

# **STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE FACEBOOK WALL POSTS: A STATISTICAL REVIEW**



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# Introduction

More than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) are shared on Facebook each month.<sup>1</sup>

And if you're involved with or leading your brand or organization's Facebook presence, you've undoubtedly faced questions such as:

- ▶ When should we post? And how often?
- ▶ Are there certain words or content that will generate the highest response?
- ▶ When are people engaging with our content?

We hear you loud and clear, and that's why we've developed the most comprehensive data report on this topic to guide your Facebook Wall publishing efforts. Showing up in the Facebook News Feed is crucial to Facebook publishing efforts, and this report will provide you guidance on how to do just that, and more.

## Methodology

All Facebook Posts made via the Buddy Media Platform by a sample size of 200 Buddy Media clients were analyzed for a two-week period (January 30, 2011-February 12, 2011). 'Likes' and Comments made to these Posts were also analyzed.

This sample size represents the world's largest brands in the entertainment, media, retail, automotive, business and finance, fashion, food and beverage, healthcare and beauty, sports and travel and hospitality industries.

### Three primary success metrics were reviewed in relation to Wall Posts:

- ▶ **Comment Rate:** number of Comments as a percentage of fan base
- ▶ **'Like' Rate:** number of 'likes' as a percentage of fan base
- ▶ **Engagement Rate:** a combination of the above factoring in fan base size

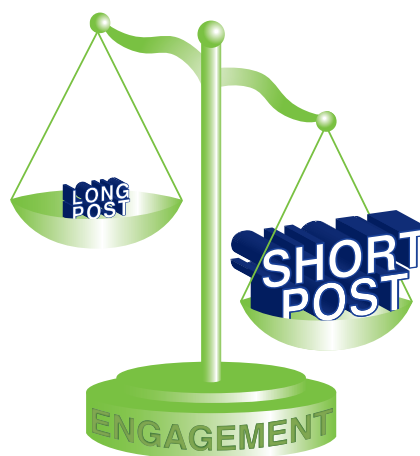
All analysis in reference to post timing and scheduling is based on Eastern Standard Time (EST).

<sup>1</sup> "Press Room: Statistics." Facebook. 6 April 2011. <<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>>



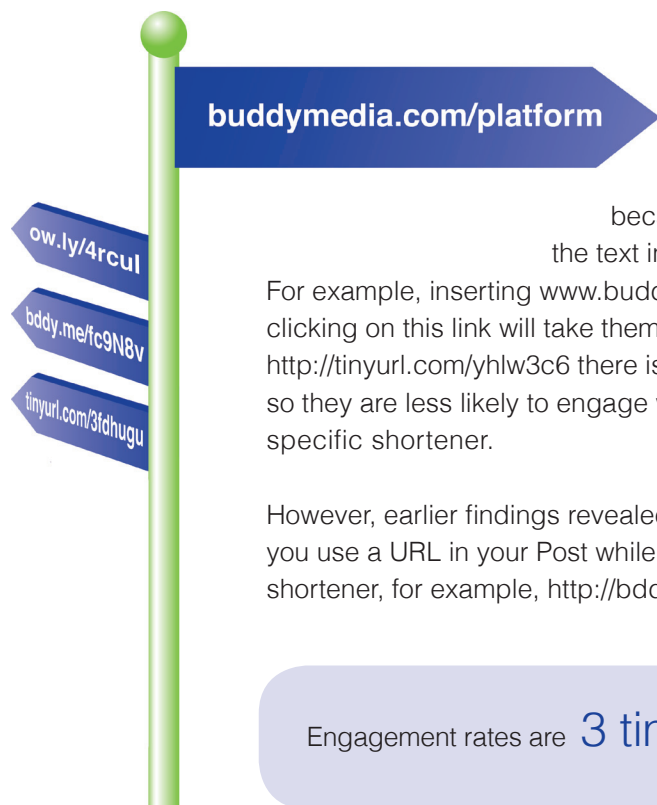
## Post Length: Keep It Short and Sweet

Our research shows that there is a strong negative correlation between post length and engagement, indicating the longer the post length, the less engaging fans find it. This finding supports the traditional best practice that concise copy increases readability and consumption. Posts between one and 80 characters had, on average, a 27% higher engagement rate, yet only accounted for 19% of all Posts.



