Replying to Comments Boosts Engagement by 5-42% on These Major Platforms

“If you want engagement, do engagement.”

It’s probably the simplest social media advice I’ve ever seen (hat tip to Buffer’s Suzanne Kelly and Carolyn Kopprasch for coining that) — and it’s 100% accurate.

Not just anecdotally, either. Replying to comments on your posts can significantly boost engagement across six major platforms, according to a massive analysis by Buffer’s data scientist, Julian Winternheimer.

He pored over nearly 2 million posts from over 220,000 accounts on Threads, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, X, and Bluesky. His conclusion was a clear and consistent pattern: Posts where creators and brands reply to comments perform better almost every time.

You want receipts? Let’s dig into how Julian analyzed the data, along with social media engagement results from LinkedIn, Threads, Instagram, Facebook, and Bluesky.

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The analysis

Across every platform, Julian used the same basic approach. Instead of comparing one account’s engagement to another’s (which would favor larger or more active accounts), he used **fixed-effects regression models** to effectively compare each account to itself over time. The models also controlled for

factors such as account size, location, and niche.

That means we asked:

“When this same account replies to comments, how does its engagement change compared to when it doesn’t?”

He also used **Z-score analyses** to measure how each post performed relative to the account’s typical engagement, giving us a second check that the lift we were seeing wasn’t random. (If you’re interested — and want more cool graphs — check Julian’s full analyses on his blog here.)

A few caveats before we get into the numbers:

- We can’t perfectly measure **cause and effect**. It’s possible that high-performing posts attract more replies (and therefore more engagement) rather than the other way around.
- Sample sizes differ by platform, especially for newer ones like Bluesky.
- These results show **directional evidence**, not definitive truths — but the consistency across platforms is hard to ignore.

Before diving into each platform, here’s the big picture. Julian analyzed nearly 2 million posts from over 220,000 accounts. Across the board, social media posts with replied-to comments outperform those without — by anywhere from 5% to over 40%.

Platform	Engagement lift (vs. baseline)
Threads	**+42%**
LinkedIn	**+30%**
Instagram	**+21%**
Facebook	**+9%**
Twitter/X	+8%

Platform	Engagement lift (vs. baseline)
Bluesky	**+5%**

Let’s take a closer look in order of impact.

Threads

Threads is a platform built on conversations, and the numbers confirm it.

Threads came out on top with the most significant increase — a **42% increase in engagement** for posts where creators replied to comments.

Julian analyzed over **128,000 Threads posts** and found that engagement wasn’t just slightly higher — it was dramatically

higher for those with comment replies.

According to the Z-score analysis, which shows relative performance per post, controlling for differences across accounts, around **two-thirds of profiles showed positive effects.**

Threads, a sister platform to Instagram, has a pretty unique approach to replies – so, it's no surprise that the platform's design rewards active discussion. In fact, **replies are given the same visual weight as posts.**

"Elevating the reply to the same level as the original post allows for much more robust, diverse discourse," Head of Instagram, Adam Mosseri, said in an interview with The Verge. "Which is part of the reason we didn't just try to shove this thing into the feed on Instagram or a separate tab."

It was a feature inspired by Twitter's original design, but Threads has consistently leaned in on this. Mosseri has talked about the power of replies (on your own posts and others) many times. This quote from an interview with Platformer sums it up:

"My advice is – and I think what a lot of people don't realize, because a lot of people are coming over from Instagram – they don't realize how important the reply game is. If you're really trying to grow your presence, you should reply much more than you post. And the sum of all your replies is about as valuable as the sum of all the value of all your posts."

Source: Threads: Engagement and Replies – Julian Winternheimer, *Buffer Data Blog*, September 2025

LinkedIn

Suzanne really was onto something about devoting time to engaging back on LinkedIn. The professional network saw a

strong 30% lift in engagement for posts with replied-to comments.

Julian analyzed **72,000 LinkedIn posts** across nearly **25,000 accounts**, and the results were remarkably consistent – within the same account, posts with replied comments significantly outperformed those without.

Even when controlling for other factors like whether the post received comments at all, the effect held. According to the Z-score analysis, roughly **83% of profiles** saw a positive difference when they replied.

Anecdotally speaking, there’s another benefit to replying to comments on LinkedIn beyond your own posts. A thoughtful comment on a high-performing post can net you more followers,

too. The platform now provides impression metrics for comments, which really solidifies how powerful this can be.

