



**socialbakers**  
The Recipe for Social Marketing Success

## WHAT IS EDGERANK AND HOW TO OPTIMIZE YOUR POSTING STRATEGY TO IT?

From the point of view of Socialbakers, Edgerank is one of the most interesting and complex things occurring on Facebook. There has been plenty of discussion surrounding Edgerank, however, not all of the discussion has been factual and in fact it has often been misleading. Therefore, this whitepaper will summarize Edgerank and provide our thoughts on how to best optimize one's own posting strategy to maximize effectiveness.

### A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF EDGES AND EDGERANK

In order to understand what Edgerank is, one must first define what is an "Edge" in Facebook. An Edge is defined as any activity that occurs in Facebook and has a potential to make it into a newsfeed story. A classical example of edges are likes, posts, comments, tags, or RSVPs, however, this can really be any public activity that one of your friend undertakes.

This is when Edgerank comes into play! It is Facebook's algorithm which decides whether this story (and edge it generates) makes it to your newsfeed or not, in addition to the potential position it will appear. In other words, Facebook tries to evaluate the large amount of edges that are constantly created and pre-select those which it believes would interest you. This of course does not apply only to the edges created by users but also to edges that are created by Pages.



## EDGERANK FACTORS

While the detailed recipe of Edgerank is a mystery, the factors which Facebook includes in the formula are surprisingly logical and simple. Facebook revealed that the Edgerank algorithm consists of three main ingredients – these are:



### EDGE AFFINITY

Affinity score evaluates the relation you have with the edge creator. The more interconnected you are, the higher the affinity score. This interconnectedness is determined by the quantity and frequency which you engage with the creator and by the number of mutual connections. It is also noteworthy that if you have a large number of Friends that like a similar Page, it is more likely that this content will arise in your newsfeed.

### EDGE WEIGHT

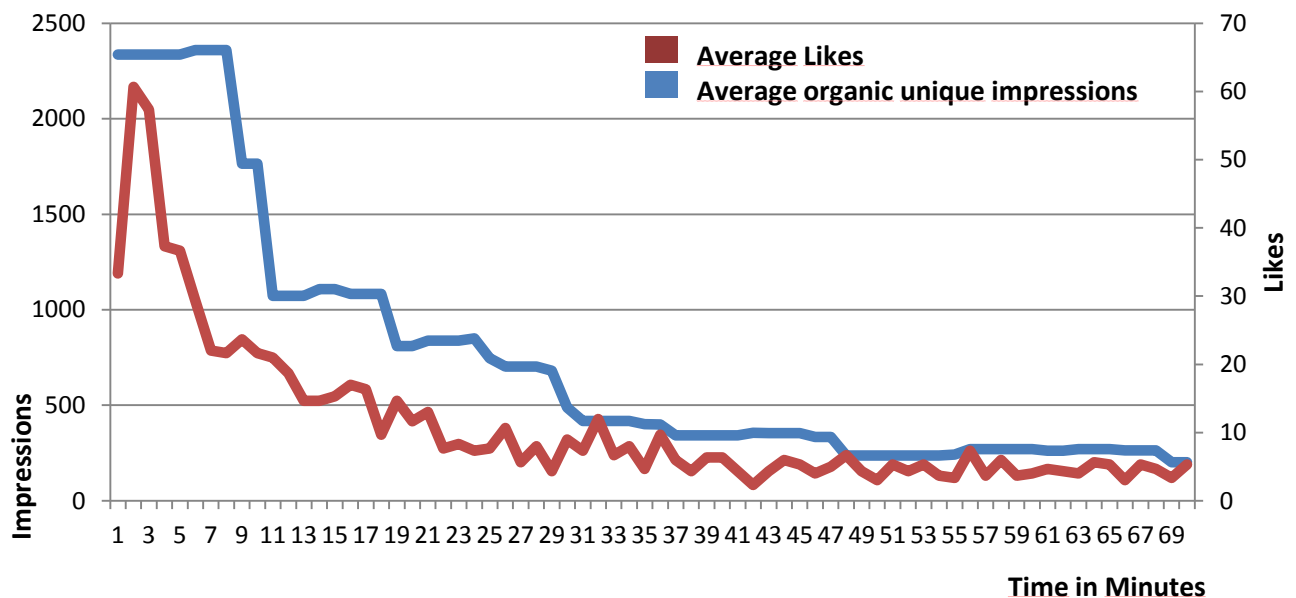
Another factor influencing the formula is the “weight.” There are two types of weights that are determined, the post weight and the the weight of an interaction. Shares and comments require more from a user than a simple “Like” click, and therefore it is more heavily weighted. To access detailed information about types of interaction, likes, comments and shares, check out the Analytics PRO “Engagement” section.



