

GUIDE

A data-driven marketing guide to TikTok



Intro

When it comes to how social platforms performed in the last twelve months there's no doubt 2021 was the year of TikTok. In an unparalleled meteoric rise since the social market matured, the app broke the over one billion active monthly user mark and even managed to beat Google to become the most popular website full stop for several months of the year. Did we mention it was the most downloaded app of the year, too?

To state the obvious: if you aren't already marketing on TikTok, you should be, and there is no better time to start than now. With many big brands still lagging, and the app's proven possibility for content to go viral despite the producer not being a market leader, clear white space opportunities exist for those ready to commit to a consistent TikTok strategy. The app is also analysis-friendly, meaning that with the right tools and expertise powerful data insights can be harnessed to set that marketing strategy up for success.

In this guide we'll give you the TikTok 101 for marketers, including explanations of where it can excel, why it's worthwhile, and what you can learn by taking a data-driven approach to harnessing the app. We'll also highlight some best practice examples to help inspire you to get started today, and look to the future and how TikTok is likely to develop.



TIKTOK 101

What you need to know

If you're one of the increasingly smaller group of people who have never used TikTok, here's a quick overview of its history. The app allows users to create, watch and share short 15-second videos that can be stylised with music, sound effects and stickers.





Videos are generally more lighthearted, natural and less filtered looking than Instagram, with subject matter ranging from comedy sketches to educational clips, political opinions to viral dance crazes and everything in between.

The app has only existed in its current form since 2018, long after the likes of Facebook and Instagram had established dominance in the social market, which makes its rise to become one of the most-used in the world even more remarkable. TikTok's Chinese parent company ByteDance also owns a mirror version of the app called Douyin which operates in the Chinese market.

KEY TERMS

The words you need to know and what they mean



Creators

The people making the content, both influencers and everyday users alike.



Fans

The people following the creators, getting their latest content as it is released.



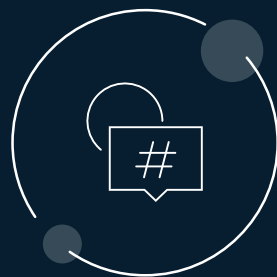
Hearts

A way to show your appreciation for a video by expressing your love of it. Clicking this button also means saving the video to your list of favourites for later viewing.



Comments

How people openly express their thoughts on the content they're watching.



Hashtags

You know these from other platforms but on TikTok they're important for extending visibility and reach. Some unique hashtags are particularly useful for analysis and marketing too, not least #tiktokmademebuyit, which when combined with analysis of the accompanying text and content can produce powerful insights about why consumers love the products they buy.

Why is TikTok marketing worthwhile?

Let's start with some key numbers. TikTok has a worldwide ad reach of 885 million adults over 18, and added more than 650,000 users per day in 2021. Overall, 17.9% of total internet users aged 18 plus are present on the platform – and all of these impressive figures don't take China (where sister platform Bytedance operates instead) and India (where TikTok is banned for the moment) into account.

Recent studies also show global TikTok users now spend as much time using the platform's Android app as they do using Facebook's android app. But crucially, while Facebook has stagnated and hasn't grown, TikTok's app is on an upward trajectory: up 48 percent in 2021 vs 2020. And it is only likely to increase again in 2022.

Digital 2022: TikTok's rapid rise continues

Then there's the age factor: the perception that TikTok is only for GenZ is now outdated. In the US for example, 22.4% of active users are aged 20-29, 21.7% are 30-39, and 20.3% are 40-49, so age groups with real purchasing power are already present there and learning about new products via the app. And as we will demonstrate later, well-orchestrated campaigns can have tangible positive results.





What can you learn?

TikTok has the highest social media engagement rate per post of any major platform, and a highly engaged audience presents great opportunities for valuable learnings.

Behaviours like purchase intent are openly expressed through popular hashtag #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt, meaning that with the right level of analysis you can gain valuable insight for data-driven product marketing.

Hashtags can also be analysed to understand conversation drivers for different target groups, map the kind of consumer they are, and predict how they may behave in a way that enhances targeted marketing.

Whispr Group's tools do this by parsing out linguistic analysis from TikTok conversations and bios to deliver key insights about consumers, audience segments, brands and products. The analysis can detail the audiences behind the popularity of certain products or hashtags for example, predict the marketing themes and aesthetics likely to succeed in engaging those groups, and also identify influencers to partner with in order to best reach them. Influencer brand advocacy is a huge factor on TikTok and not to be underestimated. They don't suffer from the skepticism that more traditional ads can face, have already mastered the more natural non-scripted style that succeeds on the platform and above all have a ready-made loyal audience, and one that trusts their opinions.



