SNS SPOTLIGHT:

TIKTOK

THE STORY OF **TIKTOK**



17 MILLION

TikTok monthly active users in the UK

325%

Time spent on TikTok is up 325% year-on-year in 2021

2021

THE STORY OF TIKTOK

TikTok exploded onto the social scene in 2016 as Instagram's rebellious younger sibling and has since amassed 1.2 billion monthly active users. What was once dismissed by many as 'that app with kids doing dances', TikTok has exploded into the mainstream and cemented itself as a serious contender within the social space.

The coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdowns had a huge impact on **TikTok** usage as people's screen time increased. In March 2020 alone, **TikTok** app downloads peaked at 115 million, staying over 100 million until May.

In a world where physical connection was forbidden, many turned to online channels for solace. In the UK and the US, 16% users admitted to using **TikTok** to feel more connected to others during the pandemic.

As the most downloaded app in 2020, even the most reluctant brands and marketers have had to take notice of the channel's meteoric rise.



BUT ISN'T IT JUST FOR TEENS?

Not at all! Whilst the channel's demographic certainly skews towards the younger end (62% of TikTok users are between ages 10-29), there's a large chunk of millennials who are highly engaged.

HOW IS IT ANY DIFFERENT TO OTHER SOCIAL CHANNELS?

One of the crucial differences is how the users feel about the channel. 60% of TikTok users feel a sense of community, and while Facebook and Instagram is overflowing with advertisers, nearly half of heavy TikTok users feel that advertising blends well within the app. As a marketing channel, TikTok is still relatively untapped - only 14% of marketers plan to up their TikTok spend over 2021 - and so there's a golden opportunity for those who get in early.

CAN IT REALLY HELP TO DRIVE SALES?

Social media can be hard to sell in at the best of times, and with many still holding the misconception that TikTok is 'just for kids', getting sign off can be even more difficult. The fact is, TikTok has more purchase power than you might think:

#TIKTOKMADEMEBUYIT

a trending hashtag, currently has over 2 billion views

21% vs 15%

TikTok users are significantly more likely to send brand or product recommendations than on Facebook and Instagram

(21% on TikTok vs. 15% on Instagram)

50%

of users say that they discover new products through ads on TikTok

52%

of users would buy a product to be part of the community around it

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

EVERYONE IS A CREATOR

TikTok is less about passive consumption, and has a bigger focus on creating - in fact, 83% of TikTok users have posted at least one video. The algorithm functions differently to other channels, meaning that there's a much higher chance of an account with a low following gaining traction with a viral video.

IT HAS AN ALGORITHM LIKE NO OTHER

The home feed is different to other social channels - it's generated based on what users are interested in, not who they follow. The 'For You' page is notoriously accurate, and is constantly adjusting based on what you're watching and engaging with.

ROUGH AND READY WINS THE RACE

TikTok was born from the 'no filter' movement that has become more prevalent on other channels in recent years. Where Instagram has historically been polished, curated and cool, TikTok is raw, goofy and uninhibited. It's less about high-end content and more about creating something 'real'.





IT'S THE ✨ COMMENTS ✨ FOR ME

Comments are a key part of the TikTok user experience - 79% of users take the time to read the comments on videos. The comments section is packed with user exchanges and even functions as an extension of the video itself. Scroll through them for long enough and you'll start to recognise a sort of 'language' that's emerged - if you can tap into this well, you'll get serious kudos as a brand.

SOUNDS ARE EVERYTHING

'Sounds' are crucial to TikTok. This means a song or a voiceover playing over your video. Most of the best performing videos will use a trending sound. There's a reason why songs often go viral on TikTok before they dominate the charts.

