

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/facebook-algorithm/>

## How the Facebook Algorithm Works in 2023 and How to Make it Work for You

Find out how the Facebook algorithm ranks content in 2023 and learn what it takes to get your posts seen on the platform.

Christina Newberry February 28, 2022

The Facebook algorithm. Whether you love it or hate it, you've got to understand it to be successful in marketing your business on the world's largest social network.

The average organic Facebook Page post sees just 0.07% engagement. To bump that up for your brand, you've got to learn how to signal the algorithm. You want it to know that your content is valuable, authentic, and worth serving up in your followers' feeds.

### Table of Contents

[What is the Facebook algorithm?](#)

[A brief history of the Facebook algorithm](#)

[How the Facebook algorithm works in 2023](#)

[8 tips for working with the Facebook algorithm](#)

**Bonus:** [Download a free guide](#) that teaches you how to turn Facebook traffic into sales in four simple steps using Hootsuite.

## What is the Facebook algorithm?

The Facebook algorithm determines which posts people see every time they check their Facebook feed, and in what order those posts show up.

Essentially, the Facebook algorithm evaluates every post. It scores posts and then arranges them in descending, non-chronological order of interest for each individual user. This process happens every time a user—and there are 2.9 billion of them—refreshes their feed.

We don't know all the details of how the Facebook algorithm decides what to show people (and what not to show people). But we do know that—like all social media recommendation algorithms—one of its goals is to keep people on the platform, so that they see more ads.

In fact, Facebook faced heat in 2021 because the algorithm was prioritizing controversial content. Controversy often gets the highest engagement and can even trigger “compulsive use” of the platform.

And as far back as 2018, critics feared the algorithm was increasing outrage, divisiveness and political polarization while promoting misinformation and borderline content.

For its part, Facebook says the algorithm is all about helping users “discover new content and connect with the stories they care the most about,” while “keep[ing] spam and misleading content at bay.” As you’ll see below, recent Facebook algorithm changes have aimed to address concerns about content, as well as privacy.

## A brief history of the Facebook algorithm

The Facebook algorithm isn’t static. Meta has a whole team of people working on artificial intelligence and machine learning. Part of their work is to improve the algorithms that connect Facebook users with the most valuable content for them.

Over the years, algorithm ranking signals have been added, removed, and had their importance adjusted. It all depends on what Facebook thinks users want to see.

Here are some of the more notable moments and changes in the development of the Facebook algorithm.

- **2009:** Facebook premieres its first algorithm to bump posts with the most Likes to the top of the feed.
- **2015:** Facebook starts downranking Pages that post too much overly promotional content. They introduce the “See First” feature to let users indicate that they’d like a Page’s posts to be prioritized in their feed.
- **2016:** Facebook adds a “time spent” ranking signal to measure a post’s value based on the amount of time users spent with it, even if they didn’t like or share it.
- **2017:** Facebook starts weighing reactions (e.g., hearts or the angry face) more than classic Likes. Another ranking signal is added for video: completion rate. In other words, videos that keep people watching to the end are shown to more people.
- **2018:** The Facebook new algorithm prioritizes “posts that spark conversations and meaningful interactions.” Posts from friends, family

and Facebook Groups were prioritized over organic content from Pages. Brands would now need to earn a lot more engagement to signal value to the algorithm.

- **2019:** Facebook prioritizes “high-quality, original video” that keeps viewers watching longer than 1 minute, especially video that holds attention longer than 3 minutes. Facebook also starts bumping up content from “close friends”: those that people engage with the most. The “Why am I seeing this post” tool is introduced.
- **2020:** Facebook reveals some details of the algorithm to help users understand how it serves content, and lets users take control of their data to give the algorithm better feedback. The algorithm begins to evaluate the credibility and quality of news articles in order to promote substantiated news rather than misinformation.
- **2021:** Facebook releases new details about its algorithm and gives people better access to their data. Here’s their explanation of the algorithm in 2021.

## How the Facebook algorithm works in 2023

So, where does all of this leave us in 2023? First up, News Feed is no more. What you see when scrolling through Facebook is now just called Feed.

Facebook says Feed “shows you stories that are meaningful and informative.” As of 2023, the Facebook algorithm can figure out what those stories might be using three main ranking signals:

1. **Who posted it:** You’re more likely to see content from sources you interact with, including friends and businesses.
2. **Type of content:** If you most often interact with video, you’ll see more video. If you engage with photos, you’ll see more photos. You get the idea.
3. **Interactions with the post:** Feed will prioritize posts with a lot of engagement, especially from people you interact with a lot.