Posts **80 characters or less** in length have **27% higher** engagement rates.

## URL Shorteners: Think Twice before Using Them



Despite the popularity of URL shorteners, our research revealed that engagement rates were three times higher for Posts that used a full-length URL. This insight indicates that the use of URL shorteners negatively affects user experience. Why? It's likely because the "indicators" a user normally gets from reading the text in a full-length URL are missing with a shortened URL.

For example, inserting [www.buddymedia.com](http://www.buddymedia.com) into a Post clearly indicates to the user that clicking on this link will take them to the Buddy Media website. With a shortened URL like <http://tinyurl.com/yhlw3c6> there is no indication to the user where this link will direct them, so they are less likely to engage with it. If you do need to shorten a URL, try a brand-specific shortener.

However, earlier findings revealed that long Posts have lower engagement. So, how do you use a URL in your Post while still keeping the Post short? Use a brand-specific URL shortener, for example, <http://bddy.me/1F8M>, which still allows for some brand indicators.

Engagement rates are **3 times higher** for Posts that used a full-length URL.



# Best Time to Post: Post When People Are Listening

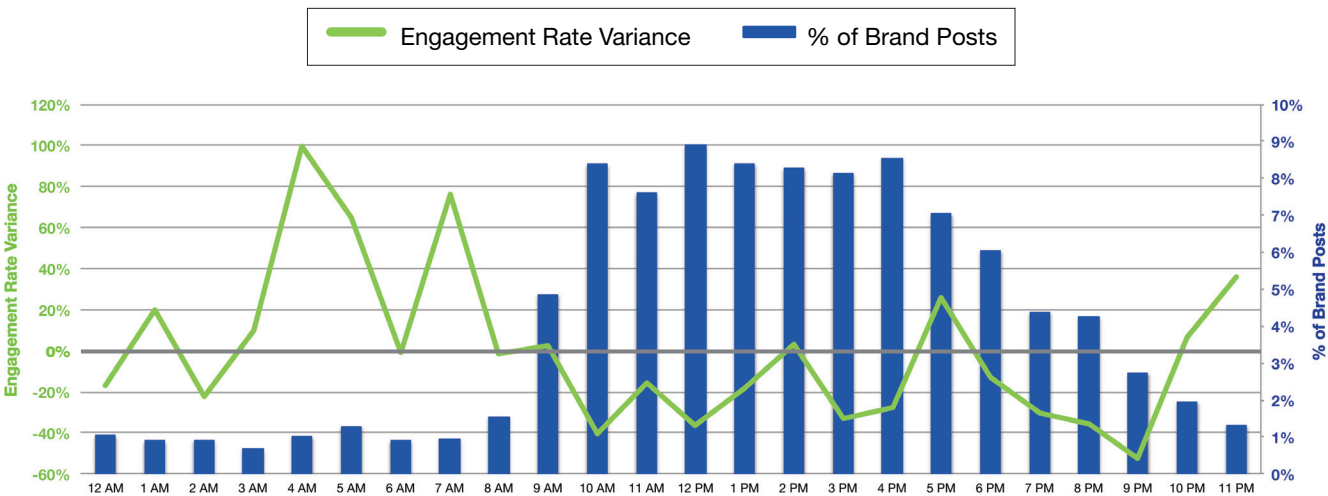


Approximately 60% of Posts were published from 10 AM through 4 PM, indicating brands are most active with their Posts during core business hours (EST). After 4 PM, the number of published Posts steadily decreased.

However, brands that posted outside of business hours (early morning, at the finish of the work day and late at night) had engagement rates approximately 20% higher than average.

This reflects the importance of having a Post appear at the top of fans' News Feeds during the times of day they are most likely checking their Facebook Pages. By posting within business hours, brands miss the critical opportunity to get the visibility they need for maximum engagement. So, schedule Posts to appear early in the morning or late at night. Don't publish Posts simply because you're in front of your computer.

Brands that posted outside of business hours had **20% higher** engagement rates.

