

# Strategies for Effective Wall Posts: A Timeline Analysis

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**Take Away: Facebook Wall Posts Cheat Sheet**

**When to Post: Reference Guide**

# Introduction

When Facebook announced and subsequently transitioned all Pages to its new timeline format, marketers had a number of questions. How does this new format for presenting content impact the ability to engage my audience? Have my strategies for effective posting changed? Does content that garnered high interaction before timeline still get people interacting with timeline? Do the insights from Buddy Media's last data report, "Strategies for Effective Wall Posts: A Statistical Review"<sup>1</sup> still apply?

As Facebook marketing continues to mature, brands and agencies are asking smarter questions concerning posting strategies. Analysis is a critical part of being able to solidify those strategies. Instead of implementing a one-size-fits-all approach, marketers are reorganizing internal teams and social strategies to better meet overall business objectives.

Facebook users interact with you in different ways and frequencies. Likes (👍) make up approximately 79% of all interaction, while comments (💬) account for 15% and shares (📄) 6%. Depending on your goal, one of these interactions may be considered more valuable than another. But each reflects an important touch point in the conversation with your audience.

For marketers looking to interact with Facebook users in particular ways, this report serves as a guide to reach Facebook marketing goals. And for those marketers looking to boost overall interaction on Facebook, there is plenty of data to help support that initiative. In this report, you'll learn:

- Best days and times to post on Facebook by industry
- What type of content resonates best with Facebook users
- Posting strategies proven to increase interaction

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<sup>1</sup> <http://bddy.me/effectivewallposts>

# Methodology

Buddy Media analyzed user engagement from more than 1,800 Facebook Pages from the world's largest brands. Data was collected for two months after all brands were moved to timeline (April 1 – May 31, 2012).

Key metrics analyzed include the following:

- Like Rate: number of likes divided by number of impressions per post
- Comment Rate: number of comments divided by number of impressions per post
- Share Rate: number of shares divided by number of impressions per post
- Interaction Rate: likes + comments + shares divided by number of impressions per post

Notes:

- All posts with paid impressions were excluded from this analysis.
- Link clicks were not included in the calculation for interaction. Link clicks are not an intra-Facebook engagement metric and also inflate the interaction rate for posts containing links, thus weighing those instances unevenly.

# When to Post

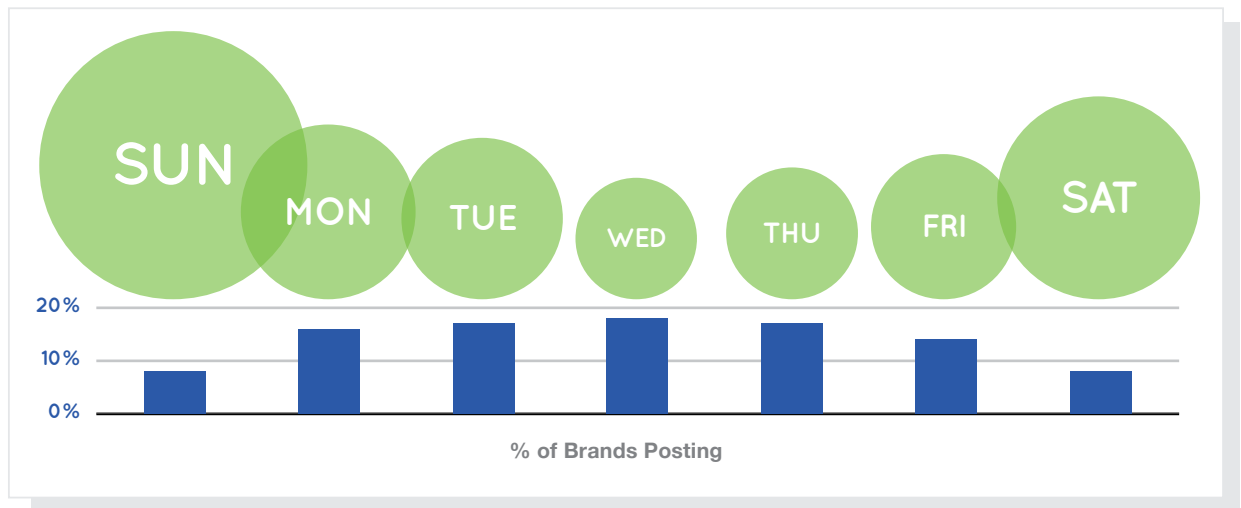
## Don't Sleep on the Weekends

There is a tremendous opportunity for brands to increase interaction by posting more on weekends. The interaction rate for posts on weekends is 14.5% higher compared to weekday posts, however only 14% of posts are published on Saturdays and Sundays. Facebook fans like to use the social network when they have downtime, which is why the weekends tend to receive such high interaction rates.

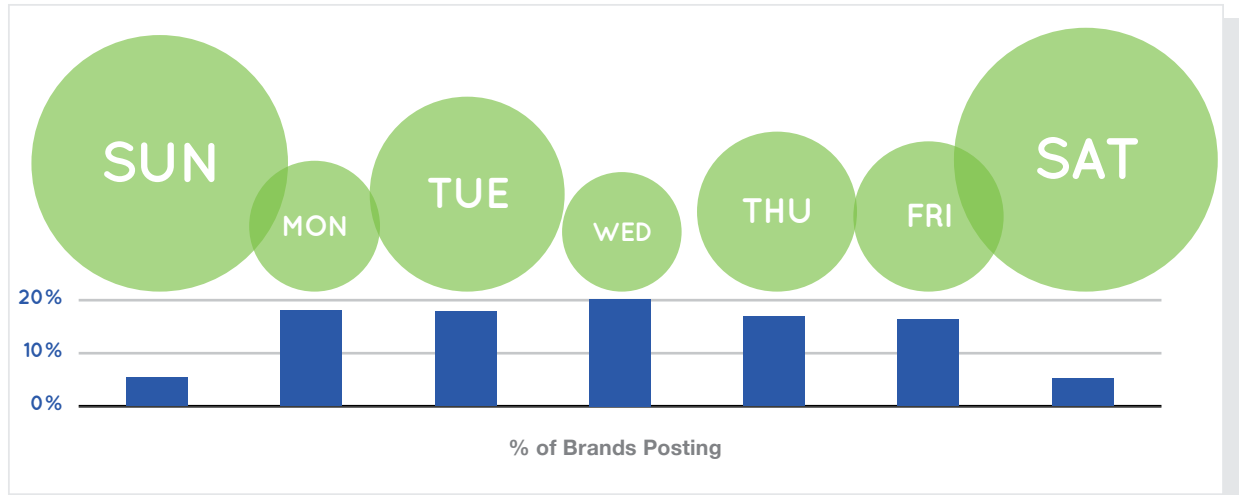
While Monday and Tuesday receive decent interaction rates, brands should avoid Wednesdays, when interactions is 7.4% below average.

## Best Day to Post by Industry

The best day to post varies by industry, which is why we looked at a number of different verticals to find when interaction rates are highest. The following serves as a guideline for the most effective days to post within 15 different industries. Use it as a starting point to identify the most effective days of the week to engage your audience.