Each post is ranked based on these main signals to determine where it appears in your feed.

Facebook also gives users options that help them train the algorithm and customize their feed:

- **Favorites:** Users can select up to 30 people and pages to add to Favorites (formerly known as “See First”). Posts from these accounts will appear higher in Feed. To access Favorites, click the **down arrow** at the top right of Facebook, then click **Settings & privacy**, and then **News Feed Preferences**.
- **In-feed options:** Click on any post and you’ll see the option **I don’t want to see this**. Then choose **Hide post** to tell Facebook you want fewer posts of that nature in your Feed. On ads, the equivalent option is **Hide ad**. Facebook will then give you a set of options to indicate why you want to hide the ad. This will help Facebook understand what kind of advertisers you want to hear from, and which you’d rather avoid.

And, finally, Facebook will remove content that goes against its Community Standards. They may also “remove or limit audiences for certain kinds of sensitive content,” such as nudity, violence, and graphic content.”

## 8 tips for working with the Facebook algorithm

### 1. Understand what your audience wants to see

Facebook indicates it prioritizes content that is “meaningful and informative.” So what does that mean, exactly?

- **Meaningful:** Stories the user will want to talk to friends and family about or spend time reading (based on past behavior), and videos they want to watch.
- **Informative:** Content someone will find “new, interesting, and informative,” which will vary by user.

Understanding what will be meaningful and informative to your specific audience means you need to understand their unique interests and behaviors. That means you need to do some audience research. We’ve got a free template to get you started.

### 2. Create accurate and authentic content

Facebook [says](#), “people on Facebook value accurate, authentic content.” They also specify that the types of posts people “consider genuine” will rank higher in Feed. Meanwhile, they work to reduce the ranking for posts people find “misleading, sensational, and spammy.”

A couple of tips for signaling the algorithm that your content is accurate and authentic:

- **Write clear headlines:** Make sure your headline clearly describes what users will find in our post. You can certainly get creative, but don’t use clickbait or misleading titles.
- **Be truthful:** Put simply, tell the truth. Don’t sensationalize, exaggerate, or outright lie. Engagement bait won’t win you the algorithm’s sympathy.

On the flip side, here are some things to avoid:

- Links to sites that use scraped or stolen content with no added value
- Borderline content (content that is not quite prohibited but probably should be)
- Misinformation and [fake news](#)
- [Misleading health information](#) and dangerous “cures”
- [“Deepfake videos”](#) or manipulated videos flagged as false by third-party fact-checkers

### 3. Don’t try to manipulate the algorithm

But wait, isn’t this post all about how to manipulate the algorithm? No, this post is about understanding how the algorithm works so you can learn what Facebook considers valuable for its users.

You have to do the work to figure out how those overall principles apply to your specific audience. Then create content that will resonate with them and in turn send positive ranking signals to the algorithm.

Trying to manipulate the algorithm to get more distribution than your content merits based on those ranking signals is a big no-no. This might include, for instance, paying for engagement or comments or engaging in other black-hat strategies to manipulate reach. Facebook considers this spam. Don’t do it.

The simple message here: Work *with* the algorithm, not against it.

## 4. Engage with your audience

The algorithm prioritizes posts from Pages that a user has interacted with in the past. This means that bumping up your reply game is key.

If a person takes the time to comment on your post, don't waste the opportunity. Making them feel heard with a reply makes it more likely they will continue to comment on your posts in future. This, of course, sends more of those juicy engagement signals to the algorithm. Ignore them and they'll likely go silent in return.

**Pro tip:** Whether you're a solopreneur or you have a whole team of community managers in place, Hootsuite Inbox makes managing these conversations at scale a lot easier.

## 5. Get your audience to engage with each other

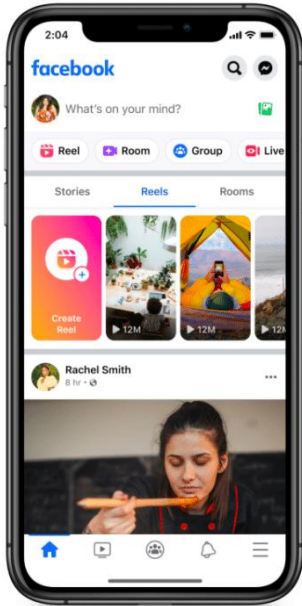
Remember how we said the algorithm values content that people want to share and discuss with their friends? Well, a pretty easy way to send that signal is to get people sharing your content and discussing it with their friends.