BEST PRACTICE – WHO DOES IT WELL?

Fenty Beauty

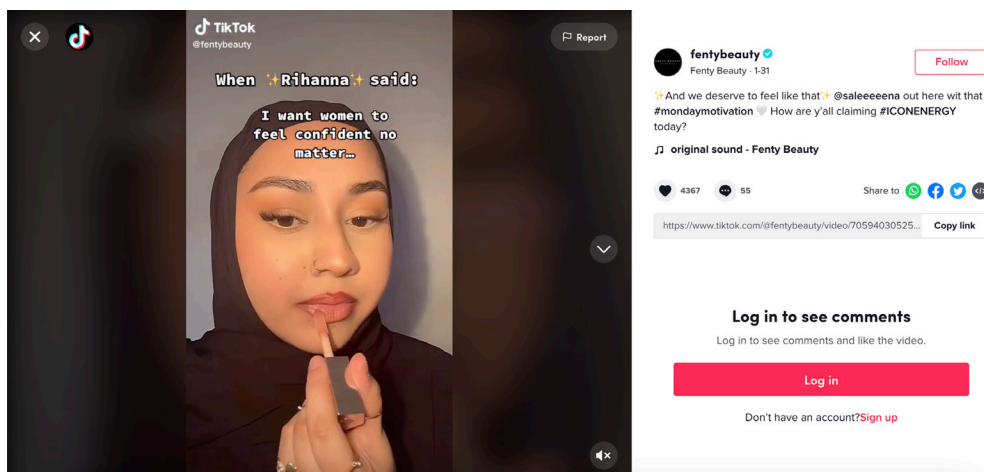
This isn't just about being associated with Rihanna. Fenty Beauty understood their audience and what interests them, understood that simple educational content with a wide range of creators from diverse backgrounds works well on this platform, and then invested in a small hand-picked group of five TikTok creators. The Result? A large amount of viral content and a whole host of eyes on their brand.

After launching the strategy the #fentybeauty hashtag had over 93M views within three weeks, with Fenty Beauty's TikTok audience growing 1180% in a week alone.

And the results didn't stay on the platform: the push drove a press frenzy, resulting in media coverage in Vogue, Teen Vogue, Time, Harper's Bazaar, Glamour, People, Billboard, Time and more. It also led to award nominations.

In a nutshell, Fenty Beauty's videos are produced by Gen Z influencers who intuitively understand TikTok, how to master its algorithm, and use trending audio and pop culture trends fit for the moment so the content feels up to date and relevant. TikTok users look to creators they trust to learn about products and are more likely to purchase from brands who feature diverse, relatable influencers, rather than traditional marketing. It's a perfect match.

[Click Here for Fenty Beauty TikTok Example](#)





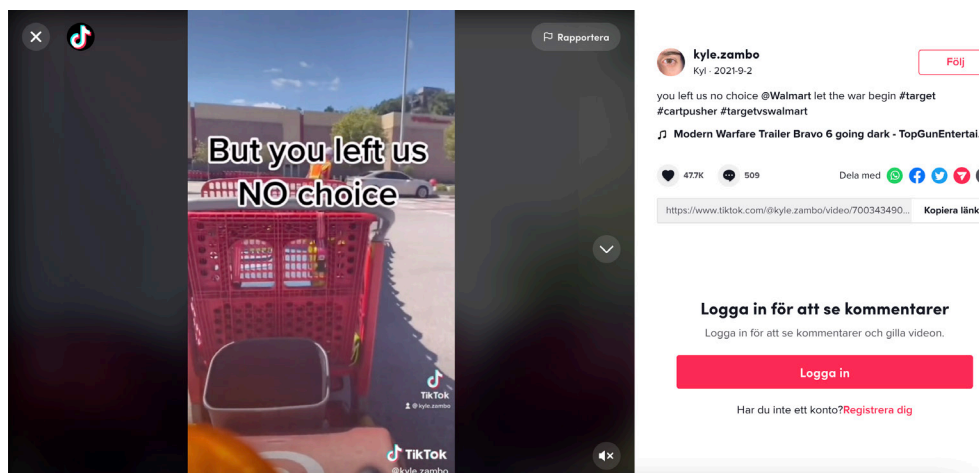
The Walmart vs Target TikTok 'war'

This one checks a lot of the key TikTok boxes including reacting quickly to user generated content, leveraging employees and keeping a light-hearted tone.

