



Why Are Your Fans Not Seeing Your Facebook Posts?

by Emily Reeves / 8.2012

Overview

Many brands are relying on the number of fans as the sole indicator of success on Facebook. However, most of those fans never see the brand messages posted to Facebook. The reason for this is a Facebook algorithm called EdgeRank that determines relevancy of your message to each fan resulting in most brand messages never making it to fans' news streams. This digital whitepaper gives an overview of EdgeRank and provides tips for overcoming its obstacles and getting your messages in front your fans.



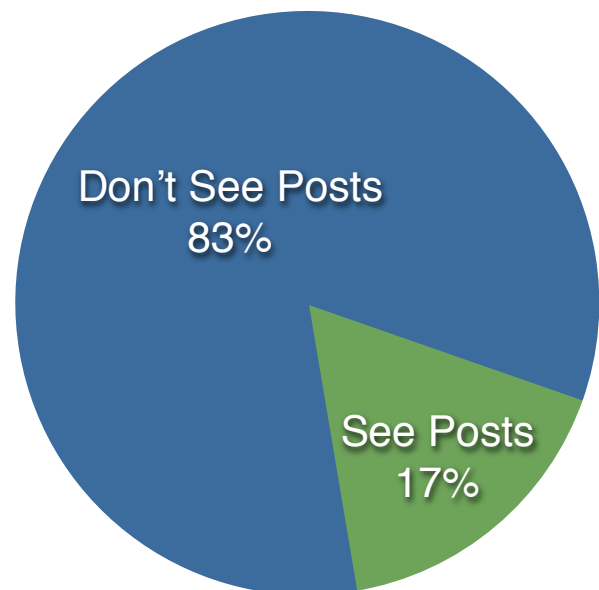
Introduction

With 900 million users worldwide, Facebook is easily the most popular social networking site in existence. It has almost become a default channel for brands to use for pushing messages and engaging with customers, though only a fraction of messages are reaching fans. On average, 83% of your fans may not even be seeing your posts, meaning that as few as 17% of fans are actually reached. Why are your fans not seeing your Facebook posts?

What is Facebook EdgeRank?

EdgeRank is an algorithm that Facebook applies to users' news streams to determine which posts to present according to what it thinks the fan or friend is most likely to want to see. EdgeRank serves two purposes:

1. to give users a better experience by delivering more relevant content based on user behavior and
2. to give Facebook a reason to sell extra services to brand pages to help improve their content display in users' streams.



There are three factors that contribute to EdgeRank:

$$\text{Affinity} \times \text{Weight} \times \text{Time Decay} = \text{Edgerank}$$

Affinity

Affinity refers to how interested a user is in a brand's page. Facebook gathers this data based on the clicks a user has made in the past to that page plus the number of likes, shares and comments they have made to that brand page's posts. If a user regularly shares or likes the content of a particular page, they will see that page's posts appearing more regularly in their news stream. If they are not engaging with the page's posts, those posts start disappearing from their news streams.

Weight

Weight refers to the type of information Facebook determines is more valuable. Posts with higher "weight" include videos, photos and links, while posts that are text only are given less "weight."

Time Decay

New posts get higher weight over older ones, so post frequency makes a difference.

What are some stats about user engagement on Facebook?

You can get as many fans as you want through fan drives, promotions or advertising on Facebook, but they won't see your posts if you don't deliver engaging content from the first day they fan your page. And here is why:

- If you don't get your fans to like and comment on your posts, they'll stop seeing them in their news feeds due to Facebook's EdgeRank system.
- Only 43% of fans will actively unlike a brand. They are more likely to do nothing (thereby allowing EdgeRank to push the brand out of their stream) or click the "Hide All" button.
- "Uninteresting information" was one of the top reasons users stopped following a brand.
- 55% of Facebook users have 'liked' a company and later decided they no longer wanted to see the company's posts.
- 51% fans said they rarely or never visit a company's page after liking it.
- 41% of fans like a page in order to receive discounts and special offers.
- When fans create new posts on your Facebook page, other fans likely will not see them.
- Posts from pages with 10,000 fans reach 30-40% of their fans.
- Posts from pages with 100,000 fans reach 20-30% of their fans.
- Posts from pages with 1,000,000 or more fans reach 10% of their fans.
- Brands are getting an average 46% more engagement with the new Timeline format of Facebook pages, attributed to the larger display of photos and videos and just generally the more visual nature of the display.