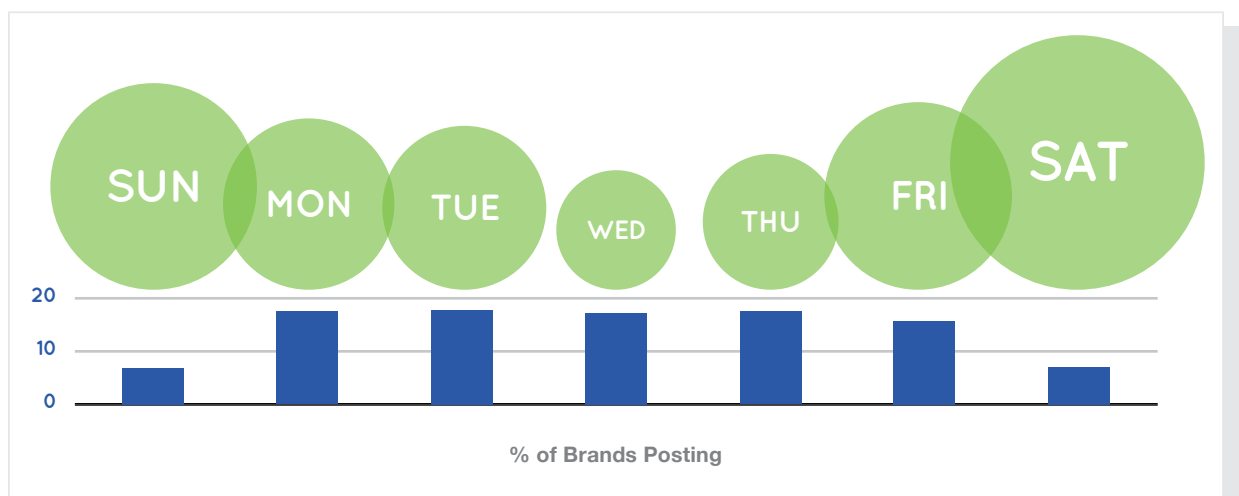


## Advertising and Consulting: It's a Weekend World



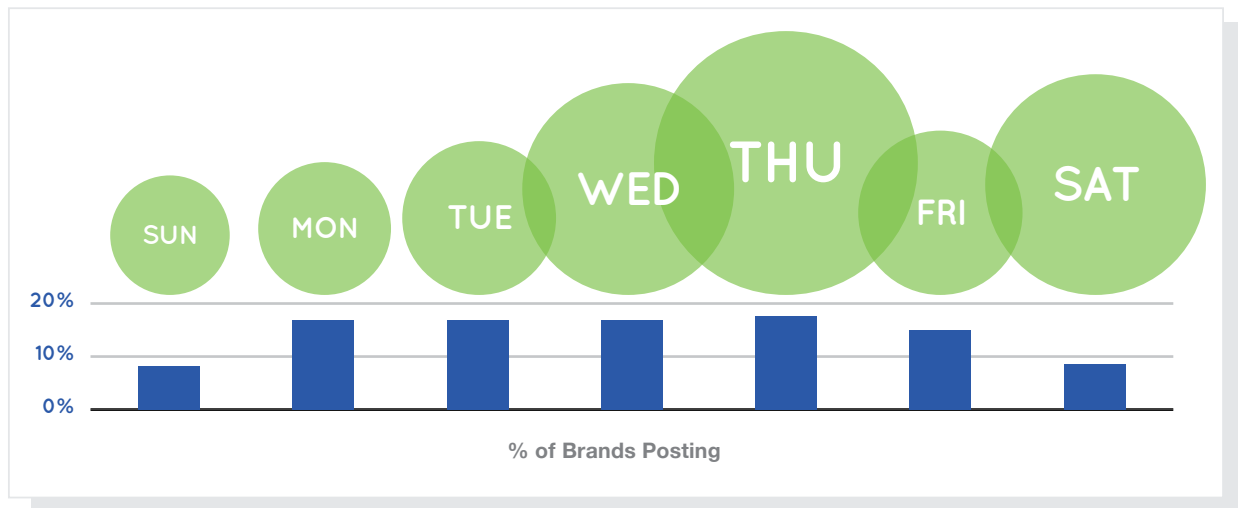
Advertising and consulting Pages have a big opportunity to leverage the weekend to receive high interaction rates. Posts on Saturdays and Sundays receive 69% higher interaction, but only 11% of posts are published on the weekends. Our hypothesis for this trend is that fans of these Pages predominately have more free time on the weekends, thus they are able to interact more with posts during this time.

## Automotive: Post on Weekends to Drive More Interaction



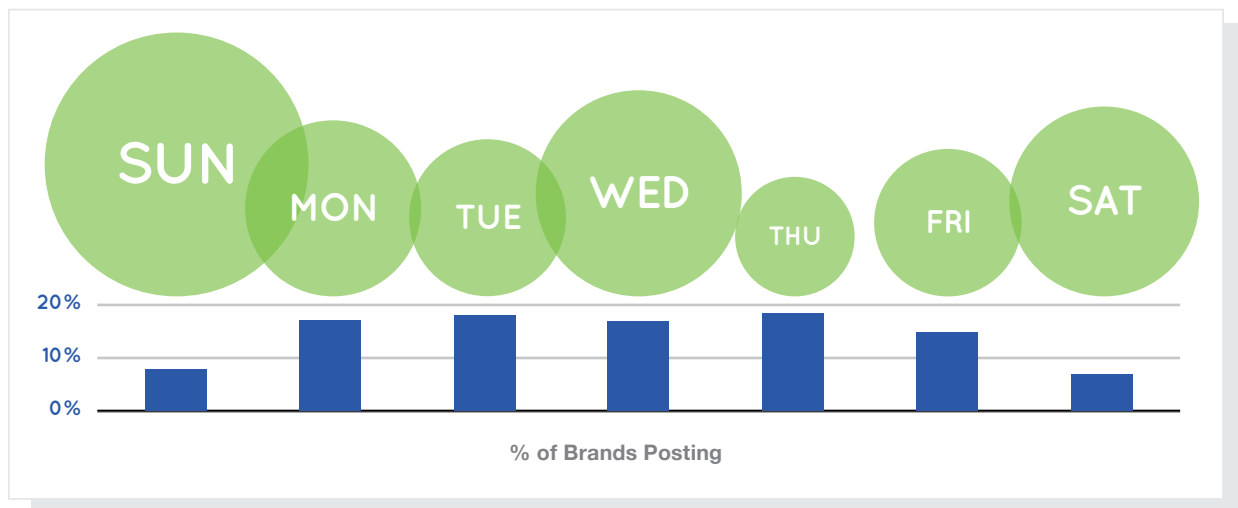
Weekend posts receive interaction rates 15% higher than weekdays. Most automotive brands, however are not taking advantage of the opportunity, as only 14% of brand posts are published at this time. The theory is that fans have more time to research and shop for cars on the weekends.

## Clothing and Fashion: You're Looking Good, Thursday



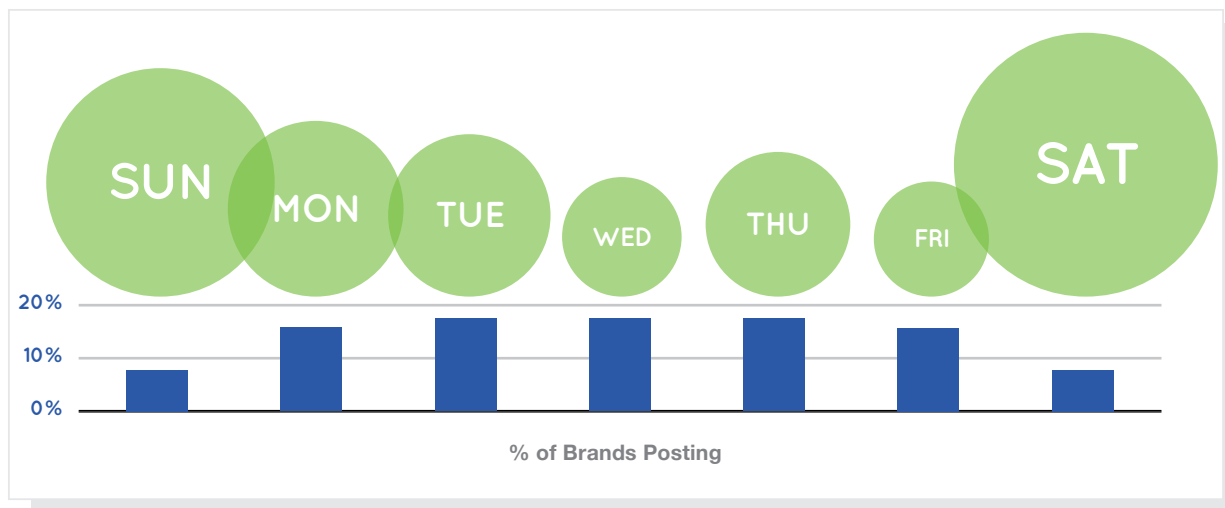
In the clothing and fashion industry, post interaction steadily increases as the week progresses, reaching its peak on Thursdays, when interaction rates are 13% above average. Additionally, Saturdays also show above-average interaction. People may look to plan their weekend outfits and shopping trips as the end of the week approaches, causing the interaction spike on Thursdays and Saturdays.

## Consumer Packaged Goods: Use the Weekends and Wednesdays



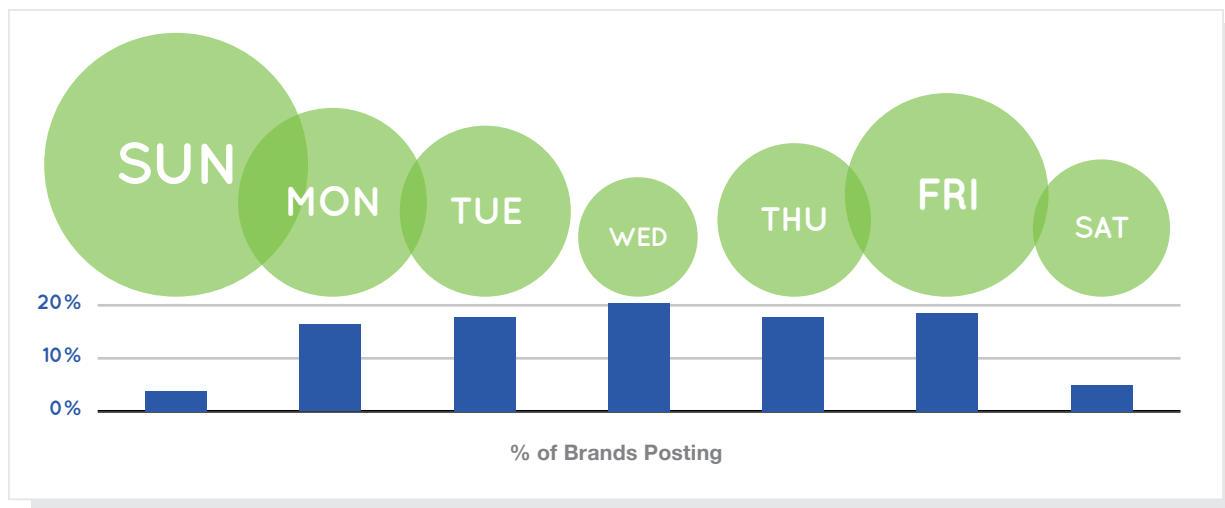
Though only 15% of brand posts are published on weekends, interaction rates are highest on these days. Wednesdays also receive above-average interaction, but CPG Pages should avoid Thursdays, as interaction is 9% lower on this day. Weekends and Wednesdays may be the days when fans are most likely to shop for everyday household goods.

## Entertainment: Entertain Fans on Weekends



Not surprisingly, entertainment Pages receive higher interaction on the weekends. In fact, interaction is 20% higher than on the weekdays, with Saturday receiving interaction rates 17% higher than average. The weekends give fans of these Pages time to catch up on entertainment news.

