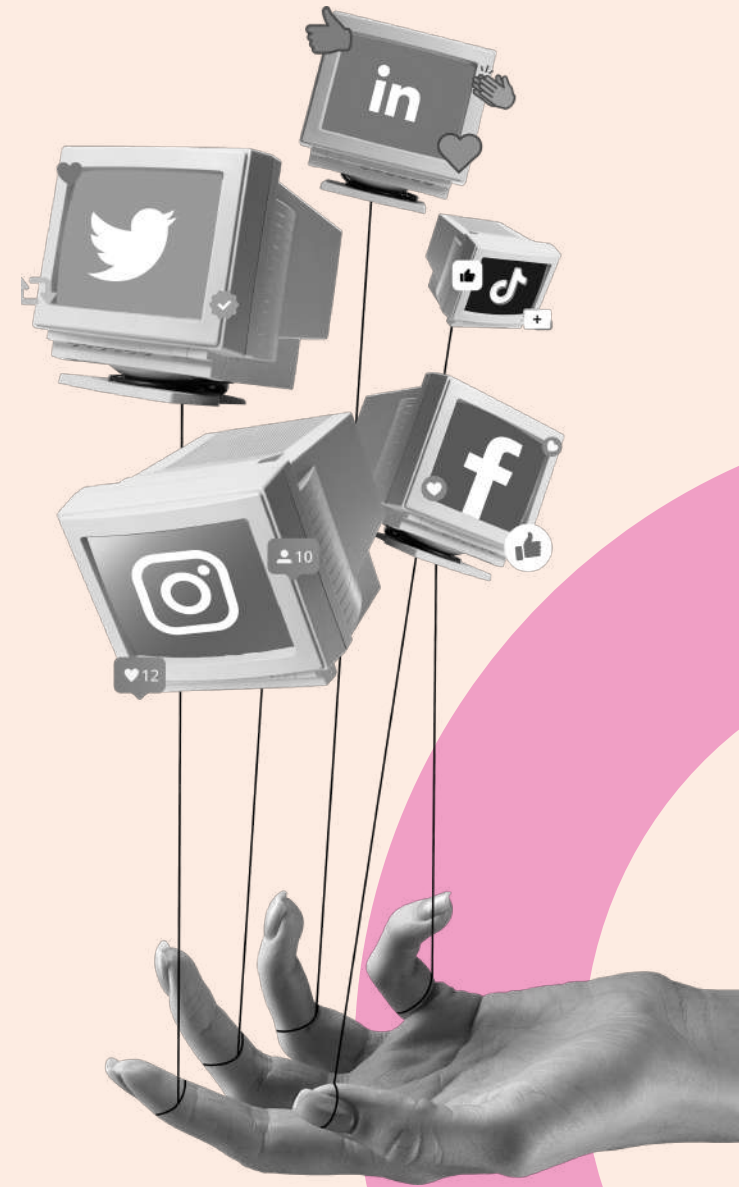


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Understanding the social algorithm

It's not as complicated as it appears



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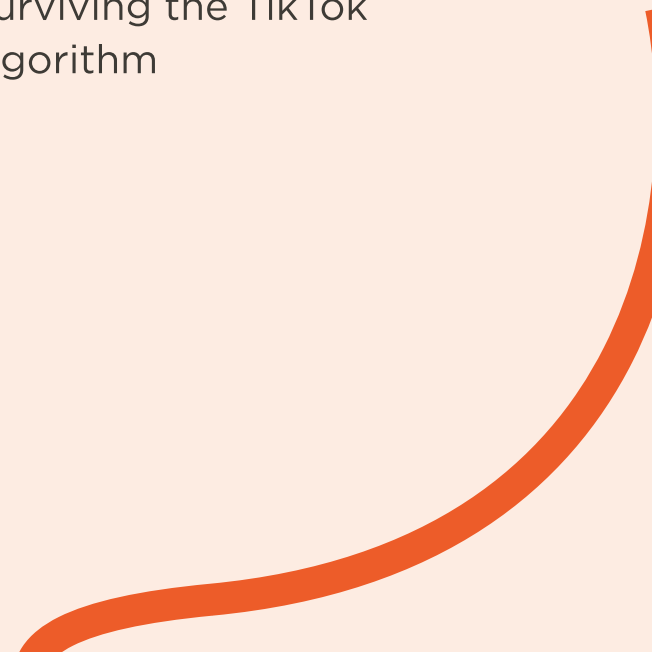
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Oh, the algorithm.

Love it or hate it, it's here to stay - and it actually does serve a purpose.

For some ed marketers, the algorithm represents a challenge to be solved, a 5000-piece jigsaw puzzle built upside down (while blindfolded). However, most marketers, institutions, and brands spend their time chasing the elusive algorithm, trying to figure out how to hack it, understand it - replicate it, or all of the above. For some - the algorithm is the bad guy in the story, the goblin lying in wait to eat their social efforts for breakfast. For the typical social media user, algorithms may appear useful and generally safe as they sort through content and present only "relevant" stuff instead of random posts.

That said - marketers that don't fully comprehend what algorithms are or how they work will find themselves facing a constant struggle.

The good news?
Social algorithms aren't as mysterious or vindictive as you might think.

Understanding the systems in place to manage the visibility of your content is no longer optional; it is a necessity.

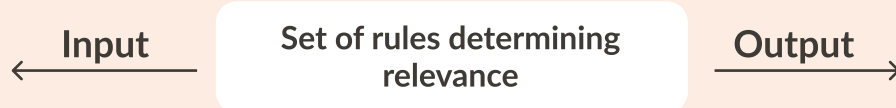
In this guide, we will teach you how to understand the algorithm - and leverage it for your institution's success.



Social media algorithms in a nutshell

An algorithm is a set of mathematical rules that describe how a collection of data should behave. Algorithms in social media help with maintaining order and ranking search results and advertisements. For instance, an algorithm on Facebook directs the order in which sites and content are displayed.

There were over 4.5 billion internet users as of October 2021, and of these, nearly 57% of the world's population used social media. Monitoring and managing that is a huge task. Because of this, algorithms play a vital role in evaluating the legitimacy and positioning of social media accounts and content.

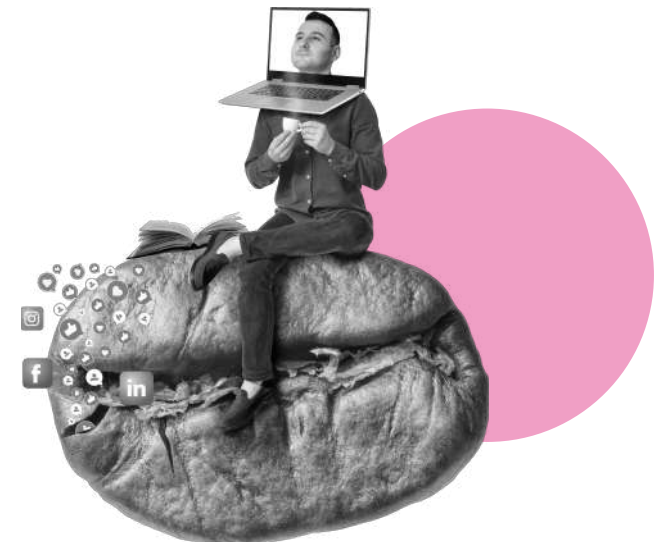


Social networks prioritize which content a user sees in their feed first by the likelihood that they'll actually **want** to see it.

