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Image Ads Playbook

Bringing more creativity to image-based storytelling on TikTok.

TikTok is a platform for *storytelling*

TikTok is a platform where brands and creators can tell authentic and remarkable stories to the global audiences.

Through storytelling, viewers are entertained, connections are built, and a magical resonance emerges between viewers, brands, and creators.

Storytelling comes in various formats

At TikTok, we know that good stories come in a wide array of formats - including imagery. Organic image-driven stories still feels unique to TikTok.

Users pair images with songs and audio clips, giving the native sound-on experience that people expect from the platform. They almost always maintain the air of authenticity that has become synonymous with TikTok.

65%

of TikTok users agree TikTok is the most inclusive platform for storytelling.

They are open to seeing a *wide array* of stories. This doesn't just refer to the substance of the story itself; it also refers to the format of the content.

Source: TikTok Marketing Science North America Value in Variety Study [US,CA] 2023, conducted by Alter Agents

Image Ads give brands more opportunities to tell their stories in the best way possible.

Images provide an additional storytelling format through which brands can reach their audiences. It perfectly fills the puzzle of TikTok users' craving for variety in content and helps brands to achieve volume in creation with less time and fewer resources.
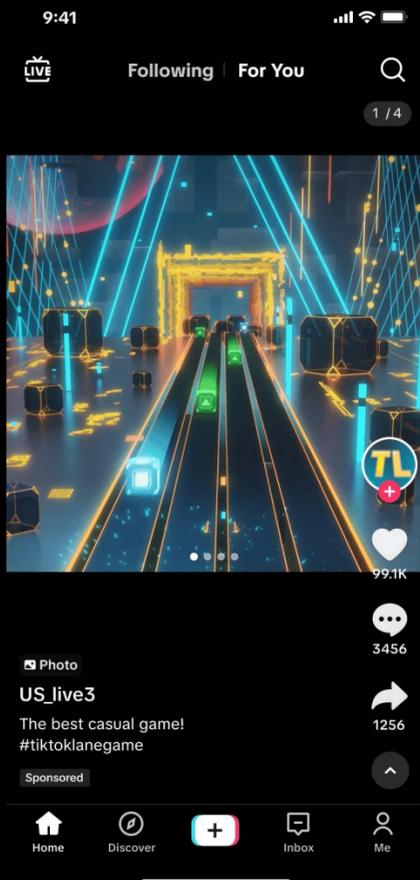
Here, Image Ads have a very important role to play.

What are Image Ads?

An Image Ad consists of an image or multiple images in Carousel that advertisers provide featuring information about the products, services or business.
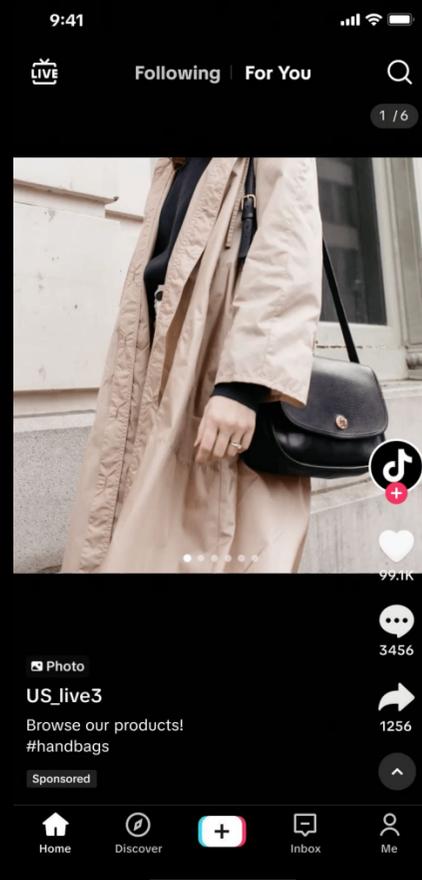
Right now, we have two major Image Ads formats:
Standard Carousel and **VSA Carousel**

Standard

Standard Carousel ad format allows advertisers to upload multiple images in a sequence as an in-feed creative that's alternative to video.

VSA

VSA Carousel ad format allows advertisers to leverage their catalog images as creatives. Help advertisers to reduce creative production costs.

