TikTok
creator playbook

HEARTBEAT
We enable everyone to create entertaining videos and discover the creativity of the world. TikTok is the first mobile-native, global video platform built around your interests.

Discovery on TikTok is powered by personalization and quality; our platform rewards content that is created by both popular tastemakers as well as emerging talent.

Maybe you’re a TikTok power user looking to engage your community, or maybe you’ve found success elsewhere and want to introduce your content to an entirely new audience.
1. START
   ESTABLISHING YOUR IDENTITY
   - Optimizing Your Profile
   - Checklist: The Basics of Posting
   - Defining a Content Strategy

2. GROW
   BUILDING YOUR FANDOM
   - Engaging Your Audience
   - Measuring Success

3. ELEVATE
   TAKING YOUR CONTENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL
   - Boost the Quality of Your Content

4. TIKTOK TIPS
   MAKING IT ALL WORK
   - Tips for Getting on the For You Page
ESTABLISHING YOUR IDENTITY

Your profile should clearly communicate your identity as a creator while also attracting first-time visitors.
ESTABLISHING YOUR IDENTITY

OPTIMIZING YOUR PROFILE

WHAT TO DO?

1. Profile Name

- Pick a name that is short, memorable, and where possible, gives visitors an idea of the videos you make or who you are.
- When you set up your profile, keep your username consistent with your other social platforms.
  - Consistency across platforms is important so your followers can easily find you.
  - Consistency helps create your brand.
2. Update Description

Have a clear description that tells visits who you are and what kind of videos you make.

**EXAMPLES**

"Hi guys, I do extreme sports! Check out my videos and leave a comment."

"Live, love...but mostly LAUGH at my skits! Comment which of my videos you think is the funniest!"

3. Upload Profile Pic/Video

To better showcase your personality and content, use an existing video from your camera roll instead of a picture.

4. Link Instagram/YouTube

- You will be required to sign in to your Instagram & YouTube accounts to do this. This ensures that your followers know that the TikTok account is actually yours.
- Linking to Instagram allows you to share your TikTok videos on Instagram more easily, which will in turn fuel your growth across both platforms.
- As you grow on TikTok, your fan base will want to check out more of your other content. We want you to grow as quickly as possible everywhere, so be sure to link your other social accounts.

**TIP**

If you already have amazing videos in your library, posting some of these on TikTok can help jumpstart your account (don’t forget, TikTok is a platform where vertical videos shine brightest).
**Vertical Video**

The best videos are full vertical videos (aspect ratio of 1080 x 1920) shot in the TikTok app. You can convert your videos in your library to vertical videos using editing apps or software.

**Hashtags & Descriptions**

Including relevant hashtags and descriptions (metadata) allows TikTok to better surface your content to the right audience.

**Thumbnail**

After you have shot or uploaded your video, give the TikTok community a reason to watch your video by selecting the most captivating and intriguing thumbnail.

**Category Selection**

After posting your video, select the most relevant category for your content. This helps surface your content to a wider audience.

**Sharing**

After you post your video, be sure to share it to your accounts on other social networks and encourage your audience to follow you on TikTok.
ESTABLISHING YOUR IDENTITY

DEFINING A CONTENT STRATEGY

Why is this important?

Your content plan will guide you in deciding what content to post and when to post it. These are some good steps to take to build out your content strategy and pipeline on TikTok:

3 steps to create your TikTok content strategy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1</th>
<th>STEP 2</th>
<th>STEP 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find your main creative focus</td>
<td>Upload unique “slice of life” content</td>
<td>Use cool TikTok features to engage with fans</td>
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FREQUENCY:

- STEP 1: At least 3 per week
- STEP 2: Sporadic, no set schedule
- STEP 3: No set schedule
**STEP 1:**

Find your main creative focus

**Interest:**

Define your “interest area”: pick a content topic or area that is unique, meaningful to you, has a group of people who would be interested in it, and where you can add your own flavor.

Stay away from “general” interest areas. The more you focus, the more likely you are to find a community of enthusiastic and passionate fans.