Before the switch to algorithms, most social media feeds displayed posts in reverse chronological order. Basically, the newest posts from accounts a user followed showed up first. Many social networks still give users the option to view their feed in chronological order!

However, social media algorithms automatically decide which information to show you based on your behavior.

For instance, Facebook or Twitter might prioritize content from your closest friends and family because they are the accounts you **engage with the most** in your feed.



You've probably been given YouTube video recommendations at some point, right? Once more, this is based on your unique behavior, looking at what you've already seen and what other users like you are watching. On any specific network, elements like categories, hashtags, and keywords also influence the material that is recommended.

Before we dive any deeper into understanding social media algorithms, it's important to note that while there may be similarities between certain platforms and their algorithms - no two algorithms are created equal! Each platform has its own set of rules, preferences and objectives to achieve - and its algorithms are no different.

Seems simple enough, right?

Everything so far undoubtedly appears simple. So what's all the fuss about algorithms?

Well, the impact that algorithms have on reach is a big part of the reason why they are so contentious.

For the average user, algorithms are merely a vague collection of code that we know to determine what appears in our feeds, but most of us don't care. We come to terms with the idea that they served us by giving us more of what we enjoy. That's accurate—to a point.

Many brands are finding it difficult to reach their social audience with their content without using "engagement bait." They are often (somewhat) forced to act in particular ways in order to gain visibility due to a trend toward prioritizing and pushing "high-performing" content that manipulates the system.

"More and more brands are having to rely on engagement bait tactics such as collaborations, trend jacking and memes just to be seen," explains Nexus' Head of Social Harry Gardiner.

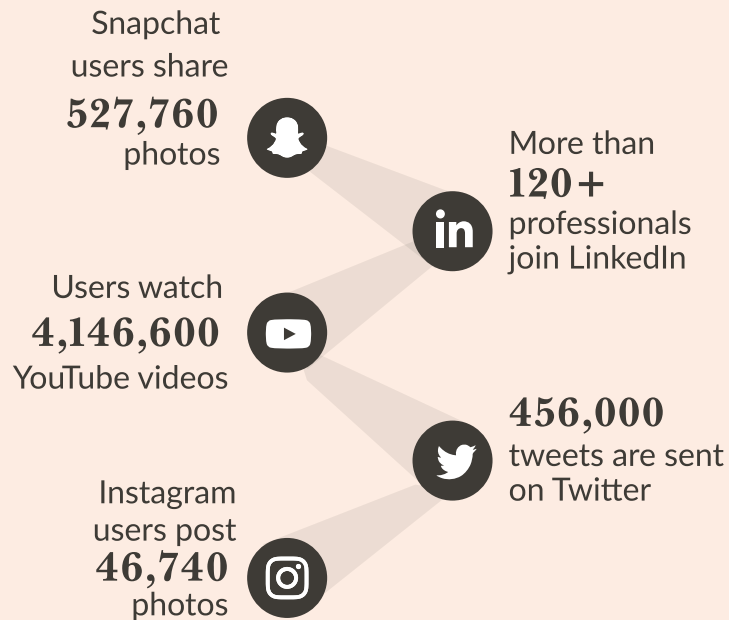
Since social media platforms are always changing, it can be challenging to keep up with all of the algorithmic changes. Even though you might anticipate seeing posts from the people you follow and interact with the most often, this isn't necessarily the case.

In an effort to provide users with the information they are more likely to connect with based on their behavior, the behavior of their friends, and similar accounts a user follows, social media platforms are continuously pushing suggested content. Additionally, it has become impossible to forecast the optimum times of day or days of the week to publish because feeds are no longer chronological.

Why social media algorithms exist

In the world of social - we're flooded with new and exciting content. Every minute, thousands of posts, images, and videos are published - each serving its own unique purpose.

According to Domo's Data Never Sleeps 5.0 [report](#), these are numbers generated every **minute** of the day:



As if this isn't crazy enough, a whopping 4.4 million new blog posts are created every day!

Sifting through all of this stuff account by account wouldn't be possible without social media algorithms. Particularly for users that follow hundreds or thousands of profiles on a network, algorithms take care of delivering what you want and eliminating low-quality or irrelevant content.

Well - in theory, that is.

Another common misconception is that social media algorithms are designed to force businesses to spend more on paid advertising. It is assumed that brands will turn to this strategy if they cannot reach their consumers organically. Naturally, this results in higher revenue for social networks.

Although this viewpoint could come across as pessimistic or even paranoid, social media marketers are aware that adjustments to the way social media algorithms rank paid and organic content can have a significant influence. Regardless of the motivations behind social media algorithms, the truth is that they are here to stay. This requires marketers to understand what algorithms "desire" as well as what could possibly make content appear low-quality or irrelevant to their audience.

How social media algorithms really work

The algorithm is as simple as it is complex. It's a beast that's beyond measure - and to make matters worse, it evolves - partly due to how it works! AKA - form follows function.

By now we know that the function of the algorithm is to deliver relevant content to users. But beyond that, if we diver under the hood that is the algorithm - you'll find a bit more.

Algorithms involve machine learning and data science. They're capable of parsing data and ranking posts based on criteria that, quite honestly, the average marketer will probably never truly understand.

Moreover, algorithms can operate in a collaborative way. Collaborative filtering consists of matching users to other users who seem to share similar interests; this way, a person is directed to posts or videos that they might want to see based on the fact that a user with a similar profile searched for that specific source. Algorithms can be context-aware in that they can individuate personal data such as a user's exact geographic location to include it in the algorithmic calculations.

That said, algorithms aren't giant question marks, though.

Sometimes networks are transparent about what will help content rank and be seen as high-quality on their platform.

It takes both hands-on experimentation and listening to what networks are saying to understand how algorithms operate. Although it may be time-consuming, the process is essential.



Leveraging social media algorithms

Marketers often look at social media algorithms as bottlenecks - something that exists only to watch them fail.

But rather than try to fight with algorithms, it's really important to understand how to craft the type of content that algorithms want to see.

Between trial and error and what we know about the current crop of social media algorithms, there are actionable steps marketers can take to optimize their content. The key is finding a balance between what an algorithm wants and creating compelling content for your audience.

Although no two algorithms are the same, there are some general algorithm-outsmarting strategies that work across all social channels.



1. Ask questions to encourage engagement

The algorithm is more likely to reward content that receives greater engagement.

By asking your followers questions, you may find that this is one of the simplest ways to increase interaction. Posts containing questions are a simple method to promote connection with your audience while also acting as a sort of call-to-action.

Remember: It's a snowball effect!

2. Involve other accounts by tagging them

Basically - tagging other accounts acts like an invitation for other users to view, and (hopefully) share your content. So tag away!

3. Use your hashtags wisely

By linking a post to a category, hashtags basically make your content searchable and broaden its audience. When it comes to social media algorithms, hashtags categorize your material and increase the likelihood that users searching for that tag will find it.

