TikTok

CREATIVE CODES

Six secrets to help decode your brand's creative potential on TikTok

Creative Codes

01 TikTok First

02 Structure

03 Stimulation

04 Sound

05 Trends

06 Production

Code 1:
TikTok First

Creating content authentic to TiKTok and the For You Page is as simple as thinking **TikTok First**.

What does TikTok First Mean?

It's as simple as feeling authentic to the For You Page, from looking right-at-home to talking the lingo.

- Go lo-fi (avoid glossiness)
- Go 9:6
- Shoot hi-res
- Feature people (creators, employees, customers)
- Adopt category/vertical norms

Actions Increase

Actions such as clicks or shares increase by nearly

+3.3x

when taken on TikTok First ads vs. non-TikTok First ads on the platform [1]

Moving TV-style assets to TikTok First Ads leads to significant lift: [2]

1% Increase in Recall

1% Increase in Intent

1% Increase in Favorability

1% Increase in Brand Association

2X Increase in engagement and watchtime

If you can't adopt - adapt

Adapt your existing content in a few simple ways to make them feel authentic and compelling:

- Make sure your asset is hi-res and vertical framed
- Use quickfire stitches: simple, pacey, clean and satisfying to watch edits
- Use post-editing techniques that borrow from user generated content
- Use TikTok text overlays to make content fit with the platform

Creator Made:

Use creators as an effective shortcut to create TikTok First assets. Give them a clear brief and trust them to create content in their style.

Key takeaways

1. **Think TikTok First**
   Going TikTok First on the platform is simple, but effective in driving results
2. **Adapt your content and use creators**
   Going TikTok First doesn't mean making everything from scratch!

1. Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Entertaining Ads Study 2022 conducted by Marketcast
2. Source: TikTok Marketing Science Creative Coding Analysis based on 3,500 TikTok ads that ran from 1/1/2021 - 10/1/2021 representing all major verticals, conducted by Kantar, 2022

TikTok for Business

Code 2: Structure

Structure drives effectiveness and value in the ads on TikTok. By focusing in on the content structure of your creative, you can focus on grabbing attention, conveying value, and then driving actions. Good structure guides your audience through the ad and keeps them engaged.

Structure Breakdown

We can split the structure of your creative into **three sections: the hook, the body, and the close.** Use messaging across all three to guide your audience and weave in your branding throughout so that the brand naturally drives impact throughout.

Your hook should drive audience engagement, before the body pulls them in to the additive branding. Make sure you leave your audience with a clear action and a CTA.

1. The Hook: The first six seconds are vital
2. The Body: Nail your product and brand home
3. The Close: Provide a strong CTA

The Hook: Create Anticipation

The opening seconds for TikTok content can make or break the video. **Land the content value proposition early and in the first six seconds to keep attention and raise impact.**

90% of ad recall impact is captured within 6 seconds [1]

80% of the awareness impact is captured within 6 seconds[1]

Try out these hook types:

Suspense: ads that use suspense early in a story lead to a +16% increase in watch time[2]

Surprise: using surprise can lead to a 1.7x VTR[2]

Emotion: opening up your spot with powerful emotions can lead to a 1.7x lift in awareness[2]

Try and identify the most natural point to introduce your brand or product cues within the hook

Memorable Messaging

Weave your brand and product naturally throughout the content to drive impact.

Hook: Branding in the first few seconds should be subtle and not compromise the hook

Body: Additive branding to the content of the video

Close: Use strong CTA to drive your audience to your brand

Key takeaways

1. **Focus on your hook**
   Make sure it will keep your audience engaged
2. Try out these narrative structures: a-ha moments, problem-solutions, or a customer journey

1 Source: TikTok Creative Guide: Driving Brand Equity", 2020 (TikTok "Value of View" Analysis)
2 Source: TikTok Marketing Science US SMB Creative Effectiveness Study 2021, conducted by Lumen
Source: TikTok Creative Guide: Driving Brand Equity", 2020 (TikTok "Value of View" Analysis)

Code 3: Stimulation

After a powerful hook, the best way to keep users' engaged is to use editing techniques and additions to stimulate your audience. Let's break down some easy ways to stimulate your audience and keep them engaged throughout your ad campaign

Attention Triggers

The best way to grab your audience's **ATTENTION** is to employ editing techniques or assets. Try out some of these to level up your ad sets and appear more native.

