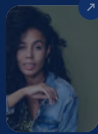




75%

Increase in Brand Mentions



12

New Fans



43%

Increase
Community Size

Guide

TikTok Marketing Playbook

A Brand's Guide to Creating Earned and Owned Media on TikTok

Introduction

TikTok is a Powerful Marketing Engine, With a New Set of Rules

Once a trendy app for teens, TikTok has established itself as an indispensable hub for contemporary culture. The short-form video-sharing platform, which reached one billion active monthly global users in September 2021, is not only the go-to social media channel for Gen Z, but also a launchpad for viral trends and conversations about beauty, fashion, food, music, and more. Given its immense influence, it's no surprise that TikTok is shaping consumer behavior: according to Newsweek, the platform is responsible for record-breaking sales of products ranging from new makeup and skincare to leggings and feta cheese.

As TikTok continues to steer consumers' shopping carts, brands across categories are increasingly recognizing and leveraging the platform's marketing power by winning over its robust creator community. But while a strong influencer strategy on TikTok can put brands on the fast track to growth, the platform also presents a distinct set of challenges: not only does TikTok's mysterious algorithm make it difficult to predict what content will perform well (and what won't), but the app's most popular creators abide by a unique set of rules. Brands eager to ignite influencer conversation on TikTok can't simply repurpose the same activation tactics that worked on other, more traditional channels. Instead, they must familiarize themselves with TikTok's unique ethos and content landscape, and build a strategy that aligns with creators' interests and priorities.



To help brands more effectively take advantage of TikTok's tremendous marketing opportunity, this report outlines **three best practices** for engaging influencers and making an impact on today's buzziest platform.



EMV

Introduction to Earned Media Value

Earned Media Value, or EMV, quantifies the estimated value of consumer engagement with digital earned media. Our holistic approach assigns a unique value to a piece of content based on the platform it was published on and engagement received from followers and consumers. This value is then attributed to the specific brands mentioned within the post. EMV can be used to evaluate the earned performance of individual marketing campaigns and benchmark brands within the competitive landscape.

Engagement via

- Comments
- Tweets/Retweets
- Favorites
- Likes
- Pins/Repins
- Shares
- Video Views

Platforms Including

- Instagram
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Twitter
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- Blogs

Posts By

- Influencers
- Brands
- Retailers
- Publications



1

Best Practice #1

Take a “Test and Learn” Approach to TikTok Strategy

TikTok may be famous for its ability to launch viral products and trends, but predicting whether or not a piece of content will go viral is practically impossible. A carefully executed video, with all the right ingredients for TikTok popularity, might fall flat, while a “throwaway” post created in five minutes might garner millions of likes. This unpredictability, while frustrating for marketers, is a key part of the app’s appeal.

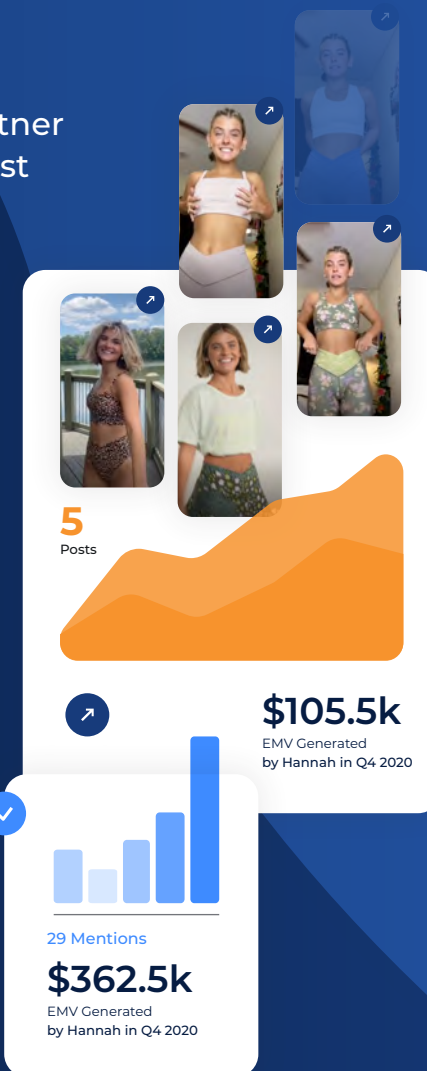
Because there’s no clear formula for success on TikTok, brands must adopt a “test and learn” approach when activating influencers on the platform. Trends on the app move rapidly, and TikTok campaigns should be similarly quick to plan, execute, and evaluate. Additionally, it’s crucial that your initiative aligns with creators’ current interests. Rather than attempting to replicate the multi-pronged, months-long, higher-budget campaigns that tend to perform well on Instagram, treat TikTok like a marketing playground. Focus on developing several quick, low-budget, creative, and timely ideas for initiatives, then iterate on what audiences are responding to.