Remember: As a rule of thumb, adding a tag or two is fair game across all networks for the sake of categorizing your content and campaigns.

4. Work on your timing

Any piece of content's level of interaction is greatly influenced by timing. For instance, posting when your audience is most likely to be active increases the likelihood that people will see your posts and respond to them.

The ideal time will differ between platforms and audiences, so do your research! Ideally, set a benchmark report, and then analyze engagement rates over a 3-month period.

5. Ace your frequency

Whatever network you're publishing to, you should make an effort to be an "active" member. In other words, social media algorithms favor accounts that post frequently over those that do so infrequently.

For this reason, it's crucial to create a content plan that enables you to consistently post to each relevant network. To maximize the impact of your content development efforts, you can also cross-post your content on several social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter).

Remember: Quality over quantity - in other words, don't post for the sake of posting.

6. Utilize your video skill

All networks' algorithms now favor native video content as a developing trend (think: a video published to that platform, not an external link).

Any kind of video is acceptable, including looping Vine-style videos, mini-commercials promoting your brand, campus tours - or student interviews!

The most important takeaway here is, that you need to work with the algorithm - not against it. It will favor you if you:

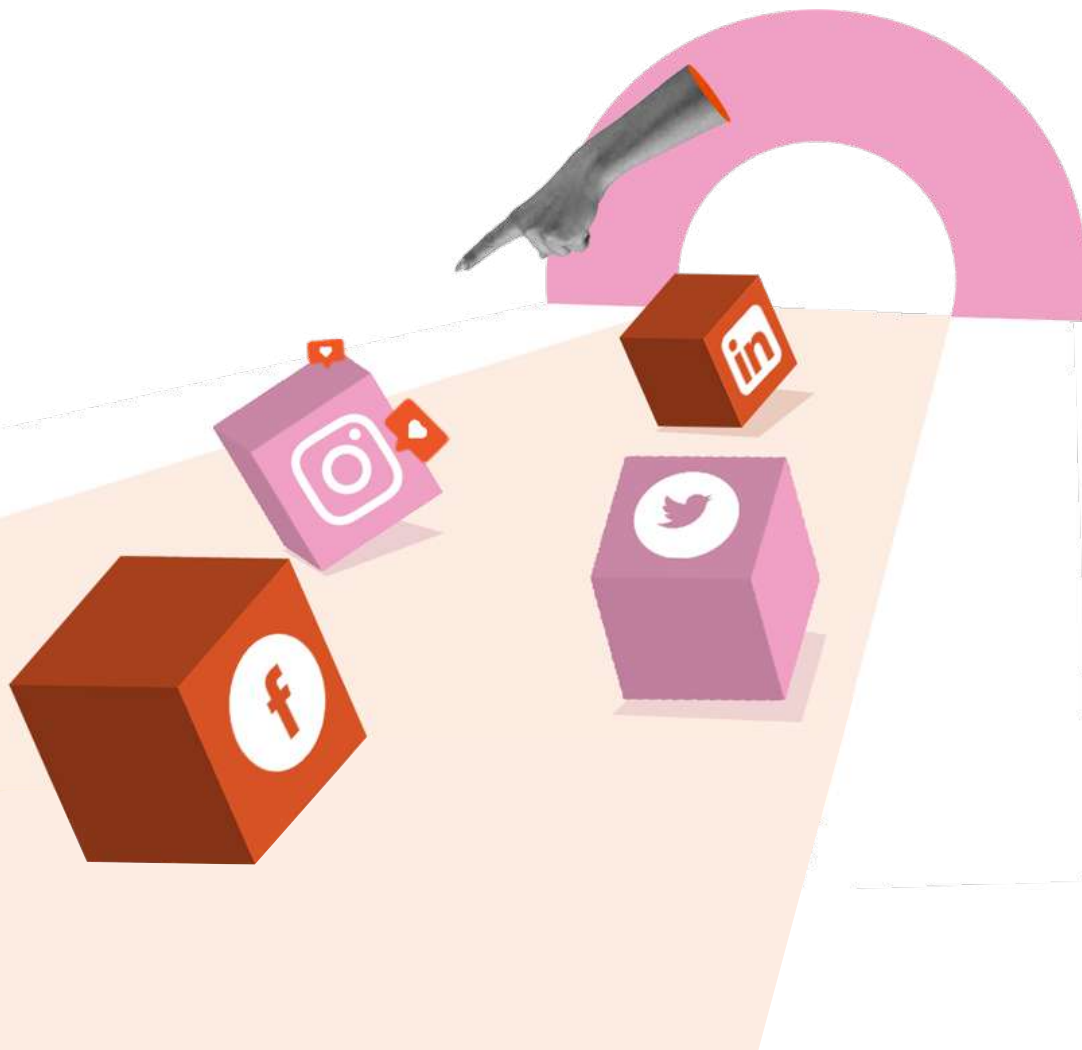
- Keep your posts relevant
- Post regularly
- Interact with your audience

Authenticity is key!

Due to the fact that the algorithm differs from platform to platform, the only option left to content creators and marketers is to learn how each social media algorithm operates.



Having a comprehensive understanding of the social media ecosystem as a whole is essential at the same time. Based on a proactive - and reactive viewpoint, it is possible to use a social media management solution that enables strategic thinking, suitable daily content generation, and distribution, as well as regular analytical insights - across all social media platforms, at the same time.



Common factors across all social algorithms

Yes - each platform has its own algorithm. While your campus video might blow up on TikTok, it could equally bomb on Instagram. There are however a few key points that are similar across all networks. Understanding and leveraging these insights are crucial to education marketing success.

Authenticity is an underlying element.

In the simplest possible terms, social media algorithms are currently being developed to explicitly favor and support authentic community interactions, in an effort to weed out the fake news and fake engagement coming from bots.

Changes in the algorithm have little bearing on paid advertising efforts

It's crucial to remember that when an advertiser pays for exposure, they will still receive exactly what they paid for. Adjustments to the way content are filtered by algorithms have no bearing on the social media advertising business. Importantly, though, genuine, organic content has surpassed other forms of largely self-promotional content that previously drove significant organic reach (such as posts that directly invite users to share, click, and like). Simply put - sponsored advertising hasn't changed, but its environment has.

Challenges that all social algorithms present

1. Those who post regularly are rewarded
2. Native content creation is rewarded and an 80% native content to 20% external content split is ideal. As soon as externally linked content levels push past 20%, the algorithm is likely to punish you.
3. In the beginning, just a small portion of users in a network are shown posts, and the algorithm closely monitors their responses. Users who actively participate with the content are rewarded, but if they don't, the content receives a low score and is quickly hidden from view.
4. Users who have complete, trustworthy profiles are rewarded for their content. This is due in part to the algorithm's desire to promote engaged, active communities as well as the fact that poorly maintained profiles are a common trait of phony accounts.

The “black box problem”

The “black box dilemma,” as described by Kelley Cotter, assistant professor in Penn State University’s College of Information Sciences and Technology, is the feeling that what little we do know about how social media algorithms operate is dwarfed by how much we don’t.