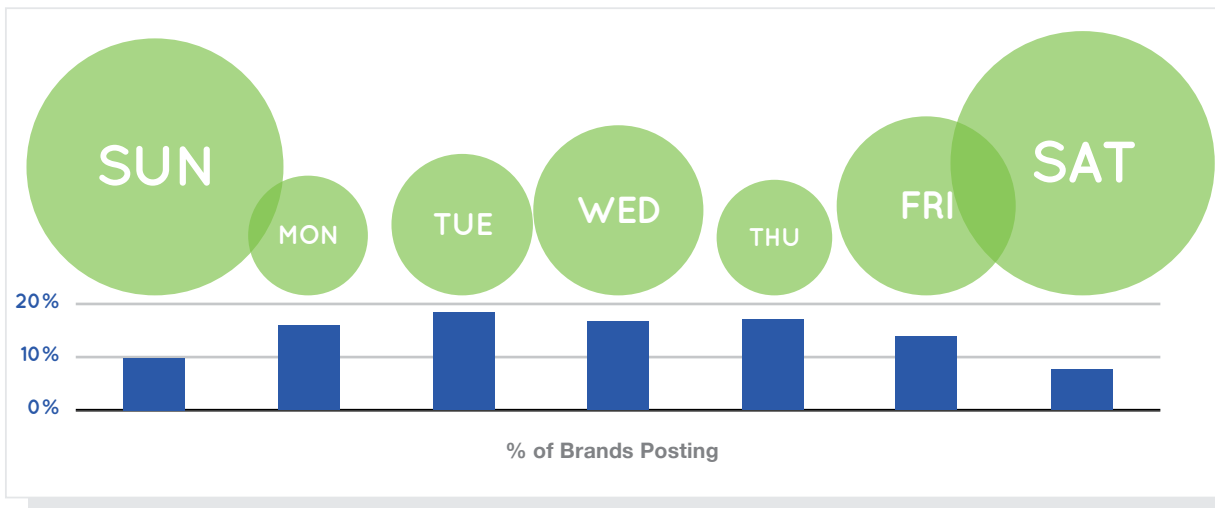
## Finance: Banks close on Sundays, Facebook Pages should not



Just because banks typically aren't open on Sundays does not mean finance brands should ignore fans on this day. While only 4% of finance posts are sent on Sundays, interaction rates are 29% higher on these days. A lazy Sunday is a great time to catch up on financial news before the workweek starts.

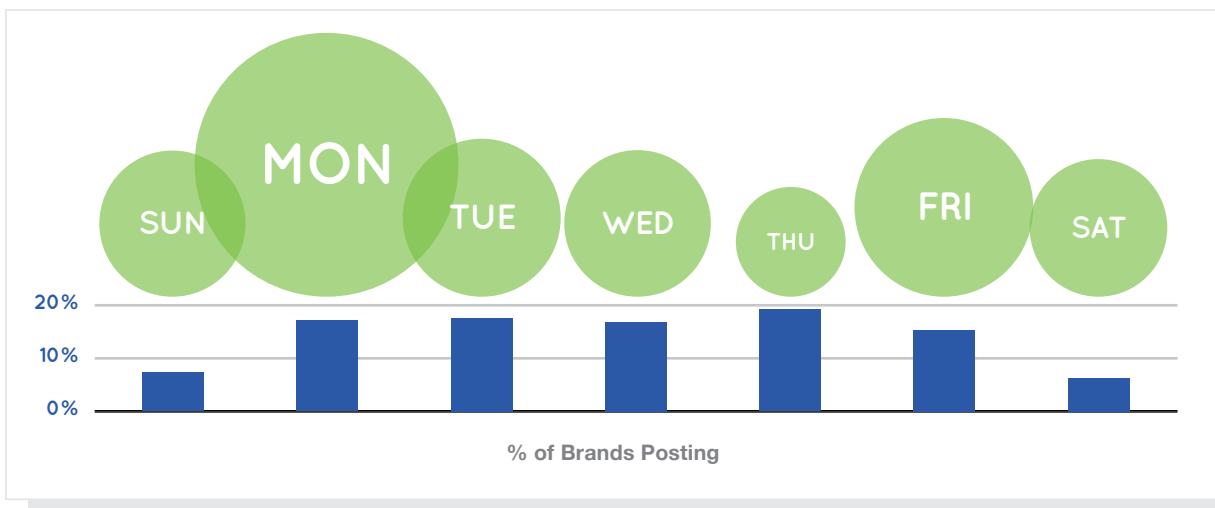


## Food and Beverage: Make a Reservation to Post on Weekends



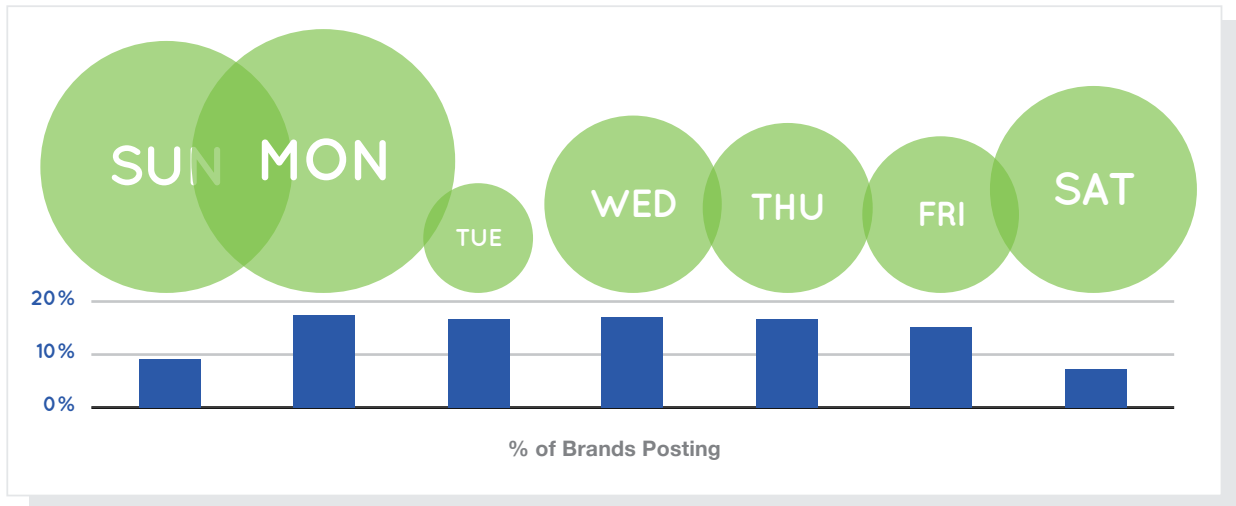
Though interaction rates are 19% higher than the weekdays, only 18% of posts occur on the weekends. Many Facebook users may have more time to enjoy food and beverages or dine-out on the weekends, so interaction is higher as a result of it. Brands are missing a key opportunity for interaction.

## General Retail: No “Monday Blues” for Fans



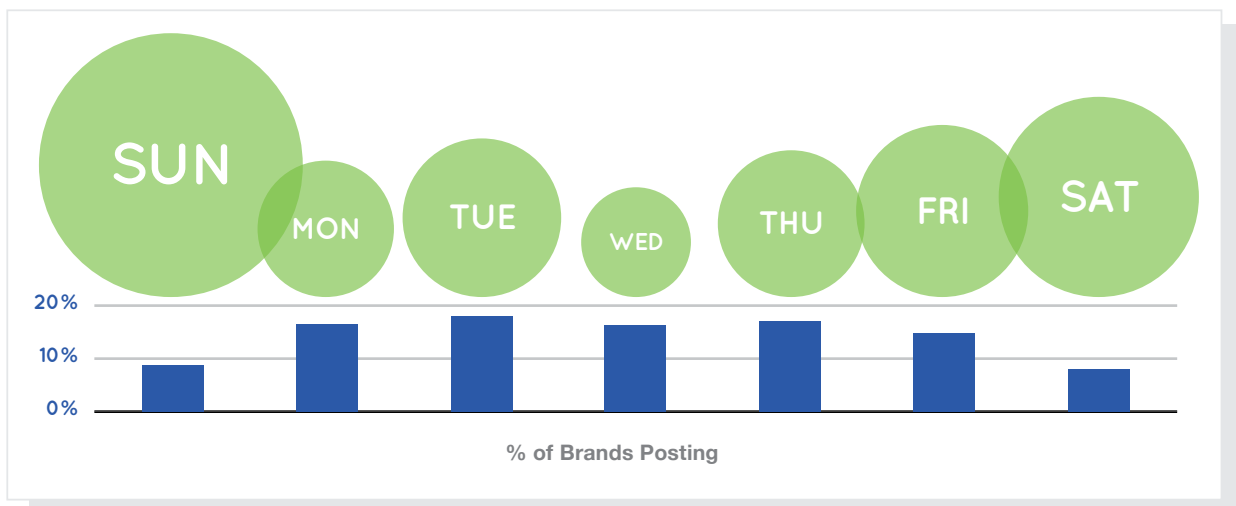
Mondays experience the highest interaction rates in the general retail industry, which are 19% above average. After the weekend is over, fans of general retail Pages turn to Facebook to take their minds off the week ahead. Posts are spread evenly throughout the workweek in the industry, so these Pages should post more on Mondays.

