



'We need human interaction': Meet the LA man who walks people for a living

A) Warm up

1. What do you believe are the main benefits of going for a long walk?
2. Do you believe that people are becoming more lonely as a result of technology and social media?

B) 'We need human interaction': Meet the LA man who walks people for a living

Adapted from an article published in 2016 by The Guardian

'We need human interaction': Meet the LA man who walks people for a living

Many people believe that the digital age is making people more lonely, but Chuck McCarthy is here to help. He has created a service for people who want to go for a walk with strangers.

He walks with people for \$7 a mile around the streets and park near his home, **pioneering** a service that requires purely an ability to walk, talk and, above all, listen.



The underemployed actor **hit upon** the idea several months ago when joking with his friends. It was originally just an imaginary way to earn extra cash, until it became real. A handwritten message across his T-shirt shows people in the street that he is "The People Walker" - low-budget, mobile advertising.

A peaceful walk with this friendly man seems to be what the people of LA want, according to the interest that he has on social media and the calls he receives from his home-made posters: "Need motivation to walk?" they ask from lamp posts. "Scared to walk alone at night? Don't like walking alone at all?"

For many, the answer to one or all of the above seems to be "yes". It seems as if Chuck is quickly **making strides** in his new business. McCarthy receives hundreds of emails from lonely, adventurous and interested people who are all **seeking** someone to talk with. Not necessarily because they have **a lack of** close friendships, but maybe because they cannot always coordinate their free time with friends because of **hectic** schedules in today's society.

"I try to listen more than talk. It's mostly small-talk. But I think it's good for people even if they're not sharing their deepest emotions and insecurities." Complaining about traffic, for instance, felt better when spoken to a real person rather than posted on social media.

McCarthy has hired other walkers in order to **keep up with** demand, though he needs to **formulate** a professional business model. Fans on his social media are offering plenty of advice. "Charge more and grow the business. **Pinpoint** your strengths: your personality, being a supremely good listener, your ability to **put up with** boring conversation topics etc. – then train your walkers accordingly."

McCarthy **aspires** to introduce an Uber-style app to match clients with walkers nearby. On the app, walkers and clients will be able to rate each other for their conversation skills and their walking speed. He wants to achieve this within the next few years.

Could the daily walks in LA lead to a movie for the **aspiring** actor one day? Lesser stories, after all, have made it onto the big screen. The people walker smiled. "Why not? Maybe Brad Pitt will play me."

Link to the original article:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/sep/14/los-angeles-people-walker-chuck-mccarthy>

C) Key Words from Context

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

to pioneer	to hit upon	hectic	to keep up with
	to put up with	to seek	to make strides
to aspire	to formulate	to pinpoint	lack

1. To make good progress in something: _____

"You are really _____ in your English."

2. To come up with an idea by chance, or to come up with an idea after brainstorming and weighing up several options: _____

"Let's brainstorm a few ideas and maybe we will _____ something really productive."

3. To be the first to use apply a new method: _____

"Our company are currently _____ new AI technology."

4. To identify or find the exact best solution or strategy: _____

"We need to _____ the best solution for our client."

5. Extremely busy or at a fast speed, often to the point that it becomes too much:

"The monthly closing period is always very _____."

"Unfortunately, I have to cancel our meeting tomorrow. My schedule tomorrow will be extremely _____. Would it be possible to reschedule the meeting to Friday?"

6. To have a strong ambition to achieve something big: _____

"As a company, we _____ to lead the industry with our advanced AI products."

7. To create something systematically, such as a strategy, policy, or plan:

"We need to _____ an effective marketing strategy for the product launch."

8. To keep the same level or speed as someone or something, such as a competitor, trends or changes: _____

"How do you usually _____ the latest trends in the industry?"

"We need to innovate constantly in order to _____ our competitors."

9. Not enough of something: _____

"Those targets will be difficult to achieve due to our _____ of resources."

10. To search for something, such as information, opportunities or support:

"I am currently _____ new opportunities in this sector."

"We are _____ partnerships with local suppliers."

11. To tolerate something challenging or annoying: _____

"There is nothing that we can do about the current supply chain situation. We just have to _____ it."

"Clients do not want to _____ problems on our platform."

D) Comprehension

Can you answer the questions below about the text?

1. What is the main strength that Chuck McCarthy needs as a people walker?

2. What impression do we get from the article about Chuck McCarthy's current success as an actor?

3. What 3 methods does Chuck McCarthy use to advertise his services?

4. According to the article, what is the real reason why people might need to talk to someone like Chuck?

5. What business advice has Chuck McCarthy received on his social media platforms?

6. In the final paragraph, what impression does the author give about the potential for 'The People Walker' to be made into a movie?

7. Do you think that such a service would benefit people in your city? What do you think about an Uber-style app to match walkers with clients?

E) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

to formulate	to aspire	to hit upon	hectic
lack	to put up with	to seek	to make strides

From Restaurant Chef to Food Truck Superstar

After 5 years of working as a chef in a Mexican restaurant in London, John was losing his interest in food. One day, he decided that a kitchen environment was too _____, with too much stress and chaos. He couldn't _____ the long evenings working in hot kitchens, as well as his boss shouting at him continuously.

After brainstorming next steps with friends and family, he eventually _____ the idea of starting up his own food truck. This would allow him _____ on his own recipes, and change his menu as often as he liked.



After 5 long months of preparation, John was ready to go. The food truck would sell Mexican street food, and John _____ to make the best quesadillas in London.

During the first few months after the food truck opened, John had few customers due to a _____ of marketing skills. After hiring an expert, John soon began to _____ in his marketing by creating an Instagram page with interesting, humorous photos. As his Instagram followers started to increase, lines of people started to form outside his food truck, full of hungry Londoners who were _____ the most delicious quesadillas in London.