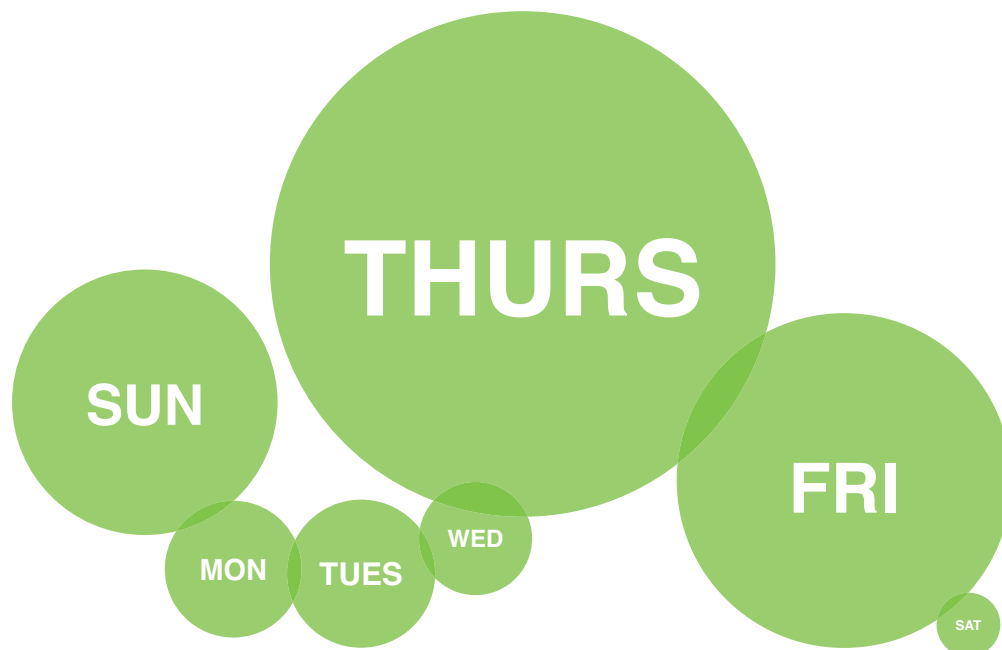




# Best Day to Post: Determine Yours

Our research revealed that 86% of Posts are published between Monday through Friday, with user engagement on these Posts peaking on Thursday and Friday. Generally speaking, that means the best time of the week to post is towards the end of the week. This finding coincides with data recently revealed by Facebook showing that the “Happiness Index” on Facebook spikes by 10% on Friday.<sup>1</sup>

Engagement rates fall approximately 3.5% below average for Posts published Monday through Wednesday, with engagement rates on Saturday being 18% below average. However, engagement rates ultimately vary by industry.

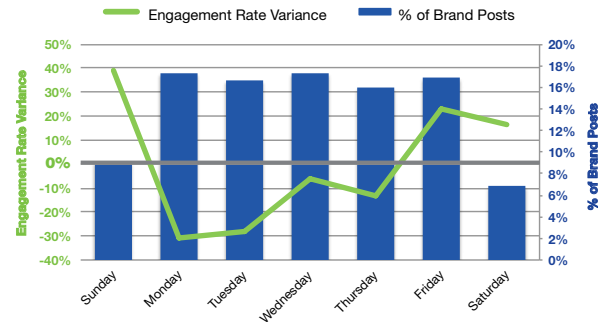
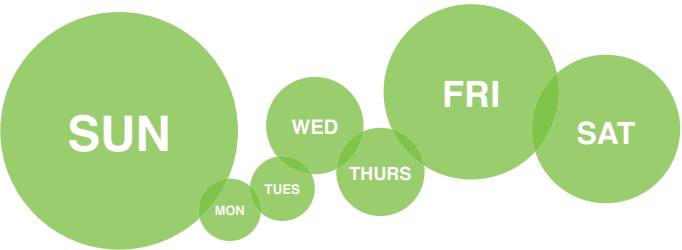


- ▶ The less people want to be at work, the more they are on Facebook!
- ▶ Utilize the flexibility of pre-scheduled Posts to communicate to fans when they are most engaged. (And so you don't have to work on the weekend!)
- ▶ Engagement rates on Thursday and Friday are **18% higher** than other days of the week.
- ▶ Take into consideration your industry when determining posting schedule.

