CreatorIQ | TikTok

5 Keys to Successful TikTok Creator Ads

Data-Backed Guidelines to Get the Most Out of Creators

TikTok Marketing Partner

Creators
Make Great TikTok Ads

Why? Because people trust them.

For today's consumer, a review or recommendation from a creator holds a lot more water than a branded advertisement or the paid endorsement of a celebrity spokesperson.

That creates a linear progression from creator trust to brand trust to conversion.

57%

of people who watched a Spark Ad featuring a creator say the creator is **trustworthy**...[1]

56%

of people who watched a Spark Ad featuring a creator say they can **trust the brand**...[1]

71%

of the TikTok community says creator authenticity led them to **buy a product**[2]

Of course, **not all** creator ads are created equal

CreatorIQ partnered with TikTok to uncover what separates the platform's top performing creator ads from the rest. In this report, we'll walk you through these data-backed findings and guidelines for delivering top-performing ad campaigns.

⚠️

A word of caution up front:

Give creators creative flexibility. Ultimately, they know best how to reach and engage their audience. But by providing them a framework in which to flex their creative muscle, you'll get the most out of your ads.
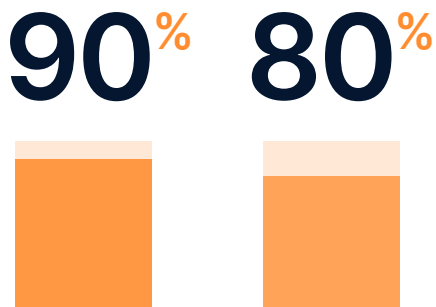
Grab Attention From the Start

The average human attention span has dropped to just eight seconds—one second less than that of a goldfish. But you're lucky to even get that much time on social or entertainment platforms.

90% 80%

50%

Grabbing attention with an effective hook is critical not only to delaying that next swipe, but for landing ad impact. TikTok found that 90% of ad recall impact and 80% of awareness impact is captured within the first six seconds of an ad.[3]
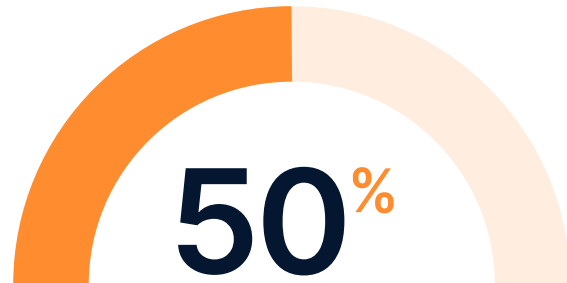
One way to hook the viewer? Show a person or creator. Doing so in the first two seconds of an ad increases hooking power by 50% and improves ad recognition by 32%.[4] And be careful about being too promotional: branding in the first few seconds can increase recall, but needs to integrate with the narrative in a meaningful way. Opening a package with your branding inside works; splashing your logo across the opening frame doesn't.

Hooking Power

TikTok determines an ad to have a successful hook based on the top third of ads that were watched for the first 6 seconds.

[3] TikTok Marketing Science, Value of a View Internal Meta-Analysis, 2021
[4] TikTok Marketing Science Global How to Hook Study [US, UK, GCC] 2023, conducted by Metrixlab

Walmart ›‹

"I'm blind and I'm surprising my husband with a home-cooked meal."

So begins a particularly effective—and, frankly, charming—**video published by creator couple Matthew and Paul** (@matthewwandpaul) and boosted by Walmart as a Spark Ad. Paul's opening line hooks the viewer from the outset, pulling them through to learn how he prepared the meal.

The answer, of course, is a Walmart+ membership that allowed Paul to have the ingredients quickly delivered to his door for free (and comes with a free Paramount+ subscription; "Dinner and a movie," quips his delighted husband to close the video). Combined with other best practices like voiceover and text overlay, Paul's hook put the video's viewer retention into the top 1% of all TikTok ads.
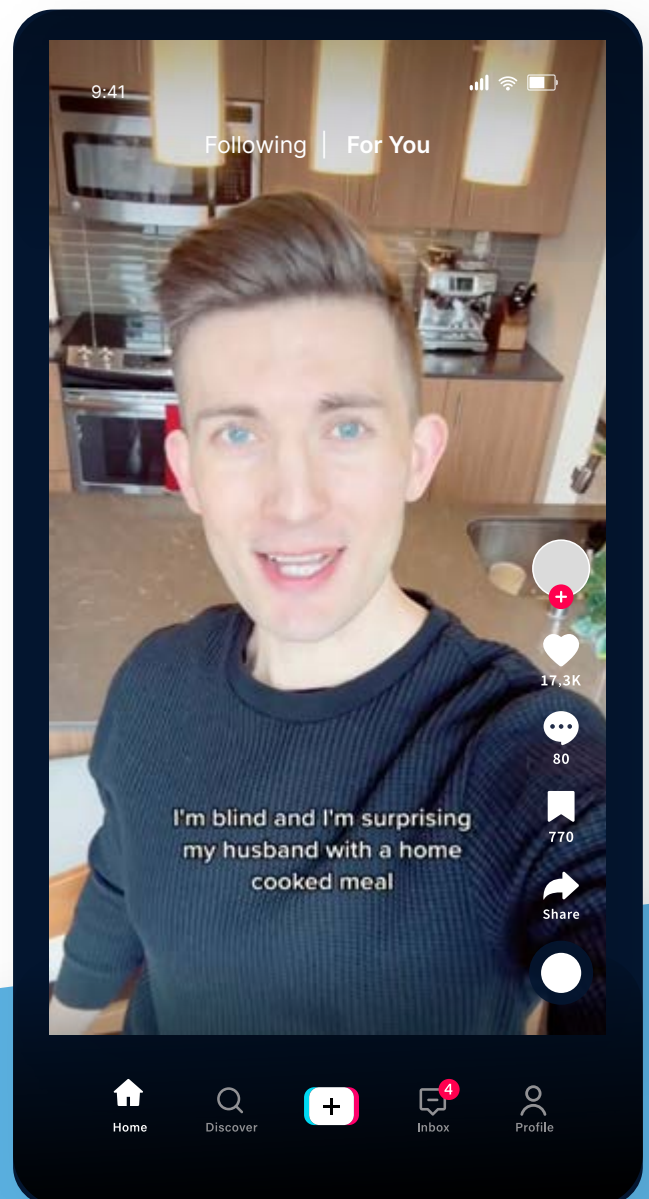
Walmart ☀️

The ad drove more than $168.3K of EMV

The ad drove more than $168.3K in Earned Media Value, CreatorIQ's proprietary metric for quantifying the value of social media content. Altogether, Walmart totaled $166.2M EMV from TikTok during the first nine months of 2023, a 62% YoY jump.

