



SYMPHONY TALENT

Using TikTok for employer brand: what you need to know



- Introduction – TikTok and its users
- How is TikTok currently used by brands?
- Using TikTok in your employer brand
- How can TikTok be used in the future?
- Best practice for building an EB with TikTok

INTRODUCTION – TIKTOK AND ITS USERS

TikTok is a brilliant example of how social platforms, when catering for the needs of their audiences, can scale up at incredible speeds. The short-form video app launched in 2016, and by 2019 had already hit a staggering **1.5 billion users around the world**. In the UK, TikTok launched in 2017, and in two short years already had **8.7% of the UK's smartphone-owning population** holding an account.

Unsurprisingly however, it has been during the coronavirus pandemic that TikTok has truly become a household name – **Q1 of 2020** has been the quarter with the **most downloads ever** for the app.

At a difficult period when people are looking to stay connected, keep entertained, and get informed, the lighthearted, short-form, user generated content (UGC) that allows people to share their experiences, participate in fun challenges and (as highlighted in recent weeks) keep politically active and informed – has been many people's saving grace.

European Monthly Active Users



UK

17 million



France

11 million



Germany

10.7 million



Italy

9.8 million



Spain

8.8 million



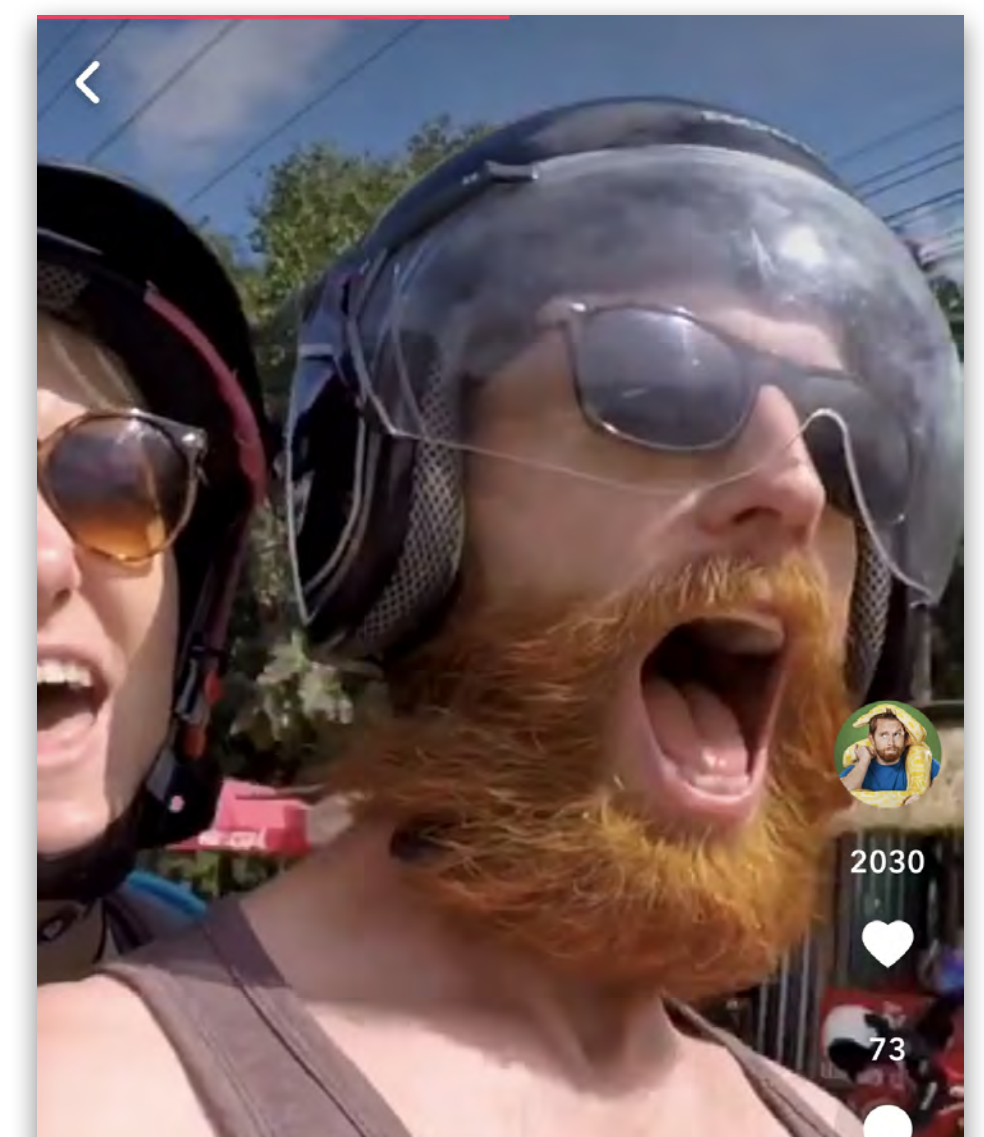
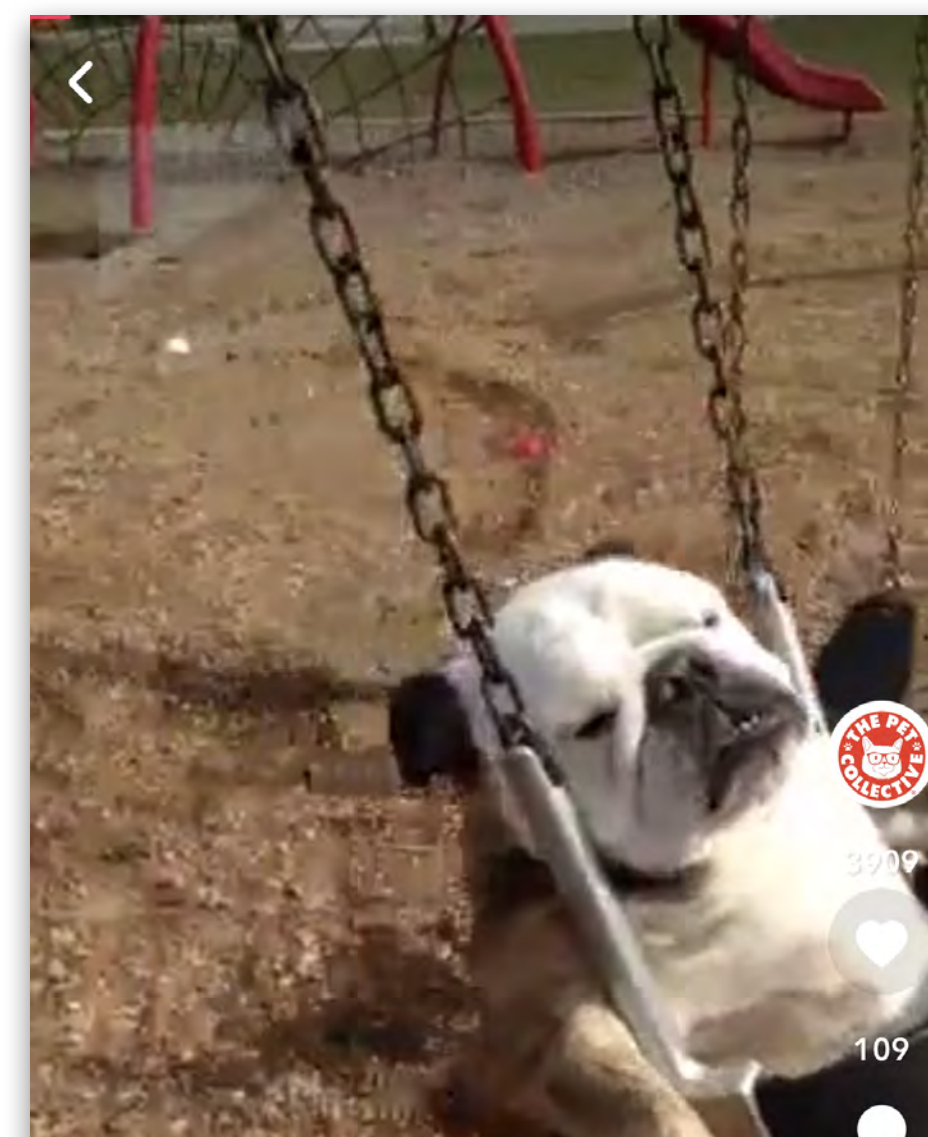
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INTRODUCTION – TIKTOK AND ITS USERS

