

# Major Changes by Facebook and Google

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These will directly affect your business.

Facebook and Google have been changing again. Facebook's change overshadowed Google's update, but it shouldn't be missed. Each company's new way of doing business will affect how veterinary hospitals are found and seen. Remember, digital marketing is a reactive business. Google and Facebook rarely tell marketing agencies and the general public what they are going to do now or in the future. Let's start with the changes Facebook has made.

## Facebook news feed change

When Facebook (or Google) makes a change, the overall 100,000-foot change is announced. However, exactly in detail, what that means to a business takes a few weeks to months to emerge.

Facebook announced in January 2018 that it was going back to its roots of being a social platform for friends and family. More news from friends and family will now be showing in the Facebook News Feed, rather than other types of information. However, ads will still be shown and there will be no change in this area. Facebook has

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to be paid somehow, and ads are what line the coffers at Facebook!

Really, this is just the next step for Facebook when it comes to businesses. Over the past few years, posts made by a practice were throttled back so only 2–6 percent of posts made by a hospital were seen by its followers. Want to have everyone see a post? Facebook's solution was, and is, to pony up and pay for that opportunity. If more family and friend news is shown, what exactly does this mean for businesses?

Preliminarily, these following factors will alter your business:

**Content.** Content plays an increased factor in being seen in the News Feed on Facebook. Luckily, practices have oodles of cute animal photos which people like to view—try being a plumber! Facebook says the key now is *engagement* with the content. The level of interaction happening with likes, comments, emojis, etc. is what will determine the News Feed display of that piece of content. Basically, can a piece of content generate buzz?

**Advertising.** Facebook is pretty unapologetic about it. Want to be seen? Then place an ad. At Beyond Indigo, we have been managing the Facebook campaigns of veterinary businesses for over five years. I have written before about how Facebook Ads can generate stellar results, bringing tails through the door and increasing revenue. As little as a couple hundred dollars a month can improve the bottom line. The primary strategy now is to focus on ads *more* than daily posting.

**Engagement with the business community.** Facebook wants businesses to interact with their followers and to make it more of a community. Responding to reviews or comments that are made, or even saying thank you for a 'like' or an emoji, goes a long way with Facebook. Facebook doesn't want a post-it-and-walk-away situation. Those days are long gone.

As this change unfolds, more details will emerge on how to thrive in this new environment. If you haven't tried Facebook Ads, now is the time.

## Google gave a heads up—gasp!

Rarely does Google give a heads about an upcoming change. Typically, it makes a change, maybe admits the change or not, and expects the rest of humanity to cope with it. Once in an extremely long while, Google will announce a date for an upcoming shift in its algorithm. Starting in July 2018, Google will start using page speed as a ranking factor. Marketing agencies have known this is coming because, last year, Google started focusing on speed in its mobile testing page (<https://testmysite.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-us>). Now, it has released a new speed test for businesses to test their website load times. It can be found at <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>.

Google creates tests to help businesses comply with, and to be prepared for, the upcoming shifts. This shift is happening because people use mobile devices more than desktop ones. Google tracks behavioral patterns from everyone using Google. It has found that loading speed is a determining factor for whether an individual uses a website after selecting it from a search query. Google wants your first click to be the last click. If a person becomes frustrated by slow loading pages after searching for results, they could move to another platform such as Facebook to find answers.

This is unacceptable to Google. Since Google does not own or control all the websites that it indexes, it can only encourage practices to make changes. First, the change is nice, like now. Find out how fast a hospital's website loads and, if it is in the red, make a change before it becomes a factor.

"This shift is happening because people use mobile devices more than desktop ones."

## "The key takeaway for now is to have your practice's website receive the green light from the speed test."

Google says that, at first, this Google Update will only affect the slowest loading website pages. However, it most likely won't stop there and will progress to moderate loading website pages in time. The key takeaway for now is to have your practice's website receive the green light from the speed test. A few items to keep in mind:

**Age matters.** How old of a website a business has will probably matter for the speed test. Older coding might not be where it needs to be for Google's new requirements. Think of a house that has old wiring from the 1920's. Changes have been made since then and the wiring needs to be updated to modern codes. The same goes with a website. If a website is three to four years old (or older), it is most likely time to get an updated website from your provider. Retrofitting is difficult and doesn't always work. Take the speed test first and, if an older website passes, then it is good. However, do not become upset with your provider if it doesn't. It is just time to change.

**Don't panic.** Google has given hospitals and their marketing providers plenty of time to make changes. If your website is scoring in the yellow or red, talk to your provider about what they are doing to have your site in Google's good graces. If a marketing agency has been keeping tabs on Google, they are already working on solutions to meet the requirements of this new update. If your provider tells you not to worry about the update or has no good answer for improving your score, it's time to look for another provider.

Beyond Indigo is an expert in Facebook and social media paid advertising. We can also manage a hospital's social media brand. We stay informed about Google and the changes it makes. We keep up with these changes. For example, we have upgraded our servers to provide faster speed to our websites. With our management, we focus on results first and discuss costs second. Beyond Indigo has been on the cutting edge of digital marketing for the last 21 years. We deeply know how Facebook and social media

work, are Google AdWords Partners, and can expertly manage reviews to integrate and enhance the rest of a hospital's marketing to empower clicks to websites. Call Melissa Neff at 877.244.9322, ext. 100, or email her at [Melissa@BeyondIndigo.com](mailto:Melissa@BeyondIndigo.com) to have us assist you! Coming to WVC? Stop by and see us in booth #1227!

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Kelly Baltzell, M.A. is President and CEO of the Beyond Indigo family of companies which she founded in 1997. Beyond Indigo is a full-service marketing company focusing on Search Engine Optimization, is a Google Adwords Partner, Social Media Marketing, Online Reviews and websites. She has been a monthly columnist for MWI Animal Health since 2011. She has also presented and been published in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK.

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