## Health and Beauty: Sunday and Monday Are Beautiful



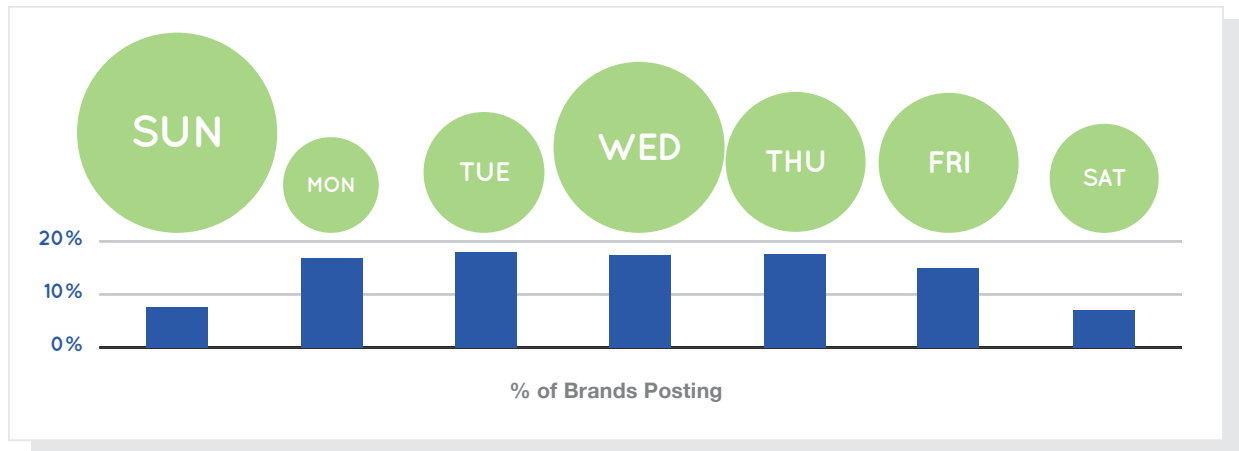
Sunday and Monday see the highest interaction rates in the health and beauty industry at 11% and 12% above average, respectively. Saturdays also do well, with interaction rates 6% higher than average. Tuesdays, however seem to suffer with interaction rates far lower than average, and yet Tuesday posts make up 17% of all posts during the week. Health and beauty brands, therefore, should limit Tuesday posts and focus on days with higher engagement.

## Nonprofit: Look to Weekends



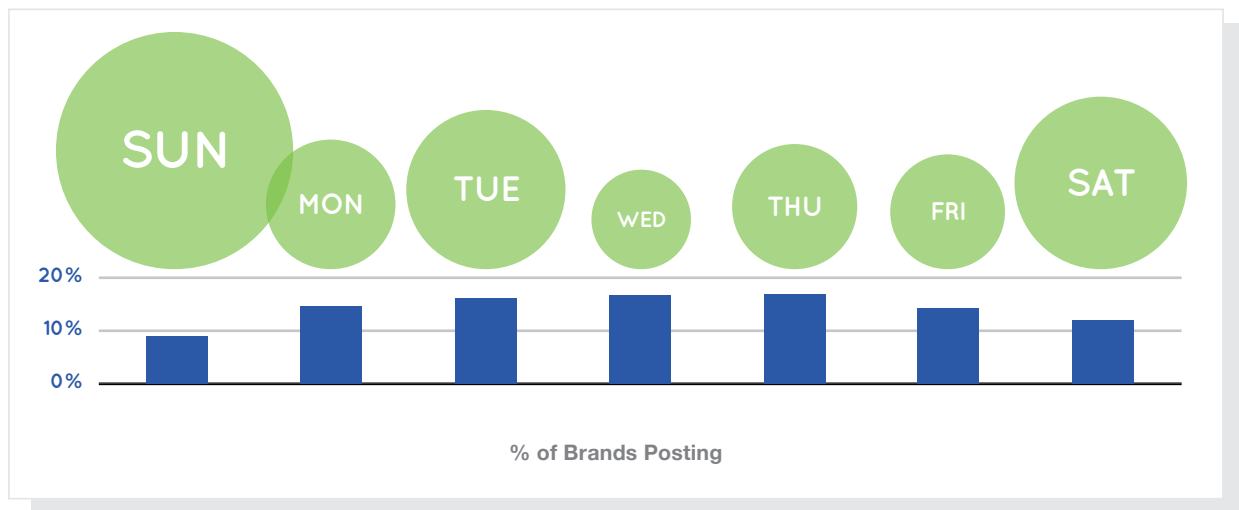
The nonprofit industry is another industry that has a lot of opportunity to post on weekends. Though interaction is significantly higher on Saturdays and Sundays than the rest of the week (to the tune of 14% higher interaction), the weekends are the least utilized days of the week when it comes to posting. On weekends, Facebook users have a chance to learn and engage with nonprofit organizations.

## Publishing: Let Fans Play “Catch Up” on Sundays



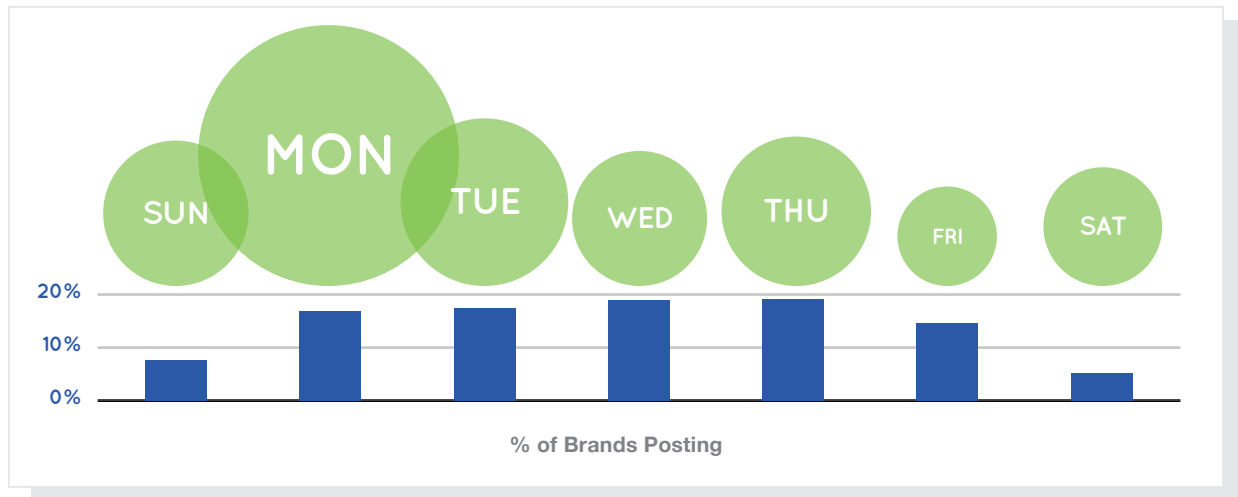
Sundays provide a great opportunity for Facebook fans to catch up on the news of the week, and as a result, interaction rates are 5% higher than average on these days. Mondays, however see interaction rates 7% below average, so it’s best to let people get settled into the workweek before posting Facebook content.

## Sports: Weekends Host Major Sporting Events and See Major Interaction



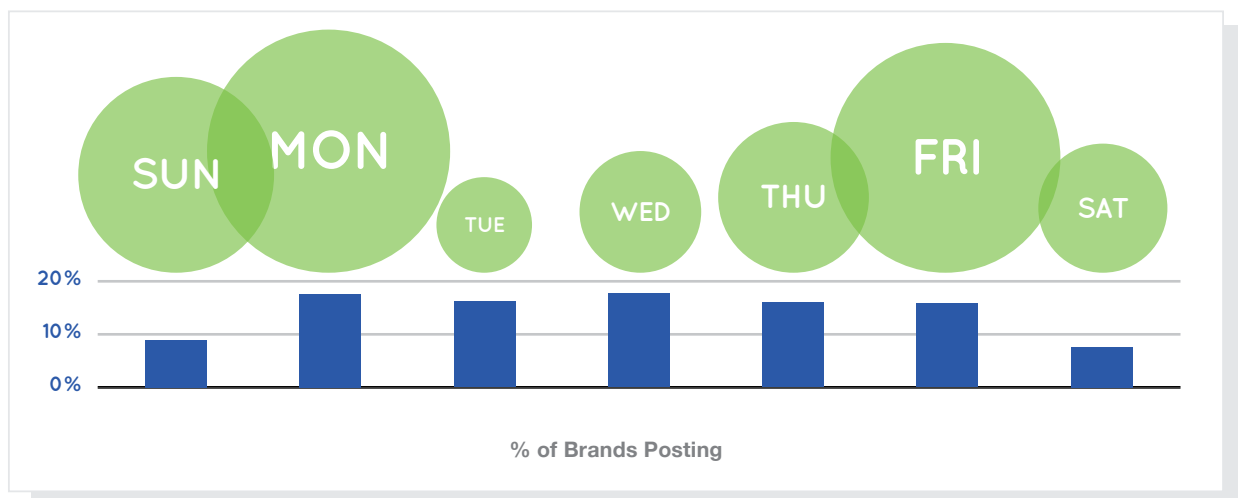
The biggest sporting events are often held on weekends, so it’s no surprise that Saturdays and Sundays see the highest interaction rates. Sundays, in fact, see interaction rates 11% higher than average. In the middle of the workweek, however fans don’t interact with Pages as often. Wednesdays in particular see significantly lower interaction rates compared to the rest of the week.