This platform is not just for under 25s, as most would expect. Over the last year, TikTok has been attracting a wide-range of different audiences. At the end of 2019:

- **25% of users were 18-24 year olds (Gen Z)**
- **9.3% were 25-34 years old (Millennials)**
- **4.7% were 45-54 years old (Gen X)**

Jana Ulaite, head of brand and partner marketing at TikTok claims that 'our proposition is relevant for everyone. Even before lockdown, we've seen different people from all ages and backgrounds joining TikTok.'





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INTRODUCTION – TIKTOK AND ITS USERS

All of the above isn't to say that the platform doesn't also have its detractors. Over the last year, TikTok has dominated media headlines, with concerns being raised over the platform's use of data and Chinese government access to it, as well as anecdotal stories regarding its content moderation processes and criticisms of its algorithm.

More recently, the app has also been banned in India (following a temporary ban in early 2020) related to border skirmishes with the Chinese government.

But what should this mean for users and brands looking to leverage the platform?

With an aggressive growth strategy leading to a higher profile, it is easy to see why more and more people are questioning the platform's use and governance. And TikTok isn't alone in data and content moderation controversy. To date, many global companies including Coca Cola and Starbucks have suspended social media advertising over perceived lack of action regarding hate speech.

The thing to keep in mind is that, as with any media, caution is key. Assessing why your brand wants to use the channel and how it intends to engage with the audience will ensure a robust strategy for posting and, should further revelations come to light, a clear direction for suspending its use.



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HOW IS TIKTOK CURRENTLY USED BY BRANDS?