MUSIC

Faster paced music was found to **boost neuro activity** associated with **ad memorability.**

TRANSITIONS

Fast scene changes draw users in early and **increase chances** of **making an impression** on users.

MOVEMENT

Movement within an assets **catches the users eye and keeps the narrative moving.**

TEXT

Visual guidance such as text pop-ups **sustain high engagement** among viewers.

EMOJIS

Emoji's can help to **humanise your content**, **conveying tone** in a simple, playful manner that **feels native.**

BRANDS

Increased brand visibility or early product placement improves **ad effectiveness, memorability, brand recall.**

Now where to start? Try using text pop-ups as a simple way to go TikTok First, formation, and convey key information!

Mock Video Structure

Let's look at a potential video structure to hook your audience in. This is not a prescriptive video structure, but something that you can get started with.

Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Information Density 2022 conducted by Neuro-Insight

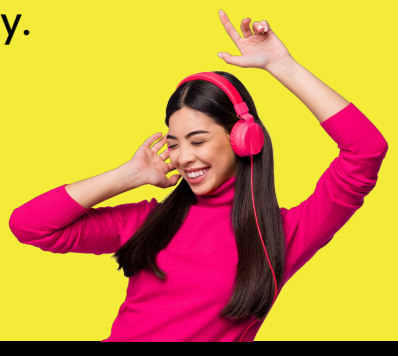
Code 4: Sound

TikTok is the only platform where ads with sound drive significant lifts in purchase intent and brand favorability. Here are some ways where you can think about sound on TikTok.

Sound-On is Powerful

Sound on TikTok is a full body experience. It helps your content resonate in the mind of TikTok users..

Let's breakdown why sound is so important to drive significant lift in purchase intent and brand favorability.



50% of TikTok users say music makes content more uplifting and entertaining[1]

55% lift in communicating new information to audiences through sound-on[2]

73% of users would "stop and look" at a sound-on TikTok ad[2]

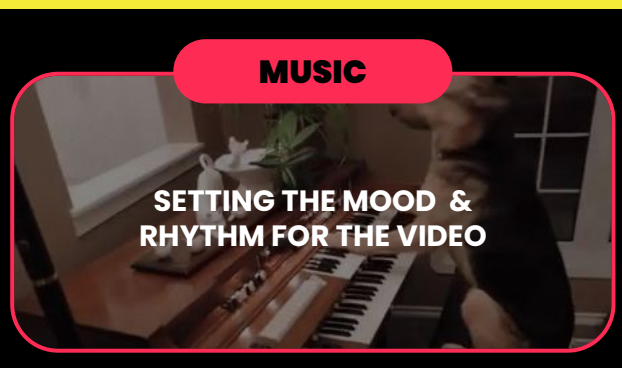
90% of users say sound it vital to the TikTok experience[2]

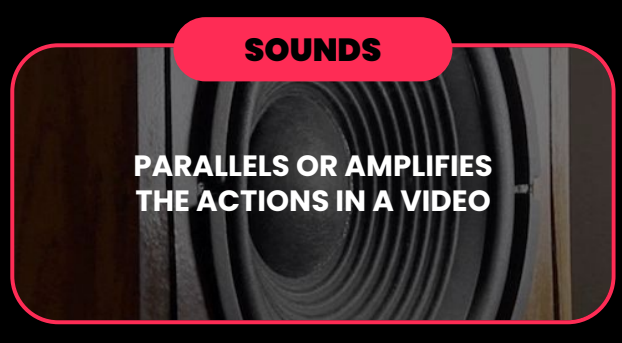
How to Tune In

Music: Set the mood and rhythm for the video
- Find music that complements the content's look and feel
- Use rhythm and volume to build energy

Voiceovers: Reveal more details about the story
- Use for how to/guides, reviews, or commentary/narration
- Keep it clear and concise

Sounds: Parallels or amplifies the actions in a video
- Use for ASMR, demonstrations, candid camera
- Ensure sounds are high-quality