Standard Carousel and VSA Carousel details

	Standard	VSA
Campaign Objective	Traffic, App Promotion, Web Conversions, Lead Generation	Product Sales
Recommended Verticals	All other verticals except Commerce	Commerce vertical
Image Source and Type of Image	Images need to be uploaded manually. Images can be brand or product focused. 2 to 35 images can be shown in each ad.	Images are automatically pulled from catalog product Images. 2 to 20 product images can be shown in each ad.
CTA	Only one CTA can be attached to an image ad set.	Multiple CTAs can be attached to an image ad set. One individual CTA can be attached to one image.
Dynamic Product Recommendation	Not Available	Viewers will get to see product images tailor-made only for them.

Value Propositions

1

Lower creative production costs

Compared to video, images take less time and resources to produce.

2

A path to scalable creative

A higher volume of creative can drive stronger results for advertisers; over 60% of TikTok advertisers experience a positive correlation between the number of materials and the effectiveness of their campaigns.

3

Showcase several products

With image carousels, advertisers can highlight several products and features in one placement.

4

Strong campaign performance

Image-based ads drive conversions at 120% higher rate of driving conversions in the first 5 days of an ads launch. And they have a significantly higher rate (+6.14%) of driving new audiences.

Master Image Ads Step by Step

Meet the minimum standards for Image Ads

In order to leverage the power of Image Ads, you need to get started by meeting the basic requirements for Image Ads: the Ad Specifications.

Image Ad Specifications

	Standard Carousel	VSA Carousel
Image Requirements	• min 2 • max 35 images • JPG/.JPEG or .PNG • File size ≤100 KB suggested • Image resolution: • Horizontal 1200*628px • Square 640*640px • Vertical 720*1280px	• Minimum images shown: 2 • Maximum images shown: 20
Music Requirements	• Music is a must (will play loop playback) • Duration >=2s • Can support both CML music and music upload (File size: Up to 10M; Music format: MP3)	• Music is a must (will play loop playback) • Duration >=2s, Supported type: .mp3, .wav, .m4a, .flac • Can support both CML music and music upload (File size: Up to 10M; Music format: MP3)
Ad Requirements	• Only allows one ad caption and call-to-action for all images • One URL for all images (Not powered by a feed/product catalog) • Not supported: SPC, CBO, ACO, and Spark Ads	• Only allows one ad caption and call-to-action button • Each product image can be led to a unique product link (powered by Catalog) • Not supported: SPC, ACO, and Spark Ads

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Step 2

Take a stab at the basics of best practices

To unleash the power of Image Ads, try the TikTok-first approach by meeting the basic best practice standards.

Go vertical 9:16

Vertical, horizontal and square images are all supported, but vertical ones are most recommended for TikTok. (Other aspect ratios may result in black cut-off in feed.)

Use 3 or 7-9 Images per Carousel

Use 3 or 7-9 images for one carousel ad, since it's found that these image number usually have better CTR and CVR compared than other number. (But keep testing to identify what works best for your products)

Use Images of High Resolution

Use images with high resolution 720P+ in carousel ads to ensure basic visual effects.

Content within Safezone

Make sure the key information including the product, texts and other important elements is shown within the safezone.

Sound On

Remember to select music that's more relevant to bring dynamism and ambience to your carousel ads.

Smart Order On

Set Smart Order on at ad level to automatically show the best performing image first for better performance.

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Step 3

Take it one step further with advanced best practices

To maximize the impacts of Image Ads, try the advanced best practices to fully activate its potential.

Highlight selling points and core messages

- **Show concise and easy-to-read messages.** Use text to convey core messages or show key selling points, such as affordable prices or functional product features. Ensure the texts are concise, clear and easy-to-read. Avoid white, vague, too big or too small texts.

- **Showcase scenario-based product benefits.** Demonstrate how the products/services with human model effectively address the various pain points that your customers may experience in key use cases/scenarios.

- **Emphasize on promotional offers.** Emphasize on appealing discounts or holiday offers to encourage purchases or conversions.

Reinforce Storytelling

- **Grab attention as early as possible.** Begin with a visually compelling or eye-catching first image to grab audience's attention and encourage them to swipe through the carousel. (e.g. demonstrating a problem or a use case that resonates with potential audience).

- **Tell a continuous story.** Adopt storytelling skills and guide users through a continuous narrative. Build anticipation to engage users and encourage them to swipe through the images.

- **Show CTA to drive action.** Show CTA after introducing key benefits to drive immediate actions.

Make your image/carousel more visually appealing

- **Add relevant stickers and other visual elements.** Add stickers/elements to add more flavour to the image content. (e.g. Use holiday promotion stickers to amplify seasonal promotions and holiday vibes.)

- **Remain visual consistency.** Use consistent color/fonts/logos for visual and layout design to keep visual consistency to create a unified visual effect for potential audiences and enhance brand recognition.

