

5 Ways to Improve Your Facebook Engagement

By [Sarah Pierce](#)

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Having trouble engaging your Facebook audience?

If your fans are not interacting with your brand and sharing your content, what value are they?

In this article, you'll discover how to get more likes, comments and shares. I'll reveal **five strategies for Facebook posts that get your fans buzzing**.



#1: Keep Your Updates Short

Research repeatedly shows that the longer a post is, the less engagement it will receive.

Blame it on Twitter, but people don't have the time or patience to read anything over 140 characters anymore.

Results vary, but research shows that **100 characters or fewer seems to be the sweet spot**. This will also allow for easy cross-posting on Twitter.

Want even more engagement? [Let a photo do the talking](#).

According to [Facebook](#) posts that

According to [Facebook](#), posts that include a photo album, picture or video generate about 180%, 120% and 100% more engagement, respectively.

Starbucks is a great example of a brand combining short posts with beautiful photos. Their posts generally fall within the 100- to 140-character mark and elicit thousands of likes and comments.

#2: Don't Use URL Shorteners

A recent [study by Buddy Media](#) found that engagement rates were three times higher for Facebook posts that **use a full-length URL**, rather than a link generated by a URL shortener like [bit.ly](#).

Why is this?

The likely explanation is that Facebook users want to know where you're taking them. This makes even more sense considering the fact that **Facebook users are increasingly accessing the social**



Starbucks

September 4 via Starbucks ✱

#itsfallwhen... The Pumpkin Spice Latte is back!



Like · Comment · Share

18,830

331,224 people like this.

View all 17,971 comments

Posts with fewer than 140 characters combined with bold, beautiful photos get the most response.

increasingly accessing the social network exclusively from their mobile devices (20%, or 102 million and growing).

A shortened URL does not indicate what type of website you're taking them to, which is a deterrent to mobile users.

But didn't we just learn that longer posts have lower engagement? Yes, but a URL doesn't seem to count in this instance.

If you're worried about post length, use a **brand-specific URL shortener** that lets users know you're taking them to your website.

For example, Victoria's Secret uses <http://i.victoria.com/wSI> instead of this crazy-long link:

http://www.victoriassecret.com/shoes/whats-new/studded-suede-pump-betsey-johnson?ProductID=68804&CatalogueType=OLS&cm_mmc=fb-_-stores-_-status-_-suedpump090512.

#3: Post at Times Ideal

 **Converse**
February 21

Mardi Gras inspired shoe. Design your own. <http://bit.ly/z3fuZx>



Like · Comment · Share

4,873 331 292

Converse fans may have liked this post, but how many actually clicked on the link? Generic bit.ly URLs are less likely to drive traffic to your site.

Post at Times Ideal for Your Fans

Getting your post at the top of fans' newsfeeds is paramount for [engagement](#). So how do you do this?

For one, **make sure you post at the right times.**

Recent data from bit.ly shows that **the optimal time to post on Facebook is between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm**, when Facebook traffic peaks.

Links posted between 1 and 4 pm get the highest click-through rates, with Wednesday at 3:00 pm being the best time to post all week. Links posted before 8:00 am and after 8:00 pm are less likely to get shared.

Another thing to consider is the TGIF (Thank God It's Friday) factor. As office burnout peaks toward the end of the week, more people will be escaping to Facebook.

Engagement rates are 18% higher on Thursday and Friday than other days of the week, according to Buddy Media. Engagement rates fall 3.5% below average for posts Monday through Wednesday, when people are more focused at work.

If your goal is likes, not comments, [Dan Zarrella of HubSpot](#) found that **Saturday and Sunday posts get the most likes.**

Finally **make sure you post enough**

**Victoria's Secret**
Wednesday

Pump or wedge?

Shop this: <http://i.victoria.com/wSl>
Shop that: <http://i.victoria.com/4QD>



Like · Comment · Share 4,627

 69,613 people like this.

 View all 5,108 comments

Get more clicks by using a brand-specific URL shortener. Fans want to know where you're taking them.

many, make sure you post enough content to stay visible in the newsfeed without annoying your fans. The key to walking this fine line is to **know your posts' lifespan**.

The average Facebook post lifespan is 3 hours, although this varies by page.

A post is considered “alive” when it’s occupying the newsfeed or is a Highlighted Story and receiving a continuous stream of engagement.

A post is considered “dead” when its engagement stops growing more than 10% per hour.

Never post while another post is alive or you risk losing engagement.

How do you **find your average post lifespan**? [EdgeRank Checker Pro](#) analyzes your post engagement on an hourly basis (found in the Post Grading section at the bottom of your page analysis).

It also tells you the best



Disney

September 9

Success is in the attempt.



Like · Comment · Share

16,455

190,682 people like this.

View all 1,738 comments

Don't forget about the weekend. Saturday and Sunday posts get the most likes.

It also tells you the best time to post again. Once engagement has fallen below 10%, your post is considered dead and it's safe to post new content.

If your average post lifespan is 3 hours, then wait at least that long before posting again.

#4: Use the Right Words for Higher Engagement

What you say—or don't say—on Facebook matters. [Certain words elicit more engagement](#), while others will leave your post dead in the water.

