADVANCED · STUDENT WORKSHEET

If We Launched That, It Would Be a Faux Pas

The present unreal conditional for risk assessment — brand risk, marketing optimization and market positioning

Name: Date:

1 Icebreaker: what if we did?

SPEAKING

1. Three hypotheticals about your company: 'If we ___, we would ___.' Make one of them something nobody would approve.
2. What could a technology company do tomorrow that would be a real brand faux pas? Why would it land badly?
3. 'If I were running the whole company, I would ___ and I would stop ___.' Use WERE.

2 Vocabulary: the risk board

VOCABULARY

Word	Meaning	Example
brand faux pas	a public mistake that damages reputation	*If we ran that ad here, it would be a faux pas.*
PR disaster	a serious failure of public communication	*Most PR disasters were predictable.*
tone-deaf	insensitive to the audience's mood	*The email wasn't rude; it was tone-deaf.*
reputational risk	the chance of damage to how you are seen	*Untested firmware is a reputational risk.*
backlash	a strong negative reaction from many people	*Ending support overnight would cause a backlash.*
USP	unique selling point — what makes you different	*Our USP is local support in under 24 hours.*
market optimization	tuning positioning, pricing and the funnel for the best return	*If we optimized the funnel, our valuation would rise.*
premium positioning	selling on value and service, not price	*Premium positioning means fewer, better clients.*
stock dilution	smaller ownership when new shares are issued	*If we raised money now, the dilution would be severe.*
hostile takeover	buying a company against its board's wishes	*A low valuation invites a hostile takeover.*
to backfire	to produce the opposite effect	*A defensive statement would backfire.*
to alienate	to make a group feel rejected	*Ending support would alienate old clients.*
to stress-test	to examine under extreme conditions	*Stress-test the plan before the market does.*
to reposition	to change how the market sees you	*Repositioning would take two years.*

3 Vocabulary practice

VOCABULARY

Complete each sentence with a term from Exercise 2. Watch the form.

1. If we ran that advertisement in this market, it would be a real _____.
2. The message wasn't offensive; it was _____, which lasts longer.
3. Shipping untested firmware is a serious _____.
4. If our valuation stayed this low, a _____ would become possible.
5. If we raised money at this price, the _____ would be severe.
6. If we moved to _____, we would lose volume on purpose.
7. A defensive statement would _____ — and silence probably would too.
8. _____ the plan before the market does it for you.
9. If we ended support for older printers overnight, there would be a _____ from clients.
10. Our _____ is local technical support in under 24 hours.

4 Grammar: the hypothetical frame

GRAMMAR

Form	Meaning	Example
If + past simple, would + base	a sure result of an unreal situation	If we launched now, it would fail.
... could + base	a possible result	It could damage our reputation.
... might + base	an uncertain result	The client might accept a delay.
If I / he / it were...	formal form for all persons	If I were the CEO, I would wait for the certification.
if we lose → will	real: you think it is likely	If we lose the client, we'll cut costs.
if we lost → would	unreal: hypothetical distance	If we lost the client, we would cut costs.

THE RULE WOULD never goes in the IF clause. ✘ If we would launch now, it will fail → ✔ If we launched now, it would fail

5 Grammar practice: test it hypothetically

GRAMMAR

Items 1–5: complete with the verb in brackets. Items 6–8: correct the sentence.

1. If we _____ (launch) the printer now, it _____ (be) a real faux pas.
2. If we _____ (optimize) the funnel properly, our valuation _____ (rise).
3. If I _____ the CEO, I _____ (stop) the third product line tomorrow.
4. If the label supplier _____ (fail) next month, we _____ (lose) two quarters.
5. If the firmware _____ ready, we _____ already _____ (sell) the new range.
6. If we would launch that campaign, it will be a disaster.

   _____
7. If I was the CEO, I would to reposition the brand.

   _____
8. If the market was ready, we would already selling.

   _____

6 Grade the result: would, could or might?

GRAMMAR

Read the note in brackets and choose the modal that shows the right level of confidence.

1. If the certification lapsed, shipments _____ stop. (You are sure. It's a rule.)
2. If we released the firmware this week, it _____ fail on older scanners. (It's a real possibility.)
3. If we asked for three more weeks, the client _____ accept. (You really don't know.)
4. If we raised prices during a competitor's outage, we _____ lose our clients' trust. (You are sure.)
5. If we answered the complaint in public, we _____ keep it alive for another week. (It's possible.)

7 Real or unreal? Imagine a different situation

WRITING

Read the facts. Write one unreal conditional for each. Example: 'I have a lot of work. I can't take a holiday.' → 'If I didn't have so much work, I would take a holiday.'

1. I don't have the client's direct number. I can't call him.

2. I have no free time. I can't go to the gym.

3. My team is small. We can't accept the new project.

4. The budget is fixed. I can't hire another engineer.

5. Say it twice — as a likely risk, then as a distant hypothetical: 'we lose our largest client'

8 The Faux Pas Lab

SPEAKING PREP

Somebody suggested these ideas. Stress-test each one: what would happen? Grade it honestly (would / could / might).

Launch the new printer at the trade show before certification

Raise service prices during a competitor's outage

Announce record sales in the week of the layoffs

Use a client's logo in a case study without asking

Worse than it looks: _____ · Better than it sounds: _____ — why?

9 My risk register

WRITING

Write three risks from your own area. Keep details general and non-confidential. Say the impact first, then the likelihood.

The risk If ... (past simple)	The impact ... would / could / might ...	How likely?	The hedge Unless we ..., ... would ...

10 The positioning debate

SPEAKING PREP

Choose a new market position for a company (for example, from hardware supplier to premium solutions partner). Prepare notes, not full sentences.

Three WOULD results I am sure about

Two graded results (could / might)

Two WERE sentences ('If I were a small client, ...')

The honest risk: 'If we did this badly, it would...'

The reversal: 'If we did nothing at all, we would...'

My condition (78%): 'We go ahead, provided that...'

11 Final task: If I were — the 90-second scenario

SPEAKING

Run three hypotheticals about your own work. Tick each item when you have used it.

- ☐ 3 unreal conditionals about real decisions I face
- ☐ 2 graded results (could / might) where my doubt is real
- ☐ 2 WERE sentences
- ☐ 1 downside chained two links: '...which would mean...'
- ☐ The reversal: if I did nothing, what would happen?

★ Homework

- Write your team's top three risks in the unreal conditional, with every modal graded (would / could / might).
- Add one WERE sentence that changes the point of view: 'If I were the client, ...'
- Next lesson: 80% — Capstone review of Units 76–79%.