



Why Your Reels Get 400 Views (And What Gets 40,000)

The 20-minute reality check on the Instagram algorithm, hooks, and the honest money math — before you film another Reel that flops.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Everything that matters, in pointers

This mini gives you the honest map of Reels in 20 minutes: how the algorithm actually ranks you, how to hook viewers in one second, a phone-only shoot & edit system, and the real money math. Read it once and you'll already out-execute most accounts stuck at a few hundred views.

01	The Reels Game — how ranking really works	p.3
02	Hooks — the first second	p.5
03	Shoot — phone-only production	p.7
04	Edit — retention is edited in	p.8
05	Audio — trends, originals & the mute trap	p.10
06	The growth system	p.11
07	Money — rate cards & revenue streams	p.12
08	The 30-day Reels plan	p.14

THE ONE IDEA TO HOLD THE WHOLE WAY

The algorithm optimizes for one thing above all: would a stranger send this to a friend? Sends per reach beats likes, beats views, beats everything. Make sendable content and the rest follows.

The Reels Game — how ranking really works

- **Three signals, in order:** Instagram's Adam Mosseri has named them on record — watch time, likes per reach, sends per reach.
- **Watch time is #1** — the top signal for whether a Reel gets pushed to more people at all.
- **Likes vs sends:** likes matter most to people who already follow you; sends per reach matters most for reaching strangers — where growth actually lives.
- **Mosseri's own words:** "I would look at sends per reach. Of the people who saw it, how many sent it to a friend?"
- **The ratio, not the count:** 200 sends on 10,000 reach (2%) beats 200 sends on 50,000 reach (0.4%) — a small account with shareable content beats a big account with forgettable content.

REALITY CHECK

Analysts estimate sends carry roughly 3–5× the weight of likes for non-follower reach. Instagram has never published the exact number — but the direction is clear and confirmed.

CHAPTER 01 · CONTINUED

What changed in 2025–26, in numbers

3–5

Posts/week — Buffer's 2M-post reach-growth sweet spot

482M

Instagram users in India — the #1 market worldwide

200B+

Reels played daily across Facebook + Instagram

Since April 21, 2025, Meta counts a "View" on any play start — a half-second accidental scroll counts the same as a full watch. Raw view counts are now inflated and nearly useless for judging quality.

- **Judge these instead:** average watch time (above 50% of the Reel's length is "good") and sends per reach.
- **Originality is enforced:** reposts get replaced by the original in recommendations; watermarked re-uploads get downranked; since April 2026, accounts posting mostly non-original content over 30 days are removed from recommendations entirely.

REMEMBER

Trial Reels (launched Dec 2024) let ~1,000+ follower accounts test bold ideas on non-followers only — never touching the grid. Zero risk, real data in ~24 hours.

Hooks — the first second

- **The retention curve:** Meta's own research — 65% of viewers who watch the first 3 seconds watch at least 10; 45% make it to 30.
- **The one-second reflex:** keep-or-swipe isn't a decision, it's a reflex at roughly one second. The first FRAME is the hook, not "the opening bit."
- **Stack three layers:** text (3–7 bold words, readable muted), visual (movement in frame one), verbal (the promise first, never an intro).
- **Why muted matters:** studies put muted viewing at roughly 69–85% of video watching — if your hook only works with audio, most viewers never receive it.

DEAD VS ALIVE FIRST FRAMES

Dead: a logo, "hey guys, welcome back," a static shot, context before the point. Alive: the result shown mid-action, bold text stating the promise, movement already happening, the most surprising line first.

Six patterns + the structure that holds attention

- **Mistake/Negativity:** "Most people get this wrong about ____." Negativity hooks consistently outperform.
- **Command:** "Stop doing X if you want Y." Creates an instant am-I-doing-this-wrong check.
- **Secret, POV, Open Loop, Specificity:** "What nobody tells you...", "POV: you...", "Wait for it...", exact numbers — steal the pattern, never the words.
- **The structure:** Hook (0–3s, earn second 4) → Promise (3–5s) → Payload (deliver fast, one idea) → Micro-CTA ("send this to a friend").

THE RULE

Cut everything before the point. Find the moment your draft actually gets interesting — that moment is your new frame one.

