

Why Your Short-Form Content Isn't Working (And How to Fix It)

Have you ever observed someone scrolling on TikTok or X?

If you have the opportunity, just quietly watch them and you'll see how fast they scroll from post to post. You'll be blown away by how fast they swipe, scroll, or do whatever they do to move from one post to the next.

Even short TikTok videos barely grab their attention for more than a few seconds before the doomscroller has moved on to the next post.

In fact, you might be guilty of the same thing too!

But it's not our fault. Social media, with its constant dopamine hits, has trained society to barely have the patience or attention span to consume content in full.

Facebook stories, Instagram reels, TikTok videos, YouTube shorts – it's ALL the same thing. Brief content that barely holds our attention...

And That's Why It's So Difficult to Stand Out!

As a content creator, getting your content seen and consumed has become an uphill battle because many people have the attention span of a housefly. *Some might argue that the fly is more focused.*

As content creators, we're all fighting for a flicker of focus in a feed full of noise, notifications, and posts about people burning Teslas.

Trying to grow on platforms like X or Threads?

It's harder than it looks because the algorithm doesn't give two hoots about the quality of your content or your consistency. Only a few things matter:

- ✓ *Did people stop their scroll long enough to read your post?*
- ✓ *Did they comment and engage with it?*
- ✓ *Did anyone even care enough to share your post?*

If the answer is yes to all three... you'll gain more traction on the platform. The algorithm will reward your posts with more exposure and you'll get more engagement and followers.

To him who has, more is given. This is why some creators with lacklustre content still get more followers while the ones trying to deliver massive value don't.

The former realizes what hooks the audience while the latter is so focused on the message that they forget how to capture attention in the first place.

Style Over Substance... Initially...

While having a valuable message is important, it's more important to have people sticking around long enough to hear it. This is especially true when you're first starting off and trying to build a tribe on any social media platform.

Delivery beats depth when it comes to short-form content. If you don't earn the click, the swipe, or stop the scroll... your post dies unread.

Great content doesn't just inform - it invites. It teases curiosity. It earns interest before it demands attention.

So yes, substance matters. But without style, no one really cares about it. First, win the eyes. Then, win the mind.

This is how it is... and this is the game.

Apply the strategies in this article, and you'll dramatically increase the chances of your content getting seen, clicked, and shared.

1. Don't Be a Crowd-Pleaser

When it comes to building a tribe, authenticity wins. It's that simple.

Too often, content creators try to please everyone and take the safe route because they worry about haters or negative feedback.

The key to succeeding as a niche 'celebrity' or authority is to focus on your core beliefs and stand for what you believe in.

If you observed the most popular people online, they tend to be very polarizing. E.g. Andrew Tate, Candace Owens, Ye, Gary Vaynerchuk, Logan Paul, Alex Hormozi, Liver King, etc.

They have a very specific audience they're targeting, and their content and beliefs are congruent with what their tribe is looking for. It doesn't matter if millions of people hate or disagree with them.

Their message stands and their authenticity builds a tribe of fans, NOT followers.

Fans will support what you do and buy from you. Followers are just a number on your social media profile.

You want fans... and the best way to get them is to stand firm in your message and say what you believe in.

2. Why Should People Listen to You?

This is a very important question because it forces you to ask yourself what you're bringing to the table. Most content creators don't do this – which results in their content falling flat and appealing to no one.

Ultimately, what's your goal?

- ✓ *Whom are you trying to help?*
- ✓ *What are you trying to help them with?*
- ✓ *What can your tribe gain by engaging with your content?*
- ✓ *Why does your message matter... and who are you really?*

When you spend time thinking about whom you're trying to help and how your content will transform their lives, you'll create content that's more audience-focused rather than just dispensing information. That's the type of content which resonates with people and makes them ardent fans.

3. Focus on ONE niche... and ONE platform

Firstly, if you've decided to build a tribe on X, stick with it until you have 50k to 100k followers. Avoid trying to build a following across multiple platforms at the same time. This is time-consuming and will dilute your efforts.

Many beginners make this mistake thinking that they'll speed up their results... and end up never seeing success on any platform.