According to Cotter, these social networks purposely hide their algorithms’ inner workings to safeguard proprietary technology and deflect possible regulatory scrutiny. Social media platforms have provided brief justifications for why some information appears in your feed, even though they are precisely what you would anticipate: High levels of engagement—comments, likes, shares, and other interactions—in videos or photographs increase their likelihood of going viral. But according to Cotter, these just seem to be PR stunts.

“A lot of it also is made up of rationales,” Cotter says. “So not just, ‘This is what the algorithm does,’ but ‘It does this because we want X to happen.’ Usually, it’s like, ‘We want to make sure that you’re seeing the things that you care about or you’re making real connections with people.’ So, it’s really a lot of couching of the information in these really lofty goals that they have”.

The TikTok algorithm has emerged as the one to be taken seriously when it comes to social networking algorithms.



Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Meta, disclosed that Facebook's and Instagram's feeds would include more information from users they don't follow but who they could find interesting in the company's first-quarter earnings call. It's blatantly an effort to compete more effectively with TikTok's For You page, an unending scroll of discoverability that has been a key driver of the platform's growth—and a source of mystery.

The algorithm used by TikTok is generally regarded as being too effective. Since TikTok shot to fame during the pandemic, fans and artists have been attempting to figure out what makes the crucial For You page so good at forecasting which videos will go viral. The New York Times was able to verify documents from TikTok's engineering team in Beijing that described the algorithm's operation to non-technical staff members. TikTok's recommendation engine, according to a computer scientist who analysed the documents for the Times, is "perfectly acceptable, but typical stuff," and the platform's benefit lies in the vast amounts of data and a framework designed for recommended content.

An addiction to the algorithm

Social media algorithms are created with retention in mind: the more committed users, the greater the amount of money the platform makes. For some people, spending hours reading through social media mostly makes them feel bad about wasting their time. But for other people, being drawn in that way might have a negative effect on their mental health. According to studies, both youth and adults who use social media frequently experience higher levels of anxiety and sadness.

Dr. Nina Vasan, a psychiatrist, has experienced it firsthand. As the founder of Brainstorm, Stanford's academic lab devoted to mental health innovation, she is working to assist social media platforms to lessen their impact. For instance, Brainstorm and Pinterest collaborated to develop a "compassionate search" experience where users could get guided activities to help them feel better if they searched for themes like quotations about stress or work anxiety. In order to stop potentially hazardous or triggering content from auto-filling in search results or being recommended, Vasan and her team also collaborated with Pinterest's developers.

Breaking the habit of constant (and thoughtless) social media scrolling is one of the most significant problems Vasan is working to fix for everyone.

“The algorithms have been developed with the intention of keeping us online. The problem is that there’s no ability to pause and think. Time just basically goes away,” Vasan says. “We need to think about how we can break the cycle and look at something else, take a breath.”

The algorithms’ tendency to show you more of what you enjoy is one of its issues. Theoretically, that sounds fantastic, but it may mean that posts from the same brands or people dominate your feed, thereby blocking a wider variety of content and viewpoints. It also implies that, on occasion, you should definitely think twice before engaging, especially on social media platforms like Instagram.

That is how the algorithm operates.



Organic versus paid social algorithms

There are two sides to every coin, and this time, it’s the endless debate on paid marketing versus organic marketing.

The core difference between organic and paid is goal alignment. To build trust, an audience, and engagement, organic will always win. To get conversions and retention in place, paid is your best bet. They both run in parallel, and it’s up to the team to decide on the budget and resource split.

While there isn’t a distinction between the algorithm for paid and organic advertising on social media, there are a few differences between platforms. Paid advertising will naturally garner a higher reach (you get what you pay for), while organic will take longer - and likely have a smaller reach and impression set.

Whether you’re implementing a paid or an organic advertising strategy for your institution - the algorithm will favor what is relevant, and what is entertaining.

Understanding organic social advertising

The free content (posts, photographs, videos, memes, Stories, etc.) that all users, including businesses and brands, exchange with each other on their feeds is referred to as “organic social media.”

When you post something organically to your account as an institution or brand, you can anticipate that:

- A percentage of your followers will see it, based on their unique interaction with the algorithm.
- Followers of your followers may see it, assuming that it has a certain level of engagement and shareability.
- Users who follow your hashtag will see it.

It may seem obvious, but organic social media is the cornerstone of every digital marketing plan since it allows you to cultivate a relationship with your audience on a large scale.

Institutions and education companies can use organic social media to:

- Establish their brand personality, voice, and authority
- Cultivate and nurture relationships with their prospective and current students
- Engage with students at every stage of the enrollment funnel
- Provide an authentic engagement experience

Understanding paid social advertising

Paid advertising is an online advertising model where advertisers bid to participate in real-time auctions in order to show their ads within slots on a specific platform or network.

Here, brands pay social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube to promote their material with particular new target groups who are likely to be interested, either by "boosting" their organic content or creating original adverts.

Paid advertising strategies are used by institutions and brands to

- Increase brand awareness and followers
- Promote new events, campus changes, or program announcements
- Generate new student leads by incorporating paid advertising into the greater Inbound marketing funnel
- Drive conversions by guiding students to enroll

Advertising platforms also give you access to a goldmine of information about your audience(s). Most platforms like Google, Facebook, or LinkedIn will give you demographic information as a minimum for people who saw your ads. You can also get information about people's interests, their jobs, and other personal data - all anonymized of course! This data can help you understand your audience(s) better and so maximize your budget by specifically targeting people who are more likely to be interested in your products or services.

Surviving the Instagram algorithm



Benefits of Paid vs Organic Social Media



#love #instagood #photooftheday #beautiful #happy

Sound familiar?

Welcome to the world of Instagram! Where minutes turn into hours - the place where you can find everything from inspirational workout videos, to memes - and even business advice. This is the platform for, well - everyone.

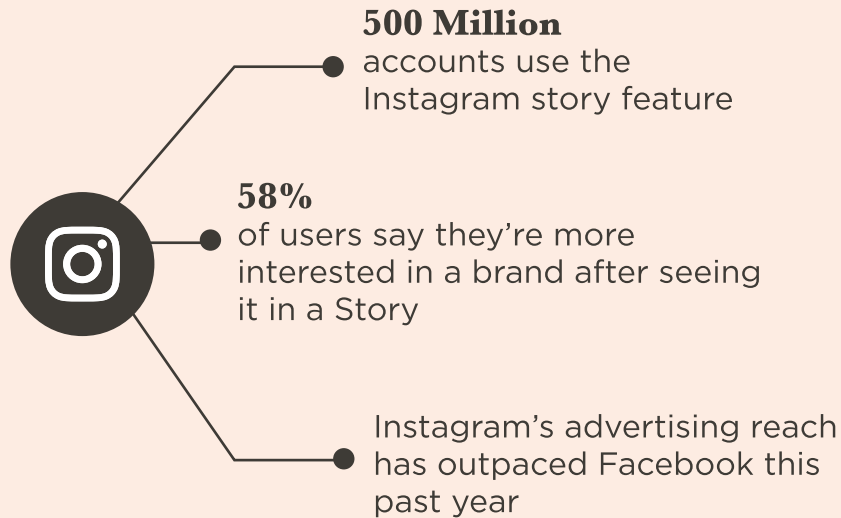
It's difficult to remember life before Instagram. Remember the saying, "do it for the gram"? Yup - it started as a photo-sharing platform, much like Facebook. But of course, it evolved into something much greater.