There are two different ways that brands can use TikTok:

- **As another advertising channel – an account is not needed for this.**
- **To build brand presence by creating a brand profile and sharing unique video content.**

For advertising

TikTok offers a vertical full-screen experience known as an **in-feed native video**. This presents a new creative opportunity for storytelling because viewing a vertical video is different from viewing other formats of video – the content must take this unique experience into consideration. And given that the main user group are digital natives immune to obvious advertising, the more creative a piece of content is, the better received it's going to be.

Other ways to advertise on TikTok include:

- **Brand takeovers**
- **TopView**
- **Hashtag challenges**
- **Branded effects.**

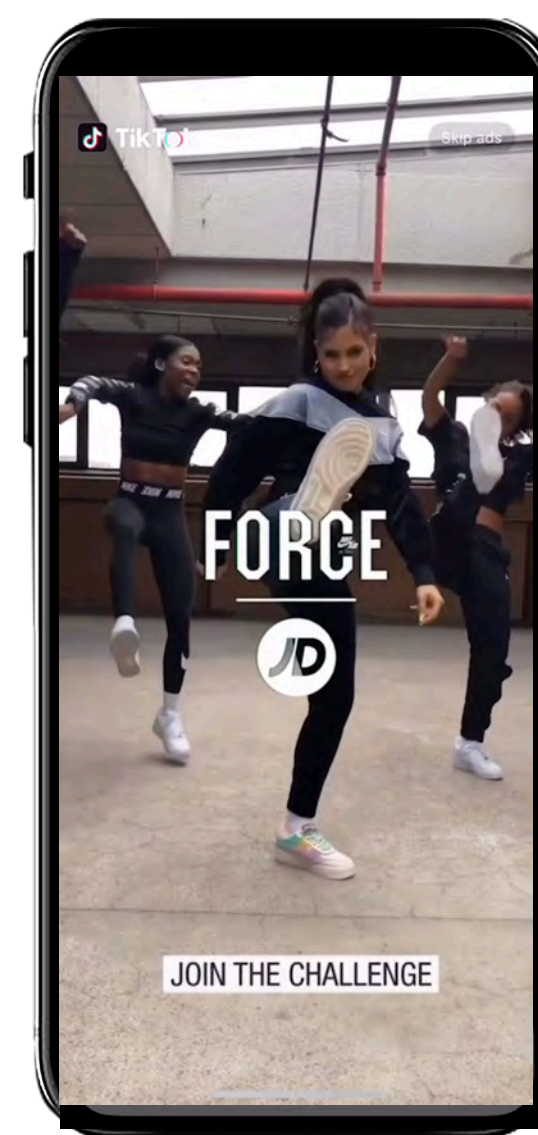


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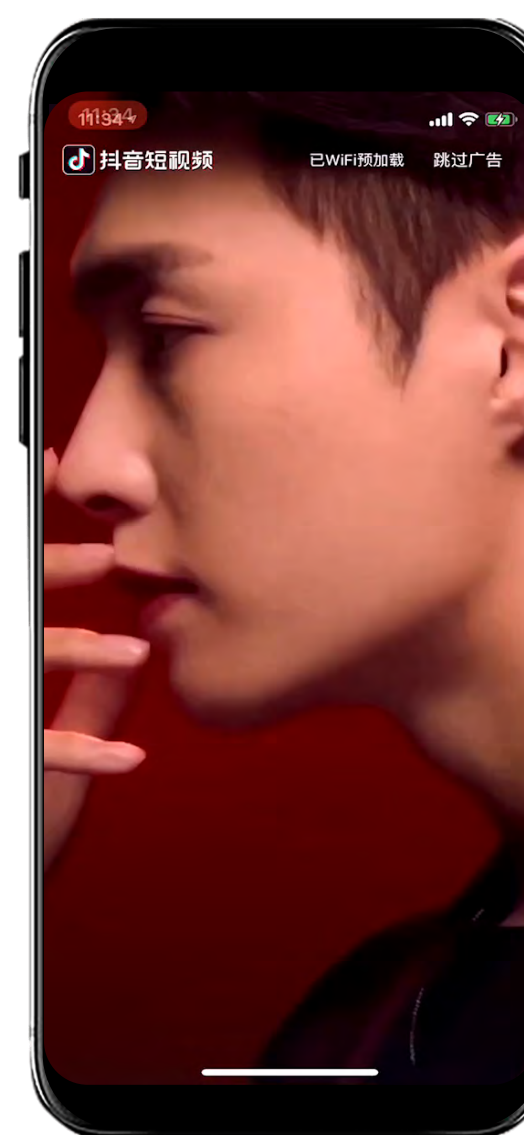
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Ways to advertise on TikTok