RYANAIR
@RYANAIR

11.6M
LIKES

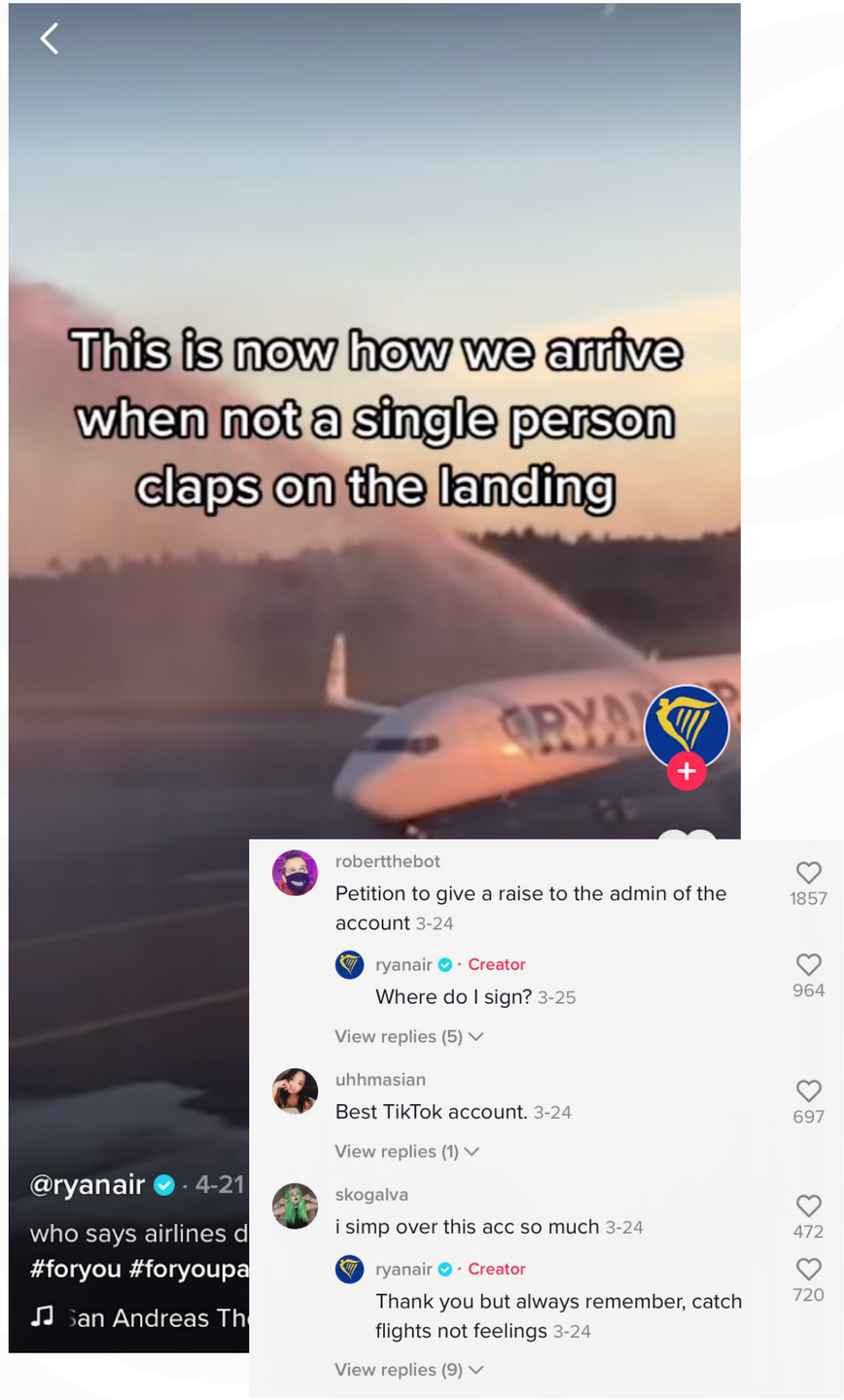
575k
FOLLOWERS

Ryanair's TikTok is a testament to understanding the channel environment, and working with existing footage, highlighting the fact that you don't need loads of bespoke video content- just a lot of creativity and willingness to have some fun with it.

They are constantly monitoring top trends and creating content based on trending sounds, helping them fit seamlessly into the For You page. Using predominantly existing footage and applying filters and text, they take a fun twist on top trends and show that a brand can be 'cool' on TikTok when they let their guard down and get creative.

WHY IT WORKS: They 'get' the channel and use top trends and sounds.

TAKEAWAYS: If your brand allows for it, don't be afraid to get a little goofy. Take some time to really understand how the channel works so that your content fits within the channel.



