

# DOES ANYONE ACTUALLY SEE WHAT MY PRACTICE POSTS ON FACEBOOK?

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Promoting your practice on Facebook can seem like a game in which the goal posts are constantly moving. Every few months the rules change. Keeping up with algorithm tweaks can feel like a full-time job.

How do you know who actually sees what your practice's Facebook page is posting? Who is your message reaching?



## HOW FACEBOOK "REACH" WORKS

First, let's look at how Facebook has evolved since business pages were first introduced. It was simple back then. Get people to like your page, and post regular updates. Facebook freely shared your posts on the newsfeeds of your fans, some of them shared it to others, and altogether this was known as your organic reach.

Facebook started looking for ways to monetize the site more heavily, and the option to "promote" or "boost" posts arrived. You could choose to pay to show your posts to people who were not fans. The people you reached through post promotions became known as "paid reach." Paid reach plus organic reach equals "total reach."

## WHY IT BECAME HARDER TO REACH FANS IN 2013

Sadly, the next step Facebook took meant cutting the number of fans who see your status updates for free. Originally "organic" reach was based on a page's total number of fans. But the number of feeds each status update appeared in suddenly dropped significantly. Organic reach dropped by as much as 80% for many pages, making many practice owners feel forced into paying to promote their Facebook content.

Since then, Facebook has made a number of changes to determine exactly how many people see un-promoted posts by pages. For a while, many practices turned to posting highly shareable content such as Internet memes and asking fans to comment, like, and share the content. Facebook would then reward these pages for the higher interaction by sharing more of the page's posts with those people, increasing organic reach.

However, early in December 2013, Facebook started devaluing posts from pages that "begged" for interaction, and began rewarding posts with high text, link, and image content. In other words, Facebook started rewarding *higher quality content*.

## LEVERAGING YOUR PRACTICE'S FACEBOOK PAGE IN 2014

How can you ensure the posts from your Facebook practice page are seen by as many people as possible, without breaking your advertising budget by paying to "boost" them? While paid posts are certainly an option, there are still many steps you can take to improve organic reach and keep people seeing and interacting with your posts on a regular basis. They include:

- Do post strong, informative textual content with a link and photo when possible.
- Don't overdo calls to action. Fans do not like it when you "beg."
- Do analyze what kind of content performs the best (gets the most likes, comments, or shares, or results in a click through to your practice website).
- Don't depend on memes. Once or twice a month should be the limit.
- Do increase engagement. Posting once a day is not enough.
- Don't ignore comments. Comments are gold. They show that your fans are interacting with you. Tag commenters when you reply for a chance at more.
- Do recycle well-performing posts when appropriate. If a post about dental hygiene tips received massive likes, share it again the next month.
- Don't stray from your message. It's fine to post about current events. But try to tie back into your practice's message (unless it would be in poor taste).
- Do stay focused on engagement. One meaningful conversation is worth a hundred views on your page.

Staying up to date with changes to Facebook's complex and sometimes infuriating algorithms is vital to continued success on the platform; however, Facebook is still one of the most valuable tools your practice has access to. So to make the extra steps to bring your actions in line with current guidelines is well worth the effort! **DE**

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