TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 256

Viral English: Soft Launch — What Are They Revealing?

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

75 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Imagine you open social media, and you see a new photo.

There are two coffee cups on a table, and a hand is holding one of them.

There is no face and no name.

Some people read that photo in a special way.

Welcome to Viral English.

I'm Martin.

And I'm Julia.

Today's phrase is: soft launch.

Let's start with the business meaning.

A soft launch is when a company releases a product to a small audience first.

The company can watch how people react before deciding on a wider release.

For example, "The restaurant had a soft launch last week, with only twenty guests."

Now there is a second, informal meaning, mostly used on social media.

It is the idea of giving a small hint about a new relationship.

For example, a photo of two coffees, a hand, or a shadow.

The photo suggests something, but it does not announce anything.

The opposite is a hard launch.

A hard launch is a clear, public announcement of a relationship.

For example, a photo with both people, and a message that says it directly.

Let's hear it in a short conversation between two friends.

Did you see Maya's new photo?

The one with two coffees on the table?

Yes.

Some people say it is a soft launch.

Maybe.

Or maybe it is just a nice photo of a good morning.

That is a fair point.

We really don't know.

That last sentence is important.

We don't know, and that is a useful lesson about this phrase.

A soft launch is a hint, and a hint can be read in many ways.

It is not a fact, and it is not our business to decide.

Also, we are not saying this is a new trend.

People often share news about their lives slowly and carefully, and each person decides how much to show.

In English, the word reveal helps us talk about this.

To reveal means to show something that was hidden.

We can say, "She revealed her new job in a short post."

Or, "He revealed the news to his family first."

Here is a work example: "The team revealed the new logo at Monday's meeting."

And a business soft launch example: "The shop did a soft launch online before opening the real store."

Same phrase, same basic idea: a small first step, then a bigger one.

That idea is the key to understanding both meanings.

Soft launch and reveal are related, but they are not the same.

A soft launch is a small hint.

A reveal is a clear moment of showing.

Let's practise, and we will use neutral, simple examples.

I will describe a situation, and you say: soft launch, hard launch, or neither.

Number one: a company shows its new app to one hundred users before the big release.

The answer is soft launch, in the business meaning.

Number two: a person posts a photo with their partner, and writes, "This is my partner, and we are very happy."

The answer is hard launch.

The message is direct and clear.

Number three: a person posts a photo of a sunset, with no other information.

The answer is neither.

It is only a photo of a sunset.

Number four: a bakery opens for a few days with a short menu, before the grand opening.

The answer is soft launch, in the business meaning.

Number five: you see a photo of two cups of coffee.

What is the best thing to say?

A good answer is, "It might mean something, or it might not."

We do not guess, and we respect the person's privacy.

That leads to a final language tip.

When we talk about other people's posts, we can use careful phrases.

For example, "It could be," "maybe," or "it's hard to say."

These phrases are useful for many topics, not only social media.

So, let's review.

In business, a soft launch is a limited early release of a product or service.

On social media, it can be a subtle hint about a relationship.

A hard launch is a clear announcement.

A reveal is the moment when we show something that was hidden.

And remember: a hint is not a fact.

If you want to keep these phrases, we have an English PDF on our website.

It has the key expressions from this episode, and the link is in the description.

Thanks for listening.

See you next time.