



Further Friday: Facebook Removes 28-day Attribution Window

As always, Facebook is keeping advertisers on their toes with surprise policy updates and platform changes. It was announced recently that the 28-day attribution window will be removed from Facebook's reporting, which means the new default window will be 7 days. At Further, our curiosity was peaked immediately with many questions that we decided to pare down and answer ourselves (with some fun stats, as always!).

Question 1: How does the 28-day window currently impact results?

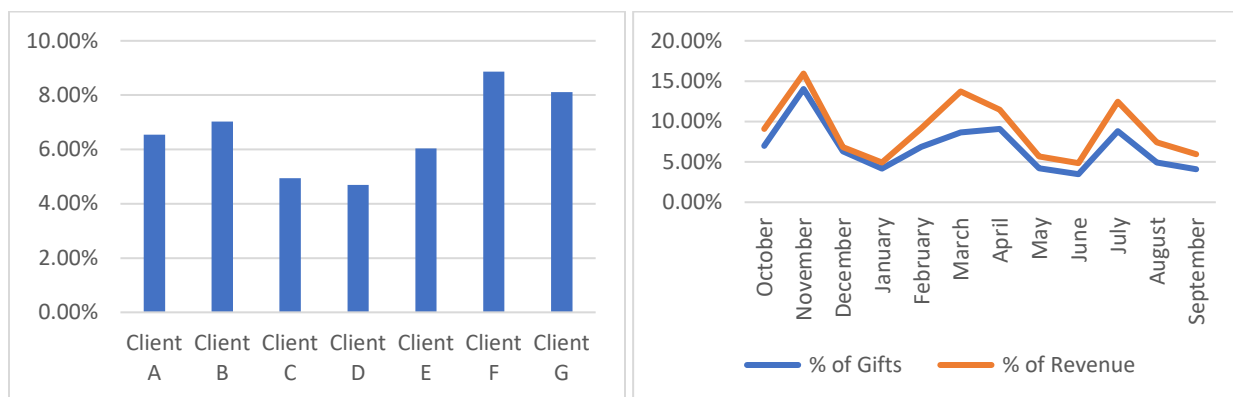
One of the most important questions comes at the beginning: how does this window currently impact our results? Or, to put it simply, does this update *really* matter?

The Answer: Yes, it does. Facebook reporting has, until now, included the 28-day click attribution window and the 1-day view window by default in results*.

In order to understand the potential impact from the data side of things, we pulled results from a selection of clients to compare the percentage of gifts and revenue generated in the 28-day post-click attribution window over the last fiscal year.

Overall, clients have seen anywhere from 5% - 9% of their total gifts generated in the 28-day day post click window. This variation is based on both the type of organization and level of investment from each client in their Facebook ads. With a higher investment, you generate more clicks on your ad which results in a higher potential number of users being counted in that 28-day post click window.

*Note: this does not take into account advertisers who have changed their default attribution window.



Question 2: How will this change impact my results?

This is the obvious next question – so now we know it does matter, what’s next?

Technically, the change took effect October 12th, but we are currently still seeing our results metric using the 28-day post-click window. So, until we start seeing this update showing up in results, how do you figure out the impact that it will have for your program?

The Answer: Reporting! Analysis! Basically, numbers are your best friend. You can easily calculate the percentage of gifts you’re receiving in the 28-day attribution window by adding the attribution window to your reporting. Use this calculation to determine any potential decrease to your results as well as impacts on things like conversion rate, CPA and net revenue.

- Calculation:

- o Step 1: 28-day click results – 7 day click results = total results in the 28-day window.
- o Step 2: Total 28-day results/Total results = % of results coming from the 28-day window.

Question 3: Year end is coming.

Granted, this is not a question. It is, however, a statement that sparks about 20 more questions for any non-profit who relies heavily on Facebook ads for their year-end success. Many of my colleagues at Further are already done with the strategic planning around year



end, and most of these strategies include a large investment in Facebook. So, will this change impact your year-end campaigns?

The Answer: This is still the biggest question mark we have at this point but, based on historical data, we believe the answer is “yes”. The best way to prepare your year-end strategy is to adjust expectations when it comes to efficiency metrics like CPA.

There is a silver lining to this change – while there may be an impact on the efficiency of results, you are also going to get a much clearer understanding of the direct impact Facebook ads are having on your advertising efforts. For example – an audience you’ve relied on heavily over the last 6 months could actually only be generating a small percentage of 1-day or 7-day click conversions, and another audience should actually be receiving more investment due to the direct impact it’s having on results.

Final Thoughts

This change can mean many things, most of which we won’t know until it happens. As hard as we try, we can’t predict the future with 100% accuracy (if you can do this, please apply to Further today - we’re looking for an oracle).

The best recommendation we can give is to analyze past data, adjust expectations and be nimble. Failure is always a possibility, but the key is to fail fast, pivot your strategy and move forward. If Facebook ads are generating poorer results than originally anticipated, re-invest in other channels like paid search, display, or other social channels. While Facebook might be the “crème de la crème” for some digital advertisers, it’s not the only one out there and there are ways to find success outside of the Facebook goliath.