



TikTok: A Game-Changing Tool for Business Growth?

In the fast-paced world of digital marketing, TikTok has become a powerful platform for businesses to expand their reach and engage with audiences in creative and meaningful ways. With more than a billion active users worldwide, TikTok offers more than just viral dances and trends—it's a vibrant space for storytelling, brand building, and community engagement. Here's why TikTok could be a valuable addition to your marketing toolkit.

What is TikTok?

TikTok is a short-form video platform where users create and share videos ranging between 15 seconds and 10 minutes long. It offers an array of tools like trending sounds, filters, and editing features, encouraging creativity and authenticity. TikTok thrives on community involvement—content is designed to be shared, recreated, and reshaped, making it an ideal platform for amplifying your messages quickly and effectively.

Audience Reach and Demographics

TikTok's largest audience includes Gen Z (18–24 years) and Millennials (25–34 years), but it's rapidly gaining popularity across all age groups. TikTok's universal appeal lies in its ability to deliver authentic, relatable, and entertaining videos—qualities most people appreciate, regardless of age.

TikTok's Future

In the USA, TikTok's future is uncertain as debates around privacy and national security continue. With potential changes looming, businesses and creators might wonder what's next for the platform. Platforms such as TikTok will always come and go, and trends will change. What really matters is the story you're telling and how you are connecting with people. Whether TikTok sticks around or not, creating engaging, authentic content will always be valuable. It's not about the platform; it's about the message and how you share it.

Is TikTok Right for Your Business?

TikTok is a dynamic platform with the potential to drive meaningful engagement, provided businesses are willing to embrace creativity and adapt to its playful, fast-paced culture. By considering both its opportunities and challenges, businesses can unlock its full potential to build community, amplify brand awareness, and achieve their goals.

At WPR, we specialise in guiding businesses through TikTok's unique ecosystem. Whether you're new to the platform or looking to refine your strategy, we can help you craft content that connects.

Using TikTok – The Basics

TikTok is designed to be intuitive, but here's a quick guide to get started and make the most of the platform:

- **Navigating the Feed:** The TikTok feed consists of two main tabs: the "For You Page" (a curated feed of videos TikTok thinks you'll like) and the "Following" tab (videos from accounts you follow). Swipe up to scroll to the next video, and swipe down to revisit a previous one.
- **Liking Content:** Tap the heart icon on the right-hand side of the screen to "like" a post. This signals to TikTok that you enjoy this type of content and want to see more like it on your For You page.
- **Removing Unwanted Content:** If you're not interested in a particular type of video, press and hold on the video and select "Not Interested." This will help refine your feed over time.
- **Sharing Posts:** To share a video, tap the arrow icon on the right-hand side. From here, you can share the post to other apps like Instagram or WhatsApp, copy the link, or even save the video to your device (if the creator allows it).
- **Following Accounts:** To follow an account, tap the + button next to the creator's profile picture or visit their profile and hit "Follow." You'll see their content on your "Following" tab going forward.
- **Creating Engagement:** Comment on posts to join the conversation or duet/stitch with a video to interact directly with the creator's content. These tools make TikTok a more interactive and social experience.

By mastering these basics, you'll not only have a better TikTok experience but also start to understand the platform's appeal to such a wide range of users.

Benefits of TikTok for Businesses

- **Enhanced Visibility:** TikTok's potential for organic growth stands out because its algorithm prioritises content relevance over follower count, giving even new accounts the chance to go viral. By leveraging trends and engaging content, businesses can reach broad audiences without needing significant ad spend.
- **Building Engagement and Personality:** TikTok allows brands to show a more human side through light-hearted, behind-the-scenes, or trend-driven content, fostering stronger audience connections.
- **Cost-Effective Advertising:** TikTok Ads Manager provides diverse and budget-friendly advertising options, such as in-feed ads and hashtag challenges, which are accessible to businesses of all scales.
- **Local and Global Reach:** Whether your aim is to reach a niche audience or expand globally, TikTok's algorithm adapts to your needs, often rewarding localised content with high engagement.

Fish Hooks: What Could Go Wrong?

While TikTok offers immense potential, there are pitfalls to be mindful of:

- **Brand Misalignment:** None of us want to feel like we're being marketed to on TikTok. The platform sprang up because people wanted to create their own content and find like-minded viewers for it. It's important that your content isn't overly polished or rigid. It helps to think of sharing your content as a way of 'finding your people' rather than building your audience.
- **Inconsistent Engagement:** The algorithm's emphasis on trends means visibility can fluctuate, making it essential to post regularly.
- **Reputation Risks:** Missteps, such as participating in controversial trends or using insensitive content, can harm a brand's image.
- **Privacy Concerns:** Businesses should be transparent about data collection and comply with platform guidelines to avoid backlash.

Tips for TikTok Success

- **Stay Genuine:** Users value authenticity. Share relatable moments, behind-the-scenes snippets, or light-hearted content that feels real.
- **Jump on Trends Wisely:** Participate in relevant trends or challenges, but ensure they align with your brand's values and tone.

- **Test Different Formats:** Experiment with storytelling, humour, tutorials, or even Q&A sessions to determine what resonates best.
- **Engage Actively:** Reply to comments, collaborate with creators, and interact with user-generated content to build trust and loyalty.

Examples of Successful Content

1. **Educational Yet Entertaining:** New Zealand skincare brand Ethique saw an increase in sales by posting videos demonstrating the sustainability and benefits of their solid beauty bars.
2. **Humour Meets Branding:** Duolingo’s witty content featuring their mascot consistently garners millions of views by combining humour with subtle promotions of their language app.
3. **Travel Inspiration:** Air New Zealand has successfully used TikTok to showcase scenic destinations and encourage young travellers to explore New Zealand.

As someone who primarily views content on TikTok, I would recommend observing what works on TikTok by studying what resonates with you as a viewer. For example:

1. **Trends That Feel Inclusive:** I’ve noticed that videos where creators take a trend and make it relatable to everyday life often keep me watching. It’s not about being overly polished but about feeling like the content could have been made by a friend.
2. **Authenticity and Humour:** The posts that grab my attention are the ones where people share genuine stories or humour in their day-to-day lives—whether it’s a funny pet moment or a light-hearted take on work struggles. They feel like a slice of real life, which makes them memorable.

As a viewer, this kind of content not only stands out but also creates a sense of connection. Even without posting, observing patterns like these can help shape your understanding of what might work if you ever decide to jump in and test the waters on TikTok.

Shanelle Smallman

Account Manager

WPR