How can you improve your brand's rank on Facebook?

You can always **pay** for more visibility: Facebook says you can reach 75% of your fans by paying for Sponsored Stories and paying to use their Reach Generator tool. As brands learn to use Facebook in better ways with more engaging content, there will be more stories competing for news stream prominence. Increasingly, brands will have to support their page and content efforts with paid media.

You can also improve your **content** on Facebook to build activity and engagement from fans:

- Focus on posting content such as photos, videos and links (and it's likely that videos uploaded to Facebook rather than YouTube will carry more "weight"). Photos take up more real estate within the feed, which also contributes to an increase in engagement.
- Time decay is going to vary by brand and industry, but plan on each post have a four to 20 hour lifespan. Pay attention to what the competition is doing and try to stay ahead of their post frequency. You don't want to over post and annoy followers that are getting every post causing them to hide your brand, but you need to stay ahead of the curve and post frequently enough to stay relevant in the stream.
- Keep content more personal rather than promotional. Content that sounds like sales talk, while lacking personal touch, may discourage users from following your brand. Add the human touch to the messages.
- Post content such as funny photos and videos that people will want to share.
- Use the polling feature available on Facebook.
- Post status updates that ask questions: people are far more likely to comment if asked.
- Use fill-in-the-gap status updates e.g. "Today I am mostly _____."
- Offer giveaways, promotions and freebies.
- Share links to other great content on the web.
- Follow social media conversation trends and jump in on meme activity.

Respond to comments. Only 5% of wall questions from consumers on brand pages ever receive follow-up interactions from the brand. The more interactions you have, the more weight your brand updates get in the EdgeRank algorithm.

Post **frequently** and during the times that make the most sense for your business.

- Post at least once a day to maximize reach. If a you are able to deliver truly engaging content more than once a day, then definitely post multiple times a day!
- Post at the optimal time. This is going to vary by brand and industry. For example, many restaurants find that posting between 7am and 12pm is ideal, while retailers find that posting between 8am and 2pm works best. People engage with Facebook pages the most between 9pm and 10pm and the 18-24 age demographic is the most engaged during this time. Brands with blue collar fans may have less engagement during the work week due to reduced internet access. On average, Wednesday is the best day of the week to post for optimal engagement.

How should you approach planning for a Facebook content generation?

Facebook is a social media channel. Before deciding on a channel for communication and engagement, we must first have an understanding of what we are trying to achieve. We want to think first and foremost about:

1. who the target audience is and
2. what we want to achieve and
3. then figure out if a channel, Facebook, is a channel that will help meet those objectives.

Upon determining that Facebook is right for the desired target and objectives, we should research to understand what kind of content our target audience needs, wants and will engage with, then work to generate that content for them.

Interested in learning more?

Contact Emily Reeves at ereeves@stoneward.com for help planning your brand's digital engagements.

About Stone Ward

[Stone Ward](#) is a full-service ad agency. Established in 1984 by Larry Stone and Millie Ward, today the agency employs 49, with capitalized billings exceeding \$40 million. The agency's offices are in Chicago and Little Rock.



About Emily Reeves, Director of Digital Strategy & Planning

As the agency's digital champion, Emily Reeves proves that Stone Ward has the offerings, expertise and alliances to bring sound, measurable digital innovation to our clients' marketing efforts. A seasoned communications strategist with a passion for all things digital, Emily has distinguished herself as an avid blogger, social media speaker, industry observer and moderator. In her role as digital thought leader for Stone Ward, Emily collaborates with our team of agency leaders in creative, brand management, public relations, media, digital technology and video production to create relevant ways to tell our clients' stories in the digital space and to provide meaningful measurement and analytics as a tool for calculating our efforts. Emily's focus on measurement extends to her duties as the agency's research leader, where she works with Stone Ward clients to develop and execute research plans that inform integrated client marketing efforts.

Sources

[An Explanation of Why EdgeRank Matters to Facebook Marketing, Part 1](#)

[The Like Economy](#)

[How to Improve EdgeRank](#)

[Stickiness: Convincing Your Brand's Fans and Followers to Stay](#)

[Facebook Pages Reach Only 17% of Fans](#)

[Reach Generator](#)

[The State of Facebook June 2012](#)