It is suspected that Facebook is tweaking the exact values for the each type of interaction. However, the user focused logic always remains the same. This logic also applies for the weight of different content types. Since users prefer visual communication such as photos (a pictures is worth a thousand words) and links, Facebook takes this into consideration and weights each post type differently. We know that photos are almost always the most engaging type of content. However, there have were major changes in terms of the reach of different post types towards the end of 2012. So, once again there will surely be ongoing tweaks in determining the value of various post types. For more detailed insight, check out the most common post types and their average engagement rates in “Analytics PRO.”

## TIME DECAY

An old story is a dead story. Facebook does not chronologically order edges, however, it does factor in time to the algorithm. Therefore, a fresh edge is more likely to appear in your newsfeed than an old one. When we collect engagement data in Analytics PRO, we see that the vast majority of engagement occurs within minutes after a post is published. Some posts can hold high levels of engagement for hours but the majority do not.





## EDGERANK AS REACH

Although in Analytics PRO we can not measure edgerank, (And just to be clear: No company in the world can), we can measure quite a few contributing factors are essential for understanding it.

One of the ways to simplify Edgerank is to take a look at what it actually does. Since the whole point of Edgerank is to decide how many people the content will be displayed to, we can quantify this outcome as "Reach." Of course, you have data about the reach of your own posts, but Socialbakers can make an educated guess at determining the reach of brands by measuring aggregated engagement data. Since engagement directly correlates with reach, Return on Engagement (ROE) is something important to measure.

	Your Engagement Rate	↔	The Reach you Get
<b>LOW</b>	lower than 0.01 %	↔	less than 10 %
<b>MEDIUM</b>	0.01 % - 0.1 %	↔	10 % - 20 %
<b>HIGH</b>	higher than 0.1 %	↔	more than 30 %

The Socialbakers' Facebook Post ER formula is one Analytics PRO core metrics, and is measuring the number of Likes, comments and shares of a post divide by the total number of Fans at the time it was posted. This number is then multiplied by 100 in order to determine the final percentage and show how well your brand is doing at engaging with your Fans. Check out the formula below:

$$\text{FB Average Post ER} = \frac{\frac{\text{Likes + Comments + Shares on a given day}}{\text{\# of wall posts made by page on a given day}}}{\text{Total Fans on a given day}} \times 100$$

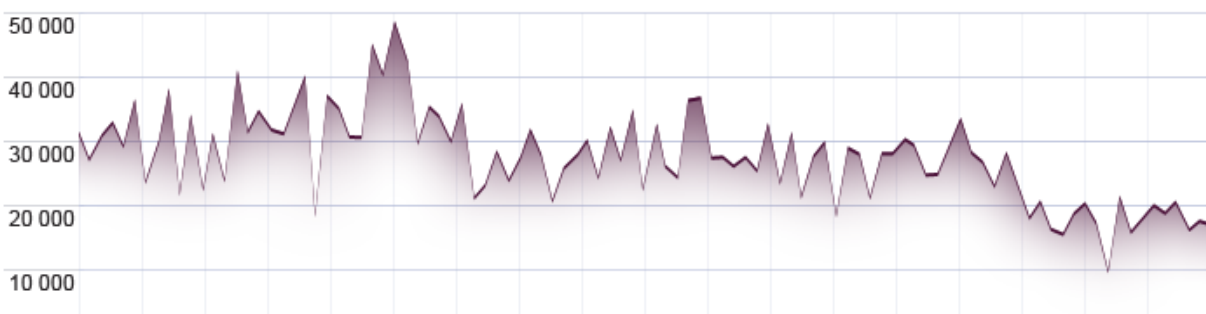


When your engagement reaches a certain level, there is a direct correlation between the total number of interactions and the number of shares. More specifically, the reach is approximately 100 times larger than the number of interactions a post receives. Therefore if a post generates 100 interactions, it is roughly reaching 10,000 people.

