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The big Facebook update of 2018 and what you need to know - by Diana Perry

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Now that it's a new year, it's time to check-in with our friend Zuckerberg and see what some of his resolutions are for 2018. There's been article after article about Zuck wanting to overhaul Facebook's algorithm which means big changes for you both personally and for business purposes.

With 2 billion users, Facebook is still clearly a place we are spending lots of time, apparently logging on an average of 14 times a day up to at least an hour in total. If the average person is logging on that many times, why would it only be an average of an hour? Researchers have found that people are actually spending less time on Facebook recently, but still coming as often. This is due to the slowing of engagement the site has received. Apparently, people have been scrolling, reading and watching but not interacting as much as they previously did and Zuck vows to "fix Facebook."

"I'm changing the goal I give our product teams from focusing on helping you find relevant content to helping you have more meaningful social interactions," said Zuckerberg. Many users have felt that the social media network has been cluttered with business brands, media, violent live videos, fake news and other negativity deterring us from connecting more with each other and have spoken out and demanded it be fixed. Now, Zuckerberg has declared a new algorithm will be put into place that will bump up personal posts from friends and family to the top of your feed in hopes that it is content that sparks conversation and meaningful interactions. He, himself said he expects that people may spend even less time on Facebook but it will be more valuable time.

Personally, you may be jumping for joy in seeing less ESPN updates as you may have really missed seeing photos of your nephew learning to ski or hearing where your wacky cousin had traveled to this week but professionally, you'll need to alter your posting strategy. Here's what you need to know:

Stay Positive – Though your business posts are going to get buried even more than before, it's important to stay positive. Facebook expert, Mari Smith believes Facebook will actually favor positive content vs. those negative in nature. Stay positive and spark social discussion like asking a question or starting a contest.

Keep your business page, but start a group – If you haven't dabbled in groups yet, check it out and start a group. A Facebook group is a page created for a business to promote activities. Users can join the group and post their thoughts on a wall and interact through discussion threads. Posts from groups will trump posts from business pages with the new algorithm.

Think video – Zuckerberg wants Facebook to be a video-first platform to capture people migrating from TV. I believe this tells us that video will be favored, especially video that creates engagement. Research Facebook Watch (launched in August) and Facebook Watch Party (in beta now).

Sponsored posts call immunity – The algorithm update will not affect paid posts, according to The New York Times.

One comment that was posed on Zuckerberg's announcement on Facebook said, "Local businesses are our community, our neighbors and our friends" which certainly rings true for many of our retail real estate businesses. The news is disappointing for business, but Facebook isn't going anywhere so it's best to roll with it, stay positive and try new things within the network. Good luck.

Social Media Fun Fact: Facebook will track your keystrokes, even if you delete something and decide not to post it, they track it, be careful – Mari Smith, Facebook expert.

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