Since then, Instagram has given video a much bigger and stronger priority. Therefore, it is rare to hear the expression "Do it for the gram." But we'll wager that the term will soon be followed by a second iteration. Do it for Reel, perhaps?

1.22 Billion monthly (active) users

Instagram is Gen Z's favorite platform

9 out of 10 users watch Reels weekly



Is your institution ready to succeed on Instagram?

It's a difficult question to answer since the platform switched from reverse chronological to a curated content feed. Marketers may find themselves scrambling to comprehend the changes and reevaluate their strategic approach after previous social algorithm tweaks that shook companies' organic reach.

A good social media marketing strategy requires an understanding of the Instagram algorithm and what it considers valuable or significant. In this chapter, we will cover the specifics of the ranking signals used by the algorithm, significant recent updates to the Instagram algorithm, and everything else you need to know to increase the visibility of your content on the platform.

Here's what you need to know.



What exactly is the Instagram algorithm?

The Instagram algorithm is the mechanism that manages which posts and in what order they appear in a user's newsfeed.

When Instagram first debuted, posts were displayed in the newsfeed according to the recency, (or recentness), of the user's posting. Then, in March 2016, Instagram introduced a new algorithm called "relevancy" that shows users' posts in the order of the events they care about most. Because of the sophistication of this algorithm, each person's newsfeed is distinctive and customized for them. The newsfeed will be tailored based on how they engage with those accounts, even if two people follow the exact same accounts.

Pretty nifty right?

How does it work?

Initially, only 7-8% of your Instagram followers will see your post. Many people are shocked by this since they mistakenly think that their following all see their posts.

The Instagram algorithm will evaluate the post's level of engagement after you publish it.

Any interaction with the post, including likes, comments, post shares, saves, profile visits, etc., is referred to as engagement. If there is a lot of interaction with your post, more of your followers will see it, along with the hashtags and locations you mention.

High-engagement posts may also appear on the explore page, giving your account a ton of exposure! (This is only applicable to accounts set to public and not private - so make sure to set your account up properly!)

After countless changes to the platform and its algorithm, the network has since described the Instagram algorithm ranking signals as

Interest: You'll see what the platform believes you're interested in

Timeliness: More recent posts are prioritized over older ones

Relationship: Content from accounts you've interacted with more is prioritized

Frequency: How often you use Instagram factors into what the top posts in your feed will be

Following: How many people you follow affects what you see—you may see less content from any one account if you follow a lot of accounts

Usage: Spending more time on the app scrolling through your Instagram feed means you'll see more or even everything the algorithm has to offer you at the moment

In a [2021 post](#) intended to promote transparency about the "algorithms, classifiers, and processes" that determine what users see first on the app, Instagram went into additional detail about the ranking considerations for each of its content kinds. The key elements listed below for feed posts generally align quite well with what was previously reported.

- **Information about the post:** Ranging from engagement to more general data like location.
- **Information about the person who posted:** Such as your previous interactions or other signals their content is interesting to you.
- **Your activity:** How many posts you liked, and how you interact with content in general.
- **Your history of interacting with someone:** Actions like commenting can show your interest level in continuing to interact with another account.

Like any well-curated social feed, Instagram has over time updated and improved its algorithm.

The 2022 Stories and feed algorithm explained

The Instagram algorithm examines the content of the accounts you follow for your feed and Stories and determines how likely you are to interact with a post using the following factors:

1. **Standard information about the post:** How many likes did it get? When was it posted? Is there a location tag? If it's a video, how long is it - too long, or too short? These are 'signals' that serve to help the algorithm decide whether or not a piece of content is relevant. And in turn, how well it performs.
2. **Information about the person, or account that created the post - as well as your history with them:** Instagram does actually track how many times you've interacted with a given account (comments, likes, views, shares etc.) This somewhat creepy act serves to tell the algorithm whether it should show you more content from that account.
3. **Your own activity on the platform:** Not necessarily what you've shared - but what you've interacted with - this gives Instagram an insight into what else you might be interested in seeing.
4. **Your broader activity across the platform:** The quantity - and more notably, the quality of the content that you've interacted with gives Instagram a clue as to what else the algorithm should show you.



The 2022 Explore tab algorithm

The algorithm for the Explore tab examines earlier posts that you have liked or engaged with, and it gathers a selection of images and videos from relevant accounts that you don't follow - but probably will after engaging with the content.

Based on how likely you are to like, save, or share a post, the algorithm then ranks these photos and videos based on what it believes you'll be most interested in.

1. **Information about the post:** When collecting content that will be shown in the Explore tab, Instagram is designed to look at the popularity of a post - by using indicators such as how many likes the post received, how many comments were left, etc. Most notably - the Explore tab algorithm notes how quickly viewers respond to certain content.
2. **Your history of interaction with the person who posted:** While the majority of the content that you see on the Explore tab will be from new-to-you accounts, Instagram does give accounts that you've interacted with a little boost by featuring some of them here too.
3. **Your activity:** Which posts have you liked, commented on - or saved in the past? How have you used the Explore page previously? All of your activity here impacts the assumption that Instagram makes about your interest.

4. Information about the person who posted: If an account garners a lot of interaction with users recently - as in the past few weeks, it signals to Instagram that there's some really great content there!

With Reels, the algorithm selects content from both the accounts you follow and the accounts you don't follow in an effort to keep you entertained.

It assesses this by taking into account the following:

- 1. Your activity:** Signals such as which Reels you've already liked, commented on, watched repeatedly - or otherwise engaged with exist to help Instagram understand what kind of content would be relevant to your interests.
- 2. Your history of interacting with the person who posted:** With Reels (similarly to the Explore tab), you're likely to be presented with videos from creators, or brands that you've never heard of. But since you've interacted with them in some way or another historically, Instagram takes that as a cue to show you more.
- 3. Information about the Reel:** The Instagram algorithm plays a guessing game here. It basically tries to guess what the video is about based on things like the audio track as well as an analysis of the pixels and frames - while also taking into account the popularity of the video.



4. Information about the person who posted: Is the original poster someone with an audience who is perpetually engaged with the content? Do they receive consistent likes, shares, saves or comments?

How has the Instagram algorithm changed in 2022?

Instagram brought back chronological feed viewing in 2022, along with the option to view a curated selection of recent posts from your favorite profiles.

Even though this is a significant update, it is safe to assume that the above-described Instagram algorithm continues to have an impact on how content is shown to most users and in most locations on the platform.

Making the most of the Instagram algorithm

In the end, Instagram's algorithm (or, to be more precise, all social algorithms) is made to show users the content they are most likely to interact with.

So - the ideal strategy for 'cheating' the system is to provide the algorithm with exactly what it needs to do its task.

While there is no single way to "hack" the algorithm - there are ways that your institution can work with it - to make the most of your content on the platform.

