

## How to Get More Shares with Social Media

### What Makes a Successful Post?

The following three components define a successful post:

- It has to be seen.
- It has to be really good.
- It has to be quick and easy to share.

How do you get people to share your social media content with their friends?

That's the million-dollar question. Having fans who have Liked your Facebook page and who see your posts is good. But if those messages aren't being dispersed so your brand gets exposed to new users, as well as continuing to engage current ones, you're missing out on the real power of social networking. Certainly there are best practices and strategies for crafting content and posts so they're more likely to get engagement. But the bottom line is that a highly successful post is going to be comprised of three components:

1. It has to be seen.
2. It has to be really good.
3. It has to be quick and easy to share.

Meeting the second component (quality content) will help you achieve the first component (views). The better your posts, the more engagement they're going to get. The more engagement they get, the more you'll show up on news feeds. Yes, you have to do some work to build your Facebook reputation, even after people have Liked you. And there is no shortcut to building that reputation. You must write posts that inform, entertain, and reward. If you've heard that the quality of content is absolutely critical to social marketing success, that's because it's true. No one is going to share your content unless they're moved and inspired by it.

Meeting the third goal (easy to share) is most straightforward. There are more services and tools than ever for sharing content. These services and tools can be found from within Facebook itself to Open Graph objects commonly available on the Web. It's useful to know which methods of sharing users prefer, and what days and times of day they're most likely to share content.

### When and How Shares Happen

Bookmarking and sharing service AddThis recently put out an infographic based on an analysis of five years' worth of their sharing data. The service reaches 1.2 billion users per month, so learning from such a sizable sample can extend beyond AddThis to other share services.

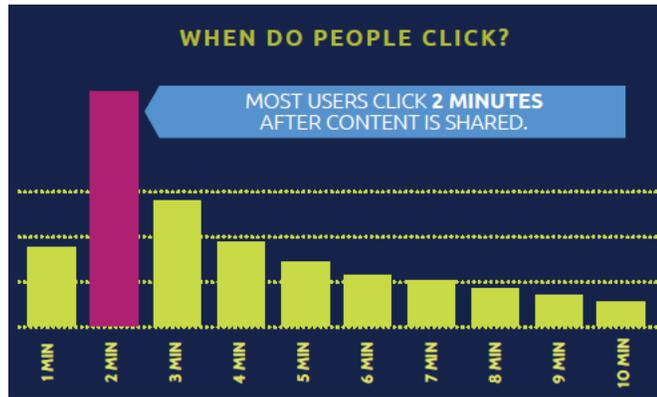


Figure 1. According to an AddThis analysis, most users click within two minutes after content is shared.

Most shares happen on Wednesdays. And, to be even more specific, they happen around 9:30 a.m. Clearly if every marketer posted at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, the message would get lost in the crowd. But, generally speaking, posting your highest-quality content on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday mornings will optimize sharing.

#### Sharing Tools Trending Down

- iGoogle -68%
- AOL Lifestream -63%
- Myspace -53%
- Delicious -46%
- Digg -46%

75 percent of clicks appear within the first day of a share. And most people click within two minutes after content is shared. This indicates that the content you may have put many hours and much thought into has an extremely short shelf life. So, although generating high-quality content is difficult, you must continue to do so frequently. This challenge—to consistently deliver engaging content—puts professionals who can both market and deliver entertaining content in high demand.

Sharing tools that have trended up in the past year include Facebook Send, Tumblr, and Google +1. Facebook Send allows users to send items directly to individuals versus posting to all their friends. Users are clearly communicating that not all content is appropriate for all of their contacts. Sharing tools that are trending down include iGoogle, AOL Lifestream, and Myspace. Choose carefully when selecting social media tools for your brand.

Probably the most surprising and commented-on statistic from the AddThis infographic is the revelation that most people still share by copying and pasting the URL in the address bar into an e-mail or instant message (IM). This method is used up to 10 times more than sharing tools. This could be due to any of the following reasons:

- People find copying and pasting just as fast and easy as using a sharing button.
- A sea of sharing option buttons is overwhelming to users, and they prefer to use what they know.
- Different sharing tools allow for varying levels of control and customization, and not all tools allow users to fully control the image, link, or caption.

Beyond consistent, great content, keeping an eye on social network user behavior (which is ever changing) is one fundamental thing you can do to make sure your posts maintain a solid advantage.

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