

# Understanding the Algorithms





# Introduction

It's quite possibly the greatest pain point for our clients and social media users alike...why isn't everyone seeing my posts in their feeds? The simple answer is, "Blame the Algorithm."

First introduced in 2009, Facebook announced it would prioritize more popular posts in users' feeds. This meant no more reverse chronological ordering of posts and instead, meant that the more likes and comments a post received, the more likely it was for you to see it in your newsfeed.

Shortly after being acquired by Facebook, Instagram debuted their algorithm in 2014 by showcasing content tailored to the users' interest within the Explore tab.





Since then, other social media networks have followed suit in implementing an algorithm with a primary goal of cleaning up their users' feeds and showing us posts that peak our interest. And while it may be good for the user experience, it makes it more difficult for businesses to get their content in front of a new audience of potential customers.

Rather than blame the algorithm for decreased views of your social media posts, we want to teach you about how the algorithm works and then offer some tips on how to make it work for your social media strategy.

Today, we will cover three of the major social media networking including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

# Examples of Algorithms

Take a look at real-life algorithms used by Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.







# Instagram

Let's start first with Instagram who recently revealed some insightful info about how they filter posts for their users. Instagram's algorithm functions off key signals when determining what makes it on to your feed.

**Here are the main signals they look for:**

- **Post Info** - The main thing here is determining the popularity of the post and how much engagement (likes, comments and shares) it has received. It also looks for info such as when and where the post took place.
- **The Person Behind the Post** - Again, a popularity filter here. The algorithm looks at how often the person posts to Instagram as well as how often others interact with them.
- **Activity and Interests** - the algorithm asks, "What posts does this person typically like?" and then tries to show you more of that type of content. If you see a lot of food-related posts in your feed, it's probably because you're a sucker for some foodie accounts!
- **History of Interaction** - this one is a more personal perception of how often you interact with posts from a particular person. If you typically like, comment or share posts from other accounts, it is likely you will see more of them in your feed.



# Facebook

Facebook's algorithm is very similar, as they seek various signals from "inventory" (aka posts) shared to the platform.

**The major signals are:**

- **Engagement (likes, comments and shares)** the most important metric of course, but one unique metric the algorithm likes is when users share and send a post through Facebook Messenger.
- **Relationships** - if you post and ghost, the algorithm will not be your friend. Facebook wants to see who and how often you interact on the platform. Also, they're looking for how complete your profile is so be sure to fill in all the relevant info.
- **Type of Content** - if you're sharing eye-catching images or upbeat videos, the algorithm takes notice of this and will likely share your posts with more people. Also, informative content is good as people spend more time reading the post which sends a positive signal to the algorithm.





# in LinkedIn

Let's talk about LinkedIn for a moment, shall we? LinkedIn is still one of our favorite platforms for getting the most organic reach despite their implemented algorithm.

Nonetheless, there is a filtering process to what users see in their feed and **this is how it works:**

- **First Step Filter** - as soon as you post to your feed, LinkedIn categorizes the content as Spam, Low Quality or Clear. Obviously, you want to aim for the clear!
- **Time to Test** - once you pass the initial filter, your post is tested to a small audience to make sure it is not marked as spam, hidden or flagged as inappropriate.
- **Keeping Score** - now your post receives a score based on how your audience interacts with it. For example, a share is worth more points than a basic like of the post and the more "points" you receive the more likely LinkedIn will show your content to a wider audience.
- **Final Assessment** - if your posts makes it this far, it is now reviewed by LinkedIn editors to determine if it should be spread to an audience outside your network or even showcased on the "trending content" page.

# Trends & Tips

Now that you understand more about how the algorithm works across different social media channels, how can you make it work for your social media strategy? And while each platform's algorithm is slightly different, I'm sure you will see three common trends here.

- **It's all about the quality of your content.**
- **Your network is your algorithmic net worth.**
- **Keep social media SOCIAL.**

**Here are three tips to help you use the algorithm to your advantage:**

**1**

**Quality of content** - regardless of which social media platform you're using, they all look for content that keeps users engaged longer. LinkedIn calls it "dwell time" and it means that your audience stops to read or watch what you're posting. With that being said, aim to create content that intentionally engages your followers. Posts with questions, helpful information or eye-catching imagery and video can help to stop the scroll and send a positive signal to the algorithm. Be sure the content is relevant to the platform as well. For example, GIFs and funny cat videos are not necessarily relevant to a professional audience on LinkedIn but your Facebook community may find it worth a like or share.



2

**Utilize your network** - you likely will have some followers who regularly engage and interact with your posts. These are your people. Your tribe. Your community. Take time to learn more about these folks and why your content is resonating with them. As long as they are within your target audience, keep sharing information and updates that cater to them and don't hesitate to reach out privately to them and ask what they'd like to see more of on their feeds.

3

**Keep it social** - once again, a common theme in any social media algorithm is the aspect of interaction and engagement with others. Keeping the SOCIAL in social media is important! Make sure you're setting time aside each day to spend 10-15 minutes liking, commenting and engaging with other people and accounts on your feed. This simple process will send positive signals to the algorithm that you're not just posting and ghosting and also indicate to your audience that you're using social media as a communications tool not just a place to dump content.

## Remember!

The social media algorithms are always changing and evolving but they're always doing so with the user, not the business in mind. By putting yourself in the users' shoes and thinking about how to best serve your audience on social media, you will make friends with the algorithm.

# Final Thoughts

The social media algorithms are always changing and evolving but they're always doing so with the user, not the business in mind. By putting yourself in the users' shoes and thinking about how to best serve your audience on social media, you will make friends with the algorithm.



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