

MARKETING

## Luxury brands consider the benefits and backlashes of #DeleteFacebook

March 27, 2018



Facebook sees backlash from data mining. Image credit: Facebook.

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Tesla's dramatic exit from Facebook amongst the #DeleteFacebook scandal will likely spur a continuation from other luxury brands, whose strategies are so rooted in the social network.

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As Facebook's fate remains unknown after a series of allegations regarding inappropriate use of data, Tesla founder Elon Musk prompts luxury and mass market brands to delete their pages on the social network in a series of harsh tweets. While Facebook was the first tool luxury brands looked to in relation to social media, it could be the first to go.

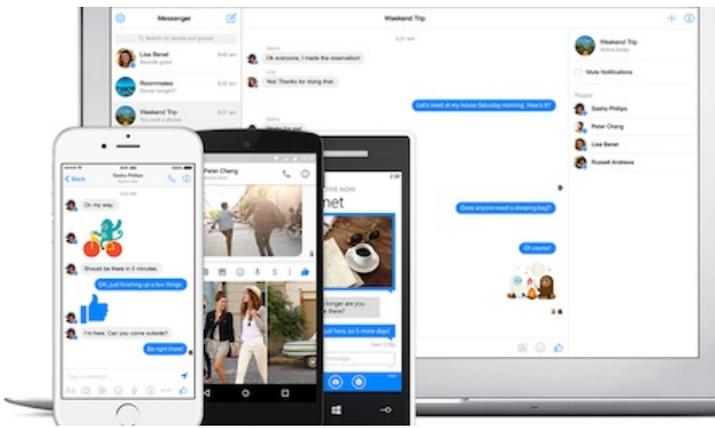
"It is quite likely that other luxury brands may jump on the bandwagon and participate in the #DeleteFacebook uprising," said Michael Becker, managing partner at **Identity Praxis**, San Francisco. "However, I advise that brands pause, consider their options and intentionally decide what to do before taking any immediate action.

"What is good for one brand, like Tesla, may not be good for another," he said. "Facebook is a relevant channel for reaching billions of individuals. Brands should remove this channel from their marketing mix only if it no longer serves their customers and their business.

"Now is the time for thoughtful evaluation over a few days, weeks or even months, not reflexive reaction."

### Backlash and consequences

Facebook has spurred a movement throughout the Internet and a hearty conversation on Twitter, where the hashtag #DeleteFacebook has been continuously trending.



Facebook taps data on a variety of devices. Image credit: Facebook.

The issue comes from allegations that data mining company Cambridge Analytica leveraged personal data from users on the social platform to push targeted content as part of the United States' presidential election in 2016.

Data mining is becoming an increasingly polarizing aspect of digital platforms, as more scandals emerge and breaches occur. Users are feeling stripped of their privacy, but have largely continued to remain on these platforms.

This latest issue with Facebook strikes an even bigger nerve, as it relates to the current presidency and alludes to "rigged" election results.

The New York Times reported a memo from July 2014 that revealed a lawyer had emailed Trump advisor Steve Bannon as well as the CEO of Cambridge Analytica's parent company that what they were doing was illegal. Government watchdog group Common Cause has even filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission.

A 27-page presentation was leaked by The Guardian, which details the company's in-depth plan for the Trump campaign during the 2016 election. The leak was supported by numerous interviews with whistle-blowers from Cambridge Analytica.

As all of this comes to light, social media users all over the Internet have been urging others to denounce Facebook. Mr. Musk joined the movement with tweets suggesting that the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX disapproves of the platform.

I didn't realize there was one. Will do.

Elon Musk (@elonmusk) **March 23, 2018**

Later on he specified that deleting his companies off Facebook was not a politically charged move but merely a feeling that the platform "gave him the willies."

Since Tesla and SpaceX both receive very little traffic from the social platform, these companies will likely remain unaffected by their founder's choice to leave Facebook.

Luxury brands have become more comfortable with making bold political statements, with many even commenting with distaste on the current White House administration. This could mean many more will join Tesla in its exit.

But Facebook is not just angering its users.

In a move that shocked and disappointed media groups who have invested heavily into Facebook Live, the social network will no longer pay publishers to create live video content on the platform, it announced in December.

Facebook had been bolstering its live video feature by paying millions of dollars to publishers to create Facebook Live video content, causing media companies to build entire teams around creating real-time video. As first reported by Digiday, publishers are saying that Facebook is not planning on renewing any contracts for such a deal in the future and that publishers will no longer receive money from Facebook to create live video on the platform ([see more](#)).



*Facebook Live has become a robust part of the social platform.*

Additionally, Facebook recently announced that it will no longer prioritize branded posts and publisher content in favor of users' friends and families.

After a series of shakeups have left brand partners of Facebook feeling hung out to dry, the latest move seems the most difficult. While Facebook has admittedly had a problem with overloading users with ads, branded content and publisher media, the effect on brands' relationships with the social media platform will certainly be affected ([see more](#)).

In the midst of all this, the #DeleteFacebook development has caused more problems for the platform. However, many say it will fair okay because it is just that massive of a company.

#### Data and the Internet

This movement could still see many brands following Tesla, but with so many data breaches and deceiving users throughout the Internet and mobile, could there be a larger movement at play?

"The Cambridge Analytica announcement is just the latest event in an ever escalating string events," Identity Praxis' Mr. Becker said. "Today we're talking about Cambridge Analytica, but let us not forget all the other eye-popping headlines that have emerged over the last few years, like the Equifax breach, Uber data leak payoffs, Yahoo's breach to the core, Anthem, eBay, JP Morgan, Home Depot, Ashley Madison, Target and hundreds of major and minor breaches and intentional and unintentional misuses of people's identity and personal information.

"The list goes on. The significance of Cambridge Analytica for most people is that it hits too close home, it is personal," he said. "It is not as much as a breach, as a rude awakening, an awakening that erodes trust.

"In fact, I hope, we are all finally witness to an overall awakening that individual [digital] sovereignty matters. I think we are," he said. "The people of the world are waking up to the fact that data, their identity and personal data, are valuable assets powering, influencing and informing nearly every aspect of society, of their daily lives.

"Used appropriately, this asset creates immeasurable good for both individuals and society, yet used inappropriately this asset creates very specific, measurable, harm. #DeleteFacebook is not a movement; it is a reaction to an event. We need not to react, but to consciously act and align our collective efforts, to leverage our technologies and our use of data to shape the world we want to live in, not the world we're given."