- **General Interest Area:** Sports

- **Focused Interest Area:**
  - Trick Shots
  - Extreme Biking
  - Fitness Training

- **General Interest Area:** Beauty

- **Focused Interest Area:**
  - Recreating Famous Looks
  - 15-second Makeup Tips
  - Hair Styling Tricks

**TIP**

Having an interest area is critical for standing out. The evolution of TikTok from a lip sync app to an entertainment social network has given rise to creators who make a diverse range of content.
Entertain:

Give viewers a reason to follow your page and watch more of your videos. Create content that makes people feel something and want to share with their friends. You might incorporate one of the below elements to your videos:

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<th>AWE</th>
<th>SURPRISE</th>
<th>HUMOR</th>
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ESTABLISHING YOUR IDENTITY

Format:

Having a consistent format / style helps your viewers build a connection to your content. Some elements in your format to develop for each video:

- **Segments:** Help move the story along by playing with the camera, mood, and lighting

- **Intros/Outros:** Every video is a story, and every great story has a beginning and an end

- **Voice and Style:** At the end of the day, your fans keep coming back for YOU

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**TIP**

When is the best time to post? This is something you’ll want to determine as you figure out your followers and their viewing habits. A good way to begin is to experiment with posting at different times to gauge engagement from your followers.

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**TIP**

Note on Timing & Frequency of Posting: All top users agree that consistency of posting is critical for your continued growth or success on TikTok.
Establishing Your Identity

Step 2: Upload unique “slice of life” content

These are not the everyday, “video diary” moments, but rather the select, funny, organic moments you capture - and these can get real distribution on TikTok. This type of content, with the right description and hashtags, can help drive discovery of your profile, and engage and entertain your fans.

Examples

- Epic Street Performers
- Unique Cute Animals
- Jaw-dropping Scenery
STEP 3:

Use cool TikTok features to engage with fans

Your fans love to see your personality, and TikTok’s fun native formats allow you to connect and engage with your fans even deeper.

These formats are great for engaging with your existing fans and friends. While they do not receive as much distribution for reaching new fans (although if it’s really special sometimes it can!), it is always important to focus on both Growth and Engagement. These formats fall more in the engagement bucket, and can be used now and then to keep your fans engaged.

Another fun way to engage with your fans is to add funny sounds or songs to your videos. You can find plenty of sounds in our extensive sound library.

TIP

We do recommend, however, that you post this type of content no more frequently than creative focus point #1 above. So, for example, if you are posting 2 videos per week based on your creative focus, then we would recommend no more than 2 videos per week for these fan engagement formats as well. (Of course, if Dancing or Live Streaming IS your creative focus and talent, then of course, you would do those more often).

Use some of the tools / formats described below whenever you’re inspired to do so:

• **live.ly**: TikTok’s integrated live-streaming app allows you to go live and talk to your fans. You can host Q&A sessions, video call some fans (aka “guesting”), and co-broadcast with other creators.

• **Duet**: You can pick a lucky fan and duet to one of their videos. They’ll feel special and become a part of your fandom. More on building your fandom in the next section.
Growing your community.

Promoting your videos on social media and collaborating with other creatives are two tools to growing your community.
Why is this important?

While you continue to work on producing great content on TikTok, it's equally important to focus on how to grow your audience.

Having a solid audience development strategy allows you to benefit from the power of our social network.

TIP

The most important way to grow your audience is to keep the quality high. High quality content leads to better engagement, which in turn leads to wider distribution of those videos.

*Participate in Trending Hashtags
What to do?

There are a few easy steps to growing your audience.

1. Understand your Audience Base

   • Questions You Should Be Asking:
     - Who are my followers?
     - Who are my most faithful fans?
     - Who are my top commenters?
     - What do they want to see from me?