Buddy Media found that action keywords like



"post," "comment," "take," "submit," "like" or "tell us" are the most effective. **Be direct in your request, and fans will listen.**

On the other hand if you're running

On the other hand, if you're running a contest, sweepstakes or other promotional offer, fans don't respond well to direct or aggressive language.

Softer-sell keywords such as "winner," "win," "winning" and "events" will **make fans excited** rather than feeling like they're being sold to.

Aggressive promotional keywords like



Macy's
September 12 via Macy's

Shop the limited-edition Nicole Richie for Impulse collection, only @ Macy's in select stores, macys.com and on our Facebook page. Tell us, which do you love? <http://pub.vitruue.com/EFMz>

Like · Comment · Share 243

13,700 people like this.

View all 1,276 comments

Want your fans to do something? Tell them! Fans respond well to specific instructions.

"contest," "promotion," "sweepstakes" and "coupon" will turn them off.

#5: Ask Questions

Asking a question is a surefire way to elicit comments, but not all questions are created equal. **How and where you ask a question matters.**

Questions placed at the

Questions placed at the end of a post increased engagement by 15% over questions placed at the beginning.

“*Where*,” “*when*” and “*should*” drive the highest engagement rates, with “*would*” generating the most likes. Avoid asking “*why*” questions, which have the lowest like and comment rates.

Beauty retailer Sephora has mastered the art of when to **use action keywords, promotional keywords and questions to get fans engaged**.

This Facebook post generated 38,028 likes, 2,188 comments and 4,778 shares.

For even more tips, read [5 Ways to](#)

Conclusion

I recommend you **measure your goals on a monthly basis, record these numbers in a Google spreadsheet and monitor the increases or decreases month-to-month**. As a bonus, the measurements outlined here can all be done with free software.

Don't fool yourself into believing that social media is completely free marketing. Your time is valuable, especially if you're just starting up or you're a small business. Unfocused efforts spent on social media can quickly become a huge time sink.

By measuring your social media impact, you **ensure the best use of your time and resources**.

What do you think? What social media metrics are you measuring? What questions do you have about measuring goals? Leave your questions and comments in the box below.

Place questions at the end of posts to increase engagement.

For even more tips, read [5 Ways to Increase Your Facebook Engagement](#).

Now it's your turn.

What do you think? Did you find these tips helpful? How do you keep your fans engaged?

Please share your questions and comments in the box below.

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Sarah Pierce is a freelance writer, editor and content strategist for print and online media. She is also the managing editor for [FacebookAdvanced](#). Follow Sarah on Twitter: [@sk_pierce](#). **Other posts by [Sarah Pierce](#) »**



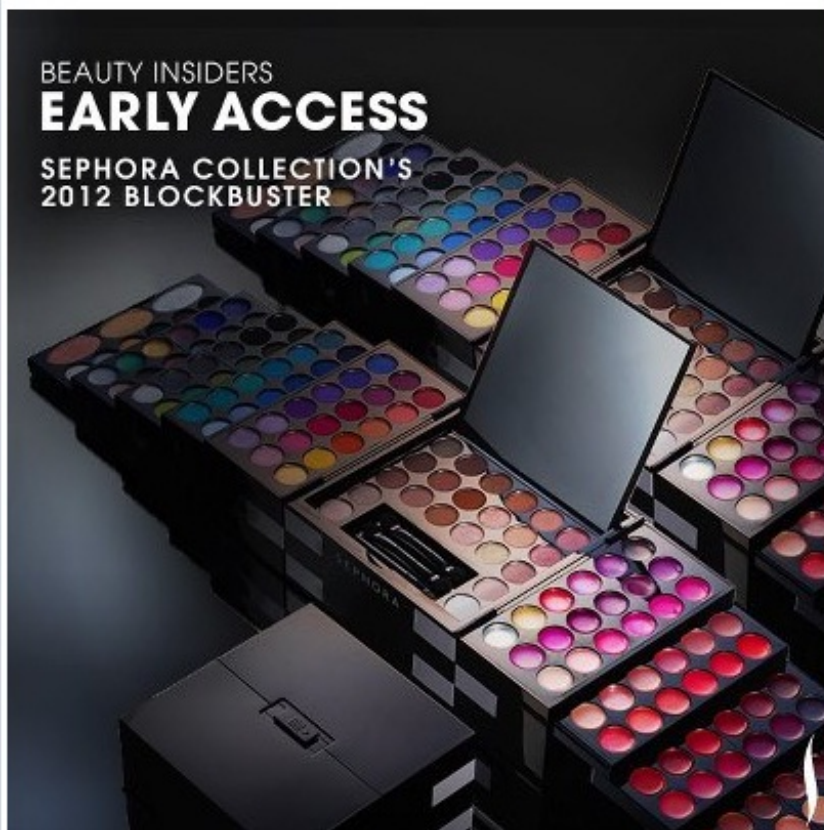
Sephora

August 27

It's back! Be the first to score this 148-piece color station before it's gone until the holidays. Online only through 9/1. Shop the 2012 SEPHORA COLLECTION Color Daze Blockbuster now>

<http://seph.me/PiqAfh>

What color do you wear the most?



Like · Comment · Share

4,778

38,028 people like this.

View all 2,188 comments

Combining action keywords like "shop" with soft-sell keywords like "score" will encourage fans to take action. End your post with a question to get 15% more engagement.