M&S FOOD
@MANDSFOOD

1.5M
LIKES

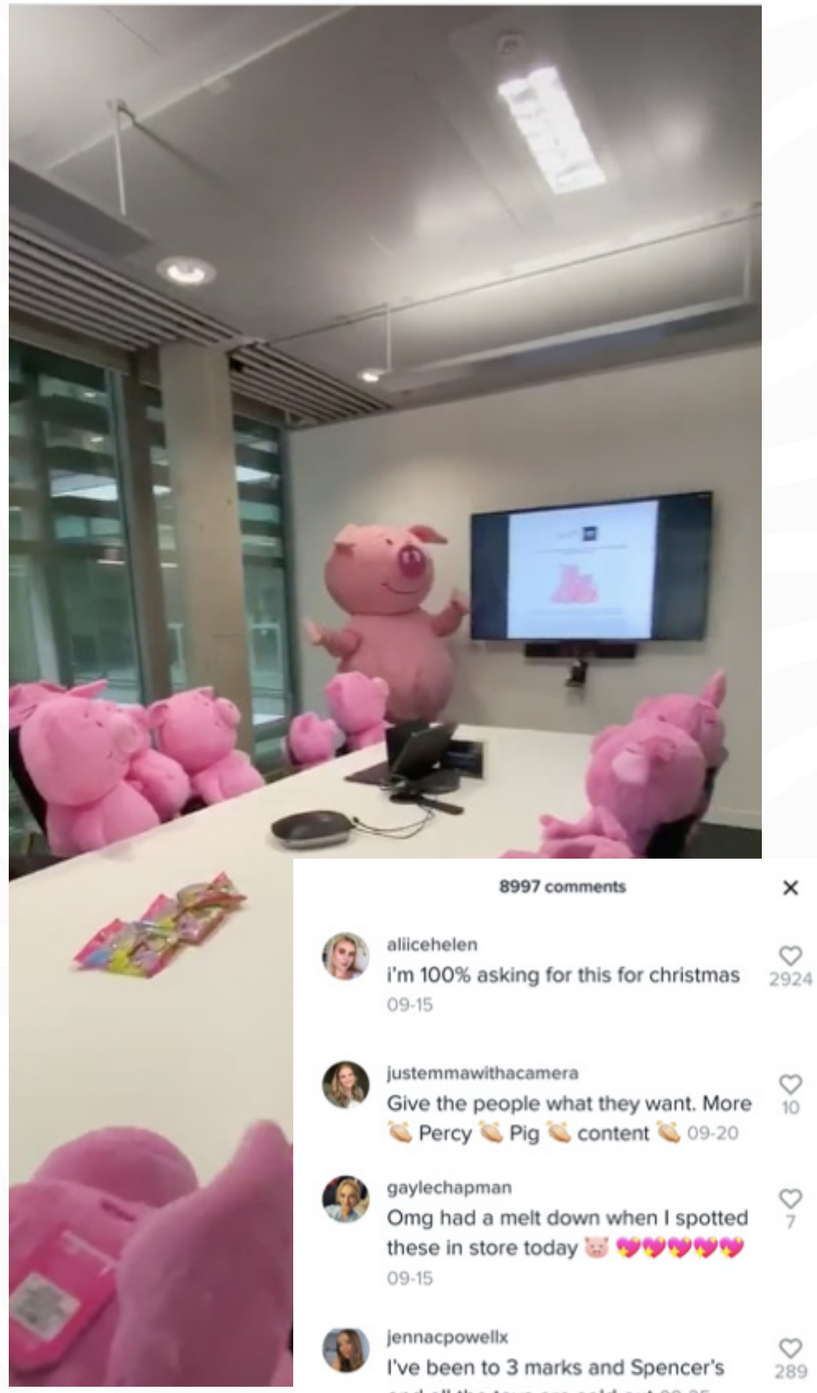
101k
FOLLOWERS

M&S have seen a good deal of success in posting around flagship product line, Percy Pig. When launching their Percy Pig plush toys in-store, they created some serious hype, and users rushed to try and find them. How did they do it? With a series of quirky 'behind-the-scenes' videos that were so bizarre that people had to laugh.

M&S do a great job of championing one of their key products and creating a space for people to rave about it.

WHY IT WORKS: It's quirky, unique and eye-catching within the feed.

TAKEAWAYS: Be human and authentic (even as a brand), and don't be afraid to be silly.



