

# PORTAL

TECHNOLOGIES



ENGAGEMENT

COMMENTS

FACEBOOK  
ALGORITHM  
CHANGES

FRIENDS

SHARING

# FACEBOOK ALGORITHM UPDATE FOR 2018

On 11 January 2018 Facebook released information on their reviewed algorithm. This has sparked a huge concern amongst marketers. But what are these changes and what is all the fuss about. More importantly, how does it affect my small business and my social media marketing and content strategy.

This manual shares a brief overview and guidelines on:

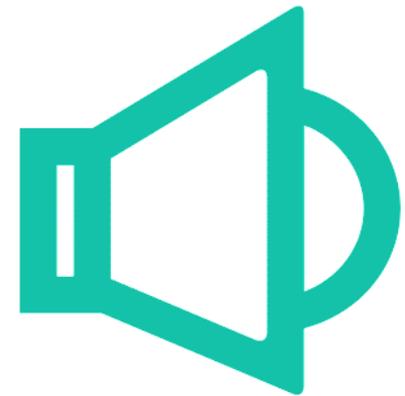
- 1) The changes to Facebook's algorithm
- 2) The impact of these changes on small businesses
- 3) How to respond to these changes in terms of strategy and content



# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

The latest changes revolves around one core focus and that is a refocus on what Facebook is all about: Bringing people closer together. In effect the newsfeed has changed to support this focus. I.e. A newsfeed that brings people closer together. But what does this mean?

- The newsfeed will give preference to 'people' – connections, friends and networks – rather than brands, pages and publishers.
- The current metrics used to rank/score where a post will feature on your network on Facebook, include likes, clicks, comments and shares. I..e time spent on sites and engagement.
- The new metrics will be weighted so that they rank posts that promote interaction and conversation between people higher than other posts. This means posts from friends and family will be more prominent.
- In essence a person interacting with another person on a post (people-to-people, not people-to-page) will lead to a higher ranking.



# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## WHY?

- Brands publish way more often than regular facebook users do, This means that even if there is a relatively low organic reach, the amount of posts that go out still overfeeds the newsfeed – leading to a great deal of free exposure for brands.
- According to Mark Zuckerberg: “The research shows that when we use social media to connect with people we care about, it can be good for our well-being. We can feel more connected and less lonely, and that correlates with long term measures of happiness and health. On the other hand, passively reading articles or watching videos -- even if they're entertaining or informative -- may not be as good.”
- Therefore the balance must shift from a newsfeed with plenty of publisher's posts to one with more posts from family and friends.. Time spent on Facebook should be more intentional, meaningful, rather than infinitely scrolling through a newsfeed without interacting.

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## THE IMPACT

- 1) **A decrease in organic reach:**
  - Currently a page's organic reach per post is about 2 to 5 percent. This means that two to five out of 100 people who "like" your page would probably see one of your posts.
  - The prediction is that there will be up to an 80% reduction in page reach, clicks and engagement.
  
- 2) **People will spend less time on Facebook:**
  - Time spent on Facebook is likely to decrease
  - Engagement on posts is likely to decrease
  - This means
  
- 3) **Advertising's pricing will go up:**
  - Less time spent on Facebook by users will mean less virtual advertising "space".
  - Brands will most likely up their ad spend to make up for their loss on organic reach
  - The result is more competition (demand) and less space (supply) and so the ad rates could increase drastically.
  
- 4) **Engagement-baiting will be penalised**
  - Often advertisers use "bait" to get users to engage with their content, promising an incentive (reward, prize, discount) for liking a post.
  - Engagement-baiting posts or advertisements will be ranked lower and even penalised or demoted.

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## THE RESPONSE

As a small business owner relying on Facebook marketing, should you be worried? Yes and No...

To respond appropriately, it is important to recap the reasoning:

*“As we roll this out, you’ll see less public content like posts from businesses, brands, and media. And the public content you see more will be held to the same standard — it should **encourage meaningful interactions** between people. For example, there are many tight-knit communities around TV shows and sports teams.”*

In other words, the focus is on ensuring that your content is engaging and discussion worthy, finding ways to relate your messaging to content that encourages *“meaningful interactions.”*

Although we cannot say for sure what the overall results will be, we can offer some guideline of how to stay on top of the algorithm and ahead of the content game, as far as possible.