Brand Spotlight

American Eagle Finds New Partner via Viral Crossover Leggings Post

Gen Z-oriented apparel brand American Eagle is no stranger to success on TikTok, galvanizing the creator community in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic via its mental-health-oriented #AerieRealPositivity challenge. However, one of the brand’s biggest wins on TikTok to date was largely unplanned. In November 2020, creator Hannah Schlenker (@hannahschlenker) wore the brand’s Real Me High-Waisted Crossover Leggings in an unsponsored dance video that quickly went viral. As a result, the leggings subsequently sold out online. In response to this surprise success, American Eagle tapped Hannah as an official ambassador, a gesture that prompted increased content creation: after generating \$105.5k EMV for the brand via five posts in Q4 2020, the influencer drove \$362.5k across 29 mentions in H1 2021, ranking among American Eagle’s top 20 EMV-drivers. By listening to its fans and building off an organic victory, the brand secured a passionate, impactful advocate.



2

Best Practice #2

Make TikTok Campaigns Creative and Easily Adaptable

TikTok's stated mission is to "inspire creativity and bring joy" to both influencers and their audiences, so it's no surprise that top-performing content on the platform reflects this playful ethos. Correspondingly, brands tend to see the most success with TikTok campaigns that allow influencers to freely express themselves, putting their own spin on a simple, easily adaptable concept. While granting influencers creative agency is a must on any platform, controlled scripts and strict campaign guidelines are especially off-limits on TikTok: influencers and their followers, especially those in the Gen Z set, will steer clear of initiatives that feel inauthentic or artistically limiting. Instead, brands should trust influencers' judgment, and rely on the creativity inherent to the platform to carry their message forward.

Strategy Tip

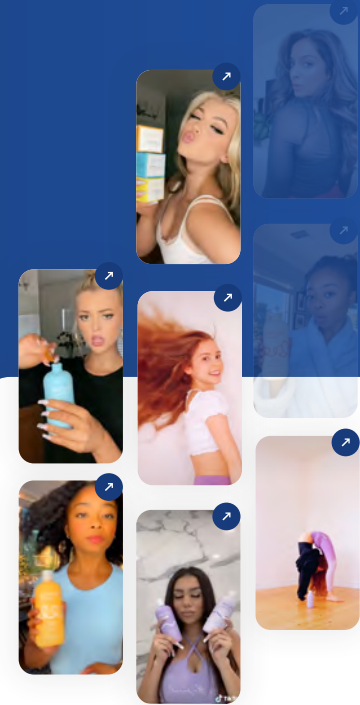
Many top-performing TikTok campaigns embrace the platform's unique format by leaning into two common aspects of viral posts: humorous storylines and memorable sounds. TikTokers love to laugh, so initiatives that are conducive to comedic content creation tend to elicit strong responses. Additionally, because many influencers build their videos around a catchy song or other distinct sound bite, original music is a promising way to unify campaign content and help your initiative resonate with users.



Brand Spotlight

Function of Beauty Engages Fans Via Open-Ended #ShampooShakeUpChallenge

In August 2021, haircare brand Function of Beauty—known for its highly personalized, customizable formulas—made a splash on TikTok with its #ShampooShakeUpChallenge, which invited beauty enthusiasts to share hair routines set to an original song by the brand. As an additional incentive for content creation, Function of Beauty promised one lucky participant a \$1k Target gift card. The open-ended campaign, which offered influencers ample room for creativity, proved to be a hit: #ShampooShakeUpChallenge accounted for \$1.3M of the brand's net \$3.3M EMV in August, fueling Function of Beauty's 71% month-over-month growth.