VESSI
@VESSI

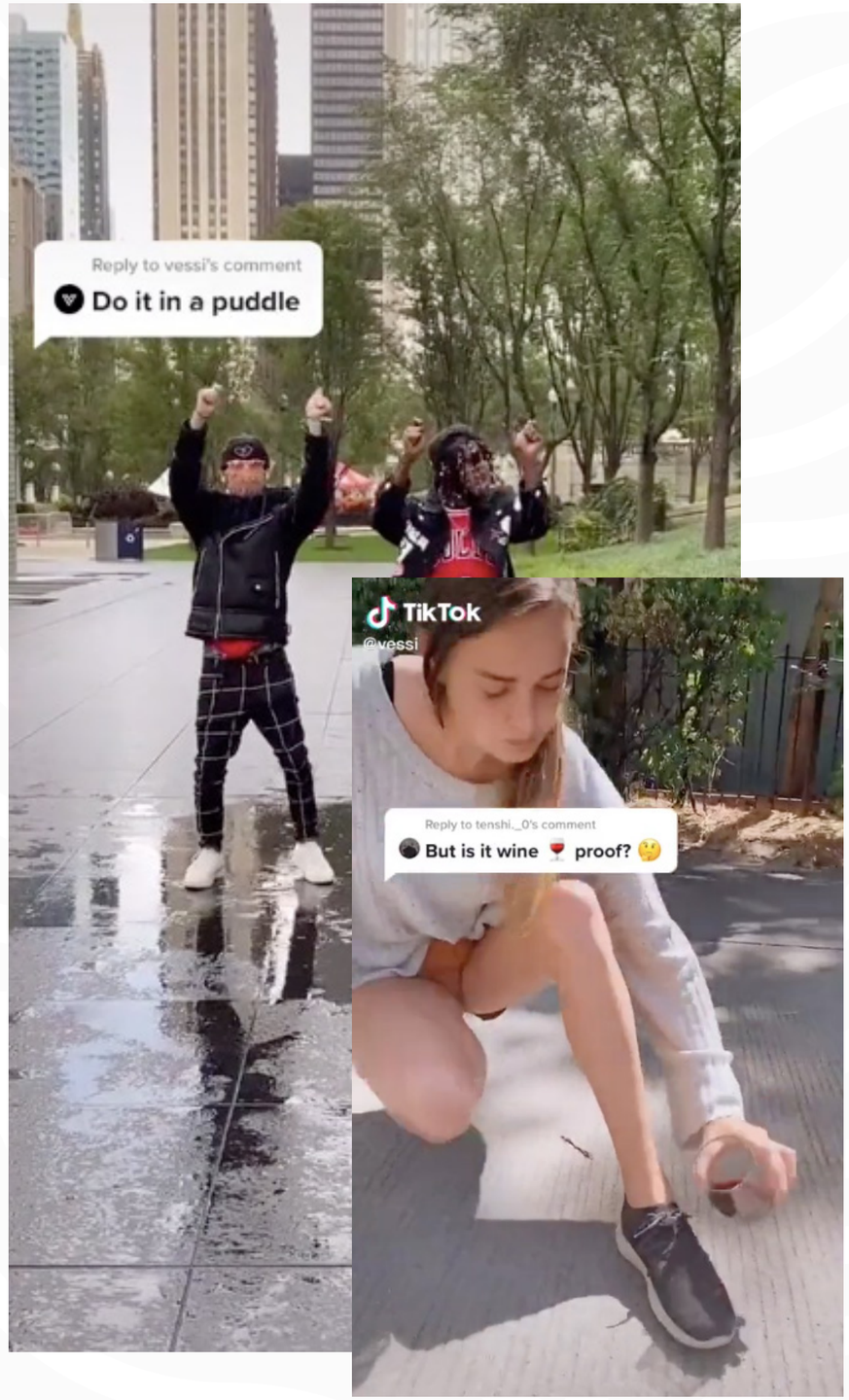
1.5M
LIKES

127k
FOLLOWERS

This waterproof shoe company bring their product to life in a unique way, with a focus on replying to comments and questions from prospective customers. They also do regular giveaways geared towards gaining user-generated content.

WHY IT WORKS: They are constantly interacting with the customer and prospective customers, through duets and creating videos based on user comments.

TAKEAWAYS: Use TikTok to prove how good your product is, and ask people what they want to know about it.



