



BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING MESSAGING

**Six Surefire Strategies to Keep Your
Facebook Fans Coming Back for More**

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Introduction

How to make your Facebook page a fan favorite

When it comes to posting on your Facebook fan page, you have a wide choice of content types, including photos, updates, video, and links. Each has its own strengths—and therefore a rightful place in your arsenal. Regardless of what **type** of content you post, there are certain **messaging strategies** that consistently prove to increase fan engagement. We've repeatedly seen specific content strategies work over many different brand pages—both to trigger instant engagement and to inspire fans to keep coming back for more. In this paper, we take a look at what these proven strategies are, using real life examples from companies that do a fantastic job of engaging their fan bases.



Tap into fan passions

You already know what your fans are passionate about, so make your Facebook page the perfect platform for them to express that. If you market for a fashion brand, talk about design, style, and haute couture. If you're a food brand, ask for favorite recipes and opinions on food trends. **Focus on the unique personality of your fans to determine what type of messaging or content they'll respond to with the greatest enthusiasm.** Here are some examples of brand pages that excel at engaging their fans on a personal and emotional level.

Rue La La is an online boutique for designer merchandise and clothing. Knowing that its fans live and breathe fashion trends and style, the company cleverly taps into their excitement via a regular "live chat" on its Facebook page with a featured fashion stylist. The top screenshot on the right shows how Rue La La informed fans of an upcoming chat with stylist Sydney Wasserman from Elle.com. Rue La La added the stylist's photo both to make the post more personal and engaging—and to increase its EdgeRank weight. The second message was posted as the live chat began, and shows 43 comments from engaged fans and the stylist as they carried on a conversation in real time. Because the community actively enjoys the conversations with a stylist, Rue La La has made them a regular feature on its fan page timeline.



The first (top) comment posted by Rue La La informed fans of an upcoming chat with stylist Sydney Wasserman from Elle.com. The photo makes the post more personal and engaging, and also increases its EdgeRank weight.



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HomeAgain Pet Rescuers is a microchip and recovery service for pets. Most of its fans are pet owners or pet lovers, and the fan page administrator understands this to a T. Nearly everything HomeAgain posts is about animals, whether it's sharing cute pictures submitted by fans, or reposting videos of animals from YouTube. **The posts with the most engagement, however, encourage people to answer questions about their own pets.** The screenshots below show that the two posts asking fans about real life experiences with their own pets inspire even more engagement than the popular "Pet of the Week" pictures.



The "Pet of the Week" post is very popular—but the two posts, above, that ask the community about their *own* pets inspired significantly more engagement.

Ask simple, closed questions

Would you rather do a task that's quick and easy, or one that takes time and effort? It depends on the reward, right? Day-to-day interactions on Facebook don't really offer fans much reward other than taking part in a community, so make sure your messaging is easy to interact with.

One strategy to ensure engagement is to ask fans questions that are a breeze to answer.

Asking open-ended questions requires fans to consider and write out their answers. However, nothing is easier than stating an opinion to a "Yes" or "No" question. The barrier to typing a one-word response, or simply clicking "Like," is very low, so more fans respond. Let's look at some examples of brands that make it easy for fans to engage.

Make it quick and easy for fans to engage.



ideeli, an online consumer merchandise retailer, features weekly “Like or Dislike” posts on its timeline that ask fans to weigh in on specific fashion trends. They **make it easy for fans to find this popular activity** by always using the same thumbs-up/thumbs-down icon paired with the latest question. The recurring image adds a bit of flair and makes the posts stand out whether someone is scanning the timeline or perusing their own news feed. Additionally, ideeli can gather all the pictures together into one photo album called “Like or Dislike,” where the commentary from all the polls is stored together for easy access.



Including the same iconic image with a consistently structured message allows fans to scan your timeline and quickly find the posts for a recurring theme or activity.

The Verge, an online publication about technology, frequently poses simple, closed questions for its fans. The questions are always about technology and are easy to answer. But, because *The Verge* chooses hot topics such as “Android or iPhone?” or “What is your current web browser?” it also prompts a lot of commentary from people who have more to say on the subject. To see the power of this strategy in action, just compare the engagement generated by closed questions versus open-ended questions like “What do you think about this article?” In the screenshots below, **there’s a huge difference between fan engagement for open and closed questions.**



Fans of the technology publication *The Verge* are much more engaged by talking about their own technology and opinions than they are commenting on articles about other people.



Tell fans what you want from them

Use instructive language in your posts to make it crystal clear what you want fans to do.

Believe it or not, ending a post with the instruction to “Like this post” usually results in a markedly higher number of Likes! We found a perfect example on **Wildfire’s** own fan page.

The two screenshots below show content that we posted on **Wildfire’s Facebook Timeline**. The content was very similar, both posts linked to outside articles, and both had a similar number of impressions. But the post with the instruction to “Click LIKE if you love the tool,” got twice as many Likes as the post without the instruction. This result is consistent with the results our clients get on their pages as well. The lesson: Never leave the next step up to interpretation—tell fans exactly what you want them to do.

Always tell your fans exactly what to do next.