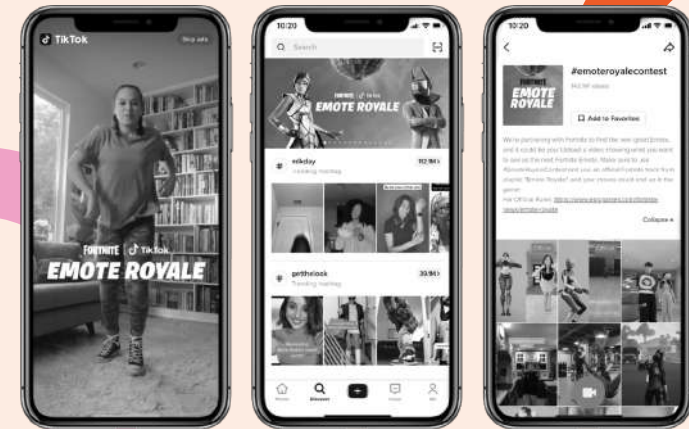
- Be consistent in your niche
- Share content when your audience is most engaged
- Encourage comments and likes
- Tailor your posts for Instagram SEO
- Improve your hashtag strategy
- Embrace new features
- Regularly post Stories that drive engagement
- Share content on Reels (Make sure to remove a TikTok Watermark)

Okay - technical insights are great - but where does that leave marketers? Creating a content plan that provides the Instagram algorithm with what it needs is really the only way to survive - if not conquer, the algorithm. Making consistently excellent content that can withstand future algorithm adjustments is one approach to achieving this.

It may not always be the algorithm's fault if you notice a decline in Instagram engagement. With relevant and authentic content as well as a deeper understanding of how the platform operates, these suggestions will help you future-proof your website and be prepared for any new algorithm modifications.



Surviving the TikTok algorithm



#makeyourday

Say hello to TikTok! When the platform first debuted on the social media world in 2018, no one could have predicted how powerful it would become. But what exactly is TikTok?

TikTok is the world's seventh-most popular social platform, with over 2 billion downloads (and counting!). Still, it has an outsized influence on the cultural zeitgeist since it's the app of choice for the hyper-influential Gen Z. TikTok is responsible for culinary trends, a new wave of famous pooches, 2000s nostalgia, and of course, a host of influencer's careers - depending on your point of view.

So - what is it?

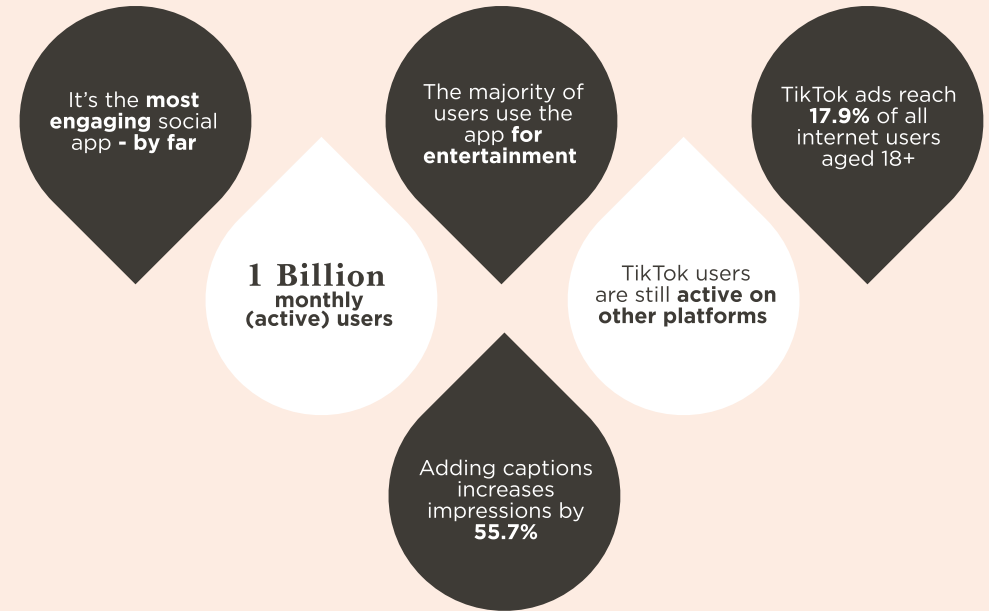
TikTok is a social media platform that focuses on short videos.

Many people consider it a mini version of YouTube, with videos ranging from five to 120 seconds in length.

TikTok calls itself “the leading destination for short-form mobile videos” with a mission to “inspire creativity and bring joy.” (Loving the confidence here!)

TikTok places content discovery at the center of its experience. The TikTok algorithm curates a never-ending stream of videos for you on the For You Page. The video feed starts playing as soon as the app is launched, immediately enticing users.

TikTok is centered on unique content that is mostly intended for enjoyment. This is a fantastic way to portray the brand in a more personal and genuine light. It can also serve as a showcase for the resources you have to help build differentiation and brand memory.



With that in mind - is your institution ready for the world of TikTok?

There are more differences between Gen Z and Millennials than just hairstyles and skinny jeans. GenZ wants brands to share their beliefs and produce less polished content since they have different perspectives on money, branding, and authenticity.

(Higher) Ed will need to reevaluate “talking head videos” and campus beauty shots as a result of this change. Instead, education marketers need to look for chances to portray students in actual settings, discuss real problems, and exchange genuine experiences.

Institutions are encouraged to use this platform to demonstrate campus - and classroom life, with a focus on student engagement. Promote health and safety, school sports or culture - to reduce the 'unknowns' for potential students. Keep it real, and advocate for student (or user-generated) content.



What exactly is the TikTok algorithm?

Although there isn't a secret formula to TikTok stardom, understanding the TikTok algorithm might assist you to work with it and increase your chances of success as an institution on the platform. The *For You* feed, which is powered by the highly tailored TikTok algorithm, is what makes the app so compelling!

Each user receives personalized content recommendations thanks to the TikTok algorithm. On the user's *For You* page, it chooses which videos the user might enjoy based on their particular preferences.

As a result, each user's experience with the *For You* page is specially designed. Your friend's or colleague's *For You* page may not display the same content as yours does. It makes sense that someone who consumes a lot of beauty and makeup content may get more suggestions for related videos. However, those videos won't frequently appear for someone who primarily watches sports and gaming-related stuff.

Additionally, it implies that when your viewing habits and preferences change, so will the types of content you see on this page. For instance, you might notice more DIY-related videos on your *For You* tab when you develop a new interest in home improvement projects. As you interact with more DIY and creating stuff, this occurs.

This tailored experience is what gives the platform its edge!

So how does it work?

You might now be curious as to how TikTok chooses what content to recommend. The TikTok algorithm takes into account a variety of elements to determine which videos a user may enjoy.

These are the key TikTok ranking parameters that affect which videos appear on your *For You* page.

User interactions and behavioural signals

TikTok takes many factors into account, but one of the most significant is how users act on the platform. With the help of this data, the platform can better comprehend each user's distinct tastes and how they evolve over time. Then, based on how well these behavioral signals match up with the videos, it ranks them.