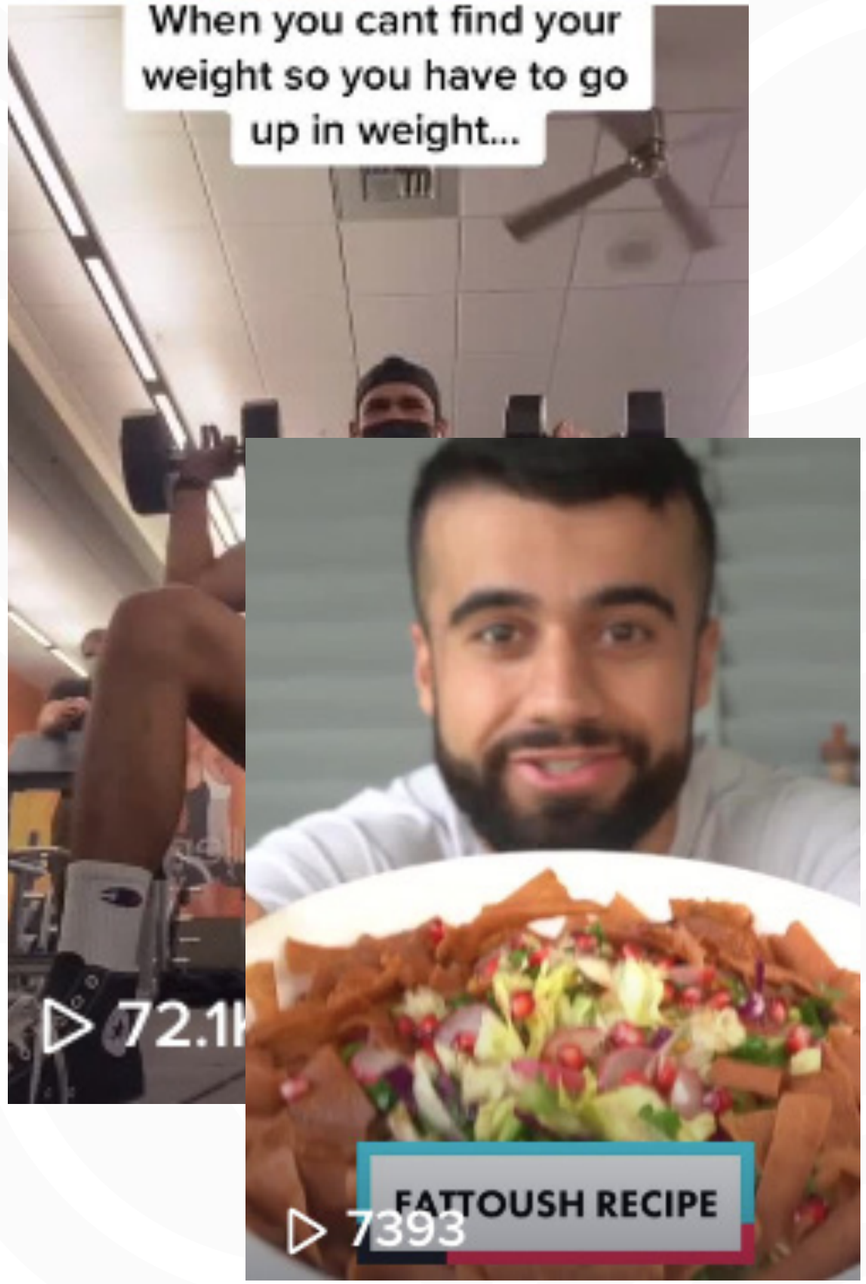
GYMSHARK
@GYMSHARK

41M
LIKES

2.7M
FOLLOWERS

Gymshark have the perfect blend of serious vs. silly, and so videos have gained a huge amount of traction and fit well within the channel environment. They also do a great job of leveraging their brand ambassadors and share user content.

TAKEAWAYS: Find the balance of serious, helpful and educational content with goofier, trend-led content.



5 TIPS FOR BRANDS USING TIKTOK

1

MAKE YOUR CONTENT 'FIT'

Get to know the channel- research what's trending in terms of sounds and hashtags. Become familiar with the 'For You' page to understand the kind of content that's working and get involved in a way that feels natural.

2

BE HUMAN

Be authentic and real, and if you can, showcase some faces behind the brand. Have a voice that sounds like a person, not a brand.

3

LET GO OF PERFECTION

This isn't the channel to have perfectly shot and edited videos. Embrace the more rough and ready approach to help your content fit within people's feeds.

4

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

Dedicate time and effort to curating your community. Comments are crucial - take the time to respond in a way that's human and fun, and consider using them to steer your content, for example, making videos that answers product FAQs.

5

EXPERIMENT

You're probably not going to get it right the first time. Commit to a period of testing different types of content and gathering learnings in the early stages.

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