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The first step is to get a grip on what makes a great Facebook page. In HaveYouHeard's opinion, it is not all about 'likes'. Likes mean very little, as the majority of those who have liked a page forget that they have done so and seldom visit that page again. In fact, the average return rate in South Africa is very low, with only 2% of any given brand's Facebook community actually returning to the page and engaging with it.

Possibly the best indicator for a good performing page is 'engagement'. The quickest way to determine engagement is to divide the number of 'People Talking About This' by the number of Total Fans. This only, however, provides an indication of engagement as the number can be boosted by paid-for new likes.

The true indicator for engagement, and thereby best performance, is engagement per post; in other words, how many post likes, comments and shares are taking place on your page. This should also be based on natural engagement, not competition or incentivised engagement.

To find South Africa's best performing Facebook page, we therefore looked for the page that had generated the most interactions within their community. By default, this meant that the bigger the page was, the more likely it was to have higher interactions.

Using [Social Bakers' Analytics tool](#), we pulled reports on the largest 40 Facebook pages in South Africa. We excluded smaller pages, with high engagement rates because we wanted to identify South Africa's best performing page based on generating the most total interactions in number, not as a percentage of total community size.

Results?

The table below lists the 20 largest pages in South Africa as of 16 November, based on Total Likes and only looking at fans from South Africa, as follows:

Brand SAname	SAlikes	Total interactions
1. What's for Dinner?	707,525	660,681
2. MTN South Africa	517,966	660,476
3. Mercedes Benz SA	512,392	931,527
4. Shoprite South Africa	484,205	524,204
5. Checkers	474,350	329,195
6. Vodacom	473,718	568,468
7. Samsung South Africa	447,849	406,193
8. KFC	443,564	552,889
9. Hairsawy	430,884	182,186
10. Mango Airlines	392,796	153,570
11. DHL Africa	366,961	213,304
12. Cadbury Dairy Milk	365,797	457,239
13. BMW	346,001	634,456
14. Debonairs Pizza	328,172	125,036
15. Legit	321,253	224,007
16. Toyota SA	316,368	373,532
17. Land Rover SA	312,389	382,238
18. Travel Start SA	304,039	302,835
19. Robertsons Herbs & Spices	285,753	130,083
20. DSTV	281,970	112,780

The next table lists the top performing pages using Total Interactions (second column), and provides a more meaningful picture of which brands are doing well relative to their community size. In this instance, auto brands are very strong (5 in the top 20).

Brand page name	SAlikes	Total interactions	Interaction %
Mercedes Benz SA	512,392	931,527	181.80%
What's for Dinner?	707,525	660,681	93.38%
MTN South Africa	517,966	660,476	127.51%
BMW	346,001	634,456	183.37%
Vodacom	473,718	568,468	120.00%
KFC	443,564	552,889	124.65%
Shoprite South Africa	484,205	524,204	108.26%
Cadbury Dairy Milk	365,797	457,239	125.00%
Samsung South Africa	447,849	406,193	90.70%
Magnum	236,895	386,713	163.24%
Land Rover South Africa	312,389	382,238	122.36%
Being Girl	211,575	374,667	177.08%
Toyota SA	316,368	373,532	118.07%
Checkers	474,350	329,195	69.40%

Travel Start SA	304,039	302,835	99.60%
Jaguar South Africa	212,424	264,438	124.49%
Legit	321,253	224,007	69.73%
DHL Africa	366,961	213,304	58.13%
Carling Black Label	221,791	206,886	93.28%
Pampers	161,113	205,339	127.45%

We also looked at the type of interaction taking place on the page.

In the case of the auto pages, there was an enormous amount of passion and interest expressed by these fans. Most people would regard the topics they talk about as rather ordinary, but these are fans who absolutely love almost everything about these cars.

By contrast, when it came to the service brands, enquiries and service issues accounted for this interaction.

It therefore stands to reason that measuring 'sentiment' is important when determining which is South Africa's best Facebook page.

Content quality?

One of the measures of great content is Shares, so we opted to track which page had the most 'shares', as shares are indicative of this and are the highest form of flattery for a brand.

The table below highlights that *What's for Dinner* does very well (its recipes are shared a lot) followed by Big Concerts. Again, the auto brands did well, with fans sharing car image after car image after car image.

Brand page name	SAlikes	Total interactions	Post shares
What's for Dinner?	707,525	660,681	95,731
Big Concerts	123,012	172,178	45,091
BMW	346,001	634,456	28,843
Mercedes Benz SA	512,392	931,527	28,824
MTN South Africa	517,966	660,476	28,739
Travel Start SA	304,039	302,835	27,092
Checkers	474,350	329,195	21,954
Toyota SA	316,368	373,532	18,000
Comfort Zone South Africa	222,504	1138,74	17,938
KFC	443,564	552,889	15,667
Land Rover South Africa	312,389	382,238	14,826
Shoprite South Africa	484,205	524,204	14,465
Samsung South Africa	447,849	406,193	14,115
Robertsons Herbs & Spices	285,753	130,083	10,085
MSC cruises	240,118	149,593	9,980
Cadbury Dairy Milk	365,797	457,239	9,934
Vodacom	473,718	568,468	9,443
Jaguar South Africa	212,424	264,438	9,311
Nando's	157,522	77,331	8,788
Audi South Africa	237,972	149,688	8,682

Comments about a post?

Comments about a post are regarded as second in importance, after sharing; but are still a great indication of good content. Many brands are generating this high comment amount through running competitions, and quick quiz response type posts.

However, we must note the great work done by Cadbury in engaging with its community and keeping the comment

conversation going on past the first response.