Unlock the full potential of Image Ads

Say hello to our all-new Image Ads features, some of which are powered by TikTok Symphony!

Video + Image Creatives

Get the best of both worlds.
With the new Image + Video Carousel feature, brands can combine both asset types in a single ad group.

Introduce variety into your content and build dynamic carousel stories, all in one place in the Ads Manager.

Results: +18.65% lift among SMB

Availability:
- [Alpha/Beta/Open Beta/GA] starting September 6
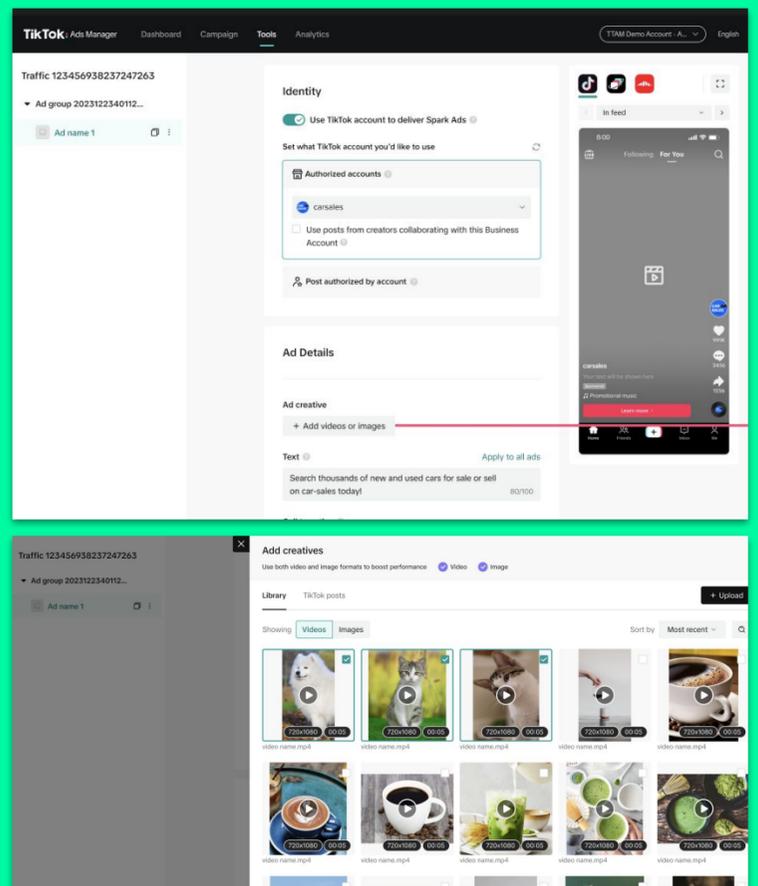- 🌎 [List regions where available on Sept 6]

Image Carousel Generation

Give a handful of inputs. Get a TikTok-fit photo carousel.
Brands can create brand-new, TikTok-fit images based on just a few inputs, like URLs, historical videos, product photos, and more. The tool is powered by TikTok Symphony, our suite of generative AI tools.

Availability:
- [Alpha/Beta/Open Beta/GA] starting September 15
- 🌎 [List regions where available on Sept 15]
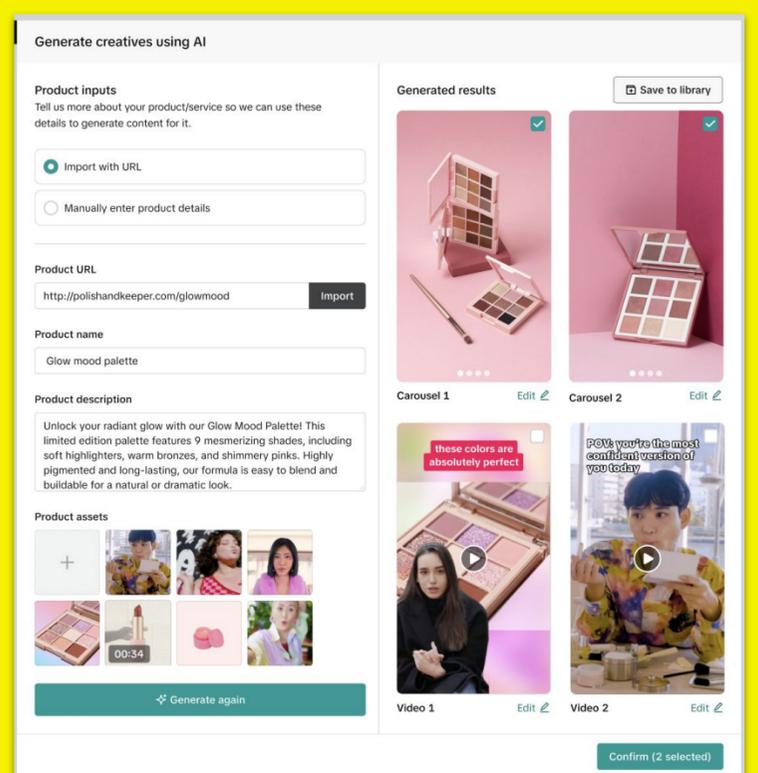
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Image Optimization