$166.2ᴹ

EMV generated from TikTok in the 1st nine months

Sept

$168.3ᵏ

EMV generated from Paul's TikTok Ad

62%

YoY Growth

Jan

How We Calculate
Earned Media
Value (EMV)

To calculate EMV for a brand or campaign, we assign a unique value to a piece of content based on the engagement that this content received from followers and consumers. This value is then attributed to the specific brands mentioned within that content. EMV can be used to evaluate the earned performance of individual marketing campaigns, and benchmark brands within their competitive landscape.
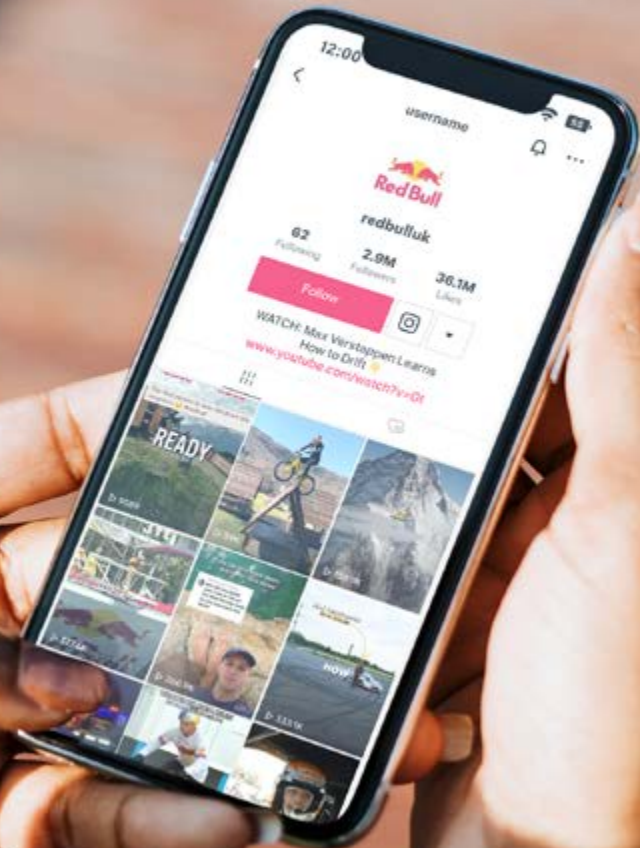
Foster a Personal Connection

The power of creators lie in their authenticity and relatability: more than three quarters of the TikTok community says the platform's creators feel approachable and they can connect with them.[5]

Your brand can harness that connection in ads by encouraging creators to engage and interact with the audience. What does that look like? Here are three keys to fostering that personal connection.

[5] Source: TikTok Marketing Science MENAT, Power of TikTok Creators 2022, conducted by IPSOS

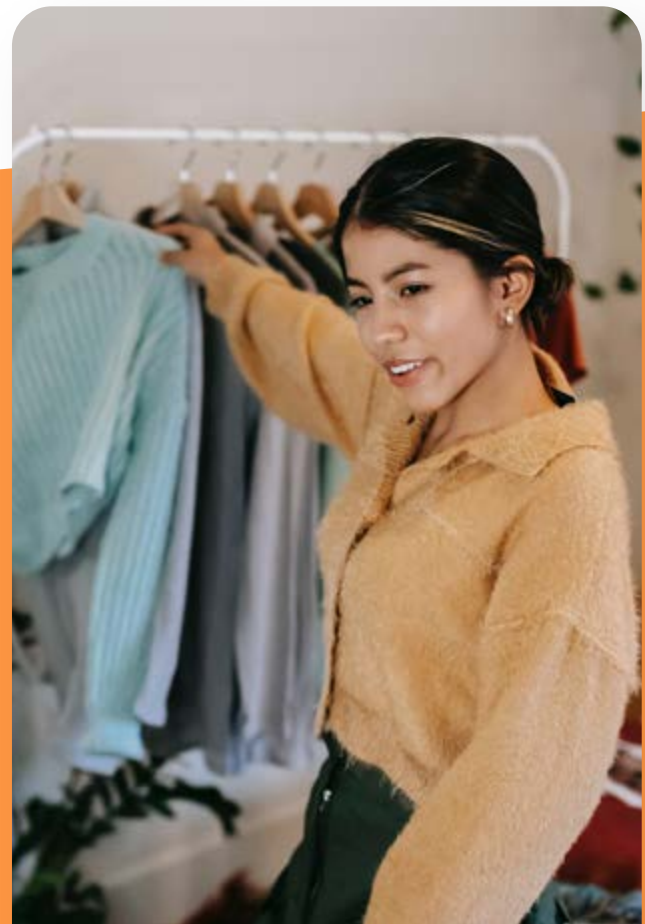# Have the creator directly address the audience from the jump.