Another Bufferoo LinkedIn creator, Simon Heaton, recently shared how a comment netted him nearly as many impressions as one of his own top-performing posts.

Source: *LinkedIn: Engagement and Replies* — Julian Winternheimer, *Buffer Data Blog*, October 2025

Instagram

On Instagram, posts where creators replied to comments saw about **21% higher engagement** on average — even after controlling for whether the post had comments at all.

Julian’s fixed-effects model compared more than **700,000 Instagram posts** across nearly **68,000 profiles** and found a clear pattern:

“When creators engage back in their comments, their posts perform better relative to their own baseline,” he concluded.

Z-score analysis showed that posts with replied-to comments tended to score **above** an account’s usual engagement level, while those without replies sat slightly **below**. Around **63% of profiles** showed positive effects overall.

Source: *Instagram: Engagement and Replies* — Julian Winternheimer, *Data Blog*, October 2025

Facebook

Facebook showed a smaller but still meaningful lift. Posts with comments that were replied to saw about a **9% increase in reactions**, according to Julian's fixed-effects regression model.

That might sound modest, but it's worth bearing in mind: Facebook's engagement patterns are broader and more mature. Even a single-digit lift across **a million posts** is significant.

Z-score analysis showed the same direction of effect — a slight but consistent bump for posts where creators engaged in the comments. About **54% of Facebook Pages** performed better when they replied.

Source: *Facebook: Engagement and Replies* — Julian Winternheimer, *Buffer Data Blog*, October 2025

Twitter/X

On X, the link between replying and engagement is more subtle. Posts where creators replied to comments saw around an **8% lift in engagement**, according to Julian's fixed effects regression model.

Unlike the other analyses here, the effect is *only marginally significant* ($p \approx 0.097$, in data science terms). That's because Julian's dataset included roughly **30,000 X posts from 16,000 accounts**, but only about **2,100 posts** had comments that were replied to — a relatively small sample size.

Still, the data did align with trends from other platforms, and the Z-score analysis backed it up. Posts with replied comments sat slightly above each account's baseline performance, with about **51% of accounts** showing positive effects.

One factor worth noting: X has multiple account tiers (Free, Basic, Premium, and Premium+), each with different algorithmic visibility. (Another of Julian's recent studies uncovered that Premium subscribers tend to get around 10% more reach on their posts.)

The fixed-effects model accounts for this by comparing each profile to itself — meaning the 8% lift reflects the true within-account effect of replying, not the influence of account type or audience size.

Source: *X: Engagement and Replies* — Julian Winternheimer, *Buffer Data Blog*, November 2025

Bluesky

As for Bluesky, we're still early in the data story. Out of **73,000 posts**, only around **5,000** had comments that were replied to. But even in this smaller dataset, the trend held: posts with replies saw a **5% engagement lift**.

The effect was statistically significant but smaller than other platforms — likely due to the smaller sample size and the decentralized social platform's newer, niche audience.

Still, Z-score analysis suggested a similar pattern: posts with replied comments tended to sit slightly above each account's usual engagement level.

Source: *Bluesky: Engagement and Replies* — Julian Winternheimer, *Buffer Data Blog*, October 2025

Across five major platforms, the signal is pretty darn clear: **Replying to your comments is strongly associated with higher engagement.**

Genuinely, this has to be one of my favorite Buffer data

studies to date. It shows that the simple act of responding to those who took the time to engage with you is beneficial. And it’s no engagement “hack.” It’s less about gaming the algorithm and more about being… human?

While we can’t yet claim direct causation, the consistency of these findings across very different social networks suggests a real behavioral effect.

This advice is simple on paper, I know. Replying to all your comments as you grow can be really time-consuming — particularly if, like me, you’re actively creating across multiple platforms.

If that’s your struggle, Buffer has got you. For free! We’ve just launched Community — a dashboard that pulls all your comments across platforms into a single place. And you can reply directly on there, too!

Another handy feature is the Comment Score — a habit-building feature to help motivate you. The Comment Score tracks your consistency and speed over a period of time, helping you make social media engagement a ritual.



Get access to Community, along with all of Buffer’s planning and scheduling features, for free for up to 3 social platforms. Get started in under 1 min → https://buffer.com/resources/replying-to-comments-boosts-engagement/