Ensure your images are fit for TikTok.

Content that has been tailored for the TikTok creative ecosystem has higher performance. These one-click optimization tools enable advertisers to utilize their existing assets as strategically as possible.

Availability:

- [Alpha/Beta/Open Beta/GA] starting Q4
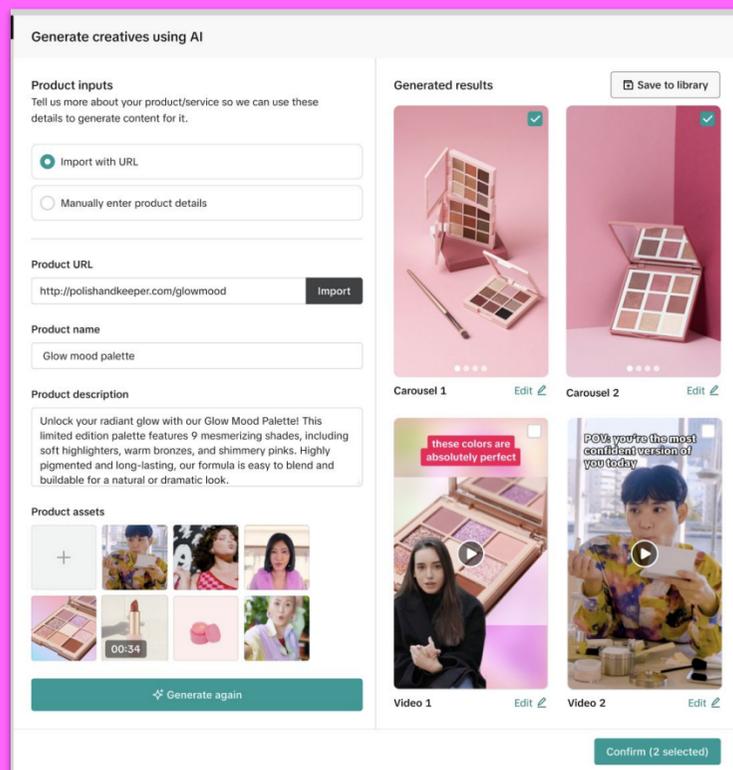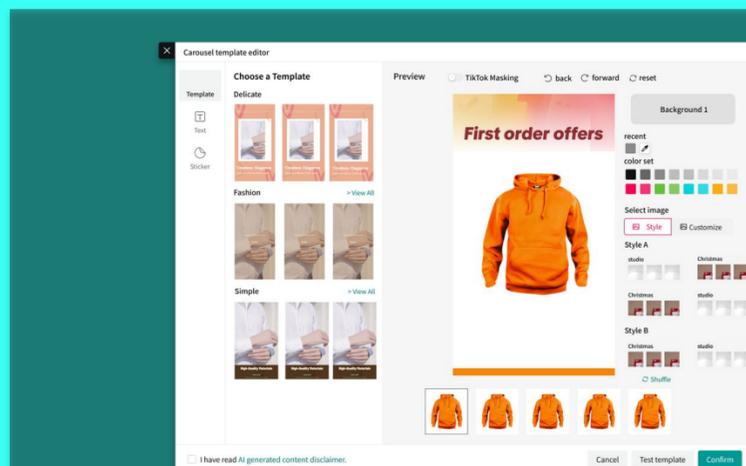- 🌎 [List regions where available in Q4]

Image Editing Tools

Go full-tilt with native storytelling.
Editing Tools allow brands to make more in-depth changes to their images, compared to one-click optimization. With Editing Tools, they can add filters, text, stickers, and other creative elements, to either repurposed images or net-new creative.

Availability:

- [Alpha/Beta/Open Beta/GA] starting Q4
- 🌎 [List regions where available in Q4]

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Thank You!