+112%

Ads in which a creator greets their audience have a +112% uplift in brand recall[6]

..you

+128%
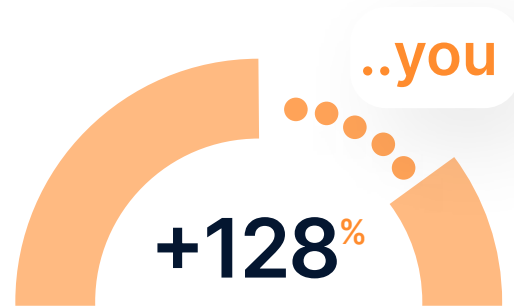
Ads in which creators say "you" within the first five seconds have a +128% uplift in purchase intent[6]

1.5x

Ads with speech talking **directly** to the audience are 1.5x more likely to hook than without[7]

[6] TikTok Marketing Science US, Creator Ads: Elements of Attention Study 2022, conducted by Lumen [7] TikTok Marketing Science Global How to Hook Study [US, UK, GCC] 2023, conducted by Metrixlab

②

Show the creator's face

+148%

Creator ads that show a person's face drive a +148% uplift in brand recall for entertainment ads.[6]
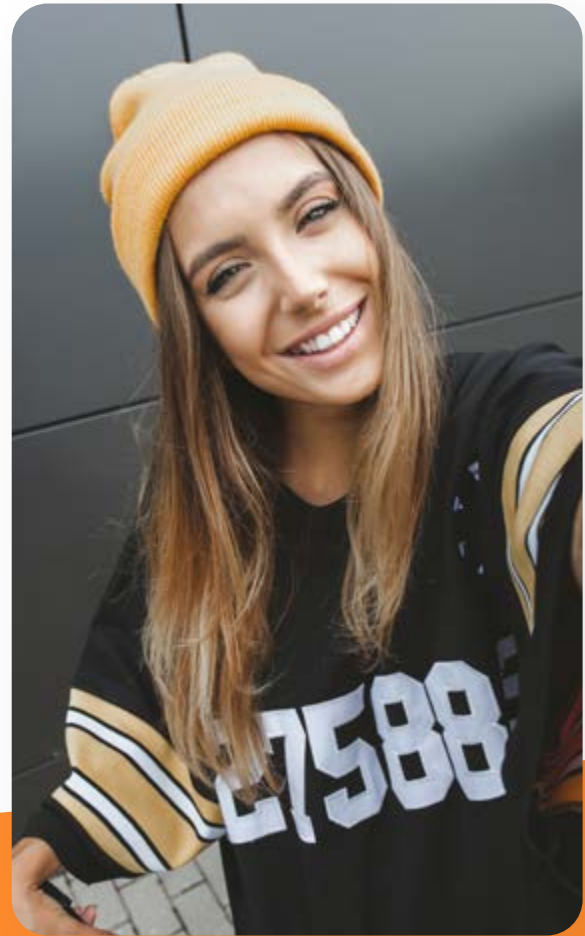
③

Include a creator voiceover

Among a sample of Food & Beverage ads, creator ads that included a voiceover drove a +63% uplift in purchase intent. If the creator is testing a product or exploring a shopping experience, have them narrate the process to engage the viewer.[6]

+63%

[6] TikTok Marketing Science US, Creator Ads: Elements of Attention Study 2022, conducted by Lumen

2023 has been a big year for Peloton on TikTok

The $5.2M EMV Peloton racked up on the platform between January and September was a 90% YoY jump.

Partnering with creators that really know how to form connections and trust with their audience has been a major factor in that growth. A **September Spark Ad** featuring fitness creator Ajahzi Gardner (@ajahzi) hits every one of the guidelines mentioned above.
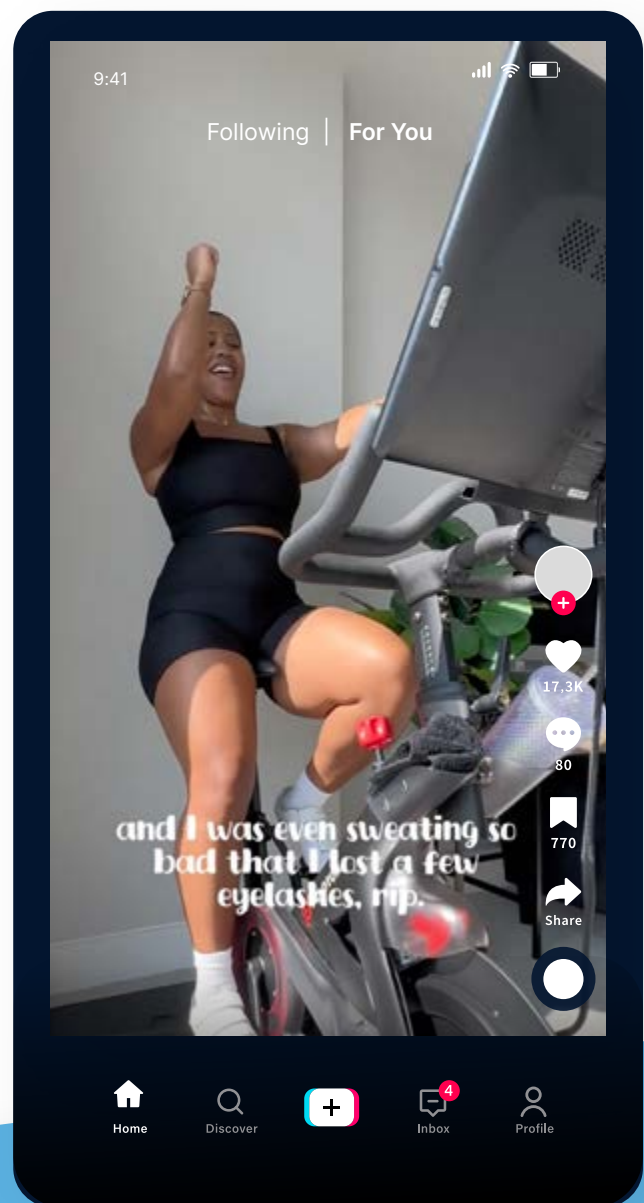
"Hi, besties. It's time for another episode of cycle with your girl."

and I was even sweating so bad that I lost a few eyelashes, rip.

and the best part about it was having my own little personal cheerleaders

Ajahzi opens by directly addressing the audience: "Hi, besties. It's time for another episode of cycle with your girl." As she climbs onto her bike, a voiceover explains why she bought a Peloton and how her 45-minute club bangers workout had her sweating hard enough to lose some fake eyelashes.