<sup>1</sup> “Gross National Happiness.” Facebook. 6 April 2011. <[http://apps.facebook.com/gnh\\_index/](http://apps.facebook.com/gnh_index/)>

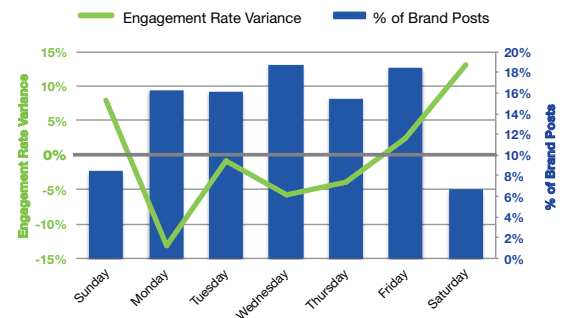
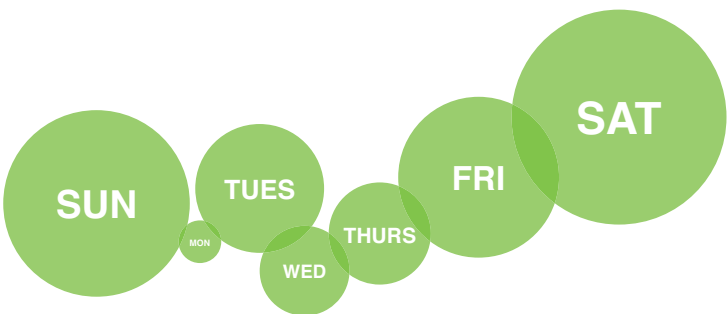


# Entertainment Industry: Don't Overlook the Weekend



- ▶ People are most engaged Friday through Sunday, but brands are not actively posting then.

# Media Industry: Avoid the Monday Noise

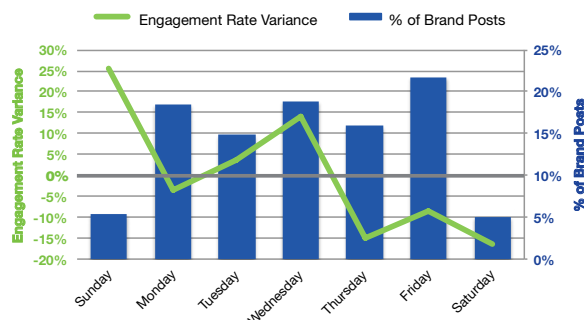
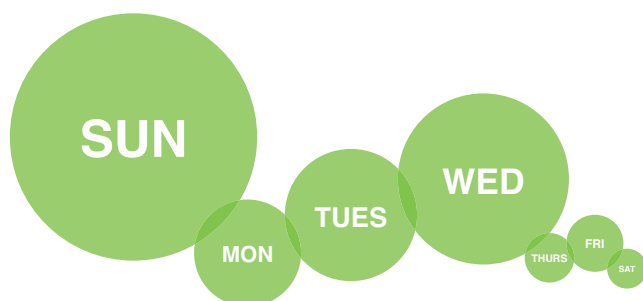


- ▶ Saturday and Sunday have great fan engagement, but brands are not aggressively posting then.
- ▶ Avoid posting on Monday.



## Retail Industry:

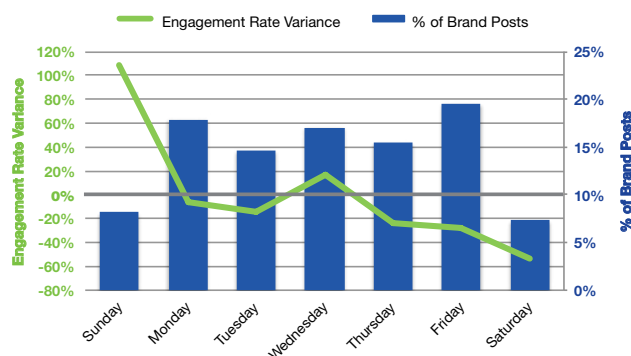
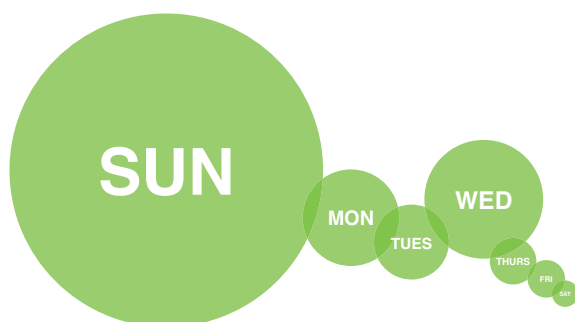
# Take a Look at Sunday, Think Twice before Posting on Friday



- ▶ Fan engagement rockets up on Sunday, but brand Posts account for only 5% of all Posts on Sunday.
- ▶ Brands posted heavily on Friday, but fan engagement is significantly below average for this day. Look to post more on Sunday.