## Technology: Plug in Posts on Mondays



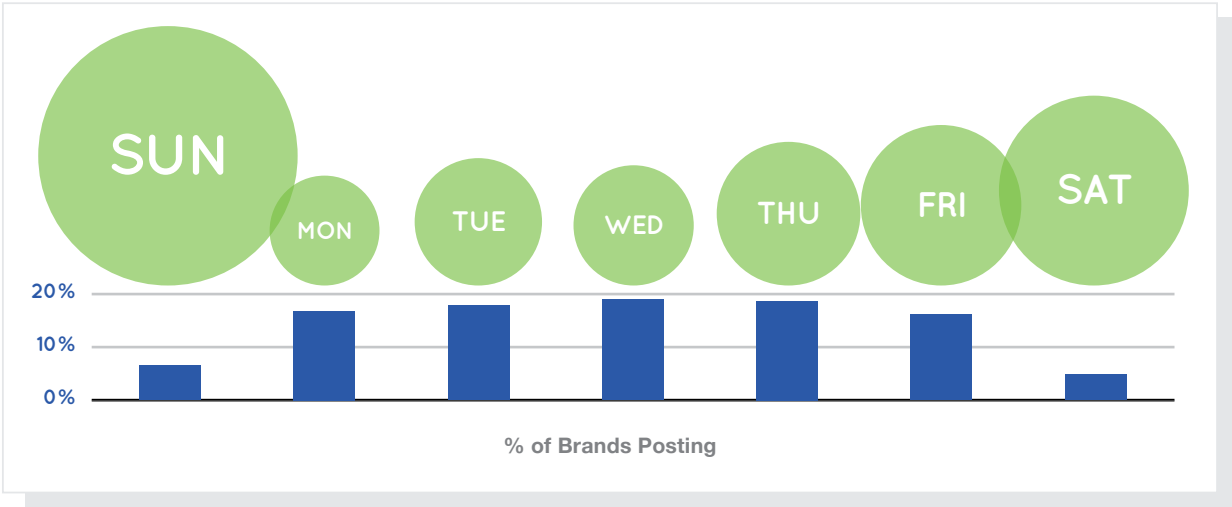
Technology is a rare industry in which Pages do not see high interaction rates on weekends. Mondays, in fact are the best days to post, as interaction rates are 30% higher than average. Our theory: technology is a subject people interact with while at work, and catch up on the topic when they start the workweek.

## Telecommunications: Connect with Fans on Fridays, Sundays and Mondays



In the telecommunications industry, Fridays, Sundays and Mondays receive the highest interaction. Yet, 16% of all posts in the industry are published on Tuesdays, when interaction is down 8% compared to the average. As the weekend approaches and recedes it appears telecommunications fans are more willing to interact than in the middle of the week.

# Travel and Leisure: Later in the Week, More Fans Interact



As the weekend approaches with opportunities for fun activities, interaction rates start climbing for travel and leisure Pages. Interaction rates start climbing on Thursdays and peak on Sundays, when interaction is 19% higher than average. People interact more with these brands when they're having fun and taking or planning their own trips.

# Facebook Interaction is Nocturnal, Post During “Non-Busy Hours”

Brand posts published between 8 PM and 7 AM, which are defined as “non-busy hours,” receive 14% higher interaction than those that post between 8 AM and 7 PM, which are defined as “busy hours.”

There is plenty of room for brands to improve on this, as only 18% of posts are sent during “non-busy hours.” When not at work, people are more likely to spend time perusing Facebook and interacting with Page content. Providing the right content at the right time to people is a huge step in the optimization of Facebook marketing, so don’t overwhelm fans when they are busy. By posting early in the morning you also allow your post to increase its News Feed Optimization during a less noisy time<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> For more information on Facebook News Feed Optimization, read the Buddy Media white paper here: <http://bddy.me/newsfeed>

# Post 1-2 Times per Day, Don't Exceed 7 Times per Week

Brands that post one or two times per day see 19% higher interaction rates than those who post three or more times per day. The key is not to bombard fans with too many posts, as Facebook News Feed Optimization often penalizes for this.

Additionally, interaction rates are high among brands that post seven or less times during the week. Pages that post more than seven times per week see a 25% decrease in interaction rates. The key here is to analyze your Page's historical performance, identify when your fans engage the most, and then post more frequently on those days (and less on the others).



# What to Post

## Keep Posts Under the 80-Character Brick Wall

KEEP IT SHORT.  
POSTS WITH MORE  
THAN **EIGHTY** CHARACTERS  
WRECK INTERACTIONS 

It's all about brevity on Facebook (even more so than Twitter<sup>2</sup>). Posts with 80 characters or less receive 23% higher interaction than longer posts. The problem for brands, however is that more than 75% of posts are beyond this optimum length, thus impacting interaction. So take time to figure out how to make posts concise, and reap the benefits of increased interaction.

<sup>2</sup> <http://bddy.me/EffectiveTweeting>



# Thinking About Attachments? Use Photos First

When it comes to attachment types on Facebook, photos definitely take the gold medal.

This is most likely the result of the new timeline design, which allows brands to display big, beautiful images on their Pages. Photo posts receive interaction rates 39% higher than average. Meanwhile, status updates that contain only text still receive notable interaction rates 12% higher than average. Meanwhile, posts with links or videos drive fewer likes, comments and shares than average.



# Use Long and Shortened URLs in Tandem

There are certain advantages to using both a long URL and shortened URL when posting links to Facebook. Because long URLs receive 16% higher interaction rates than shortened URLs, it is beneficial to use a display URL which gives an indication of the link's final destination.



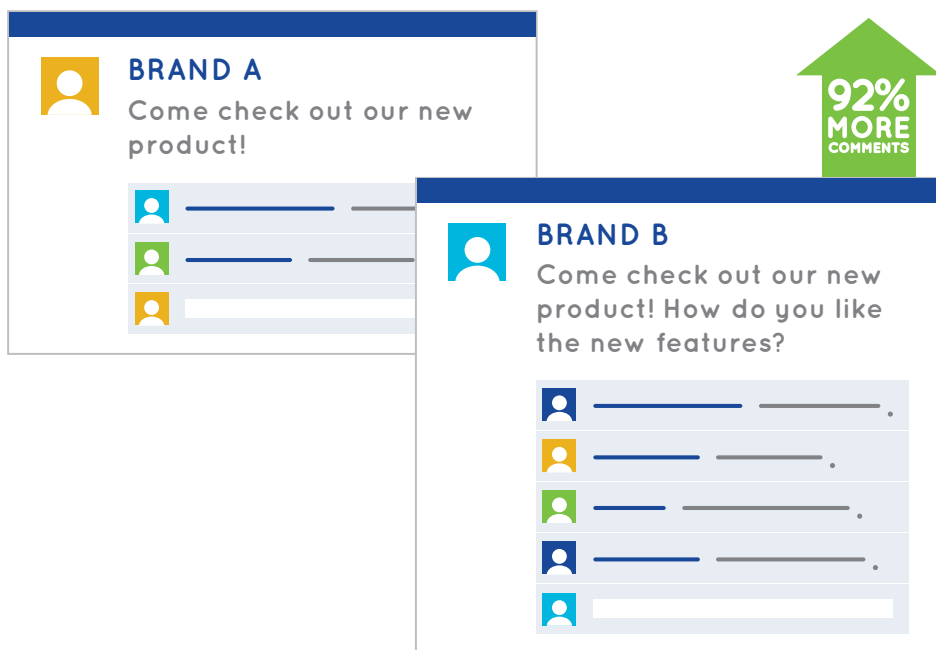
For example, the long URL [www.shop.com/umbrellas](http://www.shop.com/umbrellas) lets a user know you will direct them to a page that is selling umbrellas. Using shortened URLs, however allows for easy link click tracking, which is critical to measuring success. So the best approach is to use a combination of both. Take advantage of the capabilities in ConversationBuddy™, which allow for customization of display URLs when publishing, while using shortened URL in the background to track the link clicks.

# Content Analysis – Generating Comments

## Want Comments? Ask a Question

Question posts are popular; in fact, 29% of all posts contain a question.

Though posts containing questions receive slightly lower interaction overall, they generate 92% higher comment rates than non-question posts. The value from this type of post, of course, is the insight gleaned when mining fan comments. Using question posts for market analysis can be an easy way to gauge opinion without needing to invest in a survey or focus group.



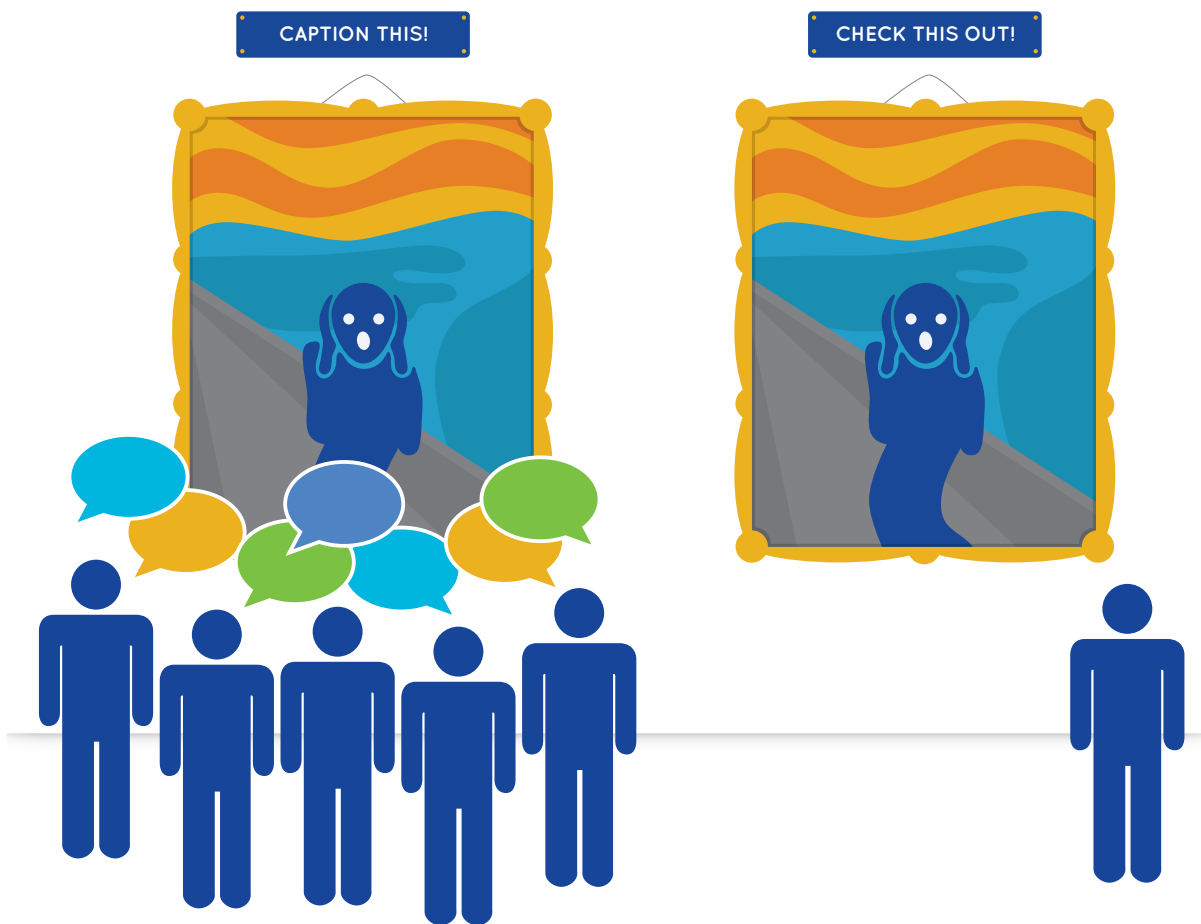
# If You Are Asking a Question, Ask it at the End

