



proprietary

POV: FACEBOOK REACTIONS: WHAT THE REDESIGNED LIKE BUTTON MEANS FOR MARKETERS

MARCH 2016



FACEBOOK REACTIONS: WHAT THE REDESIGNED LIKE BUTTON MEANS FOR MARKETERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Facebook is now giving users a new way to express themselves.

Last month, Facebook launched “Reactions,” five new emojis with a range of emotions that accompany the Like button. Reactions is a response to user demand for a “dislike” button, since there was no native way to express negative sentiment or empathy on a post. While Facebook is still avoiding adding a dislike button, Reactions will allow users to tell friends and pages how they really feel about content.



This POV will address the background for Reactions and discuss implications for marketers, with emphasis on community management and targeted advertising.

WHAT IS REACTIONS?

In October, Facebook began testing Reactions with a range of emojis in Ireland and Spain to supplement the Like button. Most of these Reactions have now been [rolled out worldwide](#).

Joining the Like button are “Love,” “Haha,” “Wow,” “Sad” and “Angry.” Users can select any of these Reactions, in addition to sharing or commenting on a post.





Facebook introduced these Reactions because Liking a post hasn't always been the most appropriate response to engaging with it. For example, instead of Liking a post about a diagnosis story or a user sharing struggles, people can now leave a Sad reaction to empathize with the user. In contrast, users who are passionate about content that inspires them can now endorse it with a Love reaction.

Facebook was careful to avoid a dislike button to prevent Facebook from becoming a community with a thumbs up/down mentality like Reddit. Historically, Facebook has introduced features to cultivate positivity on the network. A dislike button also might have caused concern among advertisers that their content would be met with a wave of negative sentiment.

For now, Reactions do not apply to comments on posts, only the posts themselves.

Users have already started to use Reactions on content from brands, and Facebook provides a complete breakdown of Reactions in its analytics tool, Insights.

35,028 People Reached		
2,536 Reactions, Comments & Shares		
2,106 Like	2,007 On Post	99 On Shares
15 Love	15 On Post	0 On Shares
1 Sad	1 On Post	0 On Shares
76 Comments	44 On Post	32 On Shares
335 Shares	334 On Post	1 On Shares



HOW SHOULD MARKETERS REACT?

One of the most important ways Reactions will affect marketers is that brands can now track sentiment on their content over time. While social listening tools will not have access for some time because Facebook has not made sentiment analysis capabilities available, Facebook Insights shows how many Reactions each post received.

Reactions should be welcomed by marketers because it offers the ability to better understand communities. Marketers can use sentiment information to measure what is resonating within a community to develop future content. Marketers will likely want to create and curate content that typically generates more Love reactions than Angry or Sad reactions.

Reactions should be welcomed by marketers because it offers the ability to better understand communities.

The new Reactions make it easier for users to express themselves, but users have always been able to express sadness or anger on page content in the form of comments. Brands may consider responding to their own content with comments on posts that receive many Sad or Angry reactions, just like they would on posts that receive passionately positive comments.

For now, all Reactions — from Wow and Love to Sad and Angry — will be treated as a Like by Facebook. Therefore, if a user responds to a sad ad with a Sad reaction, it won't be penalized by Facebook's algorithm, and it will be treated as if the user liked the content.

As Facebook product manager Sammi Krug wrote [in a recent blog post](#), "Over time we hope to learn how the different Reactions should be weighted differently by News Feed to do a better job of showing everyone the stories they most want to see."



This same philosophy may also be applied to targeted advertising one day, allowing brands to focus on users who have already left positive Reactions on their posts or ads and excluding users who have left Sad or Angry reactions.

CONCLUSION

Users have already begun to use Reactions to express themselves. Intouch recommends brands monitor how Reactions are used on their page content to learn from their communities. Brands should not necessarily remove content that receives Sad or Angry reactions because it is normal for users to express how they feel on social platforms. Instead, use a combination of comments, Reactions and shares to determine the content that's best for your audience and respond appropriately.

Because Facebook treats all Reactions the same as a Like, brands should follow [Facebook's best practices](#) and avoid asking for Reactions on their content (e.g., "'Love' this post if you agree!") in order to receive more engagement.

As always, Intouch will keep its eyes on how users engage with the feature moving forward. If you have any questions about Facebook Reactions or engaging on social media, please reach out to your Intouch Solutions representative.

© Intouch Solutions 2016
Author: Andrew Grojean — Social Media Manager

 **Kansas City**
913.317.9700

 **Chicago**
312.540.6900

 **New York**
646.795.3600

www.intouchsol.com
email: info@intouchsol.com
blog: intouchsoul.com
twitter: [@intouchsol](https://twitter.com/intouchsol)