Ending your messages with a simple instruction, such as “Like this post if...” truly motivates fans to take the actions you request.

Treat your fans like they’re VIPs

Do you have exclusive information that you haven’t shared or posted to your website yet? Do you have internal photographs of your team, or videos of a company event that you won’t be sharing any other way? Coupons, giveaways, and sweepstakes get the highest amount of entries on average.



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According to the research firm Razorfish, **the #1 reason fans Like a brand on Facebook is to get access to exclusive content, promotions, and deals.** So, give your fans privileged content that makes them feel special. If it suits your brand, you can even give your fan community a special name like Lady Gaga does with her “Little Monsters.”

The #1 reason fans “Like” you? Exclusive access.

Dunkin’ Donuts does a great job using the Facebook VIP strategy. Every week, the company encourages its fans to submit photos of themselves with Dunkin’ Donuts products. And each week, one lucky fan is chosen as the “Fan of the Week,” an honor which includes having their picture featured on the Dunkin’ Donuts Facebook page. For giving fans a chance at Facebook fame, Dunkin’ receives **week after week** of quality engagement.



Dunkin’ Donuts has established a popular weekly promotion that encourages fans to submit photos of themselves with Dunkin’ Donuts products. The payoff: A chance to be “Fan of the Week.”



Invite one-on-one interactions

Even if you have a great connection with your Facebook fans, you can take the relationship to a new level when you respond to them personally. **Address your fans by name whenever possible, and respond to their comments one-on-one.** Many fans express pleasant surprise when they receive this personal touch, because it proves that you're listening and are receptive to their comments and feedback. And that means they're more likely to keep on posting.



The page administrator for Tide addresses fan and customer questions directly, addressing commenters by name and thanking them for their feedback.

It is important not to just sit back and wait for a chance to engage. **Actively invite personal conversation with your fans by soliciting their opinions on relevant topics or asking them what types of content they want to see. Then act on their suggestions.** The [Wildfire Facebook fan page](#) is one example of this approach working very successfully. Our fan page is an ongoing initiative to build out an active community of marketers, business owners, and social media managers interested in sharing knowledge about social media in general (and Wildfire in particular). We've found that our most engaging posts—those that get the most feedback from our fans—are consistently the ones that invite people to post any question they have about social media, or to have their pages reviewed by social media professionals. The key to success is that we actually answer all the questions that are raised. Because of our reliable—and personal—follow-up, our brand is trusted as one that responds. Our “Social Media Hour” has become a popular fixture on our fan page, and commenters frequently leave feedback about how helpful they find it.

Take your relationship to the next level.



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To the right is an example of fan feedback we received after posting that we would review any fan page that left its link in the comments of a message. We promised just a simple 10-second test, but we delivered for every single fan page that participated. Many fans were pleasantly surprised and grateful—and they let us know about it.

Wildfire promised and delivered a simple 10-second individualized review for every fan page that left a link. The fan feedback resonated with pleasant surprise and gratitude.



Humanize your brand

We don't know what it is, but there's undeniably *something* that gets people excited about a glimpse behind the scenes. It works for DVD and Blu-ray sales, and it works on Facebook fan pages too. Fans are quick to tell us they clamor for exclusive content and VIP access to brands. And what's more exclusive or VIP than a look inside the workings of your company?

Any messaging that humanizes your brand, adds depth to its personality, or colors its character typically goes over extremely well with fans.

This strategy can even add a positive new dimension to your brand, changing its image from untouchable to relatable with a few thoughtful posts. Let's take a look at several examples of companies that give fans a peek behind the curtain—and receive enthusiastic engagement in return.

Let your fans see the real you.

Holland America regularly posts photos that show life onboard with its crew. The post on the right showcases several employees and tells fans about the cruise line's tradition of luncheons for new employees. The result is great return engagement from interested fans.



Holland America fans respond enthusiastically to photos that show life behind the scenes with the crew.



Our own fan page regularly displays posts that share the spirit of Wildfire with our fans. In the sample post to the right, we let fans in on the fun tradition of ringing a cowbell to signify the launch of a new full-service campaign. This post received 50 Likes within an hour of its publication.



This post shared the spirit of Wildfire with its fans—and got 50 Likes in the first hour.

Summary

Putting it all together

As you've seen from our examples, the subject matter for your Facebook posts is limited only by your imagination. But if you want to make sure you and your fans are getting the most out of every message, keep a few simple guidelines in mind.

- First, humanize your brand by being personal, friendly, and unafraid to tap into the shared passions that brought you together in the first place.
- Always make your fans feel special and appreciated by giving them one-on-one or VIP treatment whenever possible—even if it's just a thank you or a peek behind the scenes.
- And finally, keep things as simple as possible by making it easy for fans to respond to your posts, and by letting them know exactly what it is you'd like them to do next.

So, now that you're armed with six actionable strategies for improving engagement, be sure to explore and test which strategies work best for your Facebook fan page community.



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Wildfire is a powerful, easy-to-use social marketing platform to grow, engage and monetize your audience across social networks.

Learn how we can help you today!

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