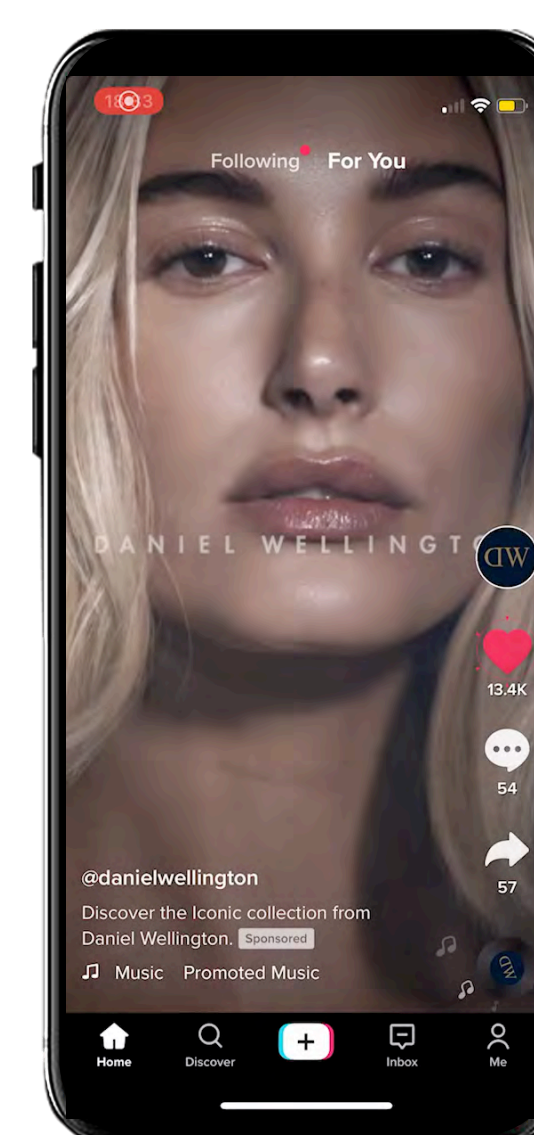
Brand Takeovers



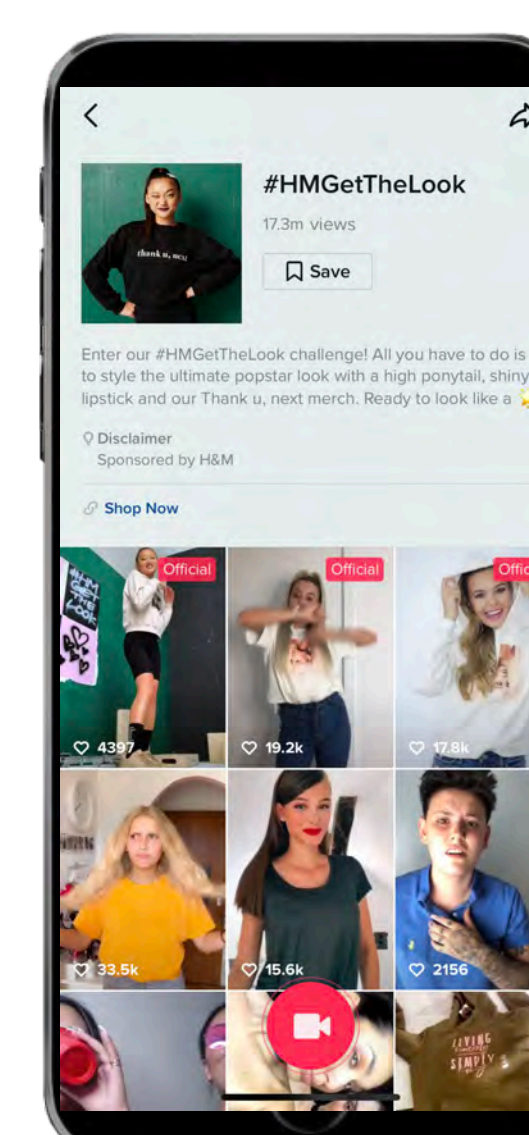
TopView



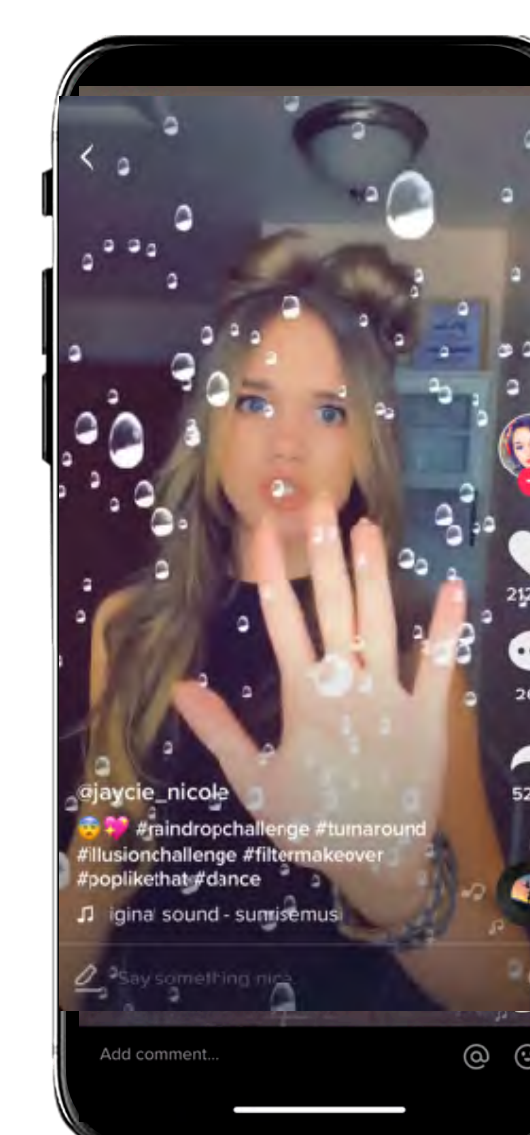
In-Feed Video



Hashtag Challenges



Branded Effects



We can provide more detailed information on each of these formats to help you decide on which one would be the most suitable for your campaign.



