

## March 30 is Approaching. Is Your Brand's Facebook Page Ready?

Perhaps you stumbled upon it on a friend's page or you might be an early adopter to the latest feature from the great minds of Facebook: Timeline is coming, and it's coming in a matter of days. Facebook Timeline was introduced last fall and, until most recently, was optional. On March 30, the more than 845 million Facebook users (of those who haven't flipped the switch) will be automatically switched to the new profile, and this major change in format is, as usual, met with controversy for users resistant to change.

According to Facebook, Timeline is a new profile format allowing you to highlight photos, posts and life events that help tell your story. Paul McDonald, one of the engineers behind the new Timeline feature, said in a December 2011 blog post, "Timeline gives users easy ways to rediscover content that has been previously shared, to collect your most important moments and to share new experiences with your friends." The questions that remain are: 1) why are up to 40 percent of Facebook users unhappy with the change, and 2) why are businesses raving about Facebook's new look?

As predicted, those who utilize Facebook for personal reasons believe if it's not broken, why fix it. And they believe there should be an option to keep the old version. Most unhappy users are part of Facebook's Baby Boomer demographic that find navigating past posts, updates and messages challenging. Other criticisms include having your Facebook past automatically featured on the Timeline in the milestone feature. In addition, Timeline is requesting users to complete their profiles with likes and information. In doing this, Facebook is seeking to capture more user data to make its service more appealing to advertisers. Does the same human tendency to reject the unfamiliar apply to business? Let's take a look at the new features for brand building.

The Facebook Timeline features can benefit brand image through the large cover image, apps, friend activity, pinned posts, larger story layouts, milestones and Facebook Ads. The cover photo is always public

and encompasses the majority of the page's width. It is intended to be an aesthetic, creative and eye-catching image. According to Facebook, the space may not be used as a billboard, to display calls to action and can not contain contact information, pricing and discounts.

In Timeline, tabs now exist as apps. Apps are located under the cover image, and the brand page can feature up to 12 apps. Once you click on an app, you will be linked to a full page within Facebook, eliminating the previous default landing tabs.

Directly below the cover photo, profile picture and apps for brand pages are pinned posts and friend activity. These two features are vital for new friend outreach. Pinned posts are featured on the top left and are intended to feature the page's call to action for that week. The pinned post will only be featured for a maximum of seven days and can be targeted by location. On the right, next to the pinned posts, a user will be able to see the number of friends that like the page, as well as their friend's comment about the product, brand or company.

Certainly the most visually impactful feature of the Facebook Timeline is larger story layouts. Links, photo and video posts become more dynamic and impactful because of the option to highlight individual posts. Highlighting enlarges a post to encompass the Timeline's width.

The milestone feature allows a company to integrate brand history and major events beyond the standard About section. After the user defines the event, location, date, story, and image, a date link is created and added to the Timeline sidebar.

Moving on to Facebook Ads, the transition to Timeline will improved functionality and visibility. Ads will be displayed in five different places: the right-hand side of the homepage, the news feed, the news feed on mobile devices, the log-out page (optional) and as Facebook Offers. Facebook Offers replaces Facebook Deals and can be a sponsored story, viewed in the news feed and redeemed via email or a mobile device. In addition, Facebook is offering a reach generator option for a brand's ads with large budgets and premium ads. Brands can pay for a guaranteed reach of 75 percent of existing fans compared to the previous reach of

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# white paper

approximately 16 percent.

Finally, Facebook Timeline will feature the ability to message fans directly as long as the fan directly messages the brand page first.

For business, this Facebook transition can be an exciting time to feature your brand. Using evōk advertising's tools like this white paper or the March 16 webinar, learn the nuances of this evolving social media channel, and embrace these new opportunities to engage with your loyal brand ambassadors and get to know new ones.



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