#ShampooShakeUpChallenge
Aug 2021



✓ **\$1.3M**
EMV Generated
Aug 2021



\$3.3M
Net EMV
Aug 2021

71%
Increase
in EMV MoM



3

Best Practice #3

Let Influencers Be the Experts

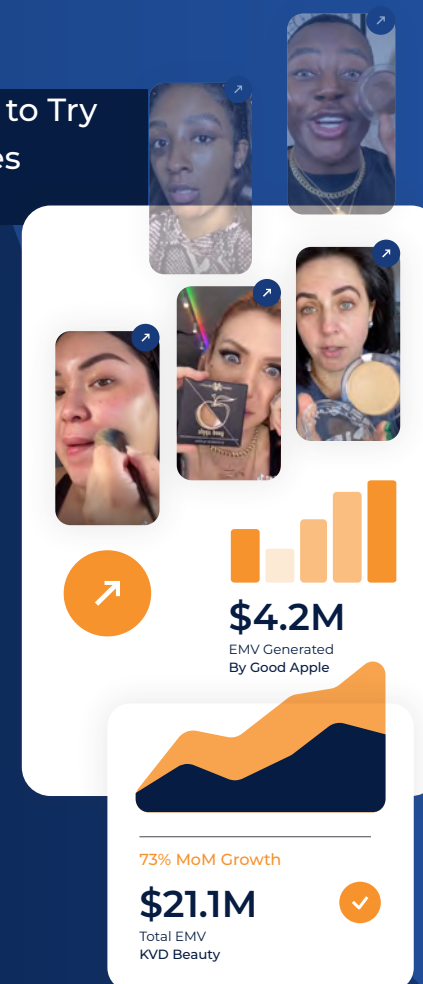
While many marketers are still finding their footing on TikTok, creators are deeply in touch with their audiences' interests. Because these creators are experts on the kinds of content that their followers will appreciate, it's important that brands allow influencers to take creative liberty with partnered posts and campaigns. Rather than attempting to impose pre-existing ideas about how to promote your offerings onto influencers, let creators decide the best way to share your brand with their fans. It's also wise for brands to remain receptive and responsive to creators' feedback about products and marketing activities, and revise their own plans accordingly.



Brand Spotlight

KVD Beauty Invites Influencers to Try Viral Foundation for Themselves

Apple Skin-Perfecting Foundation Balm in March 2021, the brand partnered with beauty TikTokers like Stephanie Valentine (@glamzilla) on videos highlighting the new offering. While these posts were explicitly sponsored, KVD Beauty invited ambassadors to promote the foundation however they saw fit, which for Stephanie meant testing the product on camera to determine whether or not it was "worth the hype." Impressed by the trusted beauty guru's glowing review—and the clear results shown in her video—other TikTokers rushed to try the foundation for themselves, sharing their own seals of approval. This enthusiastic, organic response to an influencer-led promotional activity helped Good Apple power \$4.2M EMV as KVD Beauty's No. 1 product in March, contributing to the brand's 73% month-over-month growth in total EMV (\$21.1M)



Key Takeaways

To Win on TikTok, Let Creators Run the Show

TikTok is now an integral part of the influencer economy, and a critically important platform for any brand hoping to remain relevant among younger consumers. However, to achieve success on TikTok, brands must play by a new set of rules. The following list provides a recap of the core TikTok influencer marketing strategies covered in this report.

1

Take a “test and learn” approach to engaging influencers. Eschew carefully planned, resource-intensive initiatives in favor of quick, low-budget activities, and build off of those that succeed.

2

Develop campaigns that are simple and adaptable, and allow influencers to put a unique, creative spin on your concept.

3

Make influencers your brand’s creative directors on TikTok. Understand that they’re experts on the types of content that engage their audiences, and let them decide on the best way to bring your brand to their followers.

**Advance your
influencer marketing
maturity in the age of
the Creator Economy
with the most trusted
software solution.**



CreatorIQ is the most trusted software to unify and power advanced influencer marketing for the world's most innovative enterprises. Its Intelligence Cloud facilitates data science-enabled creator discovery, streamlines workflow, ensures brand safety, and drives meaningful measurement. AB Inbev, Airbnb, Calvin Klein, CVS, Disney, H&M, Sephora, and Unilever are just some of the brands that utilize CreatorIQ's platform to drive real business results across their influencer marketing ecosystems.

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