## Automotive Industry:

# Sunday Is Your Friend

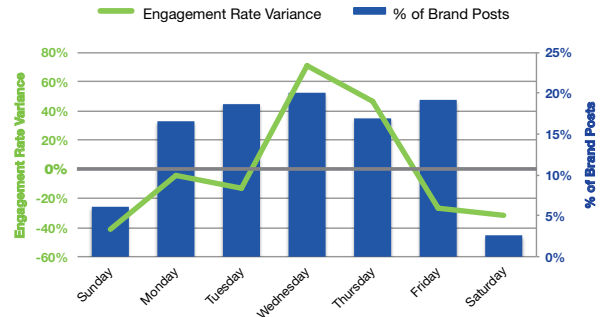
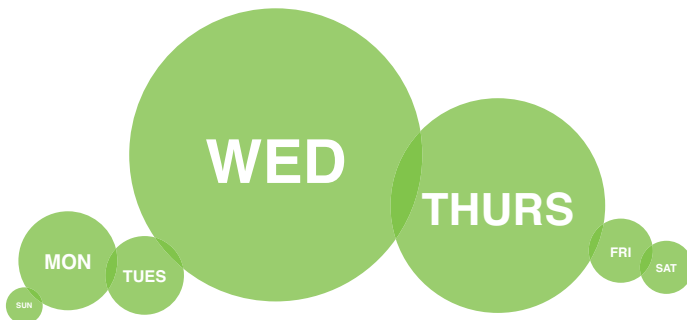


- ▶ Engagement rates spike significantly for Posts made on Sunday, but the automotive industry is slow to capitalize on this trend, with less than 8% of all Posts being made on this day. Look to post more on Sunday.



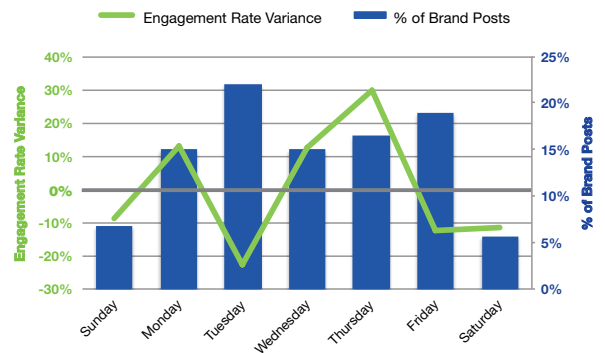
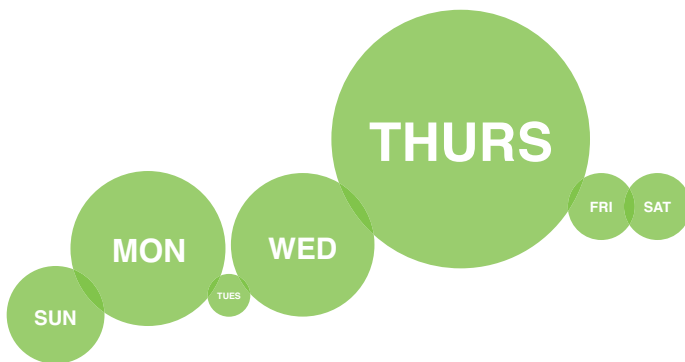


## Business and Finance Industry: Engagement Peaks Midweek



- ▶ Most Posts are published Monday through Friday, but engagement rates don't spike until Wednesday and Thursday, dropping sharply again Friday through Tuesday. Look to post on Wednesday and Thursday when engagement rates are highest.

