



Point of View

Navigating Facebook's Shift to Private Communications



Christian Tevis, Social Community Manager

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“The future is private.” This statement was the rallying cry Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg echoed during the social network’s annual F8 developer conference, as he announced a series of dramatic changes that will prioritize private communications in an effort to create a more trustworthy platform. Given the growing demand for secure personal data, trust is a must for the social media titan. So, what does Zuckerberg’s privacy-focused vision for Facebook look like, and how might it offer new marketing capabilities for pharma and healthcare brands?

Pivoting to Private Messaging

To catch up with people’s shifting social media behaviors—with more users gravitating towards private interactions—Facebook is investing energy into one of its fastest-growing components: Facebook Messenger.

With 1.3 billion monthly users, including 40 million active businesses, Messenger sits comfortably behind Facebook as the second most popular iOS app of all time. And to keep these numbers growing, Facebook announced that it will be rolling out desktop Messenger apps for Macs and PCs later this year.

A dedicated desktop interface for Messenger is a huge win for businesses looking to take advantage of the platform’s lead generation and customer service capabilities. The revamped app also bodes well for users who value security, as the platform will have end-to-end encryption and an option to reduce message permanence, should users opt to have their content removed after a certain time period.

Opportunities on Messenger

While the News Feed, Facebook’s town square and most lucrative advertising component, is not going to disappear any time soon, the platform is certainly paving the way for exciting business opportunities for pharma brands on Messenger, including:

- **Improved Chatbot:** While we’re far from trusting bots to handle adverse events and product complaints, Messenger offers an improved chatbot experience using lead-generation templates that may work best for unbranded campaigns in collecting contact information or business intent.
- **Appointments:** Messenger is exploring ways to help appointment-based businesses handle their bookings through the app itself. This is still in the early phases but could become a major component of brands’ customer service offerings in the future, especially within telemedicine.
- **Video Co-Watching:** Users will soon be able to have live-watch parties with their friends in Messenger chats, a unique spin that could appeal to a younger audience and provides yet another avenue for video ad placements, which continue to grow in popularity.



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Where to Start

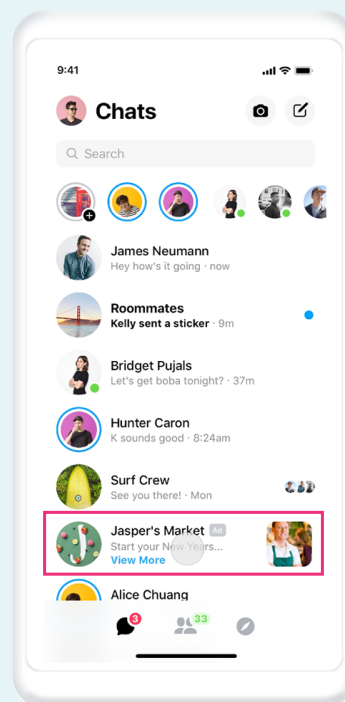
It will be interesting to see how Messenger's new suite of business tools are put into practice in the coming months as Facebook evolves into a platform focused on private communication. For those brands who are eager to get in on the action with something a little more tried-and-tested, ad placements in Messenger are a great place to start.

Messenger ads works just like News Feed ads and can be automatically delivered with optimal placement. Brands can even use the same creative for Messenger that they're running across Facebook and Instagram, creating an easy way for businesses to integrate Messenger into their marketing mix.

Why Change is Good

We all know that social media is constantly evolving, and this latest Facebook revamp is still par for the course. The growing importance of Messenger doesn't mean brands need to change their entire approach to advertising on Facebook. It's simply an opportunity to test, learn, and optimize what works for your business in an effort to stay ahead of the curve.

To discover more about the latest features of Facebook and how they may affect your social media plan, speak with your Evoke Client Services lead or contact business@evokegroup.com.



*Examples of Facebook Messenger ads.
Above: how the advertisement will appear
in a user's list of chats. Below: how an ad
appears after a user clicks on it.*