Shoot — phone-only production

- **Format:** vertical 9:16, 1080×1920, back camera when possible. Keep all text and key action in the middle two-thirds — Instagram's UI eats the top, bottom and right edge.
- **Lighting, free:** face a window (daylight beats cheap gear), never shoot backlit, avoid mixed color sources.
- **Stabilize:** lock focus/exposure before recording; a ₹500 tripod or a lean against a wall beats shaky, always.
- **Pick a format:** talking-head (trust, personal brand), voiceover + b-roll (fast, scalable), or faceless (text + visuals — the algorithm rewards completion, not faces).
- **B-roll bank:** shoot 3–5 angles of any process in one session; cut to a new visual every 3–4 seconds under voiceover.

ONE BATCH DAY A WEEK

Shooting daily burns creators out by week three. Shoot the week's 3–5 Reels plus b-roll in one session with hooks already written — edit and post across the week.

Edit — retention is edited in

- **Default app:** Edits by Instagram — free, no watermark, teleprompter, auto-captions, direct publish to Reels. Stop app-shopping.
- **The checkpoint rhythm:** 20–40 cuts per minute is the short-form average; treat every 1.5–2 seconds as a checkpoint where something must change.
- **Four pattern interrupts:** punch-ins (10–20% zoom), b-roll cutaways, SFX on key beats, on-screen graphics pointing at what matters.
- **Vary the tempo:** 30 perfectly even cuts feel as flat as no cuts — cut fast through setup, slow on the payoff.

WATCH OUT

The slow editors are the ones fixing captions, cuts and music simultaneously. One job per pass, every time.

Captions + the 30-minute edit pipeline

+12%

Lift in view time when subtitles
were added

80%

Of consumers say captions
make them finish a video

30

Minutes — the capped six-
pass edit pipeline

Sync captions in 2–4 word chunks, keep them in the safe zone, never cover the mouth, compress rather than transcribe. The pipeline: rough cut (8m) → tighten to checkpoints (7m) → captions (6m) → hook text (3m) → SFX & ducking (4m) → export 1080×1920 (2m).

BEFORE YOU POST

Run the 10-point muted watch-through: hook readable, nothing before the point, a change every 1.5–2s, synced captions off the mouth, no watermark.

Audio — trends, originals & the mute trap

- **Catch trends early:** the rising-arrow icon means Instagram flagged a sound as climbing. Analysts' heuristic: 1K–10K uses is early; 100K+ is past peak.
- **The Buffer test:** on identical content, trending audio beat voiceover by +24% views and ASMR audio by +33% — but original audio wins when your voice IS the content.
- **The silent killer:** Business accounts can't use the mainstream licensed music catalog — use it anyway and Instagram can mute or remove the Reel, often with no notice.
- **The fix:** solo creators who want music access often deliberately stay on a Creator account instead of Business.

AUDIO CRAFT

Record in a soft room, phone 15–20cm from your mouth, speak 10% more energetically than feels natural, duck music under voice, 2–3 SFX per Reel as seasoning.

The growth system

- **Content pillars:** pick 3–5 recurring topics, balanced ~30–40% reach, 30–40% education, 20–30% connection. A classifiable account is a recommendable account.
- **Build a show, not a feed:** a named, numbered, weekly series beats one-offs — commit to 4+ episodes before judging; compounding shows at 6–12 weeks.
- **Instagram SEO:** Mosseri says the top search factor is the keywords people actually type — put them in captions, bio, on-screen text and speech.
- **Collabs:** up to 5 co-authors, pooled engagement, a documented ~20–28% reach lift — same-niche, same-size partners work best.
- **The DM engine:** replying to DMs feeds sends per reach — the #1 signal for reaching non-followers.

THE 15-MINUTE WEEKLY REVIEW

Same day, every week: sends per reach per Reel, average watch time vs length, and one experiment for next week. That's the whole ritual.

Money — rate cards & revenue streams

- ❑ **No, Instagram doesn't pay per view.** Bonuses exist but are invite-only, re-rolled at Meta's whim, and usually under 10% of an invited creator's income. Never build a plan on them.
- ❑ **Brand deals are the real income:** the primary stream at every tier, starting far earlier than beginners think.

