ARCHITECTURE NOTES · RESOURCE

Three metrics that predict whether your content works

A typical dashboard ships with two dozen vanity metrics. Three of them predict performance. The rest produce anxiety after the fact and change nothing about next week.

Companion to: The three metrics that predict whether your content works.

Why most content dashboards do not change behaviour

Impressions, reach, total likes, comment count, follower growth. These are the five default columns and all of them are downstream of the three metrics that actually matter. Watching the defaults produces anxiety after the fact instead of decisions before it. The point of this deck is to collapse the dashboard to the three columns that decide what your team should do more of next week.

- Metric 1: time to first 100 views
- Metric 2: save rate
- Metric 3: downstream action
- What to take off the dashboard, and why

The three metrics that predict performance

01 **Time to first 100 views**

The time from publish to first 100 views, measured in minutes. Total view count and engagement rate are downstream of this number; time-to-100 predicts a post ceiling within the first hour. Every major platform algorithm front-loads distribution to early performers. A post that

02 **Save rate**

A like is the cheapest action a viewer can take, and a save is the most expensive. A save means the viewer wants to come back to the post, which is the only durable signal that a post earned its place in the feed. On Instagram, save rate above 1.5 percent of impressions reads as

03 **Downstream action**

Did the post drive a measurable next step? A site visit, a newsletter signup, a booked call, a direct message. The exact conversion event matters less than measuring something concrete. UTM links plus a 30-day attribution window get you 90 percent of the way there.

04 **Why these three and not others**

The three metrics map to the three things you actually want to know: did the algorithm give you a chance, did the audience care enough to remember the post, did anything change in the world as a result. Every other metric is downstream of one of those questions or irrelevant to

Default dashboard vs. decision dashboard

Default (what most teams stare at)

- Impressions
- Reach
- Total likes
- Comment count
- Follower growth
- A dozen more vanity metrics

Decision (three columns that change next week)

- Time to first 100 views (minutes)
- Save rate (percent of impressions)
- Downstream action (UTM-tracked conversion event)
- Sorted by most recent post
- That is the entire dashboard

Save rate ranges (Instagram, from the article)

HEALTHY

above 1.5%

of impressions; the post earned its place

EXCELLENT

above 3%

durable signal; this post compounds for the brand

BELOW 0.5%

noise

algorithm gave distribution; nobody wanted to remember the post

The conversion-vs-engagement inversion

01 **The teaching post**

50 saves, 2 booked calls. The numbers feel small in the moment. The compounding signal is real: people came back to the post and a measurable next step happened. This is the post you want to do more of.

02 **The viral hot-take**

5,000 likes, zero conversions. The number feels like the win in the moment. Plot conversion against engagement and the ranking inverts more often than you would expect. The hot-take produced no durable change in the world.

03 **Why the inversion is the whole game**

If your team is optimising for the engagement number, you will publish more hot-takes and fewer teaching posts. The engagement-to-conversion plot is the diagnostic that breaks that habit. Run it monthly.

04 **When to override the data**

A teaching post with high saves and no immediate conversion is still doing work; the conversion event for B2B sometimes lags weeks. Use the 30-day attribution window before declaring a post unsuccessful.

Operator runbook: build the three-column dashboard

- **Locate time-to-100 in native analytics**
  Time-to-100 is the gap between publish timestamp and the audience curve crossing 100. Every major platform exposes the data; you compute the gap.
- **Pull save rate from the platform field**
  Save rate is a built-in field on every platform that supports saves. Divide by impressions to normalise.
- **Wire downstream action via UTM**
  Whatever link tracker you already use plus a 30-day attribution window gets you 90 percent of the way there. Concrete event beats philosophical perfection.
- **Three columns, sorted by recency**
  That is the dashboard. The work is using it to decide what to do more of next week.
- **Strip the default columns out**
  Impressions, reach, total likes, comment count, follower growth. All five are downstream and produce anxiety after the fact.
- **Plot engagement against conversion monthly**
  Look for the inversion: posts that rank low on engagement and high on conversion. Those are the ones to do more of.
- **Read time-to-100 within the first hour**
  Decide in the first hour whether to boost or move on. Slow starts almost never catch up; do not let your team waste boost budget pulling them up.

The same shape on the retention side

01 **Revenue per inbox-placed send**

The retention equivalent of downstream action. Inbox placement is the load-bearing metric; revenue divided by that placement number is the signal that compounds.

02 **Save-rate-equivalent**

Reply rate for cold campaigns. Click-rate for warm flows. The cheap action is open; the expensive action is the one that confirms the message earned attention.

03 **Downstream conversion**

The booked call, the order placed, the upgrade. Plot revenue against engagement on the retention side and the same teaching-post-vs-hot-take inversion appears.

04 **Why three is the right number**

The 90-day Retention Architecture is built around those three numbers, not the forty in the default Klaviyo dashboard. The discipline is the same wherever you publish: collapse to the signals that change behaviour.

NEXT STEP

Three columns. Sorted by recency. That is the dashboard.

Strip the rest out and your weekly content review will get sharper inside a month.

Read the full architecture note ->