   • Where You Can Find These Answers:
     - Looking at the fans through your profile page
     - Reading through your fans’ comments
     - Replying and liking comments that speak to you
     - Taking notice of your top contributors

2. Collaborate with Other Creators

   • Identify Them:

     There are tons of creators on TikTok. Many creators collaborate with others in order to reach current and new fanbases. It’s important to take a look and see who you are similar to. Some factors to keep your eye on when looking for good collaborators:
     - Similar categories or genres
     - Similar video formats
     - Similar audience sizes
     - Leaderboards

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   Shoot multiple videos at the same time together. You can always save those videos for public publishing at a later date, depending on your schedule.
• **Create With Them:**

Once you’ve had a chance to connect with other creators, get talking about what you want to create! Many creators use the following tools or tricks on our platform already:
- Duet functionality
- Appearances or cameos in each other’s content
- Tagging each other in the caption

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• **Connect with Them:**

There are many different ways you can reach out to other creators in the community:
- Following & BFFing each other
- Commenting and engaging on their content
- In-person at conferences or other creator-focused events
- Though agencies or creator networks
- Direct messaging within TikTok

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**TIP**

The duet feature stitches together two distinct videos into a single video, either as a montage (which flips between the two videos every 2 seconds) or as a side-by-side (in which each video plays simultaneously). Duet functionality is not dependent on using music. In fact, we’ve seen many duet videos that have not used music as their audio.
3. Participating in Trending Hashtag Challenges

If you need some inspiration, trending hashtags are a creative way to find new topics that will get your content exposed to a new viewer base. Participating in challenges helps you as a creator join—and lead—the community.

Do not abuse hashtags (for example, don’t place captions on videos with specific hashtags that aren’t relevant to the content). The most relevant tagged videos will be favored for discovery.

4. Encourage Viewers to Watch More

Many of the top creators encourage viewership through a variety of ways, including:
- Asking fans directly to follow, engage, etc.
- Posting on other social media accounts mentioning that you’re on TikTok
- Linking out your TikTok videos to your other social media
- Reacting to comments from fans

5. Build a Sense of Community

- Call your fanclub a specific name (for example, @fifthharmony fan-club’s name is “Harmonizers” and @YoJessicaFlores fanclub’s name is “Flower Fam”)
- Listen to your fanbase (BFF and shoutout to them)
- Encourage mutual following
- Duet with fans on TikTok

TIP

Use many different engagement features such as live streaming and Q&A in order to reach your fanbase.
Why is this important?

It is important to look at your key metrics in order to see what is performing best. Engagement metrics like hearts and comments can be tracked across individual videos.

Follower growth of course is key to growing your overall audience and distribution. We will continue to update this section as more metrics get released!

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Track your metrics daily to best understand what works for you.

Each creator is different!
What to do?

1. Metrics to Monitor

- TikTok:
  - Hearts
  - Comments
  - Follows

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   Follows across TikTok and other platforms, especially when you link your Instagram or YouTube handles to your profile

- live.ly:
  - Concurrent Viewers
  - Total Viewers
  - Emoji-love (hearts on the live stream)
  - Coins

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   To gain traction on your videos, stay focused on making content consistently and engaging with your fans as much as possible. Sometimes it just takes a while to find your family!

2. Being Patient

Do not get discouraged if your likes or followers are not as high as others. Some users may have been on the platform for much longer, or may be connected to other users they are using for cross-promotion. There are many factors at play here.

It can take some users a while to get distribution beyond their initial friends and fans, as much as a year or more. They key is to keep producing high quality content you love and that you would love to watch yourself. Over time, new users start to get more distribution in our recommendation algorithm the more high quality content they create - which includes many data points beyond just Hearts and Comments that we collect behind the scenes. So be patient, keep at it, and keep checking this Playbook as we will always update it with new versions as the platform updates too.
ELEVATE

TAKing your content to the next level

Once you’ve established your presence on TikTok, it’s important to keep improving the quality of your content.
Before you press the record button

Plan: It is important to plan your storyline / scenes (depending on your type of content) to help you produce quality content.