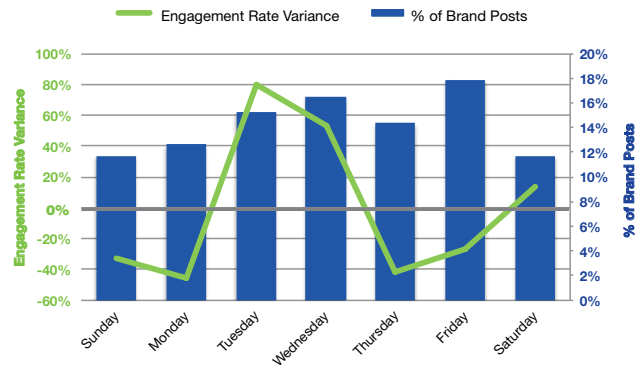
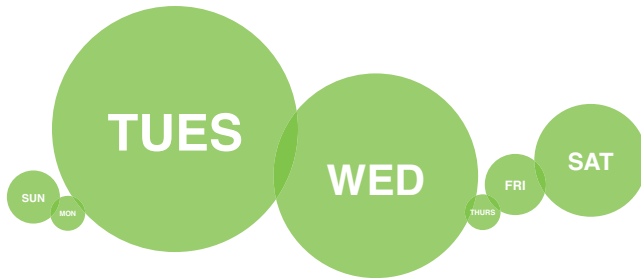
## Fashion Industry: Engagement Peaks on Thursday



- ▶ Engagement rates peak on Thursday, but show a significant drop in engagement on Friday and the weekend, despite brands being most active with Posts on Friday. Look at Thursday to publish content.

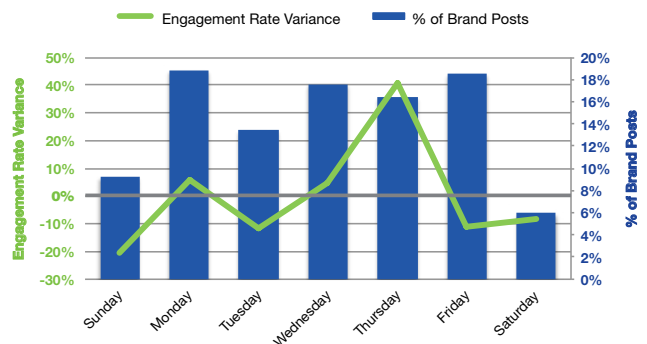
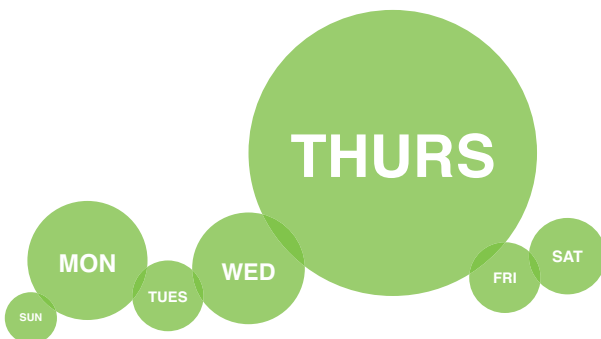


## Food and Beverage Industry: Engagement High Midweek and Saturday



- ▶ Of all the industries reviewed, food and beverage brands were proportionately more active with publishing on the weekend as compared to other industries, although engagement rates peaked on Tuesday and Wednesday, and again on Saturday.
- ▶ Food and beverage brands should look to these days (Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday) as “anchors” for content publishing.

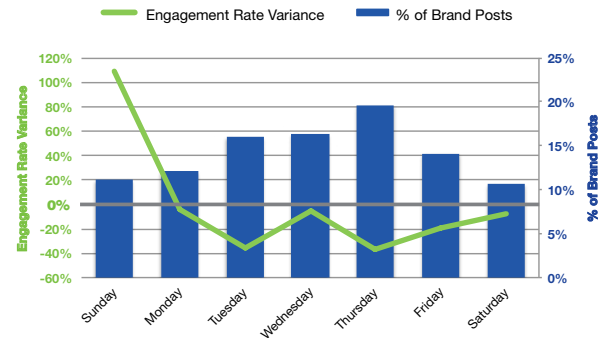
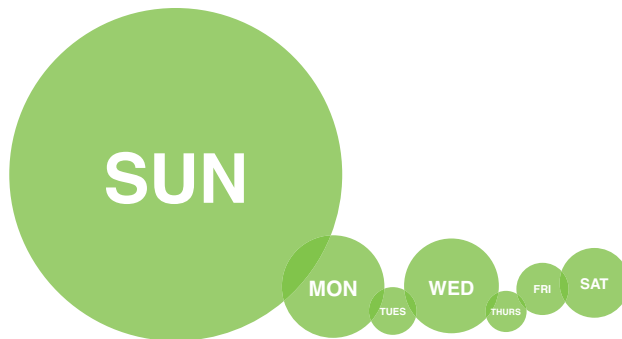
## Healthcare and Beauty Industry: Look at Thursday



- ▶ Engagement rates peak on Thursday so healthcare and beauty brands should publish then to capitalize on higher engagement rates. Save the best content for Thursday, whenever possible.