It all started when a target employee uploaded a humorous TikTok claiming Target was holding a Walmart shopping cart hostage. Walmart responded with their own clip claiming they too were holding a Target product (the brand's signature red ball which usually sits outside its stores) hostage and would return it in exchange for their cart.

The back and forth continued with an increasing number of brands getting in on the comments. It ultimately led to Walmart's official channel gaining 13x the amount of daily account followers, and Target exceeding 1M+ followers that week.

Click Here for Walmart vs Target TikTok



Chipotle Guac Challenge

A great example of how to perfectly harness the popularity of challenges on TikTok, how material that has previously gone viral on other platforms can be repurposed, and how users can be encouraged to do the hard work for you by developing creative and potentially viral content incorporating your brand's products.

The concept was simple: fans were encouraged to create a dance dedicated to avocados, set to the music from the (already previously viral from the Youtube days) Guacamole Song. The fast food chain partnered with several well-known influencers to promote the dance-off and get the ball rolling.

It worked. The #GuacDance hashtag resulted in Chipotle's biggest ever guac day, with 802,000 sides of Guac served, not to mention a mammoth amount of extra brand recognition. Over six days the challenge received 250,000 video submissions and 430 million video starts.



WHAT'S NEXT

Where's it going?

TikTok is now firmly established as one of the major social media players, and inevitably that means it will evolve in an effort to avoid stagnation. Perhaps more than any other platform, creators are key to its success, and it's perhaps no surprise that paid subscriptions are now being tested and could mean additional exclusive content for subscribers. The goal is ultimately to provide a further means for creators to monetise their content, and it follows similar testing of a tipping function comparable to Twitch where users can send money in appreciation of content.

The tricky part will be to balance the 'professionalization' of TikTok through more paid content, with the natural and unfiltered aesthetic that has made it so successful in the first place.

As for brands looking to bet big on the platform, TikTok already works to match creators with sponsors and deals in the US, and has offices in an increasingly wide range of major cities including Beijing, Berlin, London, Tokyo and Moscow. The list of local teams is constantly expanding, including the establishment of TikTok Nordic in Whispr Group's home city of Stockholm in 2021 with the goal of supporting local advertisers as well as to help SMEs develop their marketing on the platform.

Link (Swedish): TikTok öppnar nordiskt kontor i Sverige

A final note of interest is a recent deal TikTok signed in the US to air a curated TikTok TV channel in restaurants, hotel lounges, waiting rooms and more. That means more eyes on videos that aren't limited to those who directly downloaded the app onto their mobile, and potentially, even more eyes on your brand.

Link: TikTok's latest deal could mean its videos are coming to waiting room TVs near you



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Steps to Get Your TikTok Marketing Underway

TikTok offers a huge range of marketing potential with much to be learned from campaigns there, but don't let that overwhelm you. As we mentioned at the start, it's possible for newly established accounts to achieve a lot on the platform including viral success, and there are some simple steps that can be taken to get off on the right foot with your new TikTok marketing strategy.

- 01.** Research relevant hashtags that you can ride on the back of to get more eyes on your content as quickly as possible, and engage with other creators using those in order to further improve your visibility. Keep in mind too that trending hashtags on TikTok tend to change quickly, so you need to be consistent in keeping on top of how the relevant hashtags in your sphere are developing. An external insights partner with the right tools like Whispr Group can do this for you in a more time-efficient way.

02. Find influencers who have an audience relevant to your target group and work with them to leverage their credibility and success on the platform in a way that will help build your own. There may even already be someone promoting your own products on TikTok– as was the case with Dunkin’ Donuts, who reached out to influencer Charlie D’Amelio after they noticed she regularly drank their drinks in her TikToks. It led to a partnership that helped them soar ahead of rivals Starbucks on the app. But you don’t need to find creators with 135 million followers to make gains – our tools can pinpoint attainable influencers who would be beneficial for your brand.

03. Don’t overcomplicate your content. Of course any part of your marketing should be well thought-through, but the number one sin on TikTok is publishing videos that look overproduced and synthetic. The filtered aesthetic that may work on Instagram for example isn’t likely to be a hit on TikTok, where advocates are used to a more natural approach. This is why employee advocacy content can work so well there: real people speaking in a real way is a recipe for success. Make sure to find out if your employees are already using TikTok– the right influencer may already be on your payroll!



Combining cutting edge AI with expert analysts to deliver best in class actionable insights that empower decision making.

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