The ad is lent even more authenticity by the fact that it was the 16th time in 2023 that Ajahzi posted a Peloton spin video. Viewers clicking through to her profile can immediately see that she's a true believer in the product.

$5.2M

EMV generated from TikTok
Jan – Sept 2023

Sept

Jan

90%

YoY Growth
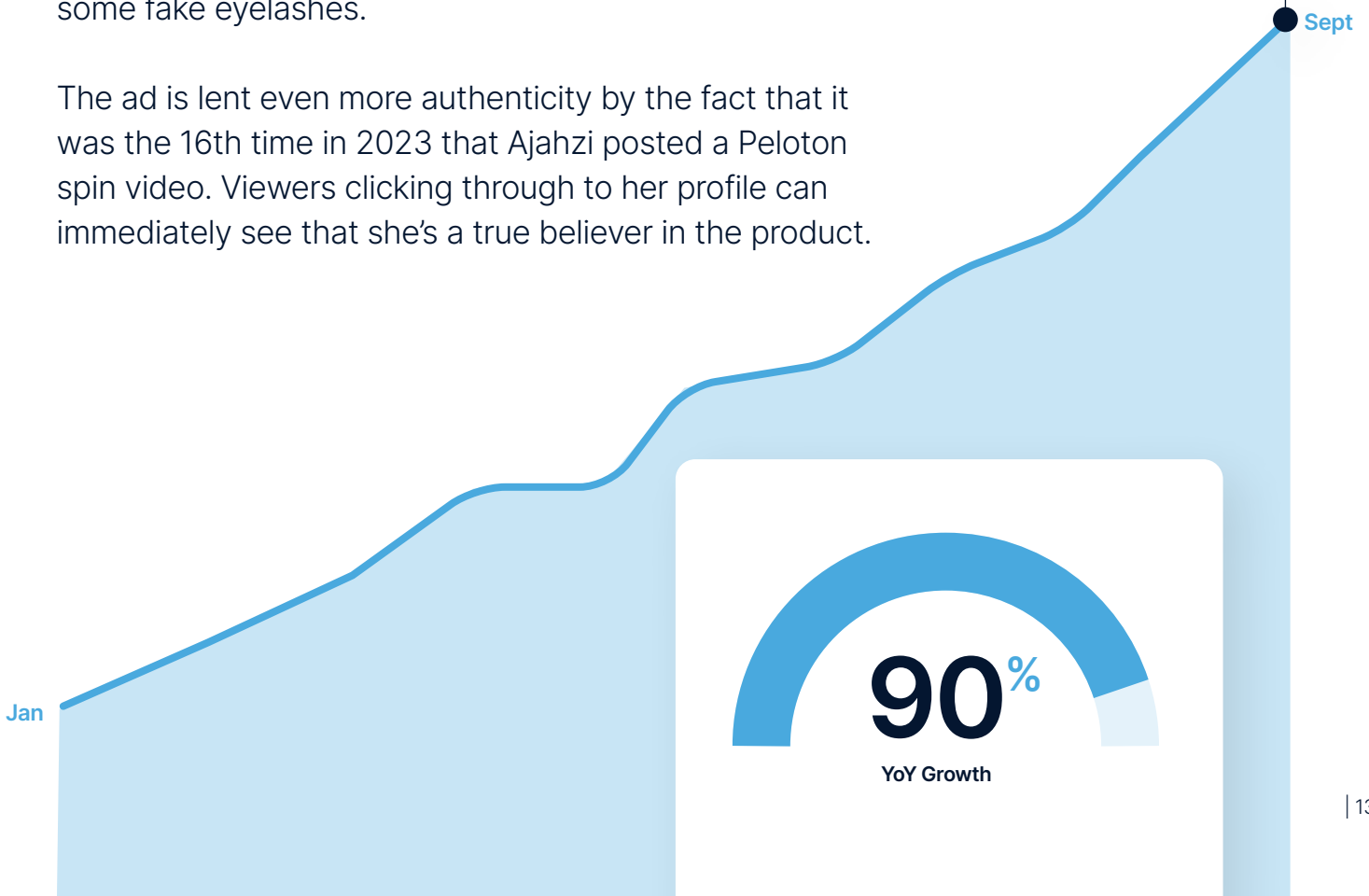
Guideline 3
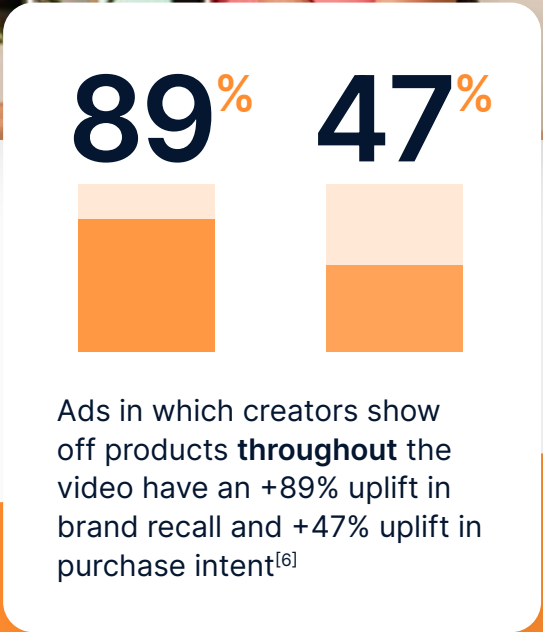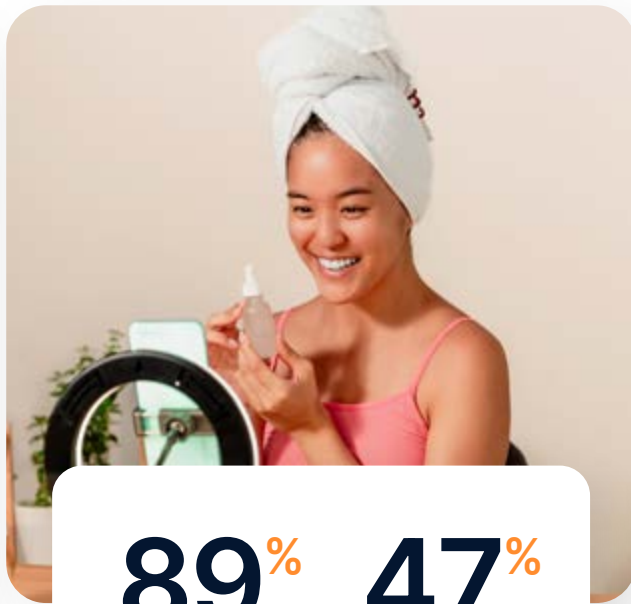
Show Your Product in Action