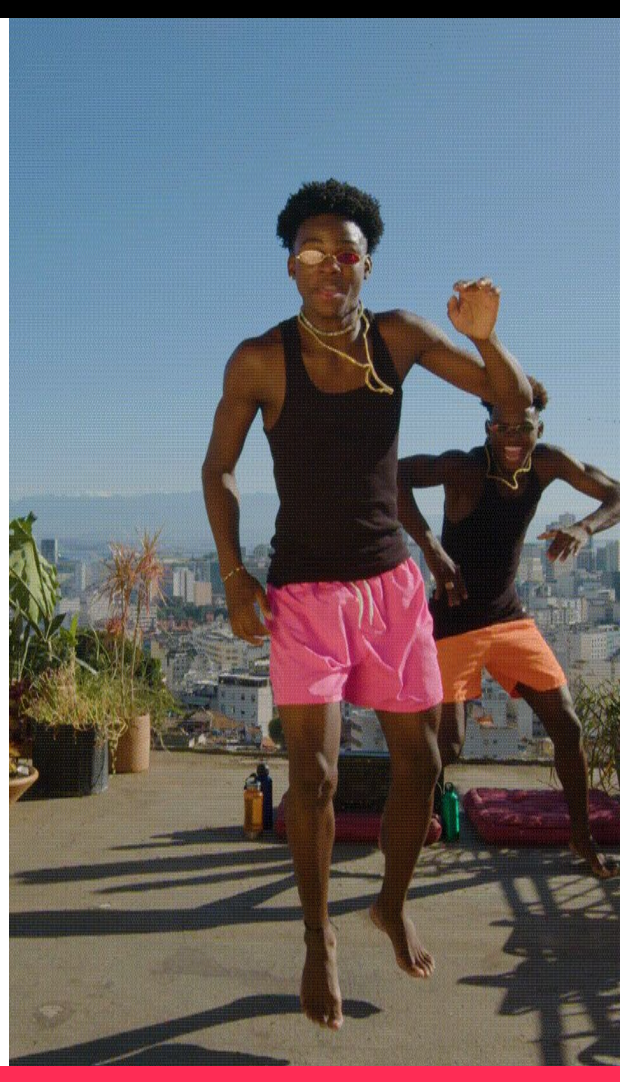




Get More Eyes and Ears

There are tons of ways to get the right audio you need! Here are just a few ways to unlock the right sound to use for your creative:

- Ask us about custom music services and leveraging our team's network of music partners
- Use our **commercial music library (CML)**, a pre-cleared brand-ready library that can be found on Creative Center
- Sound clips: owned original sounds & others original sounds, (subject to applicable clearance) to use in both organic and paid posts



Key takeaways

1. **Think Sound FIrst!** TikTok Content is best when sound is on. Think about how sound to amplify your brands
2. Check our our Commercial Music Library for a pre-cleared brand-ready library

Source: 1. TikTok Marketing Science EU Consumer Empathy Research, 2020; Base UK TikTok users in the past 7 days, 138 respondents ; 148 respondents
2 .TikTok Marketing Science US Cross-Platform Sound Research 2021 conducted by Kantar

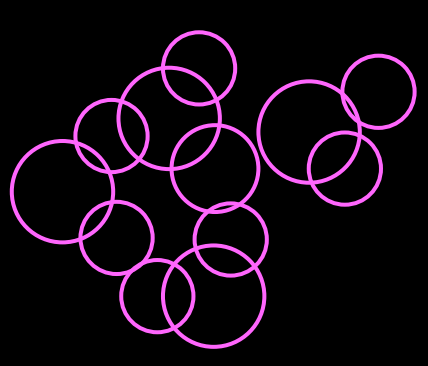
Code 5: Trends

Apply platform trends to your brand to connect with wider users. Get inspiration from what you see on your own ForYou Page and start creating today!

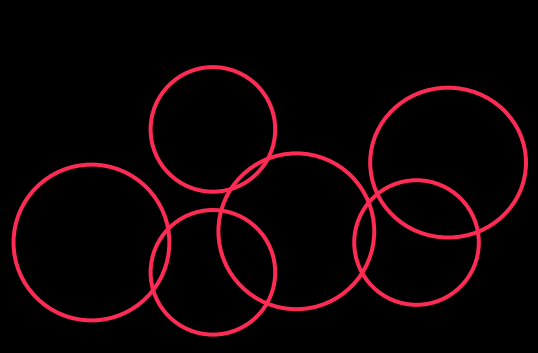
Types of Trends

There are three types of trends, all of which can be used by brands as shortcuts to make TikTok first content.