TIER	FOLLOWERS	PER REEL (USD)
Nano	1K–10K	\$50–\$300
Micro	10K–100K	\$200–\$2,500
Macro	100K–1M	\$2,500–\$25,000
Mega	1M+	\$10K–\$100K+

WATCH OUT

Video commands a premium over static posts and Stories across every tier — never quote your photo rate for a video deliverable.

India rates & the other three streams

- **India rates:** nano ₹1,000–₹12,000, micro ₹2,000–₹35,000 per Reel; finance/tech niche commands +30–50% over lifestyle.
- **The GST detail:** if GST-registered, add 18% on top and say so on your rate card — absorbing it silently is an 18% pay cut.
- **Baseline heuristic:** ≈\$100 per 10,000 followers per post, then adjust for engagement, niche and usage rights.
- **Four more streams:** affiliate (from ~500–1K followers), subscriptions (₹89–₹8,000+/month), gifts via Stars (from ~500 followers), and your own digital products — the stream you fully own.

THE SEQUENCE THAT WORKS

Affiliate at 500 followers → first brand deals at 1–5K → launch your own product once one question keeps repeating in your DMs.

The 30-day Reels plan

- **Why Reels fail, ranked:** weak first 1–3 seconds, low retention vs length, unoriginal/repost-shaped content, business-account music mute, no niche signal, shaky/dark/muffled footage, burnout, chasing raw views.
- **Week 1 — setup:** 3–5 pillars, check account type, install Edits, write 10 hooks, run one batch day. Nothing gets posted yet.
- **Week 2 — rhythm:** post 3–5 Reels, run one Trial Reel, 15 daily minutes in DMs, first review ritual on day 14.
- **Weeks 3–4 — double down:** keep your best format, kill your worst without mourning, second batch day, one collab pitch, review the trend not the snapshot.

THE WHOLE BOOK IN ONE LINE

Sends are the signal, the first frame is the hook, retention is edited in, systems beat streaks, and money follows the audience — not the views.

YOU'VE GOT THE MAP. NOW GET THE TERRAIN.

This was the 20-minute version. The full guide is the whole journey.

You now know more about the Reels algorithm than most creators posting daily. The complete **Instagram Reels Mastery** takes every chapter above and gives you the full diagrams, worksheets, and the exact 30-day execution plan.

- **The full 8 chapters** — every concept above, illustrated and expanded, plus the appendix of 10 FAQs and glossary.
- **The safe-zone diagram** mapped to exact pixels, so your captions never hide under Instagram's UI.
- **The hook-writing worksheet** — all six patterns, fill-in-the-blank, for your own niche.
- **The complete rate card template** with usage-rights pricing and the GST line.
- **The day-by-day 30-day plan** — setup week through week-4 review, ready to run tomorrow.

UPGRADE TO THE FULL EDITION

~~₹199~~ **₹99**

Complete illustrated guide · instant download

SCAN / TAP
to upgrade

GO FURTHER, PAY LESS

Two ways to keep going

THE CREATOR ECONOMY BUNDLE

Reels + Faceless YouTube + LinkedIn Branding + Content Calendar

Everything you need to build and monetize a content presence, in one download.

~~₹396~~ **₹199**

THE COMPLETE LIBRARY

All 30 Skill Series books

Spirituality, money, career, health, tech — the entire collection, one price.

₹499

GET EVERY NEW BOOK FREE

Follow [@weknowwhatyourelookingfor](#) and join our WhatsApp list — buyers get first access and reader-only pricing on everything we publish next.

weknowwhatyourelookingfor.com

COPYRIGHT & LICENSE

© 2026 weknowwhatyourelookingfor.com — All rights reserved.

This copy is licensed for **personal use only**. Reproduction, resale, sharing, or redistribution of this book in whole or in part, by any means, is prohibited without written permission.

NOTICE

This guide is for **general educational purposes only**. Individual results vary with effort and circumstances, and no specific outcome is warranted.

Published by weknowwhatyourelookingfor.com · For queries, corrections, or licensing, visit weknowwhatyourelookingfor.com.