Not only does it matter whether you ask a question, it also matters where you place the question in the post. Posts that have a question located at the end have a 15% higher overall interaction rate and a 2X higher comment rate than those with a question asked in the middle of the post. Our theory for this: by asking a question and then presenting more content in a post, a fan is distracted from immediately responding. However, when a question is placed at the end of a sentence a fan can immediately respond.



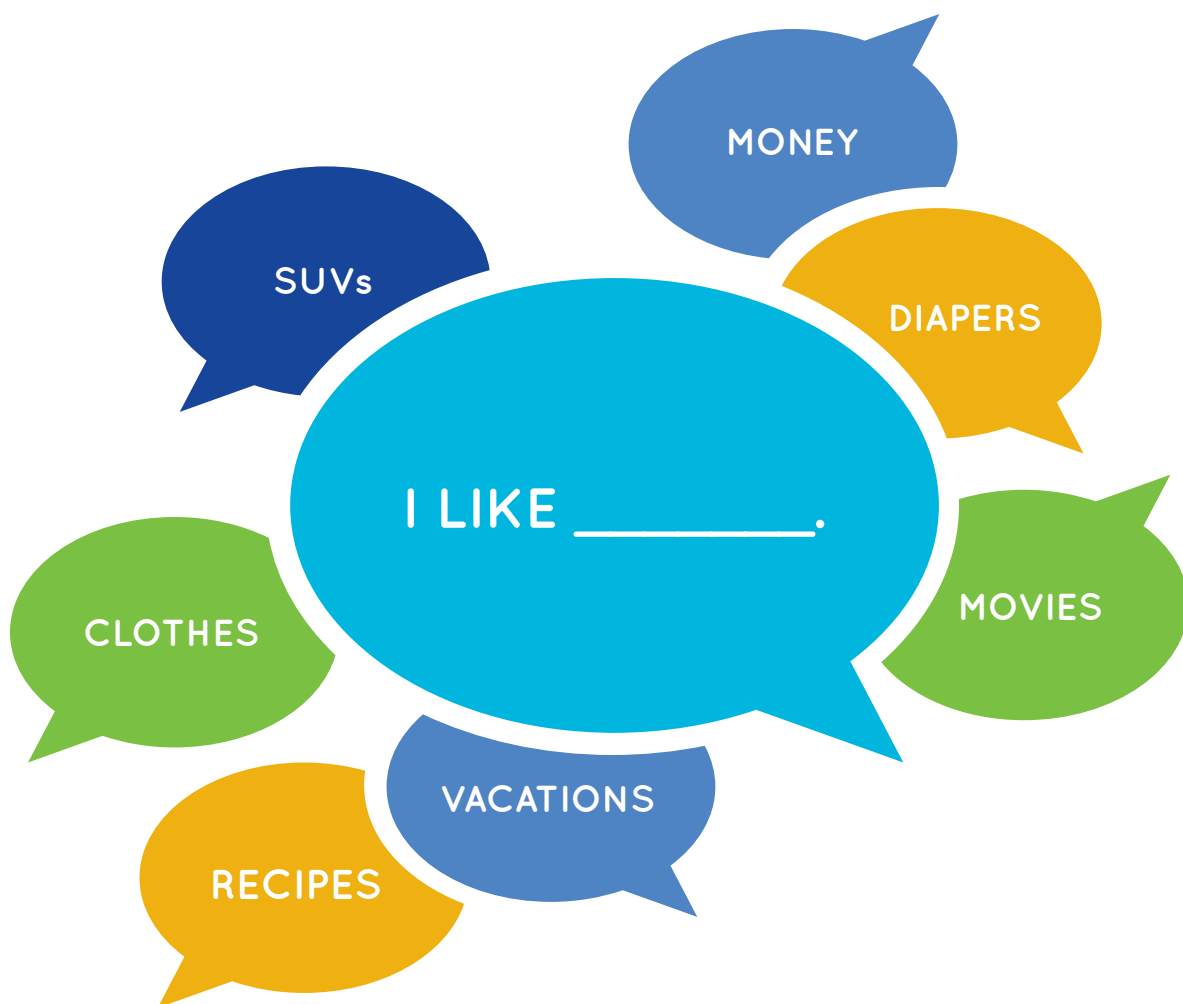
# Have a Cool Image? Tell Fans to “Caption This”

The “caption this” strategy asks users to create their own captions for a photo posted on Facebook. It’s a game that allows fans to use creativity in the conversation. With the emphasis on timeline photo posts, the “caption this” strategy can certainly pay dividends for brands, and the numbers back this assertion. Posts that employ the “caption this” strategy generate 5.5X higher comment rates than posts without a “caption this” strategy. Additionally, “caption this” posts increase the overall interaction rate by more than 100%. Like everything, it’s important to use this strategy in moderation, but it can certainly improve interaction when posting images.



# Ask Fans to Fill in the \_\_\_\_\_ to Get More Comments

Using a “fill in the blank” strategy, in which brands ask fans to add their own words or phrases to complete a sentence, is a great way to start a dialogue within a Facebook community. Posts that use a “fill in the blank” strategy receive 4X as many comments as those that do not. Therefore, if the goal for your post is to drive comments, leverage this clever strategy to learn more about your fans and drive conversations on your wall.



# Content Analysis – Increase Overall Interaction

## Wear Your Emotions on Your Sleeve: Use Emoticons

Emoticons, in which users create facial expressions using punctuation, have been used for centuries, and possibly as early as Abraham Lincoln’s presidency.<sup>3</sup> In the online realm, people use emoticons as a form of non-verbal communication. Posts that contain emoticons receive 52% higher interaction rates. These posts have a 57% higher like rate, 33% higher comment rate and 33% higher share rate. Depending on the tone you take on Facebook, emoticons can be a great way to humanize your brand while increasing interaction (just use in moderation).

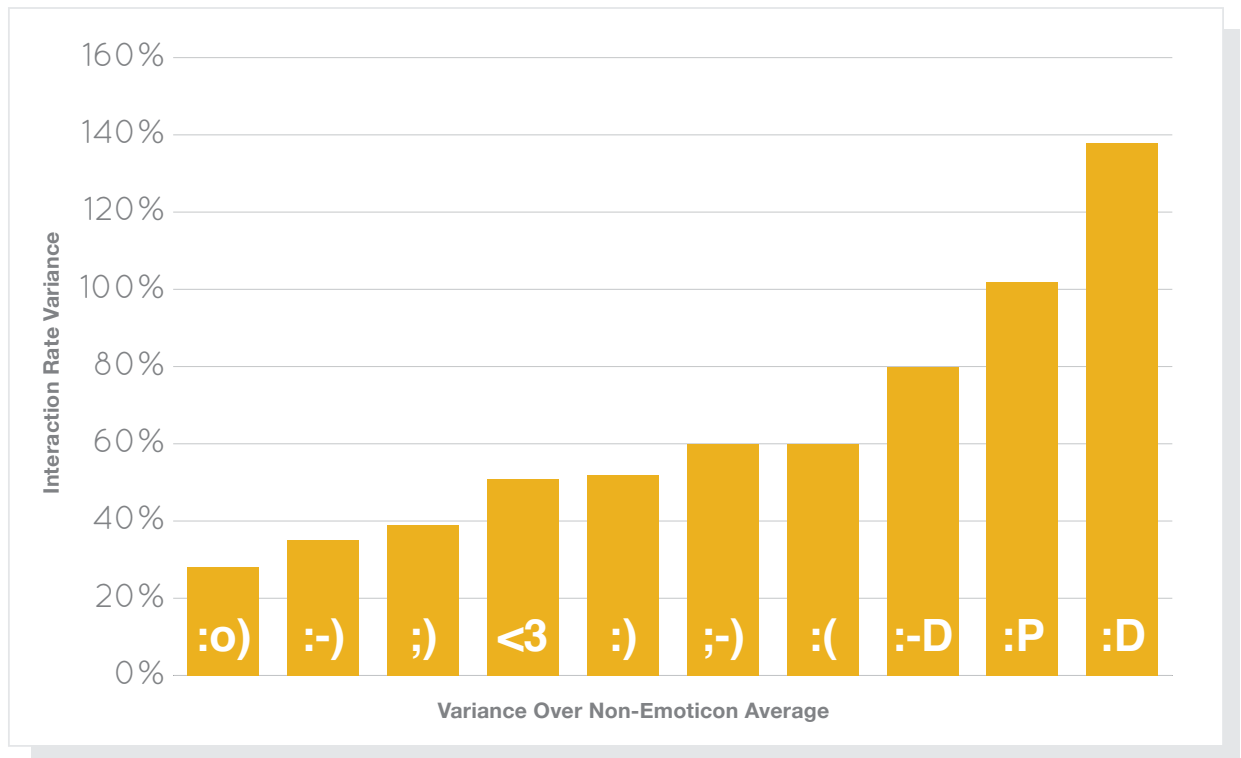


<sup>3</sup> <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/19/hfo-emoticon>

# Not All Emoticons Are Created Equal

Though emoticons increase interaction overall, certain emoticons create more interaction than others. The most popular emoticons used in posts are :) and ;) which see 52% and 39% higher interaction rates than the non-emoticon average. The :) emoticon made up 58% of all emoticon posts.