When you stick with one platform, you'll gradually understand what content works on it and what doesn't. You'll get a feel for the vibe and nuances on that platform – and develop instincts on what works and what doesn't.

As for your niche, pick one that's specific but not too narrow. Examples of such niches would be:

- Freelancing for digital nomads
- AI tips for online marketers
- Fitness for men above 50

Such niches will have sufficient sub-topics that you can cover so you won't run short of content – and whatever you create will be relevant to your tribe.

Avoid overly narrow niches such as:

- Workout routines using only resistance bands
- Time management tips for college students
- Email marketing tips for Etsy shop owners

With niches like these, there's only so much you can say before your content becomes repetitive. Think long-term when picking a niche.

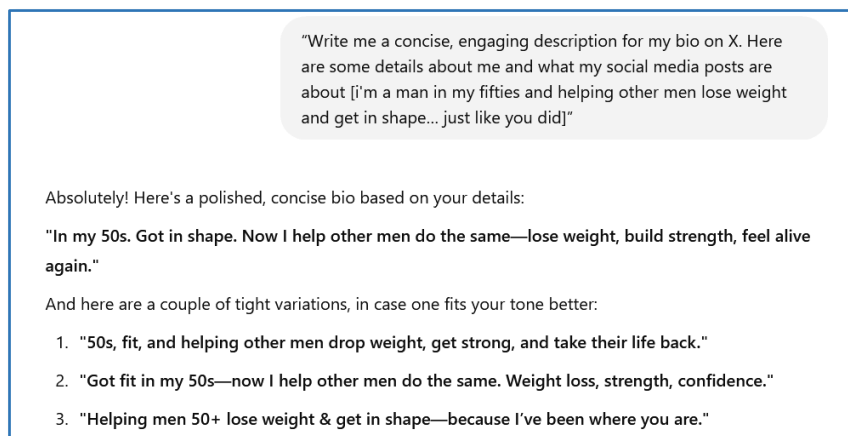
4. Have a Decent Profile (that makes you likeable)

People follow people... and having an engaging description for your profile will help people know who you are and what your posts are about.

Your bio should not be neglected because you can bet that people will check it to know more about you. A poor bio sets a poor impression.

Let's assume you're a man in his fifties and you're helping other men lose weight and get in shape... just like you did. You can either write that in your bio or ask ChatGPT to help you with it.

We'll use this prompt: **"Write me a concise, engaging description for my bio on [insert social media platform]. Here are some details about me and what my social media posts are about [insert info here]"**



You can choose whichever description you want. You could ask ChatGPT to write you several different versions: professional, bold, humorous, gritty, casual, etc.

Here's an example of a decent profile:



Choose a tone that closely resembles your personality. Which brings us to the next point...

5. Personality is CRUCIAL!

People don't just want to be educated and inspired – they also want to be entertained.

Your posts must ooze with your personality. Remember, your personality is your personal reality.

If you see yourself as charming, fun and knowledgeable – your posts will reflect who you are.

If you're constantly miserable and moaning about politics and the state of affairs in the world, your 'negative vibes' will seep into your posts. Don't ask how... it just happens.

The people you attract will be on the same frequency as you, and it may not be good for your business. So, aim to have a positive, brilliant personality and let it shine in your posts.

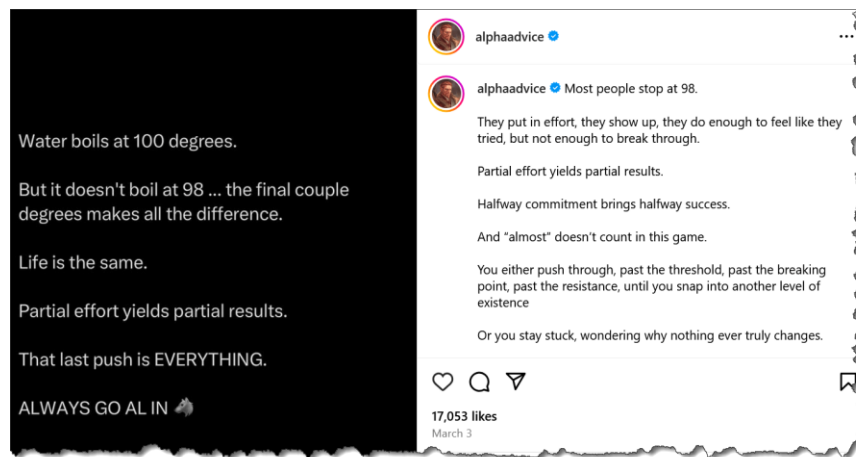
6. Structure Your Content Wisely

Generally, when it comes to short-form content, all you need to do is follow this formula:

1. Your first line hooks them in.
2. Your body content keeps them interested.
3. Your final line packs a punch.

While applying these 3 tips, it's important to keep your content concise but still engaging and informative.

Here's an example of a good post...



Over 17k likes. Definitely an attention-grabbing post. Notice how concise it is?

Keeping the content short and simple increases the rate at which people consume it.

Given the inherently ephemeral and utilitarian nature of social media discourse, excessive reliance on circumlocution tends to obfuscate rather than illuminate, ultimately alienating an audience conditioned to expect brevity and immediacy.

Did the previous sentence go over your head and make your eyes glaze?

Exactly. Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

But How Do I Keep Things Simple?

Excellent question.

Interestingly, just because the content is short-form doesn't mean that it's easy. It's just compressed, and may actually require more skill to pull off effectively.

It'll take practice to get it right, and the more you post, the better you'll get.

Alternatively, you can train ChatGPT to write like your favorite influencers, if you like their style. If we use the earlier example (see image above), and copy and paste it into ChatGPT, we could get ChatGPT to write in a similar tone to the post.

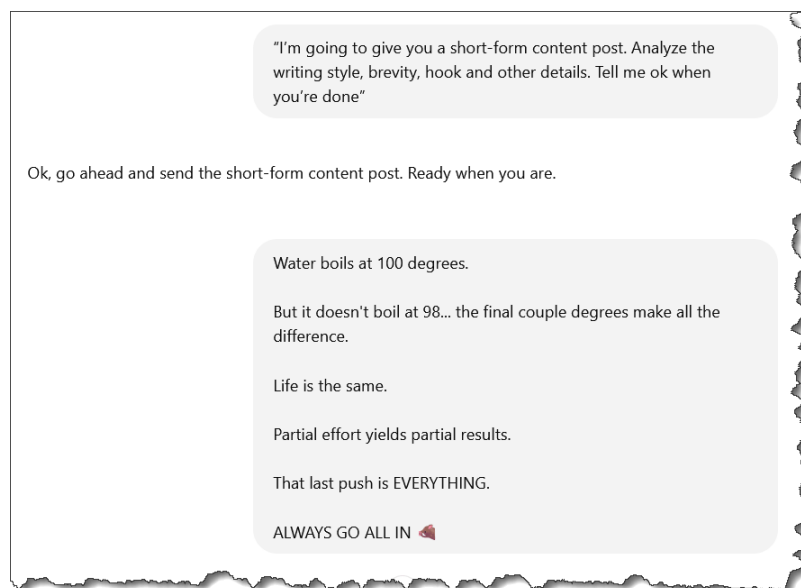
Let's assume we're in the fitness niche and we want to say that drinking diet sodas is not good. We may write a post like this:

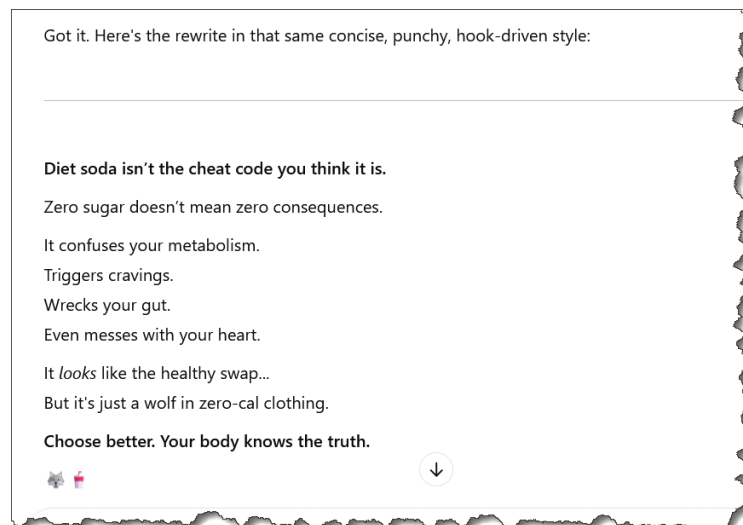
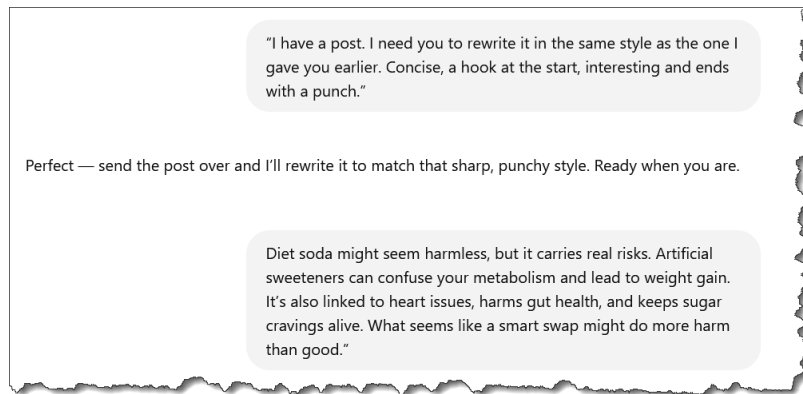
"Diet soda might seem harmless, but it carries real risks. Artificial sweeteners can confuse your metabolism and lead to weight gain. It's also linked to heart issues, harms gut health, and keeps sugar cravings alive. What seems like a smart swap might do more harm than good."

This is too wordy. So, this is what we'll do...

1. Go to [ChatGPT](#) and paste this prompt: "I'm going to give you a short-form content post. Analyze the writing style, brevity, hook and other details. Tell me OK when you're done"
2. Copy and paste the content you want ChatGPT to model.
3. Then use this prompt: "I have a post. I need you to rewrite it in the same style as the one I gave you earlier. Concise, a hook at the start, interesting and ends with a punch."
4. Paste your post and let ChatGPT do its magic.

Like this...





With this strategy, you'll always be able to create posts that stand out.

But don't always rely on ChatGPT.

Reverse engineer what it does and keep practicing until your short-form content is more engaging than what ChatGPT can create. Then watch how your engagement soars.

7. Post. Analyze. Adapt. Repeat.

Most content creators treat social media like a slot machine. They pull the lever (post content), hope for likes, and repeat without learning anything.

Here's the harsh truth: If your content isn't hitting, it's probably not as good as you think it is. And that's fine, if you're willing to analyze it and make changes.

You must be willing to learn from what's not working and adapt. Don't worry about what others think. *After all, you can always delete older posts as you get better with experience.*

Start treating your posts like experiments. Watch what performs well. Check which hooks get attention. Note which formats lead to saves or shares. Reverse engineer your own wins.

Did your post flop? That sucks... but ask yourself:

- *Was the hook boring?*
- *Did the post ramble?*
- *Was it helpful?*
- *Was it even relevant to your niche?*

Treat every post like a mini case study. Over time, you'll sharpen your instincts and automatically understand what works and what doesn't.

You could even copy and paste your post in ChatGPT and ask it why the post is not getting traction – and ask it for helpful suggestions so you can make changes.

It's consistency plus intentionality that separates the amateur content creators from the ones who actually grow. **Posting once is guessing. Posting 100 times is data.**

And all that's left now is for you to...

Start posting! You've got the strategies. Now it's go time.

Don't overthink, don't wait for the "perfect" idea, and don't worry about how far ahead the competition is.

All you need to do is post, tweak, and keep showing up. The best way to learn the game is by *playing* it.

Hit publish. Get feedback. Keep posting and growing.

Your tribe is waiting. You've got this!

(2,068 words)