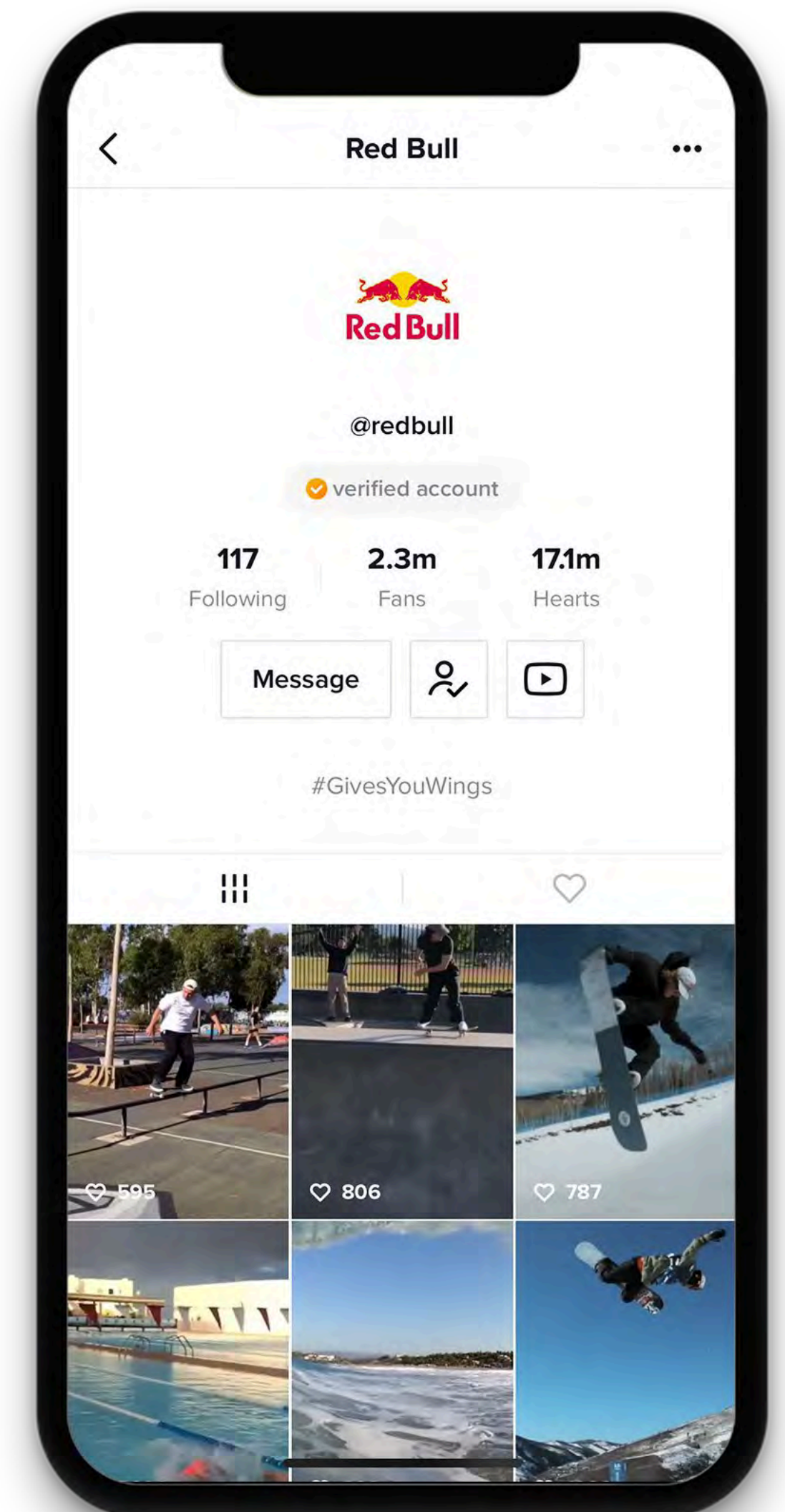
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HOW IS TIKTOK CURRENTLY USED BY BRANDS?

For brand presence

When using the platform for the second purpose, it's important to remember that your content should always be guided by an honest brand personality. TikTok's biggest user group care a lot about the transparency of brands, expect a higher level of authenticity, and are not afraid to scrutinise or 'call out' brands for supporting causes that seem unrelated to their brand mission, or contradict past behaviours in an attempt to capitalise on social issues.

Micro-influencers, hashtag challenges and UGC are the names of the TikTok game. Build affinity by turning users and TikTok superstars into co-creators. Give your audience the license to get creative. And engage with your users as much as possible to build trust and loyalty.