It's no surprise that consumers are more likely to trust the referral of a person over that of a brand—that's why brands turn to spokespeople. But TikTok creators garner more trust than your typical celebrity endorsement: six out 10 people say TikTok creators are more influential than celebrities.[8]

Consumers trust TikTok creators, which is why ads that show a creator using your product are so effective. Unboxing videos—where a creator opens and tests a product—are particularly effective, but any video that shows a product in action boosts ad performance.

+31%

Creator unboxing videos garner a +31% uplift in **attention**[6]

89% **47**%

Ads in which creators show off products **throughout** the video have an +89% uplift in brand recall and +47% uplift in purchase intent[6]
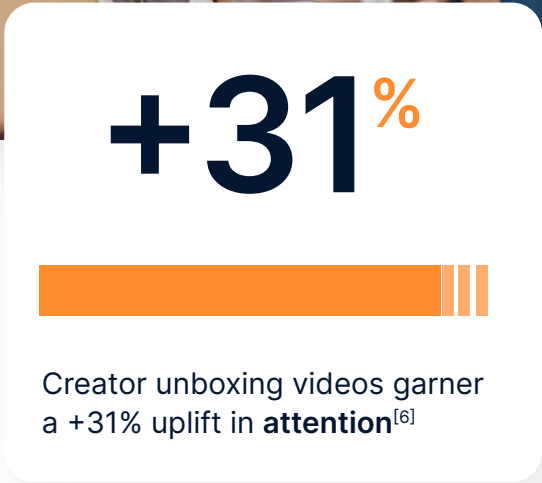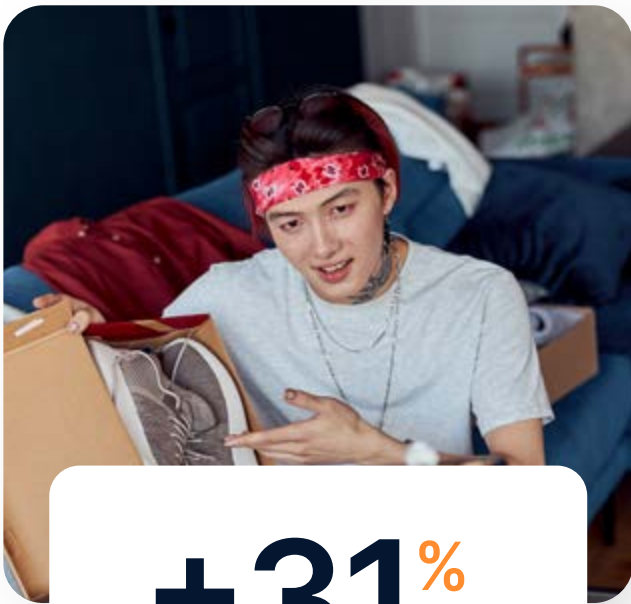
Content that shows products in use sees:

+25% uplift in recall,
+23% in ad likeability,
+65% in brand affinity, and
+18% in consideration[9]
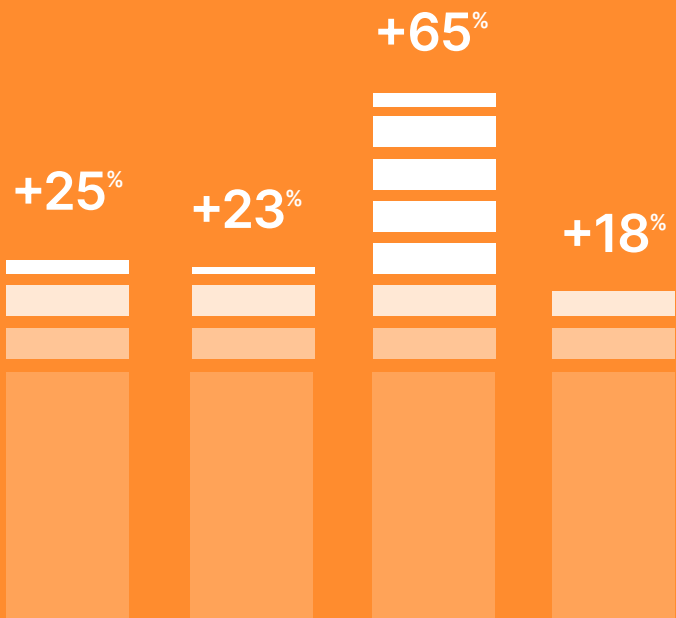
+25% **+23**% **+65**% **+18**%

[6] TikTok Marketing Science US, Creator Ads: Elements of Attention Study 2022, conducted by Lumen [9] TikTok Marketing Science, US SMB Creative Effectiveness Study 2022, conducted by Lumen

# Product use videos are particularly effective for beauty products.

Haircare powerhouse Redken, used them to drive more than $19.4M in TikTok EMV through the first nine months of 2023—good for second in the haircare category.

