

Understanding The Instagram Algorithm

The Instagram algorithm is a system or a set of formulae that works to prioritize the order of posts that you see when you're scrolling through your feed. Specific signals feed these formulae to determine the most relevant posts, and thus push those upwards to give them the most exposure; while on the other hand, the less relevant posts are pushed further downwards in the feed.

The thing about algorithms though is that they are constantly changing. If you figured out a certain strategy that has been giving your content optimal exposure to the targeted audience, it might be a successful strategy for a while, but soon you will come to notice that it is not as effective as it used to be. That would be because of the ever changing algorithm, and that's why learning its methods and working with algorithms will help you to always reach and maintain the desired exposure for your content.

Factors that affect post ranking & visibility

1. Rate of interaction

The more the user interacts with your post –even if it was in the past- the more likely that your content will be featured on top of their feed. This regular interaction between two accounts is translated into a relationship between the users, which in turn makes their feed a priority and high ranking on each other's feed. The algorithm recognizes these relationships based on the rate of 'liking' posts, commenting and direct messaging with a specific account. Furthermore, searching continuously for specific profiles signals to Instagram that you are interested in those accounts and in viewing their feed and would thus rank their posts high on your feed.

2. Engagement with similar content

If users display an interest and interact with other posts that are similar in nature to your posts, then there is a good chance that they will get to see your posts on their feed as well. Algorithms are able to determine the user's interests due to the advanced technical ability of recognizing photos and grouping them into categories such as food, nature, fashion, sports, travel, etc.

3. The chronological order

Even though Instagram feed is no longer strictly following the timely order of the feed, timeliness is still a contributing factor to the order of posts, with recent posts being pushed to the top of the feed compared to older ones which would be a bit behind. It is only logical that you would be interested to view recent post. Something that is from the last couple of days probably won't be as interesting as something that is fresh from maybe an hour ago or even some minutes ago.

4. The number of accounts a user follows

The more accounts a user follows, the more challenging it would be to ensure a top position in their feed as the algorithm would now have to sort among a larger number of

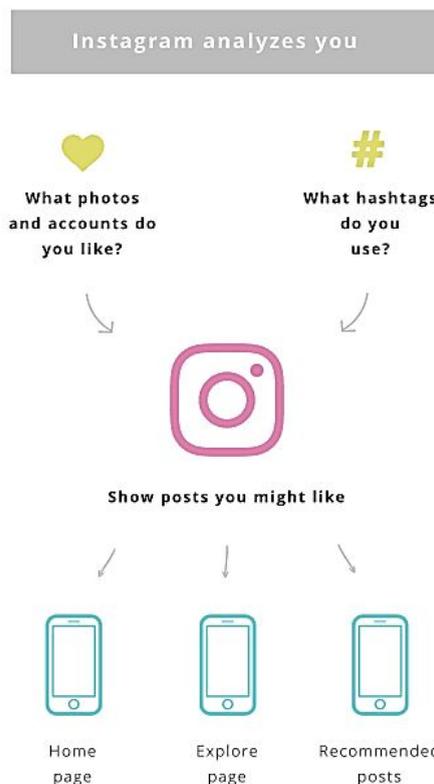
posts to decide how to order them in the most relevant way for the user's viewing experience.

5. Frequency of using the app

Presence on the app can be measured in percentage. The more frequent you use the app, the more up to date and fresh your feed will be, and the more your own posts would have a chance at a higher ranking in other people's feeds. If you don't open the app that much, the chances of having your content seen by others will decrease as well.

6. Duration of using the app

Some people scroll through their Instagram feed at short intervals like in between meetings or other time consuming daily activities. Other people spend longer sessions dedicated to catching up on their feed and making sure that they haven't missed any new posts. The duration of time spent on the app would affect the type of content for those two, or rather the "freshness" of the content. For the later type who spends longer sessions, Instagram algorithm would work on providing a wider and almost a full range of recent and unseen posts.



The successful strategy to using Instagram algorithm to your advantage

From the previous factors, we can pretty much formulate a successful strategy that would allow the maximum exposure of your content to the desired audience. This strategy is based on two major points.