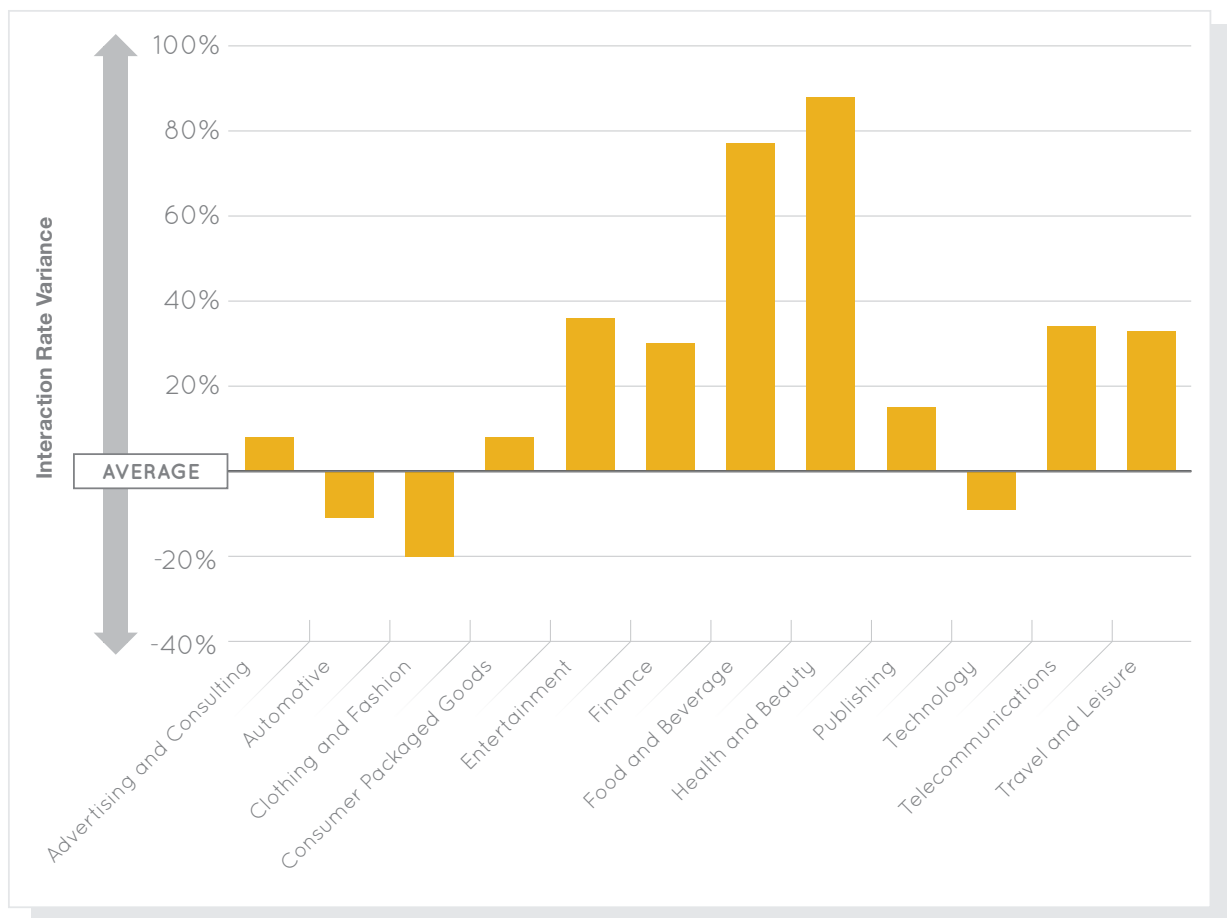
And though seldom used :D and :P actually have the highest interaction rates at 2.4X and 2X higher than the non-emoticon average.





# Emoticons May or May Not Bring a Smile to Your Fans' Faces

The effectiveness of emoticons in increasing interaction varies by industry. Within each industry, we analyzed emoticon posts vs. non-emoticon posts. Overall, the use of emoticons proves most successful for health and beauty and food and beverage brands, while automotive, clothing and fashion and technology brands all have lower than average interaction rates when using emoticons.



# Want Fans to Take Action? Use a Call to Action

Time and time again, Buddy Media research has found that using clear calls to action are incredibly effective.

The most effective calls to action on Facebook include like, caption this, share, yes or no and thumbs up. These options all see interaction rates of 48% higher than average or more. Conversely, words such as take, click, submit, check and shop see significantly lower interaction rates than average, and should be used as calls to action sparingly.



**LIKE**  
**CAPTION THIS**  
**SHARE**  
**YES OR NO**  
**THUMBS UP**  
**TRUE OR FALSE**  
**COMMENT**  
**AGREE**  
**TRIVIA**  
**HIT**  
**TELL US**  
**SEE**  
**POST**  
**ORDER**  
**VISIT**  
**WATCH**  
**TAKE**  
**CLICK**  
**SUBMIT**  
**CHECK**  
**SHOP**

# Use Specific Calls to Action to Drive Interaction

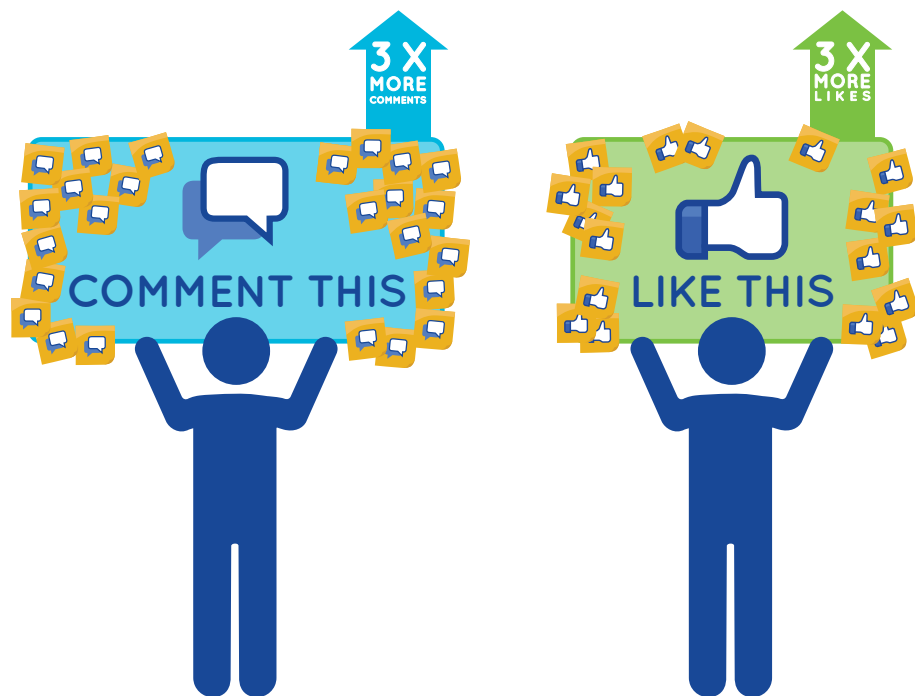


Like, comment and share calls to action help accomplish different goals. It is important for marketers to first determine the goal of the post, then determine the corresponding call to action to drive the preferred interaction.

When fans are specifically asked to like a post, there is a 3X higher like rate than when they are not asked to like.

When fans are specifically asked to comment on a post, there is a 3.3X higher comment rate than when they are not asked to comment.

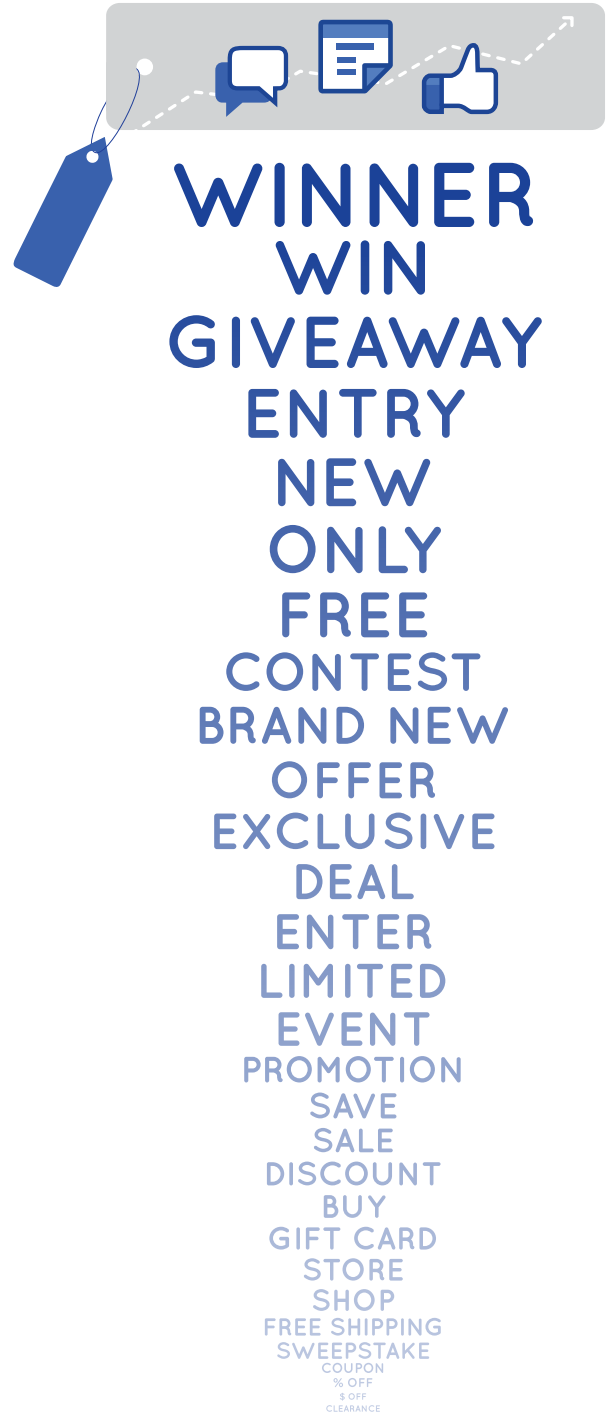
When fans are specifically asked to share a post, fans react remarkably well; posts that ask for shares have a share rate 7x higher than those that don't ask fans to share.