USING TIKTOK IN YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

More and more consumer brands are building a presence on TikTok – this means that there are plenty of ways that employer brands can follow in their lead, and even create their own ways of standing out, especially if your business relies on early career candidates to grow.

Brands best suited for TikTok

If you're looking to run an early talent recruitment campaign, TikTok is a great platform to get in front of the right audience. But if you're looking to build a presence, it would be an advantage if your employer brand already has:

- a content publishing strategy
- agility in the way you produce content
- the ability to turn-around videos quickly and consistently
- the energy and openness to create creative, out-of-the-box content.

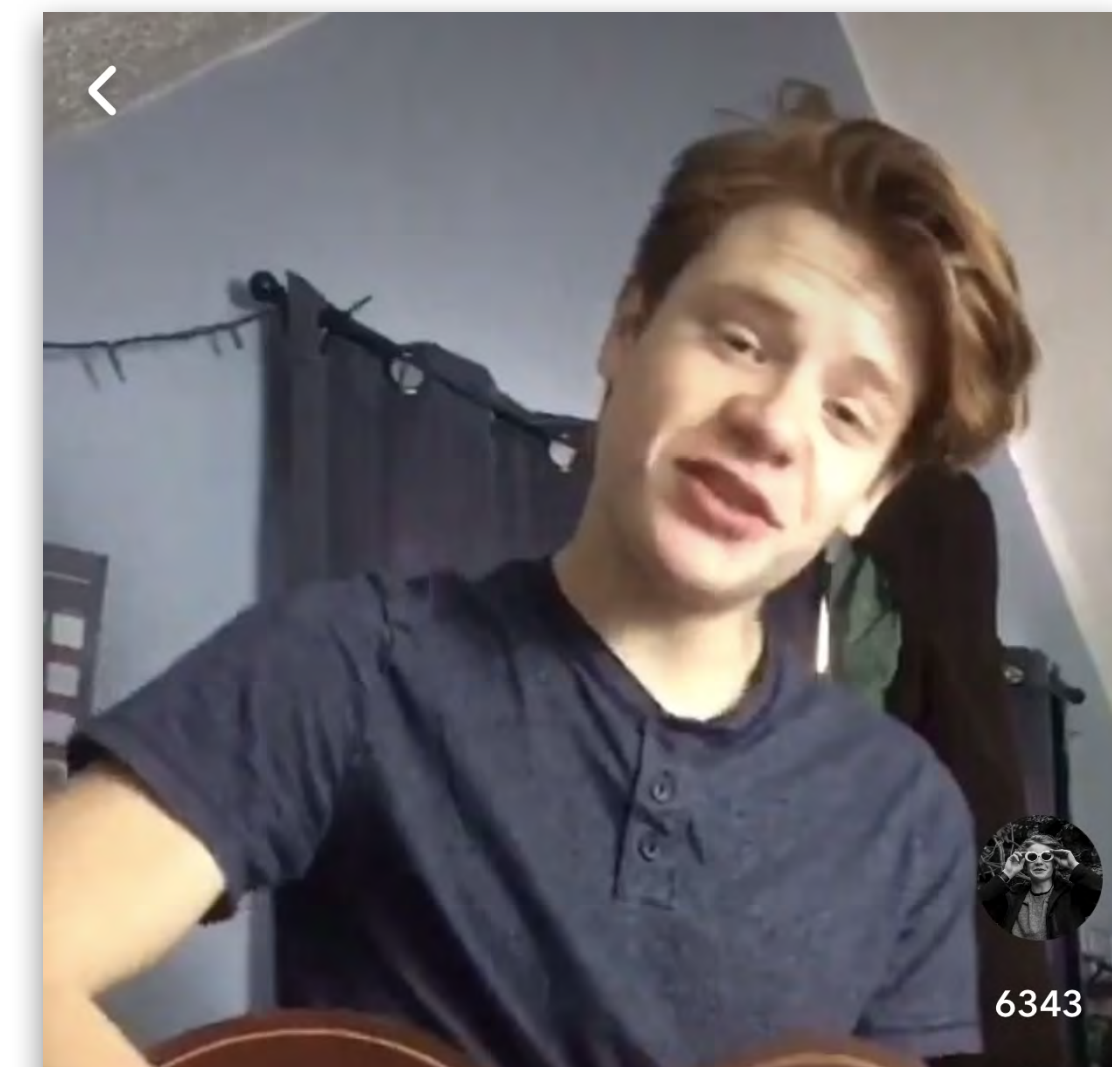
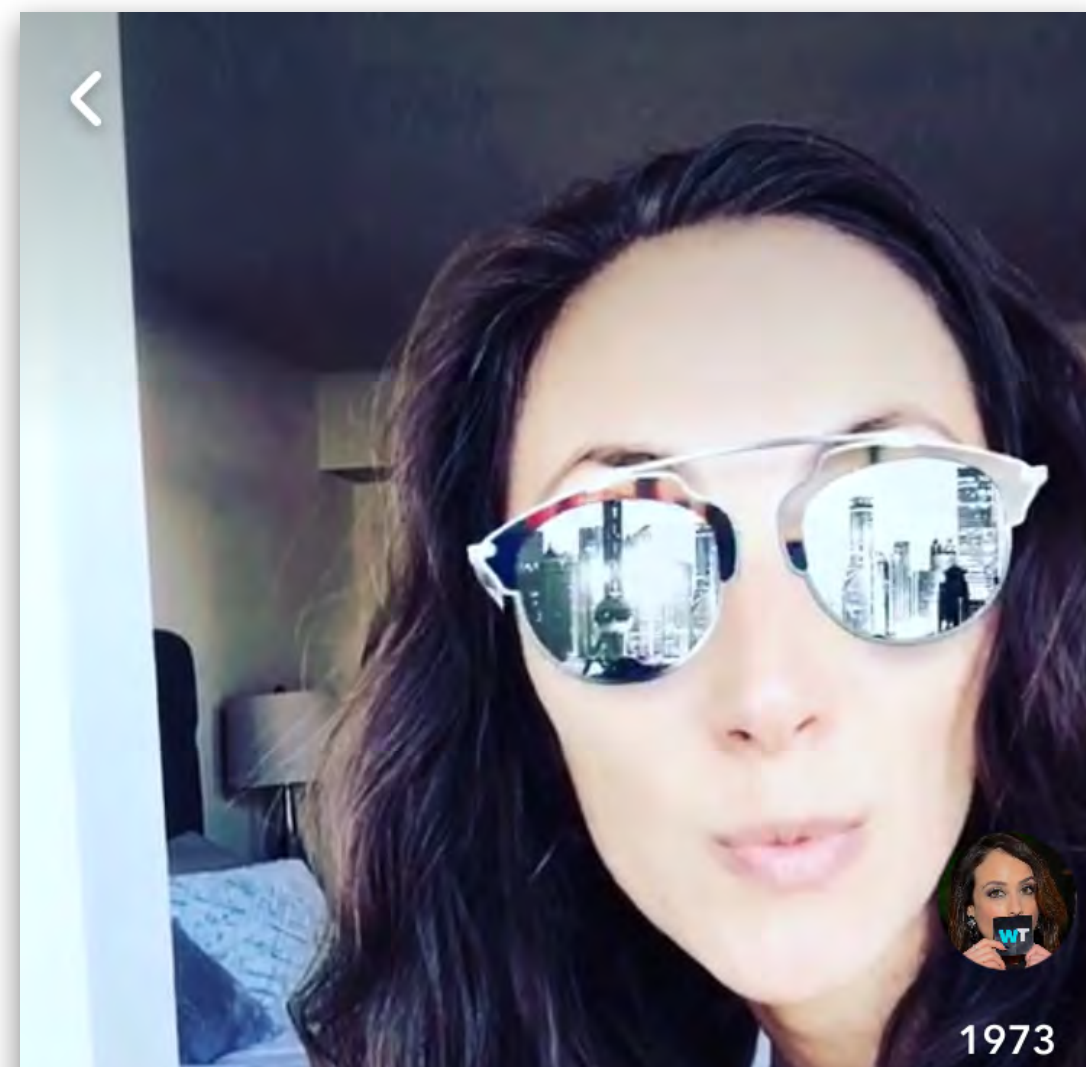
TikTok also rewards brands that are invested in music and creative arts production – with musicians and producers being able to license their tracks and keep 100% of the revenue. If you have a sonic brand, you could potentially leverage this to create a track template that could be spread by TikTok users through UGC.