Brand page name	SAlikes	Total interactions	Post comments
MTN South Africa	517,966	660,476	309,327
Shoprite South Africa	4842,05	524,204	173,007
Cadbury Dairy Milk	365,797	457,239	136,436
Toyota SA	316,368	373,532	136,179
Vodacom	473,718	568,468	126,680
What's for Dinner?	707,525	660,681	111,920
Checkers	474,350	329,195	96,398
KFC	443,564	552,889	80,011
Being Girl	211,575	374,667	72,267
BMW	346,001	634,456	52,413
Mercedes Benz South Africa	512,392	931,527	50,377
DHL Africa	366,961	213,304	47,230
Travel Start SA	304,039	302,835	46,810
Pampers	161,113	205,339	46,578
DSTV	281,970	112,780	40,144
Robertsons Herbs & Spices	285,753	130,083	39,068
Land Rover South Africa	312,389	382,238	37,727
Hairsawy	430,884	182,186	35,255
Carling Black Label	221,791	206,886	33,583
Samsung South Africa	447,849	406,193	30,514

Posts made by fans, not comments?

Breaking down interaction further, in the table below, we explore Posts by Fans (not comments), and you can clearly see the top 5 positions are held by service-related brands. However, this interaction was most often in response to service-related queries.

Brand page name	SAlikes	Posts made by fans (not comments)
DSTV	281,970	39,838
Vodacom	473,718	20,552
MTN South Africa	517,966	14,710
Shoprite South Africa	484,205	10,072
ABSA	178,954	6,802
KFC	443,564	5,803
Hairsawy	430,884	5,661
Toyota SA	316,368	5,512
Big concerts	123,012	4,336
Checkers	474,350	4,099
What's for Dinner?	707,525	3,550
Mercedes Benz South Africa	512,392	3,502
Debonairs Pizza	328,172	3,321
Samsung South Africa	447,849	2,840
BMW	346,001	2,732
Mango Airlines	392,796	2,551
MSC cruises	240,118	2,481
Clicks	184,425	2,132
Being Girl	211,575	2,061
Nando's	157,522	2,047

Response rate?

As it is more difficult for MTN to respond to over 14,000 fan posts than it is for Audi to respond to almost 900, for example, we looked at response rates within the context of posts made by fans (showing the top 30 pages now).

Brand page name	SA likes	Posts made by fans	Response rate
Comfort Zone South Africa	222,504	415	95%
What's for Dinner?	707,525	3,550	94%
Pampers	161,113	1,957	94%
Mango Airlines	392,796	2,551	92%
ABSA	178,954	6,802	91%
Volkswagen	240,278	1,818	91%
MTN South Africa	517,966	14,710	90%
Audi South Africa	237,972	894	90%
Checkers	474,350	4,099	88%
Clicks	184,425	2,132	88%
Truworths Fashion	193,182	1,898	88%
DSTV	281,970	39,838	86%
Vodacom	473,718	20,552	86%
Tomy Takkies	275,004	71	86%
DHL Africa	366,961	848	85%
KFC	443,564	5,803	84%
Debonairs Pizza	328,172	3,321	82%
MSC cruises	240,118	2,481	82%
Travel Start SA	304,039	979	78%
Legit	321,253	1,023	73%
Robertsons Herbs & Spices	285,753	523	73%
Cadbury Dairy Milk	365,797	1,592	71%
Dove	221,556	71	71%
Toyota SA	316,368	5,512	69%
Nando's	157,522	2,047	68%
Shoprite South Africa	484,205	10,072	67%
BMW	346,001	2,732	58%
Magnum	236,895	466	57%
Carling Black Label	221,791	1,460	54%
Lexus South Africa	204,347	934	51%
Mercedes Benz South Africa	512,392	3,502	48%
Being Girl	211,575	2,061	39%
Land Rover South Africa	312,389	708	39%
Tropika South Africa	202,358	556	39%
Samsung South Africa	447,849	2,840	38%
Big concerts	123,012	4,336	36%
Hairsawy	430,884	5,661	31%
Jaguar South Africa	212,424	319	15%
Hyundai South Africa	278,101	86	0%

Kudos to the brands achieving over 90% response, as this is indicative of well managed pages.

What is concerning, however, are the very low response rates on many other pages. In fact, 70% of the pages reviewed here achieved a response rate of lower than 70%. The goal should always be 100% and not one brand has achieved over 95% during 2014.

So, which is the best brand on Facebook in South Africa?

HaveYouHeard would base its answer on which Facebook page generates natural and non-incentivised engaging content for its community (indicated by total interactions, post shares and post comments) as well as great page management (indicated by response rate).

Using that formula, it would mean that MTN and What's For Dinner? Would rank in the Top 2, however, if you look closer at their performance, based on the last three months as well as within context of their size and compare it to a fast, growing challenger like DHL Africa, the results don't seem as conclusive.

MTN	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14
Fans	471,818	503,722	531,249
Interaction	61,146	73,839	27,889
Interaction / Fans %	13%	15%	5%

W4D	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14
Fans	708,086	707,705	707,440
Interaction	71,322	53,666	38,522
Interaction / Fans %	10%	8%	5%

DHL Africa	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14
Fans	282,762	354,591	377,296
Interaction	39 947	31 409	54,435
Interaction / Fans %	14%	9%	14%

So rather than giving you the answer, why don't I let you decide? What metric is most important for you, and how does that influence the line up?

ABOUT JASON STEWART

Jason Stewart is the co-founder and MD of HaveYouHeard (www.haveyouheard.co.za), a communications agency immersed in culture to influence it. With 11 years' trading experience and offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town and London, HaveYouHeard uncovers unique insights to create innovative ideas that influence the audience by bringing the brands it partners with to the centre of culture.

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