

Facebook has changed the game

Whether they use it or not, many people have a Facebook account, 22 percent of the world's population to be precise. The granddaddy of all social media, Facebook has a lot of weight to throw around.

The company certainly threw its weight in mid-January when it reconfigured its algorithm for filtering users' newsfeed. Facebook's leadership, specifically co-founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, initiated the change in an attempt to return the site to being primarily a social platform rather than a news outlet.

"We're making a major change to how we build Facebook," Zuckerberg said on his personal Facebook account. "I'm changing the goal I give our product teams from focusing on helping you find relevant content to helping you have more meaningful social interactions."

When filtering a user's feed, the new algorithm will give greater importance to post from friends and family rather than companies and nonhuman accounts.

David Lovegrove, senior manager of BJU's Marketing Communications, said the change has caused some anxiety for organizations' Facebook managers because nonhuman accounts (like those of BJU, academic divisions, societies and other student organizations) will now have to earn a spot on users' newsfeed.

A supporter of the change, Lovegrove said there is always conflict between what organizations want to say and what users want to hear.

"Companies want to yell at you the messages that they want you to hear," Lovegrove said.

"But on a platform where you're talking to your close friends and family members, you don't want companies sticking their nose in and getting in the way."

Now, organizations will have to resolve that conflict to ensure that their posts are seen. Pure advertisements don't cut it anymore.

Instead organizations will have to start weaving in their own messages while saying things users want to hear.

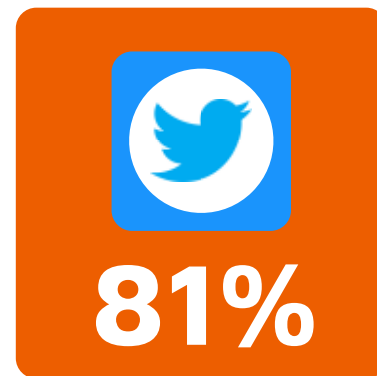
Lovegrove said likes and shares alone are no longer enough to guarantee that a post is seen.

Under Facebook's new rules, conversations between users are the most important measurement of a post's value. In order for these nonhuman accounts to be seen by a large audience, they have to get their followers talking. Facebook's algorithm initially shows a post to a small audience.

If the users in that audience engage with the post, Facebook will show the post to a larger group of people. If the post continues to find success, its audience will snowball.



Over 400 million snaps are shared on Snapchat per day, and almost 9,000 photos are shared every second.



81% of millennials check Twitter at least once per day.



100 million hours of video content are watched on Facebook daily.

A GUIDE to STRONGER SOCIAL MEDIA



10 tips for a stronger social media presence

1. Set your goals—who are you as an organization? Why do you exist? How can social media further your purpose? As an organization, meet to answer some of these questions and set your objectives for using social media. Don't use social media because it's expected. Use social media because it advances your organization's goals.

2. Know your audience—knowing the audience is the foundation of any strong social media presence. Jonny Gamet, social media manager for Bruins Athletics, advises campus organizations to stop comparing their social media to those of other organizations. "Your campus organization serves a particular niche, a demographic that's yours," Gamet said. "Use social media to add value to that demographic."

3. Post with purpose—each post you publish should be directly related to your objectives for using social media. Post only when there's a reason to post.

4. Remember what works—try out a variety of strategies for using social media to see what works well for you and for your audience.

Keep track of your likes, shares and comments. What sorts of posts gain traction? Once you know what your followers want, give them more of it.

5. Don't be an ad—your posts should be mutually beneficial to both you and your audience. Social media is a place where users can connect with their friends and families. They don't need advertisements getting in the way. Walk the line between communicating valuable content that interests your audience and communicating the messages your organization needs to get out.

6. Keep it short—social media isn't the place to write a book. Quite the opposite, social media is the place for brevity. Two or three strategically written sentences are more powerful than three paragraphs no one reads.

7. Keep it light—it's a lot to ask a college student checking Twitter to solve the world's problems in the 10 minutes before their next class. So keep most of your posts light-hearted and fun.

8. Show don't tell—pictures tell the story better than the small amount of text available. Photos can also draw users' attention to the post and to the text. In fact, tweets with pictures get 18 percent more clicks than those without photos. Consider posting a photo gallery of what your organization has been doing. Or even better, livestream one of your events.

9. Facilitate conversation—cultivate your social media to be a place where users can discuss ideas and events. Many platforms, especially Facebook, reward posts that stimulate conversation by expanding the post's audience. Publish timely posts about topics that are relevant to your audience. Consider directly asking your audience to share their opinions.

10. Consider your platform—each social media platform has its own culture. Tailor your post to fit the platform.



Pizza is the most widely instagrammed food, directly ahead of steak and sushi.



On any given day, Snapchat reaches 41% of 18- to 34-year-olds in the US.