This is not the only time in which reach can be used to determine Edgerank. As we described earlier, Facebook values the weight of each type of content differently. It is widely believed that photos and videos are the most “weighted” type of content. Socialbakers is not disputing this as the data points to this argument, however, changes at the end of 2012 show that this may not always be the case in the future.

There was a significant decrease in the average reach of the posts in 2012. The average number of unique impressions (organic, paid and viral reach) began to decrease in August with a sharp dip on September 20. According to our data, the social media market is extremely saturated in developed countries, as users gain more friends and become Fans of more Pages. The result is often that a Newsfeed can become clogged. User focus is then inevitably spread across more Pages and the Newsfeed can only deliver a limited amount of information. Facebook is therefore tweaking the Edgerank to be more strict on Pages in which the affinities of a user is not clear. It is interesting to note that the decrease in reach was different for different post types – the most significant decrease was for Photos and Links and the type of content that was affected least was status. This is another factor which implies a probable change in the edge weight of content types.

## Average of Unique Post Impressions





From our point of view the message is clear. You can not directly measure the edge rank, however, you can measure the components that are connected to it. In Analytics PRO, you can easily measure how successful your brand is at engaging with its Fans, what type of content is most effective for your Page, the type of interactions that occur on your Page and the days and hours your users interact with you most often. This can help you understand a good Edgerank strategy.

## 7 Good practices for making your Edgerank soar!

- 1. QUALITY CONTENT** – This is the core of anything relating to your posting strategy. Producing quality content that is relevant to your business and audience is key to a successful social media strategy. Ideally, post things that relate to your business but still have interesting angles and stories for your audience. A good posting strategy is about good storytelling. And good stories engage people! Remember that Edgerank directly relates to your Engagement Rates! The more engaging your posts are, the more people will see it and your affinity will continue to increase.
- 2. FOLLOW THE RULES** – This may sound awkward to many people talking about morals and social media, however, the truth is that breaking the rules only has short-term benefits. The moment you start moving to a grey zone or black zone of social marketing you are not only risking your brand reputation but you may also be punished. The more people that report your Page, the more Facebook will penalize your Page. Resulting in rapidly decreasing your future reach.
- 3. POST FORMAT** – Photos and videos are an obvious and proven choice for engaging Fans, but in many cases a link to a great story or a clever status can be super powerful as well. Pay attention to general suggestions for generating a good ER such as don't make the posts too long, use questions and call to actions, play with words and fill blanks,...



- 4. POST FREQUENCY** – More than 90% of Fans never visit a brand Facebook Page again. If you think that people are coming to your Page to read your stories you are delusional. People care about the stories appearing in their newsfeed. You do not post often enough? - Your fans can hardly build a social bond and affinity with your brand with all the brand competitors around. You post too often? - You will spam people and they will soon unlike your Page or hide your post in their Newsfeed (means there is very little chance of your content appearing there again).
  
- 5. POST TIMING** – It is crucial to time your posts right. Measure and analyze when your audience is active and the ideal time to post. Even quality content and correct formatting requires great timing to excel – even a few minutes can make a dramatic difference in the success of the edge, its engagement and the reach. In Analytics PRO, you can easily track which dates and hours your posts have the highest ER so you can optimize your posting strategy based on previous results.
  
- 6. RESPONDING FANS** – Do not forget that social media is a two-way channel. It is better to react to what they say than simply ignore them. Social media it is not just about flooding Fans with advertisements, but is about becoming more social! Bear in mind that every time you respond a fan not only are you investing in an actual brand-customer relation but you are also investing in the affinity of his/her Friends.
  
- 7. KEEP AN OPEN HEAD!** Never accept any dogma about social media without thinking about it yourself. Measure, analyze and optimize your strategy to your audience, analyze your competitors and try different techniques that work for others. Be prepared that Fans' behaviour will change as frequently as the Facebook algorithm changes.

## ORGANIC OR PAID EDGERANK?

This whitepaper has focused on how to increase your Edgerank organically. However, it is important to note that there are also paid options to increase your Edgerank. So how effective are promoted posts, sponsored stories, standard Facebook advertisements and other paid options? Stay tuned to find out in our next Edgerank whitepaper about how to optimize your Facebook ad-spend to increase your edgerank.