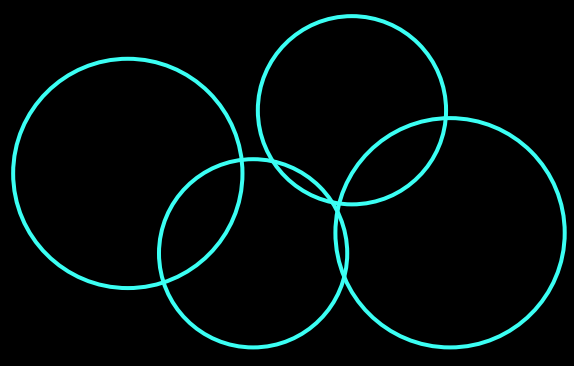
EVERYDAY MOMENTS ⟶ **CULTURAL FORCES**



MOMENTS
(days-weeks)
Popular, often ethereal moments rooted in recognisable and relatable human truths, lasting a few days or weeks.



SIGNALS
(months-years)
Evergreen trends that are platform and vertical native i.e. storytime, transitions, challenges etc.



FORCES
(up to decade)
Macro cultural patterns or trends that remain recognisable when introduced on-platform i.e. body positivity, veganism, AR adoption etc.

Why are Trends important?

Trends are an easy way to create TikTok First on the platform. Tap in and create for your brand by taking inspiration from the trends that live on the platform.

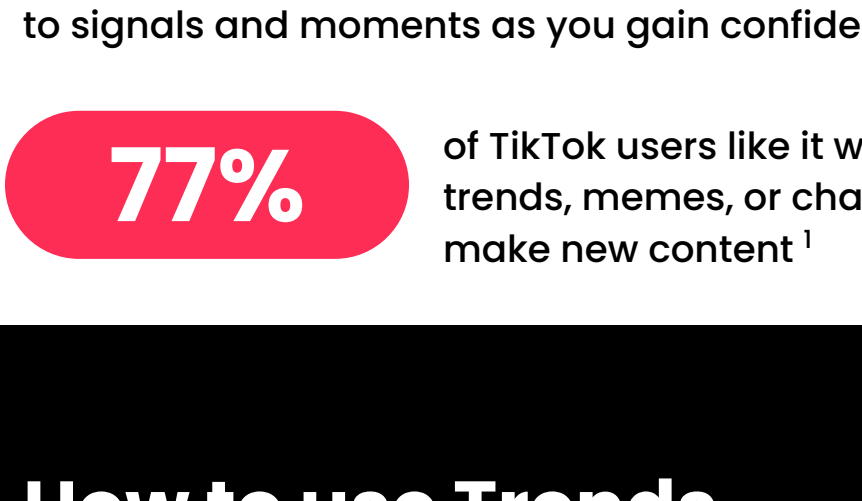
Don't overthink your creative! Moments are difficult to capitalize on, so start with relevant forces and work down to signals and moments as you gain confidence.

77% of TikTok users like it when brands use trends, memes, or challenges on TikTok to make new content [1]

How to use Trends

⚡ **Find a trend:**
Scroll your FYP, search hashtags, use Creative Center, or engage with your own community to find relevant trends that you can tap into. Start imaging how your brand can fit into the trend

🔥 **Establish Brand/Product Relevance**
Isolate how your brand or product can fit into the larger trends. Does it fit in the behavioral context? The cultural context? Even try and see if there's any emotional relevance to the brand fitting into the trend



📝 **Choose a narrative**
Iterate on what the narrative of your video could look like. Use other trend videos as inspiration. What's the trend hook? Choose a narrative structure and decide how to fit your brand/product inside of it

Key takeaways

1. **Trends are an easy way to tap in**
It comes off as native to the platform and will help start conversation with your audience

2. **Start with forces**
if you don't know where to begin, look at the macro trends of the platform before diving deeper

Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Community and Self-Expression Study 2021 conducted by Flamingo