Some points to think about:

- **Script**
  - **Storyline:**
    Is your content scripted (e.g. comedy sketch) or do you just need an outline of the type of shots you want to capture (e.g. travel vlog, Q&A, visual arts etc)?

- **Characters:**
  How many people will be in the video? The quality of comedy sketches often increases as you add in different characters.
• **Storyboard**

  • **Scenes:**
    Do you know what all the scenes will look like? Either draw them out or find images that represent your ideal shots.

  • **Length:**
    How long do you want the produced video to be?

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**TIP**

You can use music from our library to elevate your content. If a video is interesting already, keeping the original audio (and not layering in music) makes the video seem more authentic.

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• **Frame:** Now that you have your script and storyline together, you should find your location / set and set up your shots:

  • **Vertical Video:**
    - Be sure to film in 1080 x 1920 px. Vertical videos outperform all other video dimensions on TikTok.
    - Make sure your subject is in the vertical frame.
**Lighting:** Your viewers need to see you and everything in the scene, so be sure to think about your lighting source. Some ideas:

- **Basic:**
  Use natural light - it’s free, balanced, and easy to work with. If outside, be sure to face the direction of the sun. If inside, you can use the light coming in from a window.

- **Intermediate:**
  Invest in some simple lighting equipment, like ring lights, LED light, etc.

- **Advanced:**
  Invest in a lighting course - e.g. 3 point lighting. Vloggers, beauty gurus, pranksters etc. can really elevate their content with a more intricate lighting setup.

**Sound:** Your viewers want to hear you so make sure the sound is clear. Some ideas:

- Use your device’s headphone for up close shots.
- Invest in a plug-in condenser mic for your iOS or Android device.
- If shooting on another camera (e.g. DSLR), use a condenser mic.

**Post-shoot: editing your videos**

**In-app editing:**

- While shooting, use the stop motion technology to get the best segment. If you are not happy with a segment, you can delete the last segment and reshoot.
- The “story” feature allows you to compile up to 4 clips together.

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**How to use story feature:**

1. Shoot video in-app, save to private.
2. Go to private videos.
3. Select “Compile Story”.
4. Select the 4 clips you want to compile.
5. Reorder clips as desired.
6. Preview story.
7. Publish.
EDITING SOFTWARE: You can use your own editing software to add further effects. Some important steps:

- **1080 x 1920 px:**
  
  Vertical video outperforms other video types on TikTok. Be sure to set up your projects in the vertical dimension ratio that fills the vertical screen.

- **Logos, Intro Cards, End Cards:**
  
  To elevate the branding of your content, you can add in vertical intro and end cards, your logo, etc.

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**TIP**

Editing is the secret weapon that top users employ to elevate their content. Taking the time to perfect your video can make all the difference.
TIKTOK TIPS
MAKING IT ALL WORK

Check out tips on how you can have the best TikTok account. We’ll be adding more as our program grows - for now dive in to how to get on the For You Page.
MAKING IT ALL WORK

TIPS FOR YOUR PAGE

1. Want to get on the FYP?

The best videos on TikTok make it to the For You Page where they get thousands and sometimes millions of views - building a following overnight, and putting creators on the map in hours. Want to see your video on the FYP? Here are some tips:

- Make your content visually striking & satisfying

- Duet trending videos

- Likes & Comments increase distribution
  The more comments and likes you can get on your content, the more likely it will show up on the For You Page.

- Make it appeal to the largest audience possible!
  This might mean minimal voice-over in a specific language, and minimal text on your post.

- Typically shorter videos have a better chance of making it to the For You Page (15 seconds or less)
  This isn’t a hard and fast rule, but as a general principle is true.

- Use trending songs!
  By attaching a trending song to your video, you significantly increase the chances of your video reaching the For You Page.

- Do not do follow-for-follow videos or other spammy/scammy tactics
  TikTok moderators look for these, and will take action on your account, potentially even banning the account.

- Avoid very young children in content
  TikTok takes child privacy seriously, which may mean videos that have very young children in them (under 13) reduces their chances of going viral.
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