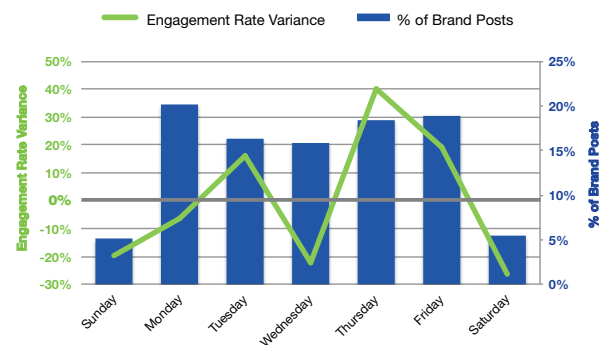


## Sports Industry: Post More on Sunday



- Not surprisingly, engagement rates for sports brands spike on Sunday. However, sports brands are not currently leveraging this trend to their advantage with post volume on this day being among the lowest for the week. Make sure you're scheduling some of your best content to be published on Sunday so that you're matching content with higher engagement levels.

## Travel and Hospitality Industry: Look Towards the End of the Week



- The lowest engagement rates are on the weekend and Wednesday, while highest engagement occurs on Thursday and Friday. Look towards the end of the week to publish content.



## Action Keywords: Fans Follow Instructions Well

To drive 'Likes,' be direct in asking for the 'like.' Outright requests worked most effectively.

To drive Comments, ask a direct question and ask for the response. Ask fans to "post," "comment" or "tell" you something. Fans will listen and respond by commenting.

The top two keywords, "like" and "post," both have positive comment and 'like' rates – suggesting the basic fundamental rule to keep it simple. 'Liking' a Post requires the least amount of effort asked of a user, so if you want users to 'like' a Post, just tell them outright because they will listen.

Fans follow instructions well.

The simpler, the better.



**LIKE**  
**TAKE**  
**SUBMIT**  
**WATCH**  
**POST**  
**CHECK**  
**COMMENT**  
**CLICK**  
**SHOP**  
**VISIT**  
**BECOME A FAN**  
**TELL US**  
**SHARE**  
**SEE**  
**ORDER**



**POST**  
**COMMENT**  
**TELL US**  
**CHECK**  
**LIKE**  
**SUBMIT**  
**SHARE**  
**CLICK**  
**TAKE**  
**WATCH**  
**VISIT**  
**SEE**  
**BECOME A FAN**  
**SHOP**  
**ORDER**



# Promotional Keywords: “Softer Sell” Keywords Resonate Best

When running a contest, sweepstakes or other promotional offer, “softer sell” keywords resonate better with users as opposed to more direct or aggressive language like “contest,” “promotion,” “sweepstake” and “coupon” keywords.

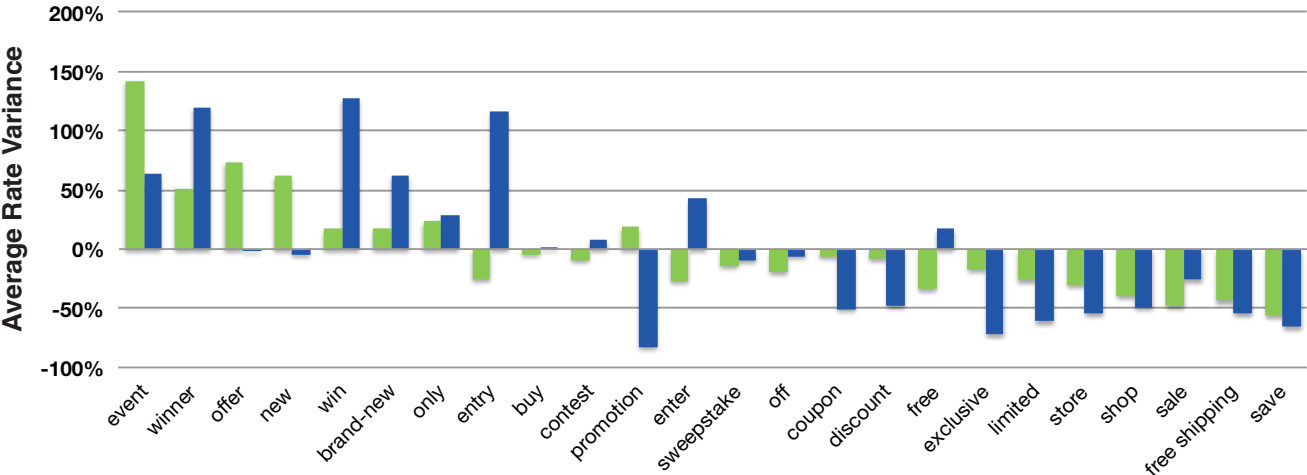
Two of the top five promotional keywords were “winner” and “win,” suggesting fans are open to a contest or sweepstakes type of promotion when the correct tone is set in the Post. Win/winning keywords give fans something to get excited about rather than feeling they are being sold to.