These are the data signals that the TikTok algorithm considers:

- Video likes and shares
- Accounts followed
- Comments posted
- Content created
- Videos completed
- Favourited videos

This data is used by TikTok to **learn** more about the kinds of videos you prefer to watch, and the genre of content creators you like. It will then likely suggest videos that are similar to those that you have already seen and interacted with. Additionally, it's likely to favor videos made by creators whose work you've previously enjoyed.

Video information for discoverability

TikTok learns how to rank the material by using information from the video itself, such as captions, hashtags, and audio clips. This is mostly due to the fact that it makes use of the data to determine what the material is about and when to display it on users' *For You* pages.

Device and account indicators

TikTok analyzes each user's device and account settings to maximize performance. It mostly considers the following details:

- Country settings
- Language preferences
- Device type
- Category selection

That said, they don't carry as much weight as the other two criteria because people don't express them as preferences in an active way. This implies a strong indicator of interest.

Audio preferences

The algorithm will classify your content and serve it to the appropriate viewers when a video contains a popular sound or song. The algorithm will serve your video to people who have already engaged with the trend, making it a terrific method to reach new viewers.

“Not interested” feedback

The TikTok algorithm constantly aims to provide each user with high-interest clips, and it does so by evaluating their prior activity:

- Videos you’ve marked as “Not Interested”
- Users you’ve hidden
- Videos you skip through

Each *For You* page is unique since TikTok’s recommendation system weighs each of these variables independently (with some signs having a higher weight than others).

What doesn’t impact the TikTok algorithm?

Contrary to popular belief - there are certain factors that have absolutely no bearing on the TikTok algorithm, even if you’ve been told that they’re a surefire way to reach TikTok stardom.

- Your follower account
- Your history of successful (or viral) content

This means that there is still a chance for your video to go viral even if you only have a small following or have never posted to TikTok before. Hooray!

Insights aside - here are a few ways that you can help your Institution reach TikTok fame

The TikTok algorithm is constantly evolving and improving as a result of user behavior.

Here are 9 strategies to improve performance and outperform the algorithm for growth based on what we know about how the algorithm operates.

• Make your first impression count

TikTok typically prefers videos that are simple to digest, have a seamless loop, and cater to users who have a short attention span even though watching a video in its entirety is a strong indicator of interest. As a result, it’s critical to capture your audience’s attention within the first three seconds. People want to be entertained right now or they’ll move on.

• Focus on your niche

The TikTok algorithm will learn to notice your expertise and start showing your material to the appropriate audience the more frequently you share films that are relevant to your niche. Consider the subject matters that best appeal to your target audience. Is it campus tours? English language tutorials? Student life videos?

- **Jump on the audio trends**

Trending audio and TikTok get along like a house on fire. Consider using popular sounds in your videos while they're still trending - because the TikTok algorithm favors them.

- **Experiment with new features**

Gaining more engagement with your content may depend in part on your willingness to embrace "beta" versions of emerging tools. Particularly given that TikTok makes clear the features and tools you used to alter your video when you posted it. To increase your visibility, keep an eye out for new feature releases and consider testing them out.

- **Stick to relevant hashtags**

Similar to Instagram, TikTok uses hashtags to categorize content and facilitate user searching. However, it's crucial to utilize pertinent hashtags. Consider these as keywords that will let the TikTok algorithm know what the topic of your material is.

- **Make your content accessible**

Creating accessible content is another valuable algorithm hack, and will also make your content more inclusive. The easiest way to do this is by adding on-screen text and captions.

- **Find the right time to post**

Even if the TikTok algorithm gives content a ranking based on a number of factors, posting at your most advantageous time is still beneficial. Why? When the majority of your community is online, you'll immediately reach more users. However, the optimal time to post on TikTok will vary according to the location and browsing patterns of your audience - this is where your user insights will come in handy.

- **Make them short and sweet**

TikTok has been gradually upping video limits over the last few years. First 15 seconds. Then one minute. Then three minutes. And now it's extending its video length to 10 minutes. While this does create more opportunities for storytelling and creativity, there's no doubt that 10 minutes is too long — especially on a platform where short is best.

- **Never delete old content**

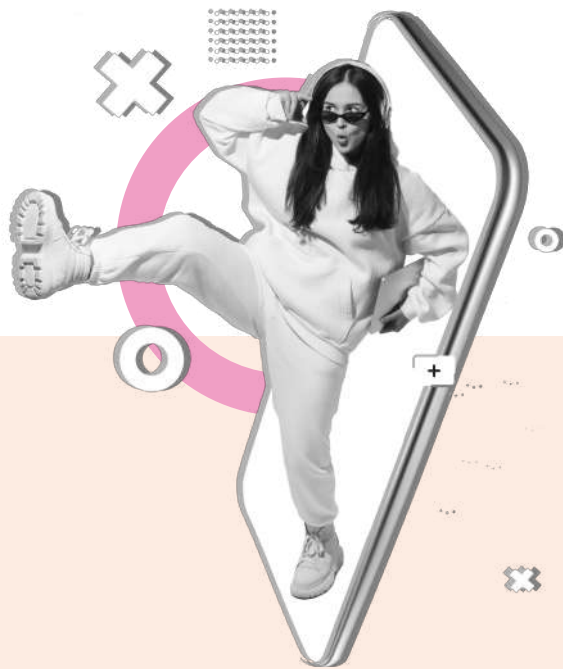
TikTok videos can go viral days, even weeks, after they've been posted. So, there's a good chance that with a consistent posting cadence, one of your videos will land a spot on the *For You* Page.



There isn't really a technique to "beat" the TikTok algorithm at the end of the day.

You can boost your chances of being seen by honing your technique and using the hacks we've revealed to understand how the TikTok algorithm functions.

The most effective technique to "hack" the system is to be consistent and have a strong presence; this will also benefit your brand greatly.



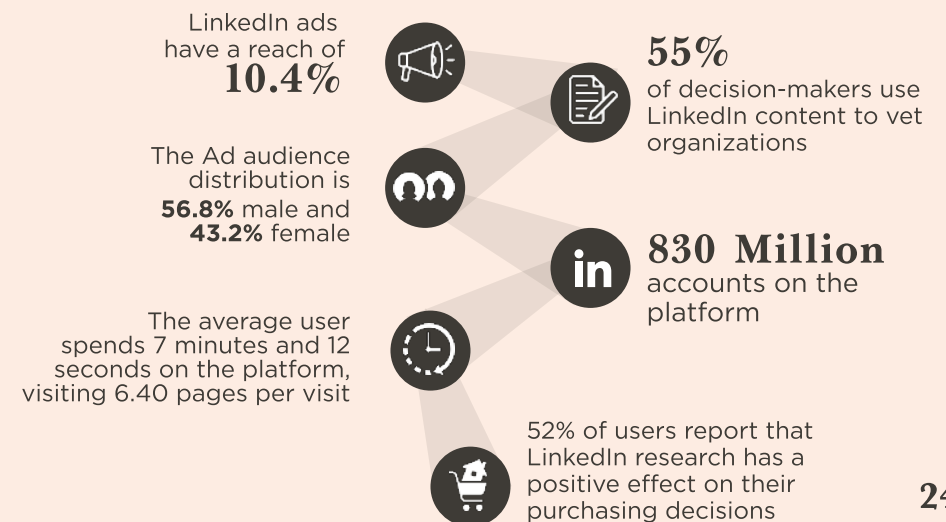
Surviving the LinkedIn algorithm



“Connecting the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.”

