

What's Even Better Than Marketing Algorithms? Astrology! 🌟

Story by Meg Carroll



Credit to @ancient_indigochild

My typical day starts like this: I'm eating breakfast at my island countertop, scrolling through my Instagram explore page. It's covered in memes relating to astrology. There's the sassy Aries, the two-faced Gemini, the quirky Aquarius, and mostly -- on my explore page anyway -- the secretive, passionate, and

intimidating Scorpio. Using those infamous algorithms, Instagram has tailored my explore page to show my Zodiac sign more than the rest, and this has piqued my interest in the growing realm of astrology.

You might have noticed this, too; more people at parties asking your Zodiac sign, more friends DMing you memes about Capricorns hiding their overwhelming stress with inappropriate jokes (“LOL so you!”), or more Zodiac themed Spotify playlists.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus quarantine, I’ve fallen back into an old pastime of mine: online shopping. I’ve been all over the internet, from Amazon, to Dollskill, to Ulta. And I’ve noticed astrology there as well, being used as a way to market to customers.

Amazon has a [Prime member horoscope](#) every month. According to my Amazon horoscope for the month of March, I need to get ready to hibernate by buying some cocoa truffle spread, and Virgos are encouraged to check out Amazon’s First Reads. Dollskill, an emo-punk clothing website, features a line called [Horoscopez](#), where clothes are tailored to each Zodiac sign. Pisces, for example, has a lot of light blue clothing because its symbol is the two fish.

Ulta supplies a makeup brand called [BH Cosmetics](#), which released a Zodiac themed eyeshadow palette. Since the successful release of that palette, they have created mini-palettes for all individual Zodiac signs. The earth sign Taurus features greens, yellows, and browns, while the air sign Libra has a sky blue with neutral pinks.

However, BH Cosmetics takes their Zodiac marketing even further. Actual astrologers focus on much more than the Sun sign, or the sign you probably know to be yours; there are actually 11 planetary placements in your birth chart that sum up your personality. When the planet Venus is “in Virgo,” as an astrologer would say, during your time of birth, you might be more nitpicky in love than someone whose Venus is in Sagittarius. (They might crave their freedom and independence.) These 11 placements are what make up your birth chart.

“It’s much easier to choose a product based on something you identify with.”
- @astrhology

BH Cosmetics uses Venus signs to market another eyeshadow palette of theirs. The [Zodiac Love Signs Palette](#) encourages you to “Meet your match!” using the custom colors of your individual Venus sign.

In the days of the internet, it is much easier for large audiences to learn about astrology. [Birth charts](#) can be generated in an instant, and there is so much content on the internet about how to interpret planetary placements within the charts. The owner of the Instagram account @astrhology frequently posts astrology memes: even memes about Moon and Venus sign placements. (If you’re curious, the Moon sign is said to represent your inner feelings and emotions.) When she makes posts to her 800K followers, she says, “I just want to entertain people and hopefully help them learn something, like when I make Moon or Venus sign memes that there’s more [to astrology] than your Sun Sign.”

@astrhology also believes that the revival of astrology in our modern era has to do with this generation’s infatuation with finding their identity. Most of my friends who are into astrology don’t even believe in it like you might think; they appreciate the fact that the Zodiac allows for a safe space of self-expression and self-growth.

Astrology makes it easier to “own it”; if you tell someone they’re weird and never going to fit in anywhere, they’re going to take offense. But if you say, “As an Aquarius you’re so quirky and unique that others can be intimidated,” they’re going to say, “Yeah, that’s me!” Marketing is only taking advantage of astrology’s popularity and ability to make someone feel more comfortable with themselves.

Even @astrhology is vulnerable to companies’ marketing agents. “I’m contacted frequently to come up with something astrology related,” she said. On the day that we messaged, she was contacted by a survey company to make a meme set titled “The Signs Taking Surveys” to encourage her followers to visit their survey website.

However, she thinks that marketing, more or less, has the right idea. “It’s much easier to choose a product based on something you identify with,” she said. She happens to be a Scorpio, like me, and she used the example, “I’m a Scorpio, and this is a ‘palette for Scorpions’ so I’ll buy this one.”

In a way, astrology is the perfect tool for marketing companies: it’s distinct, trendy, and most of all – seems personal. It encourages people to own all of the qualities in themselves and stand out, while still making them feel at home amongst their fellow Sun signs. The confusing algorithms of Instagram might one day be no more;

astrology is here for the take-over. Perhaps more astrologers will be moving out of their secluded crystal caves and onto the internet to work for marketing agencies in the future.