

# EVERYBODY STILL HATES MARK ZUCKERBERG

## Mark Zuckerberg Tried to Ride Elon Musk's Wave to Improve His Image. People Still Hate Him

- Despite his efforts to be “cool,” the Meta CEO still lacks public approval.
- Even Tesla CEO Elon Musk, despite his political ties to President Donald Trump, is liked more than Zuckerberg.



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In 2024, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg surprised many with a new look. The billionaire ditched his usual jeans and gray T-shirt for a more “badass” style, sporting gold chains, T-shirts with Roman quotes and tousled hair.

However, a Pew Research Center study found that Zuckerberg’s attempt to update his image and appeal to a younger audience has failed. Public perception of him remains negative—more so than that of other billionaires, including Tesla CEO Elon Musk, whose increasing political involvement alongside President Donald Trump has made him more polarizing.

The “unpopularity” of billionaires. According to a survey of 5,086 U.S. adults after Trump’s inauguration, 67% of respondents said they had a negative opinion of Zuckerberg, compared with 57% who had an unfavorable view of Musk, now considered one of Trump’s closest allies.

Surprisingly, 6% of respondents said they had never heard of Zuckerberg, while 3% didn’t know who Musk was. However,

after the buzz surrounding Musk's involvement with DOGE, that percentage is likely even lower now.

Both billionaires have faced controversy since Trump won the 2024 election. Musk, once the president's top donor, has played a role in implementing his administration's downsizing policies. Meanwhile, Zuckerberg has shifted Meta's corporate culture toward what he calls "more masculine energy."

Partisan differences. Pew Research data suggests that opinions on these tech leaders are divided along political lines. Musk's political stance strongly influences how people perceive him.



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For example, 85% of Democrats or Democratic-leaning respondents view Musk unfavorably, while 73% of Republicans or Republican leaners view him favorably.

However, disapproval of Zuckerberg is more bipartisan. The data shows that 76% of Democratic-leaning respondents and

60% of Republican leaners have an unfavorable opinion of the Facebook founder.

The CEO as a company figurehead. Despite Zuckerberg's efforts to improve his image—including a radical style change and a newfound interest in fashion—public opinion of him remains largely negative.

One possible reason for the backlash against what some have dubbed the "Zuckaissance" (a mix of "Zuckerberg" and "renaissance") is that his transformation feels inauthentic. Many see it as just another Meta marketing ploy to refresh the company's appeal and attract new users.

A redesigned CEO. Peter Thiel, PayPal co-founder and one of Silicon Valley's most influential figures, has long been a mentor to Zuckerberg. In a January 2020 email chain, Thiel and Meta executives discussed how the company's CEO should present himself to engage younger generations on platforms that their grandparents now use.

"There's also some distinction between me and the company here. While our company has a special role in the lives of this generation, this is likely particularly important for how I show up because I am the most well-known person of my generation," Zuckerberg wrote in those emails.

Far from being a natural shift in personal style, Zuckerberg's image overhaul was a calculated move by Meta's leadership. And the public seems to have seen right through it.

Image | Meta edited by Xataka On

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