[Facebook itself](#) says that if a post triggers a lot of conversation among a user's friends, the algorithm applies "action-bumping logic" to show that post to the user again.

To get your audience sharing and discussing, check out our tips for [boosting Facebook engagement](#).

## 6. Make the most of Facebook Stories and (especially) Reels

Reels and Stories live in a separate world from the main News Feed algorithm. Both appear in tabs at the top of Feed, above all the other content, offering you a Facebook algorithm bypass strategy.



Source: [Facebook](#)

In February 2022, Facebook expanded Reels from its initial launch in the U.S. to worldwide. Facebook [says](#) that half of all time spent on Facebook and Instagram is spent watching video, and “Reels is our fastest growing content format by far.”

They're designed to fuel the discovery of new things. Feed, on the other hand, mainly features relevant content from people and brands you're already connected to.

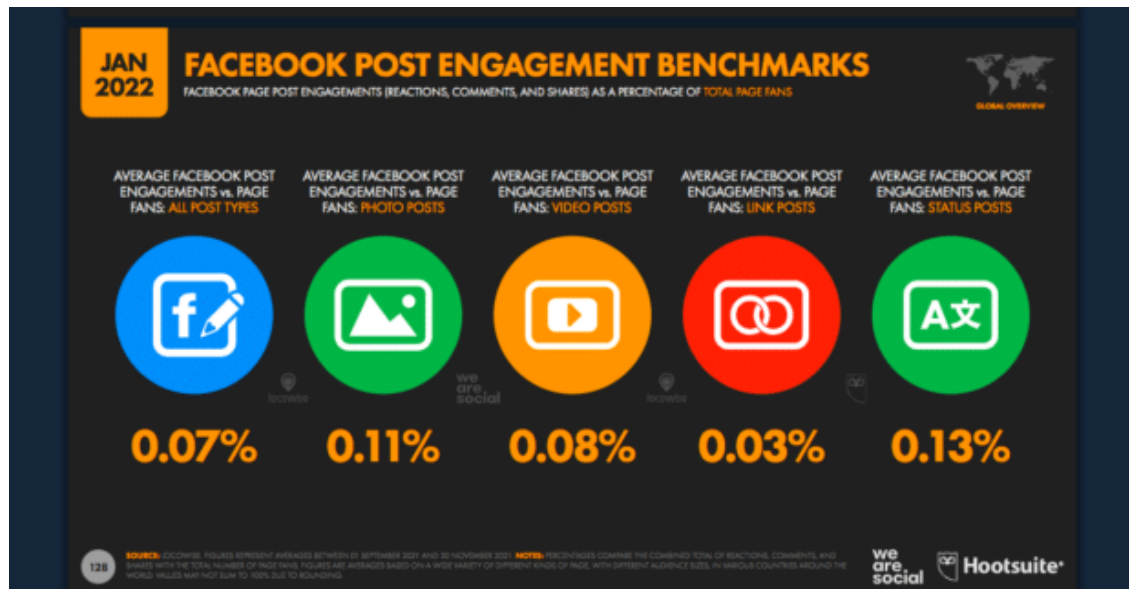
If you're looking for new eyeballs, Reels are an important part of your strategy. Facebook [says](#), “We're focused on making Reels the best way for creators to get discovered.” Brands can also find new connections through Reels if they [make quality content](#).

In addition to the tab at the top of Feed, Reels can be shared to Stories and seen within the Watch tab. Within Feed, Facebook is starting to add suggested Reels from people the user does not already follow.

## 7. Don't forget the basic status post

Didn't we just say video content is the most important thing? Well, not exactly. When you're trying to bump up your engagement numbers, it can be tempting to seek out complicated Facebook algorithm hacks, But don't forget the humble status post. (A post that has no photo, video or link.)

Hootsuite's latest research shows that status posts on average get the highest engagement: 0.13%. Photo posts are next at 0.11%, then videos at 0.08%, and finally link posts at 0.03%.



Source: [\*Hootsuite Global State of Digital 2022\*](#)

## 8. Expand your reach via your best advocates

Your employees have more credibility and authority with the Facebook algorithm than your brand page does. This is because they have more credibility and authority with their own followers and friends.

Here's a [calculator that crunches the numbers on your employees' potential reach](#) when they're empowered to share your brand's content to their own circles. [Hootsuite Amplify](#) can help make it easy for employees to share pre-approved content to their social channels.

Affiliates are another great group of advocates that can help expand your reach and build your brand's credibility. Give them resources and training to help them spread the word on Facebook and extend your targeted audience through their own algorithm signals.