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## THE RESPONSE

### 1) Create relevant content that sparks meaningful discussions:

- The new algorithm will favour posts that receive comments, but more specifically, that create a string of conversation on your post between users.
- Post content that is within your audience's field of interest,, that speaks to their emotion and content that they are most likely to have an opinion on.
- Ask your audience relevant questions that requires a thought-through answer (not just engagement baiting, but rather real questions that will give insight into your audience's preferences).
- Also look at online trends and join in on current, relevant conversations. See how your product/service can be relevant within a trending conversation (see case study 1). Join groups, use micro-influencers, find your audience and engage in conversation rather than throwing information at them.

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## THE RESPONSE

### 2) Educate your user to opt into "see first":

- If you produce content that your audience finds useful, they will most likely want to follow you.
- Make sure they get your content in their newsfeed by teaching and encouraging them to click on 'see first' on your page.
- This way your content will be part of the 'what you've missed feed'.

### 3) Quality vs Quantity

- Quality trumps quantity. While it is important to post consistently, it is even more important rather to post meaningful, relevant posts that are conversation worthy.
- Rather post less frequently, as long as they are quality content posts.
- Quality considers not only copy, but also the format you choose. Be strategic about your content.

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## THE RESPONSE

### 4) Benchmark the impact

- You are not alone in this, all digital marketers will need to take note of these changes.
- Some industries will be hit harder than others.
- Be sure to benchmark and track whether the impact is on your industry sector, or rather on your page only.
- If it is your page, then you have to re-strategise urgently.
- If it is the industry, you have to find ways and means to get ahead in terms of industry, but you also have to change your benchmark.

### 5) Involve your audience

- User-generated content has long been propagated as the way to go – and it really is.
- If you want your audience to be part of the conversation, why not ask them what they want to talk about?
- User-generated content makes for authentic, engaging content and will relate to your audience well (see case study 2).

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## THE RESPONSE

### 6) Constantly innovate

- Test new formats as they come out to see what works for your Page, and what doesn't.
- For example, Live videos demand immediate attention and are already showing higher organic reach than regular videos or posts.
- If you haven't tried stories yet, try it.
- Stay on top of these changes and trends.

### 7) Budget for ad spend

- Be realistic about the fact that your business would need some paid ad campaigns
- Be sure to budget and follow your industry benchmarks to understand what your budget realistically needs to be.
- Measure your ROI not based on your own month-on-month performance only, but rather take the value of the return into account, i.e. what was the objective and outcome of an ad campaign, what can you track.

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## THE RESPONSE

### 8) Measure, Measure and Measure

- You cannot go in blind!
- Make sure you track your Page performance, your competitors and ensure you use your data to improve and target your content better.
- Use third party tools to assist in accurate analytics, or Facebook Insights if you cannot invest in a third party tool yet.

### 9) Be proactive

- Lastly, don't sit around and wait to see what the impact will be.
- Listen to Facebook's new guidelines, and be proactive.
- Don't try to sell things to your audience, rather try to sell them experiences, add value to their lives and help your audience connect to each other to still achieve Word of Mouth marketing referrals on this very relevant platform.

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## CASE STUDY 1: Jump in on relevant conversations

The \*\*\*\*hole conversation. The president of the United States of America, Donald Trump has been known for his inappropriate public blenders, and while some take offence, others use it to their advantage. This is not the first time Namibian travel marketers have 'jumped in' on the conversation to their own benefit.

Of course do be careful when it comes to politics and sensitive topics, there is a fine line between being clever/creative and disrespectful. It can be risky if not doone correctly. But the fact of the matter is, to be on top of your game, make sure you are part of real time conversations to draw out engagement, and interaction tht are meaningful.



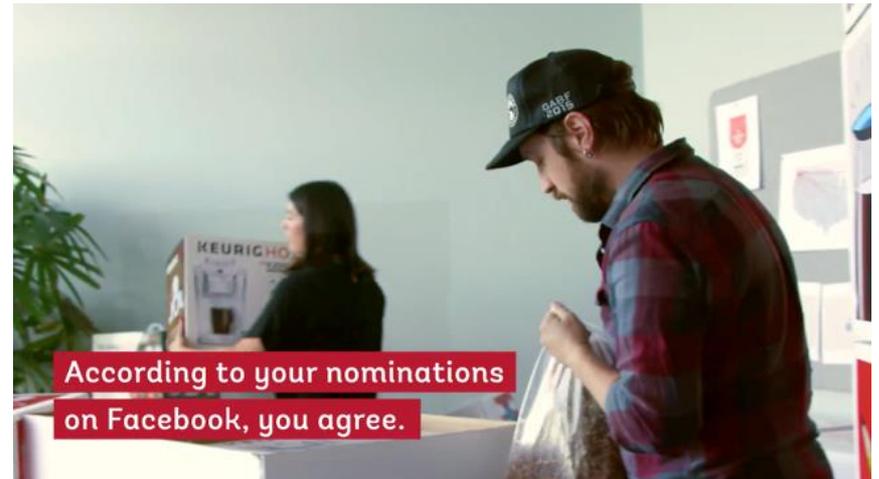
<https://www.facebook.com/gondwana.collection.namibia/videos/2272449069447736/>