Whether you like it or not, LinkedIn is considered an essential channel for any ed marketer. Why? Well - it comes down to who is on the platform, and why. Most students, teenage or otherwise will use the platform for educational purposes, and that includes researching potential institutions. And like every other social media platform, you need to know and understand its algorithm to master the platform while adapting to its changes.

With a rare chance to interact with prospects, current students, and graduates in a dependable and trusted space, education marketers are in good company on LinkedIn!



Longer relationships are the key focus of LinkedIn (especially as an educational institution). The reason for this is that LinkedIn members take their future seriously. 77% of users are actively searching to further their education, and 64% have a six-month enrollment goal in mind. A successful LinkedIn strategy means creating multiple touchpoints. Serving an ad once won't do the job. Instead, you need to prove to the algorithm that your content is relevant and that people recognize your brand.

Use this platform to compliment your brand awareness efforts on other social platforms, while providing valuable resources and information to potential students. Do this while nurturing relationships with prospective students.

What exactly is the LinkedIn algorithm?

LinkedIn uses an algorithm, just like many other social networks, to send material to its users. And just like any other algorithm, it uses a number of variables to decide what to do.

So - if you want your institution's content to be seen by the right people, you'll need to understand how you can work with the LinkedIn algorithm!

Who sees what posts on LinkedIn is determined by a number of characteristics that are taken into account by the algorithm.

The content of a user's feed is based on the subjects, users, and post categories with which they are most likely to interact.

It's also not a simple undertaking.

There are currently 810 million users on LinkedIn. Every day, the algorithm processes billions of posts in an effort to make every user's newsfeed as entertaining as possible.

In the end, LinkedIn wants to favor pertinent content and encourage engagement. They genuinely want you to enjoy yourself! (so no, it's not just a boring old platform for Gen Xers.)

How does the LinkedIn algorithm work?

The LinkedIn algorithm exists to decide whether or not your post is spam.

The algorithm used by LinkedIn evaluates a number of variables to determine how relevant a certain post may be to your audience.

Your content will be divided into one of three categories: spam, low-quality content, or high-quality content.

This is how the LinkedIn algorithm categorizes your content:

Spam: If your post contains too many links or has poor grammar, it could be flagged as spam. Don't publish too frequently (more than once every three hours), and limit the number of people you tag. #comment, #like, and #follow hashtags can also flag the system.

Low-quality: These are not spam posts. However, they also do not adhere to the best practices for content. The system will rate your content as low quality if you don't make it worthwhile.

High-quality: These are the posts that follow all LinkedIn content recommendations, including: The post has a high level of readability, encourages engagement (i.e. it poses questions), it uses 3 or fewer hashtags, incorporates strong keywords and it only tags those who are relevant, and may respond.



It tests your post before it makes its decision

Pretty smart right?

The LinkedIn algorithm will push your post to a select group of your followers once it has determined that you haven't posted something overtly spammy.

If there is immediate, high-volume interaction (likes, comments, and shares), its algorithm will then (and only then) spread the message further.

However, LinkedIn won't bother spreading it if nobody responds at this point (or worse, if your audience reports your post as spam or chooses to hide it from their feeds).

This all happens in the **first hour** after you share content, so it's the moment to succeed or fail!

Making the most of this tiny window of opportunity

- Post at a time when you know your followers are online.
Hint: Use the analytics tool!
- Be responsive to questions, or comments.
- Ask a question in the comments to keep the conversation moving.
- Post consistently.

The LinkedIn algorithm spreads authentic and relevant content

If there is activity on your post, the powerful algorithm will start promoting it to more people.

Your post's visibility from here is determined by three ranking signals.

1. **How closely you're connected:** The more closely you're related to a follower, the more likely they are to see your content.
2. **How interesting your topic is:** The groups, pages, hashtags, and users that a user follows are used by the LinkedIn algorithm to determine that user's interests. If your post references businesses or subjects that the user is interested in - then you're in!
3. **Likelihood of engagement:** This "probability of engagement" factor is measured in one of two ways. First, how likely is it that a user is going to engage with your post? (This is based on their previous behavior, and what they've engaged with your posts in the past.) The second signal: how much engagement is the post itself receiving in general? If it's a hot-hot-hot post sparking lots of conversation, more people are likely going to want to join in, too.

As with most social algorithms - it's not so much about hacking, or mastering it, but rather about learning to work with it - giving it what it needs to do its job!

As with most social algorithms - it's not so much about hacking, or mastering it, but rather about learning to work with it - giving it what it needs to do its job!

How to work with the LinkedIn algorithm

1. Keep your content relevant to your audience and followers
2. Leverage analytics insights to schedule or post at the optimal time
3. Promote your posts on other platforms too
4. Avoid outbound links - if necessary, add them to the comments section of your post
5. Encourage engagement by tagging the right people and asking questions
6. Keep your content original and authentic
7. Always optimize your content based on data insights
8. Keep the content appropriate for the platform. In other words, LinkedIn isn't the place for memes or TikTok challenges



LinkedIn success for education companies

1 Campaign outcome

One of the most crucial elements of LinkedIn advertising this year is campaign outcome. The idea behind LinkedIn's objective-based advertising method is to start with your desired result and move backward from there. It's comparable to a thriller author planning their ending before beginning the plot.

To get your name in front of potential students, you'll probably deploy brand awareness initiatives in the realm of education. Although most students are familiar with the largest brands, you might need to promote your brand to draw attention to your own university. Your target with this marketing objective is to increase clicks and impressions.

2 Nurture towards enrollment

Prospective students don't want their inboxes filled with silly emails that don't provide value to their experience. Instead, inform them of fee waivers, open houses, application deadlines, and other important information, while trying to make the messages as personalized as possible.

Consider looking at the conversion rates over time to gauge the effectiveness of your messages. If pupils aren't acting, it can be because the messages are ineffective. However, keep in mind that alerting potential students to crucial dates is one of the best messages you can deliver because it instills a feeling of urgency.

3 Adopt a full-funnel approach

A full-funnel strategy ensures that the potential student sees your institution's name at each stage and is aware of it from the start.

Your name is near the top of their list at every level. You continuously introduce the potential student to your background, resources, accomplishments, and other services. If you don't perform well along the funnel, other universities have an opportunity to stand out, and your name drops down the list.



Final Thoughts

Social algorithms are here to stay, whether you like them or not.

But for long-term social media presence growth, understanding algorithms and how they operate is essential. Anything you can do to keep each network's algorithm happy is a plus.

Social media algorithms have a job to do. You - and your content are the resources and tools that it needs to complete its task. Once you reframe your mindset - you'll be better equipped to be a useful tool, and in turn - reach the right audience.

These algorithms are designed to weed out irrelevant and subpar postings so that only the best information is displayed. The user and the social platform work together to decide what users see and don't see. The social media platform notices when a user engages with something they find interesting and displays more of that the following time they open the app.



Following these best practices will increase the likelihood that users will see your posts, allowing you to keep inspiring, surprising, and educating them.