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HOW CAN TIKTOK BE USED IN THE FUTURE?

Unusually for most social media platforms in their formative years, TikTok has been able to release TV ads to promote brand awareness. They've also recently appointed Disney's former head of streaming Kevin Mayer, as their new chief executive. And they've revealed plans for 'TikTok For Business' – a brand-facing arm which will enable marketers to access tools that will help them connect with audiences, as well as give them guidance on how to engage with TikTok communities. This tells us a lot about the growth possibilities the future holds for TikTok, and how much they are maturing, by giving brands more ways to control and manage their campaigns. Although a lot is still unclear, we can make a few hypotheses about the way TikTok can be used by brands in the coming years.





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HOW CAN TIKTOK BE USED IN THE FUTURE?

1

As TikTok creators mature, their followers will mature with them. This presents a great opportunity for brands to partner up with trusted creators to influence their reputation among Gen Z as they enter their adulthood. A worthwhile investment to make.

2

Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and now TikTok have encouraged a shift from high-budget celebrity endorsed advertising, to authentic influencer UGC advertising. This has opened the doors for people from diverse backgrounds to gain a platform - a market that will only expand in the coming years. This means that diverse representation will be key to building relatability and trust for brands, as this is clearly something that this audience values highly.

3

TikTok is at the forefront of creative content creation. The latest trends, the newest dance moves and even the most listened-to songs are now coming from TikTok hashtag challenges and viral videos. This gives brands the opportunity to support and spearhead digital creativity.



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BEST PRACTICE FOR BUILDING AN EB WITH TIKTOK

- ✓ Create and show off experiences, while leveraging your brand proposition honestly and transparently.
- ✓ Focus on micro-influencers not major celebrities.
- ✓ Use diverse representations of the people within your business (this would be the most meaningful in your senior leadership).
- ✓ Keep consistent and engage with your audience.
- ✓ Support and give users a chance to create their own content – through things like hashtag challenges and competitions.
- ✓ Be daring. Create fun, exciting, eye-catching video content.