In one particularly strong example, creator Kylie Vazzana (@kylievazzana) **showed her 162K followers** how she uses a pair of Redken products to "fix [her] damaged beach hair in five minutes." A quick before-and-after picture lets the audience know exactly what they're getting into, and a voiceover and quick cuts gets them from start to finish in an engaging way.
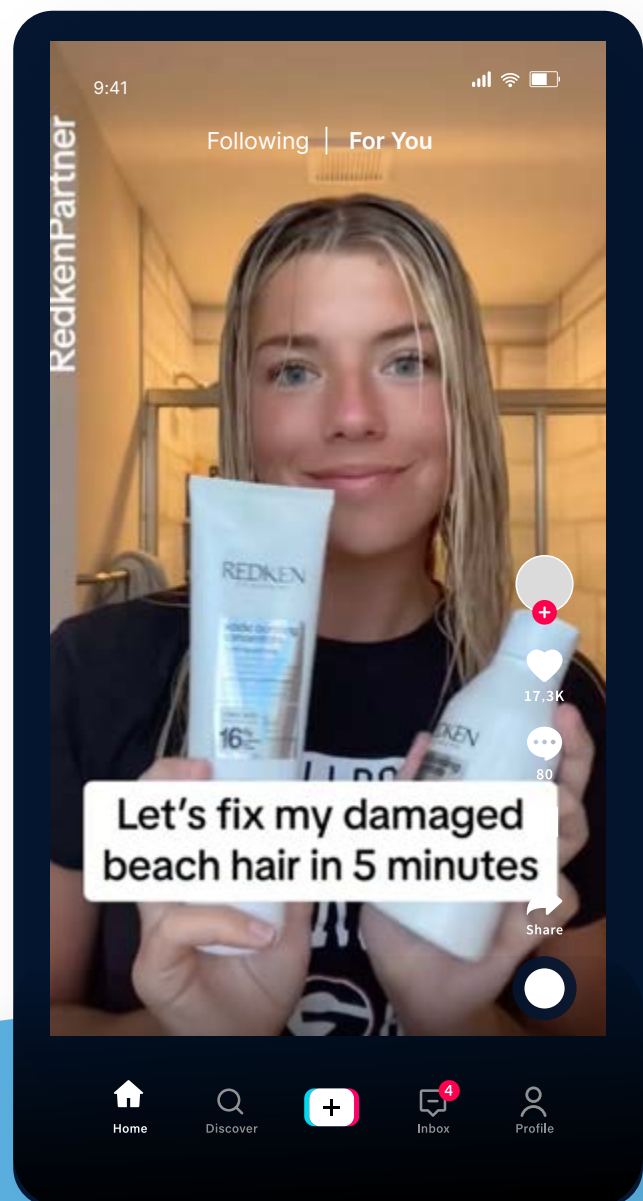
Let's fix my damaged beach hair in 5 minutes

Posts tagged with #RedkenPartner garnered over $14.1M EMV

After boosting the post as a Spark Ad, Redken saw the ad rank among the top 2% and 6% in TikTok ads in retention and conversions, respectively. It was part of a strong ad strategy that reached beyond TikTok: posts tagged with #RedkenPartner garnered over $14.1M EMV across all platforms from January to September 2023.

$14.1^M

EMV generated from tagged posts #RedkenPartner Jan - Sept 2023

Sept

Top 2%
and 6%

TikTok ads in retention and conversions

Jan

Use High-Impact
Creative Elements

TikTok ads perform best when created with the platform in mind.
These three creative elements are essential to effective creator ads.

Sound

Brands accustomed to advertising in sound-off environments need to shift their approach with TikTok. Nine out of 10 people say sound is vital to the TikTok experience.[10]

Creator ads that feature music drive a +61% uplift in brand recall and +177% uplift in purchase intent.[6]

Some brands lean in by creating original music to accompany their videos—and these can be highly effective. But that doesn't mean your brand needs to write the next chart topper: clips from popular songs and even lines of dialogue from a hit TV series can boost ad performance.

+177%

Uplift in **purchase intent**[6]

Music
Track name
ARTIST NAME
Track name
ARTIST NAME
Track name
ARTIST NAME
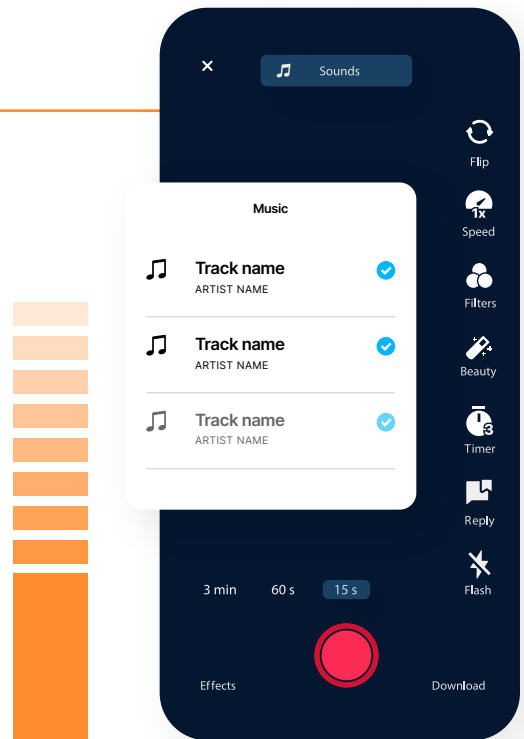
Looking for the right sound?

TikTok's **Commercial Music Library** serves up more than 500,000 sounds and songs pre-cleared for commercial use—no need to fuss with obtaining licenses on your own.

Text Overlay

Sound is most effective when it's supported by visual guidance such as text overlay. Ads that feature text overlay are 1.4x more likely to hook someone than ads that don't.[7] And the presence of captions leads to a +31% increase in likability and +95% in brand affinity.[11]

+31% uplift in **likability**

+95% uplift in **brand affinity**

I was just minding my own business when I...