Build relationships, keep the engagement going

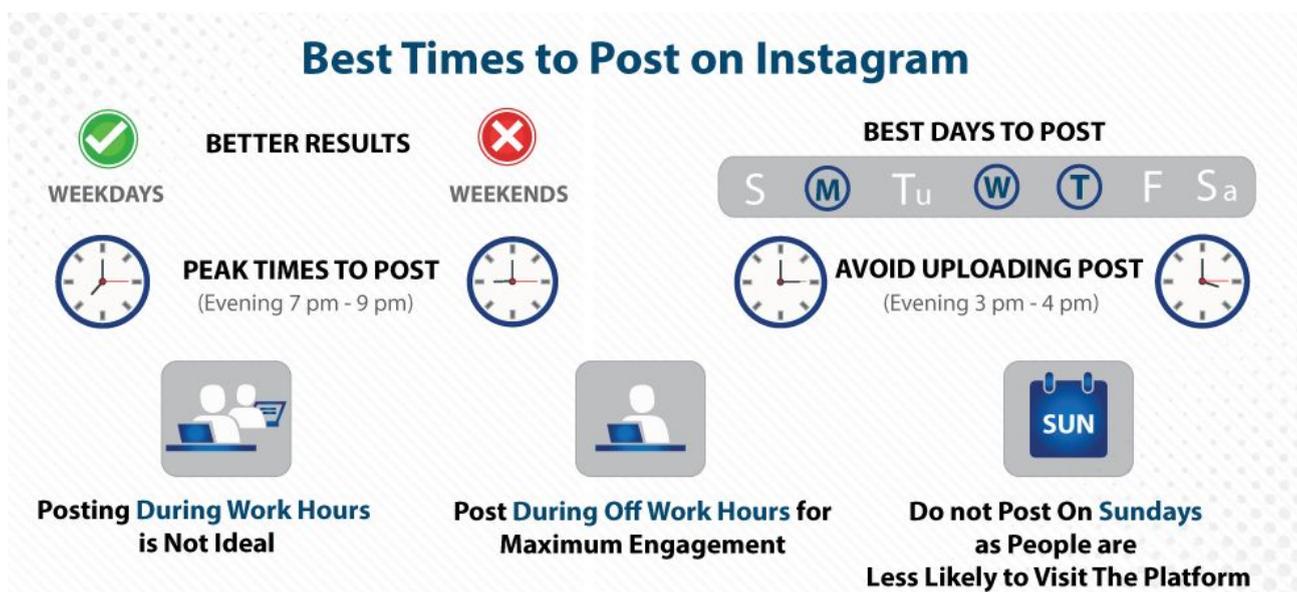
Keep them hooked

You don't want people to just scroll over your post and move on to the next, you want them to take a minute or two to stop and interact with your post. Encourage this by responding to your followers as soon as possible. If a conversation starts to take place, work on keeping it going with useful and interesting replies so that your audience would stay hooked. This will build a relationship between you and your audience and will make them grow loyal to you.

Initiate the engagement

Sometimes conversations and post engagement come naturally, but that is not often the case. Instead, you'll have to think of **creative ways to initiate that engagement** and lucky for you there is a myriad of options that you can try out. For instance, creating polls on a hot topic that is trending these days, or having a "question of the day" post, which will allow people to express their opinions. After all, who doesn't like to speak their mind and share their opinion? Another plus to this type of posts is that, not only does it give your audience the chance to express themselves and engage with your posts, but it actually gives you the room to respond back to their replies, discuss things and get the conversation going.

Another way that would help you reach out to a wider range of people is using the "tag- a-friend" post technique. This type of posts is promotional to your brand and allows your content to reach a larger number of people than what you might have targeted.



Engagement goes both ways

You want people to engage with your posts, right? Then you should engage with theirs too. Look out for users and brands that are relevant to your brand and type of content, whether they're influencers, potential customers or even businesses that relates to yours. Comment on their posts and have a few conversations here and there. Don't just comment for the sake of commenting, or type in generic words. Instead, grab their attention by leaving not just any comments but interesting, valuable and attention grabbing comments that would drive them to your feed.

Final thoughts on Instagram algorithm

On first glance, some people might think that the algorithm complicates things and makes it more difficult for their posts to be viewed by users. On the contrary though, once you understand the Instagram algorithm, you will find that it is extremely simple to apply because the truth is, all the factors that determine how the algorithm works are logical and make perfect sense. You'll eventually realize – if you haven't already- that understanding the workings of the algorithm is a powerful Instagram marketing tool that now lies within your hands and is just waiting for you to get the best out of it!

It's all about communicating, networking and getting the right exposure for your content!