

Facebook news feed changes - What now for brands?

 By [Joseph Neusu](#)

23 Jan 2018

Facebook Inc recently put brands and publishers in a tailspin by announcing that it is updating its news feed algorithm. What this latest update means is that its users will see less and less of brand posts and stories from media outlets on their feeds.



Image credit: Kaboompics // Karolina via [Pexels](#).

Some social marketers have called it a “purge” that will kill organic reach on the social network.

In what sounds like mitigation, CEO Mark Zuckerberg revealed that the changes were prompted by users’ outcry over how brands posts have taken over their private space for personal conversations. This is true in a way. Far too many brands were pumping bland broadcast messages into mass-reach media buys on Facebook and spamming millions of news feeds. Something had to be done.

High ad rates are coming

However, not everyone agrees though, especially among the spooked brands, that this update serves pure intentions. Some marketing professionals and publishers strongly believe that there is more to this story than meets the eye.

These sceptics see greed as the cause of the algorithm changes. They claim that Facebook wants to have a monopoly over its 2 billion monthly active users that will allow it to charge brands exorbitant fees for its advertising programmes. The evidence? Facebook's ad rates have risen by 35 percent in the last quarter alone.

High ad rates are definitely coming. According to Blaise Grimes-Viorrt, The Social Element chief services officer, "businesses already have to invest in ads on Facebook to get their content in front of their audiences. But there will be fewer opportunities to buy ads, so the prices will be higher."

Nothing is new here. Marketers have always been running paid ad campaigns since time immemorial. What is bothering industry experts is the rise and rise of Facebook's monopoly and the perceived threats it represents.

Move on and adapt

Others think differently. They cite the rise of fake news, the accusations that Facebook contributed to the growth of extreme political polarisation and privacy concerns as the real triggers for the coming news feed update.

No one really knows, for now at least. However, brands and publishers should quickly move on and adapt. They can put their time to better use by rethinking their social media marketing strategies.

Mobbie Nazir, chief strategy officer at the agency We Are Social, said that with these updates, brands now have to pay more attention to the quality of their posts, campaign implementation and optimisation if they are to achieve maximum reach and meaningful engagement.

Here is what brands have to do to win in the post-news feed update framework:

- Reduce post frequency and only focus on more meaningful content that reinforces key brand messages.
- Use Facebook advertising for awareness and promotions.
- Advertising will become the only way to get their messages through to their audience of interest, and those that rely on Facebook as the distribution channel will totally suffer.
- Stop any engagement baiting in their posts now—the kind of posts that say have got pushy call to actions like "like this picture".
- Stop posting any content with a link to their blog or website. Facebook has killed referral traffic.
- Go back to their community and produce content that facilitates meaningful one-to-many discussions.
- Produce more live videos (not pre-recorded ones).
- Look at the areas that are growing. Chatbots and messaging should now be a definite focus, alongside their Facebook brand page.

It is quite clear that brands using Facebook should focus more on providing meaningful interactions that drive business outcomes and not about driving engagement for the sake of engagement.

Reach is now a premium that can only be bought on Facebook via advertising. It's a new world order. Is your brand ready to embrace the post-news feed climate?

ABOUT JOSEPH NEUSU

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