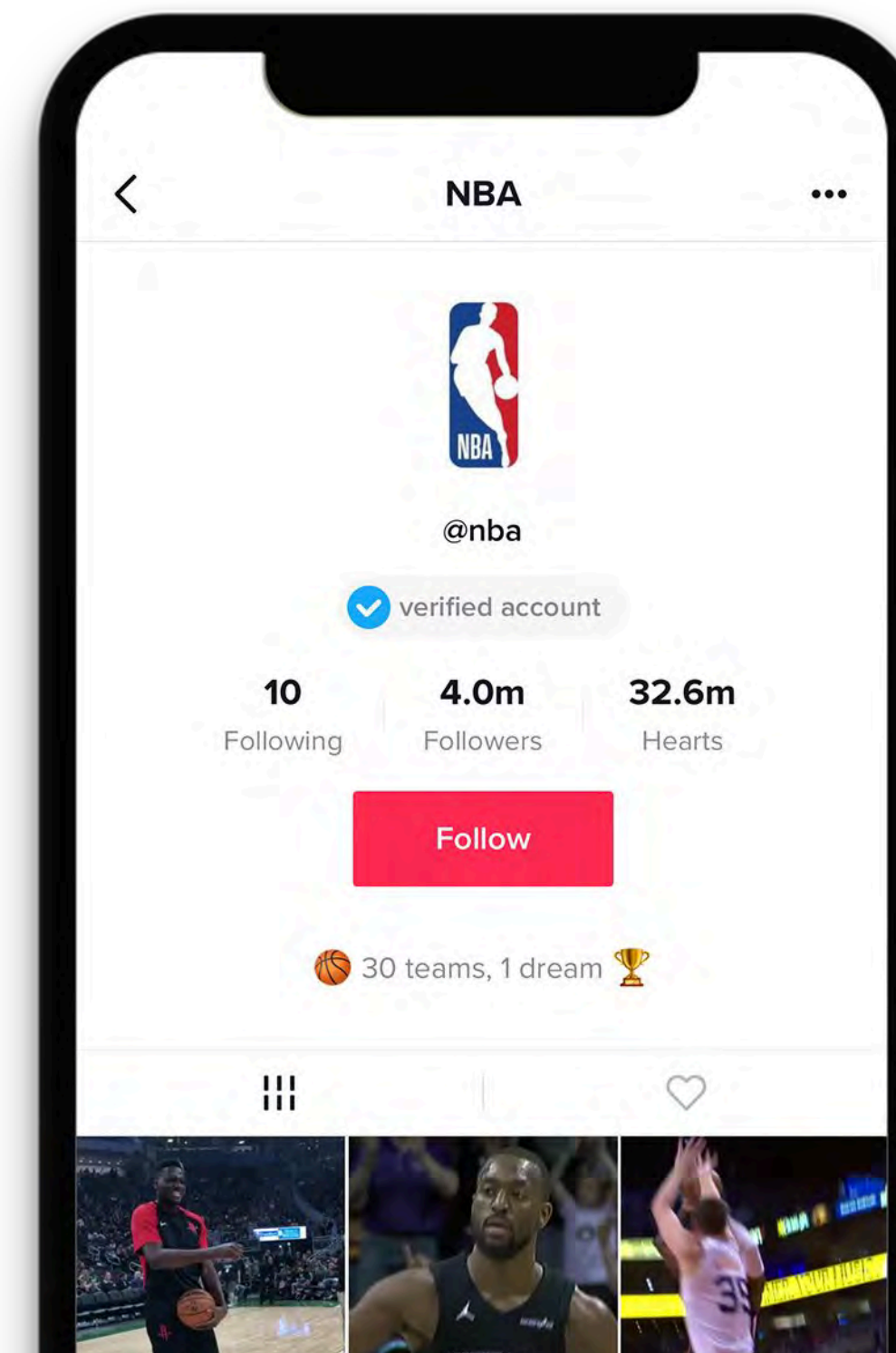
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BEST PRACTICE FOR BUILDING AN EB WITH TIKTOK

User's guide to TikTok

If you'd like to dive straight into TikTok, it's available to download on the App Store for all devices. Once you set up your profile, you'll be asked to follow some accounts. Below, we're put together a list of the brands that we think are producing some outstanding content on the consumer front.

- @NBA**
- @Redbull**
- @Chipotle**
- @IFAD**
- @WashingtonPost**
- @Guess**
- @SanDiegoZoo**
- @Gymshark**
- @MACcosmetics**
- @CalvinKlein**
- @Crocs**
- @Burberry**
- @Nickelodeon**





Get in touch

At Symphony Talent, we have the strategic, creative and social media expertise to help you navigate through TikTok, and find the best ways your employer brand can benefit from using this unique platform.

If you'd like to find out more about how it could be useful to your campaigns and employer brand, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We'd be happy to help you get the most out of TikTok.

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