Fans are happy to engage with  
“events” and “winning”  
offers. Stick with this language, as  
opposed to more direct  
language such as  
“contest” or “promotion.”

EVENT  
WINNER  
OFFER  
NEW  
WIN  
BRAND NEW  
ONLY  
ENTRY  
BUY  
CONTEST  
PROMOTION  
ENTER  
SWEEPSTAKE  
OFF  
COUPON  
DISCOUNT  
FREE  
EXCLUSIVE  
LIMITED



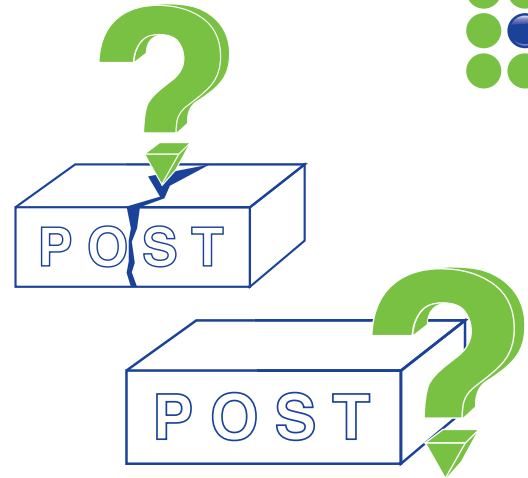
■ 'Like' Rate Variance   ■ Comment Rate Variance





## Question Placement: Ask Questions at the End

Posts that end with a question (rather than having it at the beginning or middle) have a 15% higher engagement rate. Given the desired outcome of a question Post is to invoke a response, placing it at the end of the Post ensures that any additional information in the Post does not distract the fan from providing a response. When seeking engagement from users, end the Post with a question.



Posts that end with a question have a **15% higher** engagement rate.

## Interrogative Keywords: Don't Ask Why; Ask Where, When, Would & Should

Despite the fact that they drove the highest engagement rates, “where,” “when,” “would” and “should” as question keywords were under-utilized in Posts. Brands can look to use these keywords to drive higher engagement rates.

The use of “would” drives a spike in ‘likes’ in particular. This is most likely due to fans using ‘like’ as a way to vote “yes” on the question rather than posting “yes” to a Wall.

“How,” “who,” “what,” “did” and “why” had the lowest engagement rates, with “what” being used in a large number of Posts.

**WHERE  
WHEN  
WOULD  
SHOULD  
HOW  
WHO  
WHAT  
DID  
WHY**

- ▶ “Where,” “when,” “would” and “should” drive the highest engagement rates (but are used less frequently, leaving an opportunity for brands to increase use of these keywords).
- ▶ Avoid asking “why” questions. “Why” has both the lowest ‘like’ and comment rates, and may be perceived as intrusive and/or challenging.



# Conclusion

Facebook is the fastest growing two-way communications platform of all time, and as brands increasingly make the social network a key hub for their marketing and communication strategies with various stakeholders, it is crucial they understand what drives engagement.

While engagement best practices clearly differ by industry, it is imperative that when it comes to their Facebook publishing strategies, brands keep things simple and in line with their fans' needs.

We hope this data is helpful for as you continue to maximize your brand or organization's presence on Facebook.

## Have questions?

► Contact us at [partner@buddymedia.com](mailto:partner@buddymedia.com), or follow us on:



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