17.3K
80
770
Share
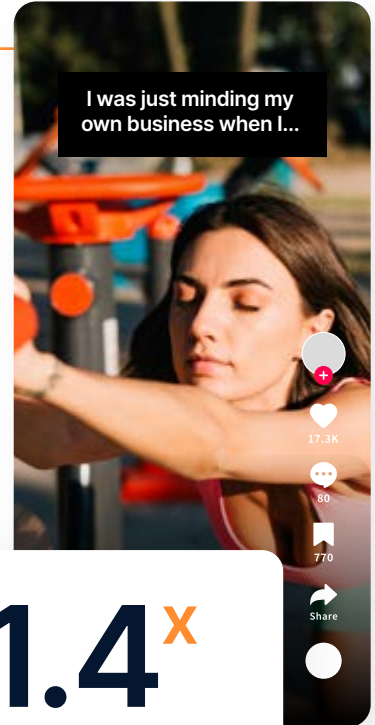
1.4x

Ads that feature text overlay are 1.4x more likely to hook someone than ads that don't.

Pacing

+162%

TikTok is a place of energy—uptempo music, movement, color, and quick cuts—and the best ads match the pace. Beauty ads that are high energy, for example, see a +162% uplift in recall compared to other ads.[6]

+60%
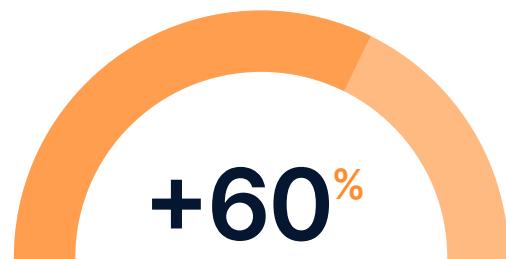
But the editing shouldn't be frenetic. Ads that feature seamless transitions from one shot to another have a +60% uplift in recall.[6]

[6] TikTok Marketing Science US, Creator Ads: Elements of Attention Study 2022, conducted by Lumen [7] TikTok Marketing Science Global How to Hook Study [US, UK, GCC] 2023, conducted by Metrixlab [11] TikTok Marketing Science US SMB Creative Effectiveness Study 2021, conducted by Lumen

GLACÉAU
vitaminwater

We all have that friend who can't take a sip or a bite until they've captured the perfect post.

In June 2023, comedian Jonathan Bynoe dropped **a laughably relatable TikTok sketch** in which an annoyed friend snaps on his post-obsessed buddy for keeping him from his Vitaminwater. As usual, Jonathan hilariously plays both characters.

Sound is obviously critical here—captions just wouldn't convey the humor in Jonathan's voice. But pacing is an underrated key to the ad's success. The perfectly timed cuts between the two characters almost make you forget they're being played by the same person.
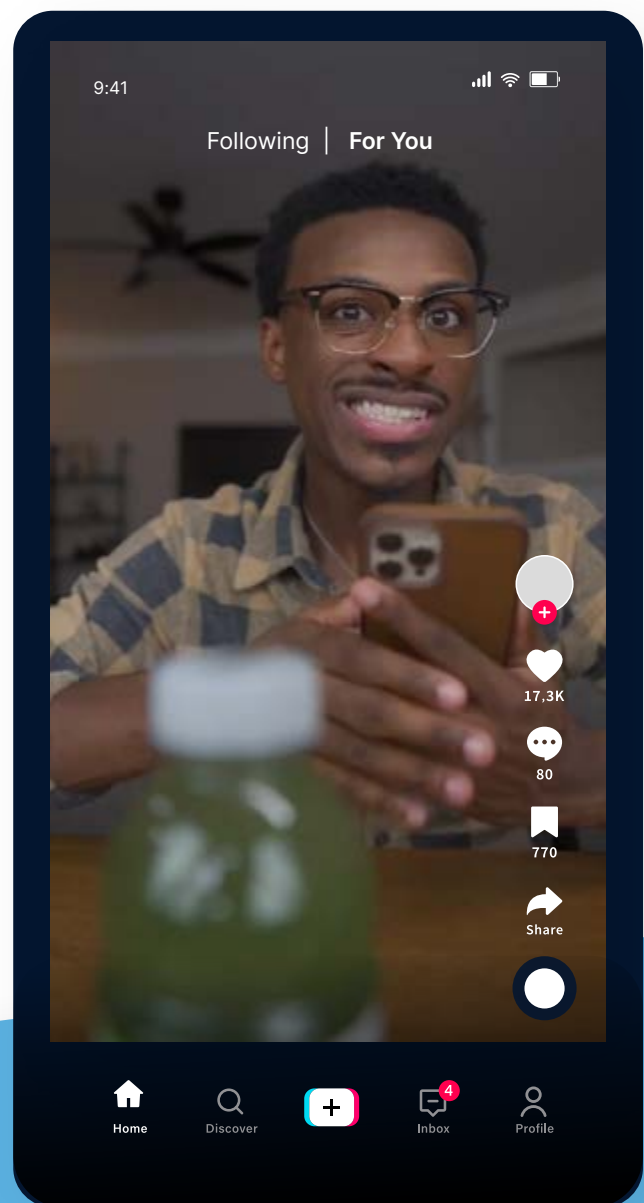
In just two months, the campaign drove over $1.6M EMV across all platforms.

vitaminwater

The ad was an ingenious fit for Vitaminwater's #NourishEveryYou campaign, which sells the drink as the ideal way to nourish and support the varied roles we each take on in our lives. In just two months, the campaign drove over $1.6M EMV across all platforms. Jonathan's two TikTok posts accounted for $391.5K of that total.

$1.6^M

EMV generated in 2 months across all platforms

Month 2

$391.5^k

EMV generated from Jonathan's posts

Month 1

Best Practice 5

Close With a Clear Call to Action

The creator has hooked the viewer and showcased your product... but the work isn't done. An effective call to action is often the difference between an engaged fan and a paying customer.

Both Spark and In-Feed Ads allow brands to add on-screen CTA copy above the CTA button. Use this limited space effectively and you'll coax viewers into taking the next step.