# Fans Interact More with “Winning” and “Giveaway” Keywords

There are certain promotional keywords that lead to more fan interaction than others, and the most and least effective words may surprise you. The top five promotional keywords that result in high interaction are winner, win, giveaway, entry and new.

The five keywords that result in the lowest interaction rates are sweepstakes, coupon, % off, \$ off and clearance. Posts that use “winner”, “win”, and “giveaway” keywords get 68%, 46%, and 42% higher interaction than average, respectively.



# Conclusion

Now that brands have almost universally adopted Facebook marketing in some form, there is a critical need for clear Facebook posting guidelines to optimize fan interaction.

Use these best practices as a foundation to guide your Facebook posting strategy, measure the success of your posts once the best practices have been used, then tweak your strategy to optimize posts based on what works for your unique fan base.

- Post on days that are best for your industry. Schedule posts to take advantage of times when interaction is high and other brands are posting less, such as weekends.
- Post between 8 PM and 7 AM to present fans with content when they are not busy.
- Post one or two times per day, but space posts out to avoid exceeding seven posts per week.
- Keep it short: use 80 characters or less per post.
- Use photo attachments or text-only status updates to increase interaction.
- Show users a long URL on posts including a link, but track link clicks internally with a shortened URL.
- Use questions to drive dialogue in the form of fan comments.
- Place your questions at the end of posts for higher comment rates.
- Use “caption this” and “fill in the blank” strategies to drive more comments.
- Use emoticons to non-verbally communicate with your fans and humanize your brand.
- Use calls to action to explicitly tell fans how you want them to interact with your posts.
- Use “softer sell” keywords, which resonate better with users.

## Have questions or comments?

Contact us at [inquiries@buddymedia.com](mailto:inquiries@buddymedia.com), find us at [www.buddymedia.com](http://www.buddymedia.com), or follow us on:



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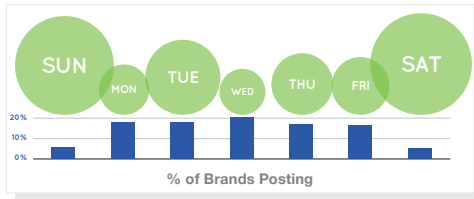
# Facebook Wall Posts Cheat Sheet

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<input type="checkbox"/>		Use questions to drive dialogue in the form of comments.
<input type="checkbox"/>		Place your questions at the end of posts.
<input type="checkbox"/>		Use “caption this” and “fill in the blank” strategies to drive more comments.
<input type="checkbox"/>		Use emoticons as a layer of non-verbal communication.
<input type="checkbox"/>		Use calls to action to explicitly tell fans what action you want them to take.
<input type="checkbox"/>		Use “softer sell” keywords, which resonate better with users.

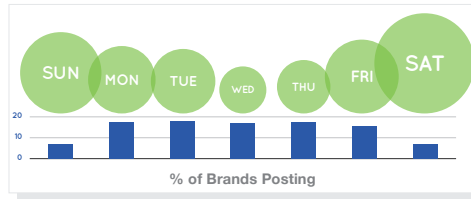
Download the full report: <http://bddy.me/timelineposting>

# When to Post: Reference Guide

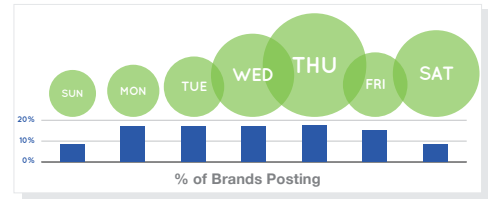
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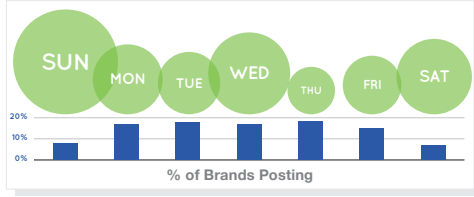
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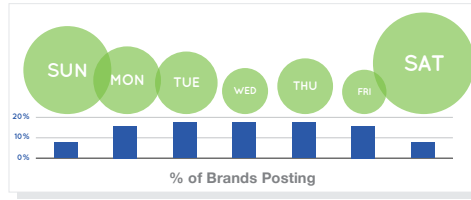
**Clothing and Fashion: You're Looking Good, Thursday**



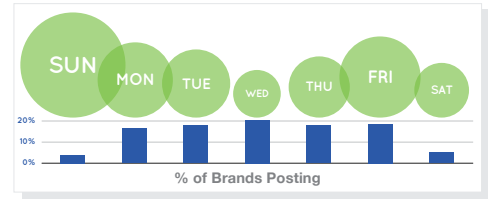
**Consumer Packaged Goods: Use the Weekends and Wednesdays**



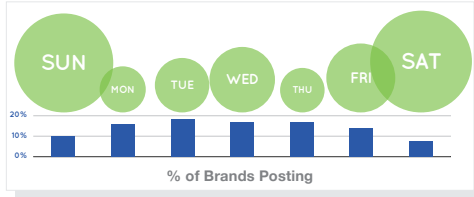
**Entertainment: Entertain Fans on Weekends**



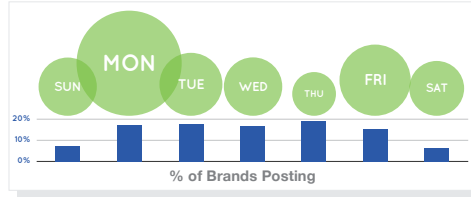
**Finance: Banks Closed Sundays, Facebook Pages Should Not Be**



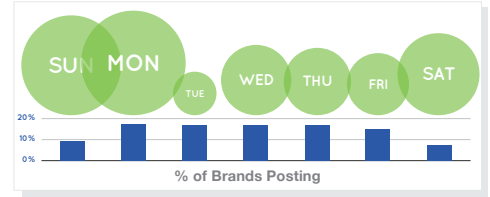
**Food and Beverage: Make a Reservation to Post on Weekends**



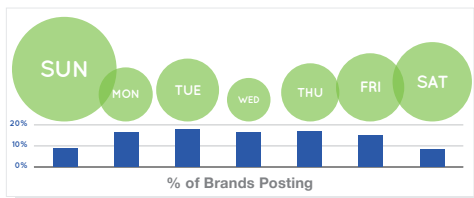
**General Retail: No "Monday Blues" for Fans**



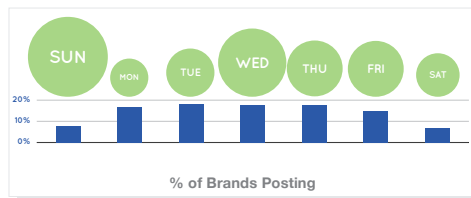
**Health and Beauty: Sunday and Monday Are Beautiful**



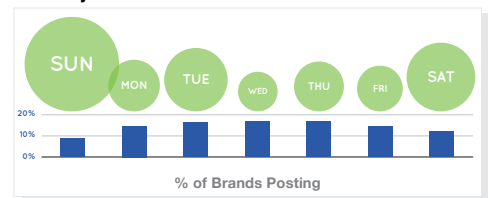
**Nonprofit: Look to Weekends**



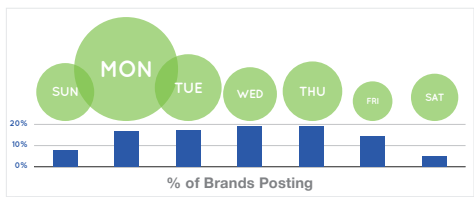
**Publishing: Let Fans Play "Catch Up" on Sundays**



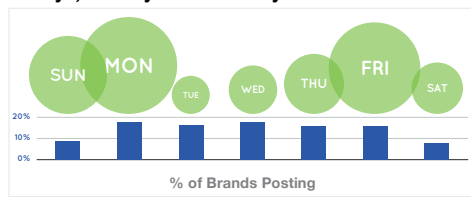
**Sports: Weekends Host Major Sporting Events and See Major Interaction**



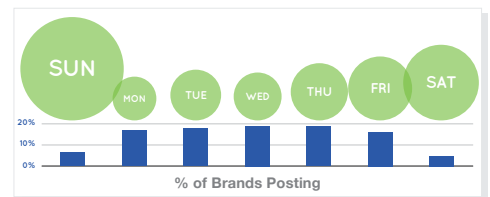
**Technology: Plug in Posts on Mondays**



**Telecommunications: Connect with Fans on Fridays, Sundays and Mondays**



**Travel and Leisure: Later in the Week, More Fans Interact**



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