Social Media Algorithms 101: What You Really Need to Know to Maximize Your Social Media Presence

By Ashley Drummond, CEO, Wow Factor Media

Creating algorithm-friendly content helps businesses engage their target audience, boosting reach, followers, product awareness, and bottom-line growth.

Here is a summary of some high-level tips on how to easily understand, discover, create, and post algorithm-friendly content for your business.

DECODING ALGORITHMS: HOW FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM RECOMMEND CONTENT

What is a social media algorithm? The Meta algorithm is used so that Facebook and Instagram can monitor and analyze what you watch and engage with so they can recommend content they predict you will want to see and that will provide you with the Best User Experience so you Use the Platforms Frequently.

Meta is focused on providing the best User Experience on social media, so you never want to leave the platform. The algorithm prioritizes User Experience. The algorithm filters and prioritizes the posts your customers see based on simple user factors like:

Their Interests: What they like, share, or watch (ie what they engage with themselves)

Overall post Engagement: How popular the post is (likes, comments, shares)
Recency: How new the post is

As a rule of thumb, engagement ultimately drives algorithms.

HARNESSING AI: LEARN HOW ALGORITHMS PREDICT USER PREFERENCES—AND HOW TO USE THIS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

#1: They track the users engagement behavior: They look at what you like, comment on, share, search, watch, and follow.

#2: They analyze the users content engagement: They assess the topics, formats (photos, videos, etc.), and accounts you engage with.

#3: They learn the users behaviour: Machine learning watches patterns in your activity to predict what you'll enjoy, including similar content to what you've interacted with before.

#4: They watch the user's social influence: They monitor content popular with your friends or content that is trending globally or within your target audience.

#5: They measure the users feedback loops: Positive signals increase the likelihood of similar content appearing. Negative signals (skipping or hiding posts) reduce exposure to that type of content.

CONTENT THAT WORKS: TIPS ON CREATING HIGH-QUALITY, STRATEGIC, AND ALGORITHM-FRIENDLY CONTENT

You can create content the algorithms love by:

#1: Getting to know what content is working for your target audience by searching keywords of trending content in your industry. When you find popular trends in your industry save the posts, the #s and the sound so you can use them for inspiration later.

#2: Creating the post types audiences love like feed posts, carousels, reels and stories. Using all content types, will help you reach different algorithms and different audiences diffusing your brand to multiple touchpoints on social media.

#3 Creating the post styles audiences love. Be sure to include photos and images of real happy people in action. This is the best performing content on social media. When branding posts, be sure your messaging is clear, and your branding is consistent for maximum engagement and recall.

#4 Creating copy algorithms can read and understand. Be sure your hook is engaging so people want to read on. Be sure your copy includes industry and product keywords and #s so the algorithm knows that your post is about.

MASTERING TIMING: PERFECT YOUR CONTENT MIX AND POSTING FREQUENCY TO MAXIMIZE REACH

The right posting times can be different for every business because it depends on when your audiences are most active. Check out your Instagram Insights to see the best times to post. Optimal timing can significantly enhance the visibility and engagement of your content.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES: LEARN HOW TO DRIVE MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS WITH STORIES, REELS, AND CAROUSELS

Content Type 1: Feed Posts

- **TIP 1** Create Carousels.
- **TIP 2** Create a Post that Encourages Shares (get them thinking "that's literally me")
- **TIP 3** Create Posts that Encourage People to Tag Others
- **TIP 4** Create Posts that Educate so People Share
- **TIP 5** Highlight People in Trendy and Fun Ways

Content Type 2: Stories

- **TIP 1** Create Carousel Stories.
- **TIP 2** Use Interactive Stickers on your Stories.
- **TIP 3** Repost Reels to your Story.

Content Type 3: Reels

- **TIP 1** Make the First 3 Seconds Count
- **TIP 2** Make them 30 to 90 Seconds
- **TIP 3** Amplify with Trending Audio
- **TIP 4** Add Topics #s and Location
- **TIP 5** Keep it High Quality

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ashley Drummond was born and raised in Moose Jaw Saskatchewan and earned her business degree with a double major in Marketing and Entrepreneurship and small business management from the University of Alberta. Ashley is the CEO of Saskatchewan's award-winning social media marketing team Wow Factor Media and CEO of Sask's only agriculture specific social media marketing company AG Social. Ashley's career at Wow Factor Media has given her valuable online marketing experience in working with a diverse range of community leaders and business owners throughout Western Canada.