+205%

Creator ads featuring **strong written CTAs** lead to a +205% uplift in purchase intent[6]

[6] TikTok Marketing Science US, Creator Ads: Elements of Attention Study 2022, conducted by Lumen

And don't sleep on Display Cards,

an interactive add-on that swaps out on-screen CTA copy for a customized image of your choosing. Doubling as a CTA button, this card is a great way to highlight important messages, promote offers, and drive more traffic to your website.

+69%

Creator ads using the display card CTA button see a +69% uplift in brand recall[6]

Sponsored
17.3K
80
770
Share

Home   Discover   Inbox   Profile
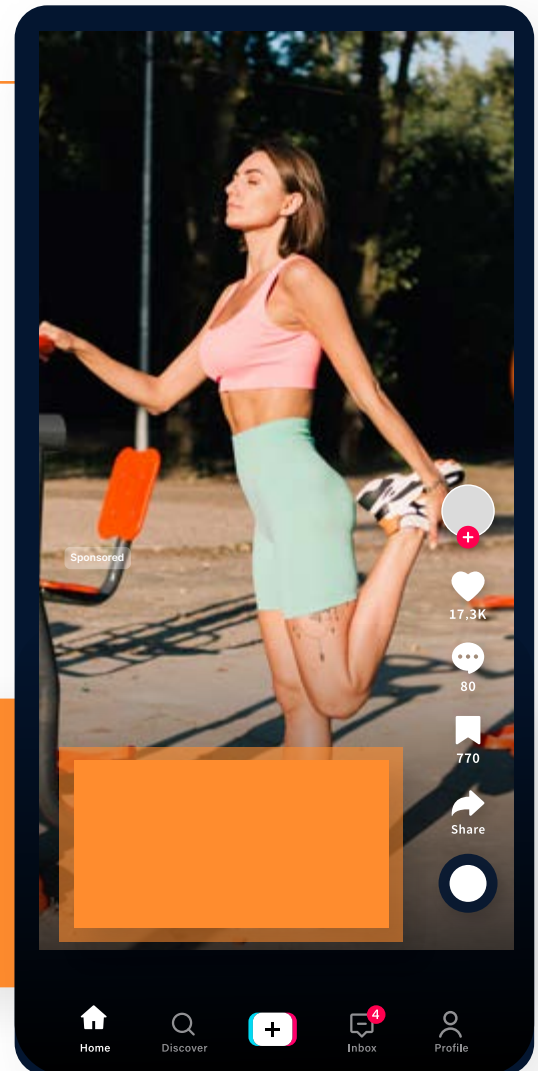
Discover What's Next

What does the future of creator marketing look like? **Read our 2024 Influencer Marketing Trends Report** to find out.

[6] TikTok Marketing Science US, Creator Ads: Elements of Attention Study 2022, conducted by Lumen
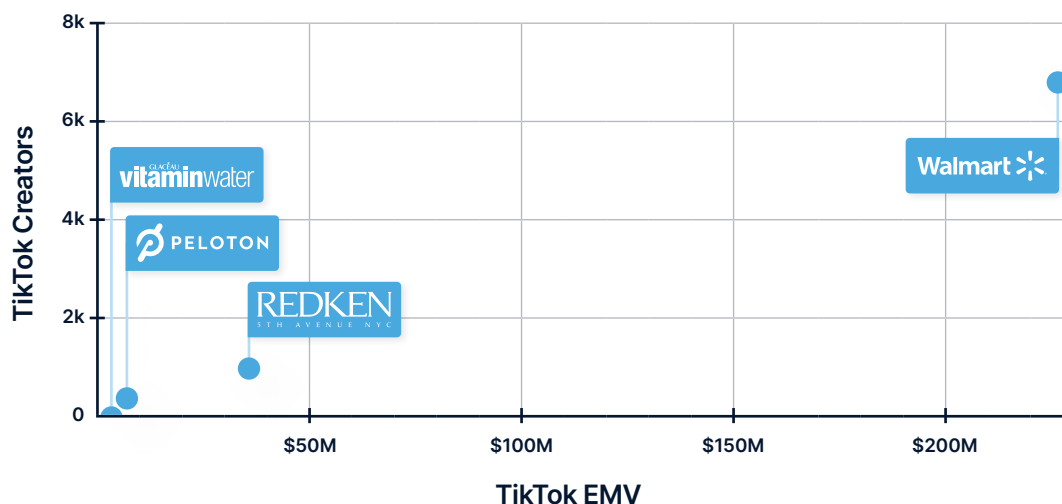
Grow With TikTok Creators

Nailing these guidelines is the first step in building an effective creator marketing program on TikTok. The next step is scaling your program.

Brands can no longer rely on partnering with a dozen or so mega influencers. There's a direct relationship between the number of creators and EMV—the top programs include thousands of creators.

Just take a look at the brands included in this report.

More creators = higher EMV.

Previous 12 months
(Oct. 2022–Sep. 2023)

Scatter plot with x-axis "TikTok EMV" ranging from $50M to $200M and y-axis "TikTok Creators" ranging from 0 to 8k. Brands plotted: vitaminwater (low EMV, ~0.3k creators), PELOTON (low EMV, near axis), REDKEN 5th Avenue NYC (~$30M EMV, ~1k creators), Walmart (~$225M EMV, ~6.8k creators).

Scale With CreatorIQ

Of course, scaling a creator program is easier said than done. How do you discover hundreds or thousands of creators? Recruit them? Manage them? Pay them? Measure their impact?

That's where CreatorIQ comes in.

CreatorIQ, the industry's most trusted software to unify and power advanced influencer marketing, has everything you need to serve up scalable ROI. **As a badged TikTok Marketing Partner**, CreatorIQ provides direct access to the exclusive first-party insights housed in the TikTok Creator Marketplace.

Ready to take your TikTok program to the next level?

Learn More at creatoriq.com

Want to uncover your own findings?

Dig through the data yourself with **TikTok Insights**. Sort by age, location, and industry to get to know your audience.