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## CASE STUDY 2: Involve your audience – Seattle's Best

In August 2017, “Seattle’s Best Coffee” strategically involved their audience in a campaign and had great success. They posed the question, “Who is the most deserving this time of year?” And their audience responded (via Facebook), “Teachers”. The Coffee House then created a fan-driven collaborative video of teachers all over the United States getting teachers’ lounge upgrades.

Their final video posted on Facebook went viral. Through involving their audience in their content creation process, the brand had their final video shared (re: distributed to Facebook’s priority channels) almost 1,000 times, receiving 3 million total views.



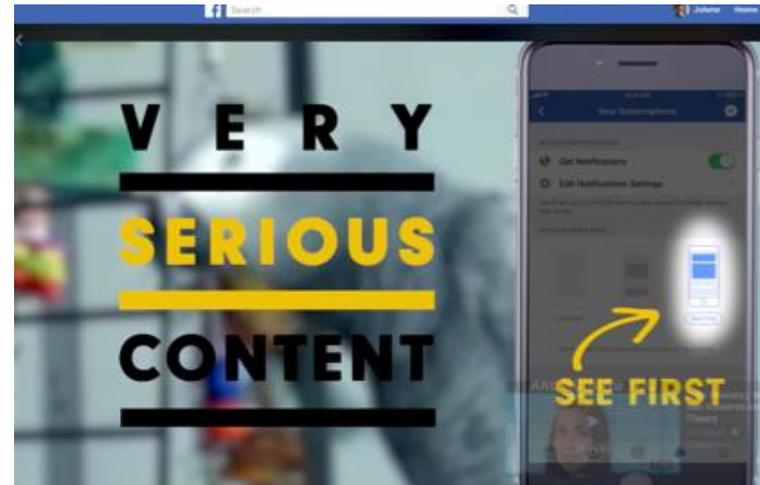
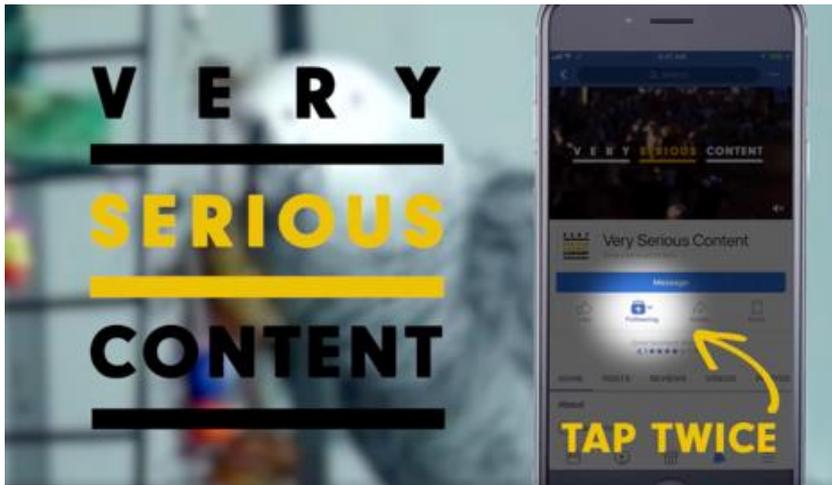
<https://www.facebook.com/SeattlesBestCoffee/videos/1543380755684918/>

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## CASE STUDY 3: Educate your audience

This page used an entertaining video to educate their audience to make sure they still receive their feed. They added instructions in a subtle way to the end of the video, drawing attention to the need to tick the 'see first' option.

It is important to find ways to teach your audience and make it as simple as possible for them to understand and do. The simpler the better.



<https://www.facebook.com/VerySeriousContent/videos/2080848831941873/>

# Changes to Facebook's Algorithm January 2018

## CONCLUSION

- In short content is still king when it comes to the new Facebook algorithm, but quality and relevant content trumps quantity.
- Social Media Marketing via Facebook still offers opportunities for targeting a relevant audience, but businesses should no longer rely on organic marketing only.
- Strategise, plan, evolve and be part of realtime conversations.
- It requires time and effort.
- If you cannot put in the time yourself, rather ask an expert, otherwise it will be a misallocation of resources.

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