Code 6: Production

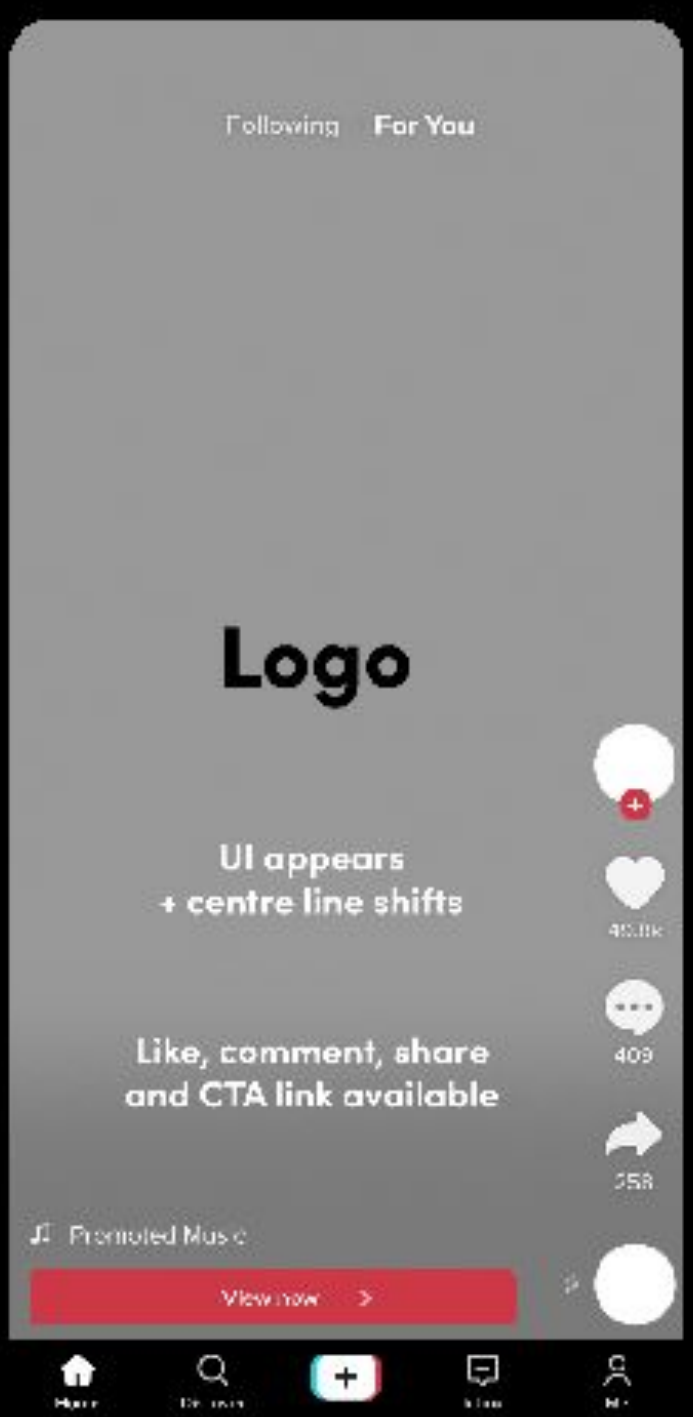
Production on TikTok doesn't look too different from any other platform. However, there are a few key differences, as well as tips and tricks to make sure your creative performs on the platform.

Production Principles

Production on TikTok is as simple as 1-2-3. Start with these fundamentals and play around with what you can do.

1. Shoot Vertical, stand tall, and frame your content at 9:16
2. Use hi-resolution footage, avoid pixelated visuals or grainy sounds
3. Be aware of the safe space of the TikTok UI to ensure nothing is covering it.

!!! **Use the space wisely! Try to fill the screen, but make sure to not overlap with the UI.**



YES

Why follow the Production Principles?

Good creative works harder. By following the production principles, your creative will be more efficient at spending and targeting.

The last step to follow is to be **refreshing your creative often.** Combat creative fatigue by refreshing your content often with different assets.

Make sure to monitor your creatives performance to ensure that you are not prematurely changing the creative out.

Key takeaways

1. **Follow the production principles** to start delivering more lift on your creative
2. **Don't forget to refresh your creative**, but keep monitoring the performance of your assets

Legal Disclaimer

This document is the property of TikTok Inc., and has been prepared by TikTok Inc. solely for informational purposes only. The recipient of this document must hold this document and any information contained herein in strict confidence, and shall have no right to distribute, exhibit, display, exploit, or otherwise use this document for any purpose other than to review the information provided by TikTok Inc. herein. The recipient hereby represents and warrants that it shall not publish, post, or otherwise publicly distribute this document or any of its elements via any media for any purpose. The recipient acknowledges that the information contained herein is illustrative only and not licensed for the recipient's public distribution.

Neither TikTok Inc. nor any of its affiliates, or its or their respective directors, officers, employees, or agents (collectively, "TikTok") make any representation or warranty, express or implied, in relation to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this document, and accepts no responsibility, obligation, or liability in relation to any of such information. TikTok expressly disclaims any and all liability which may be based on this document and any errors therein or omissions therefrom. TikTok undertakes no obligation or responsibility to update any of the information contained in this document. Past performance does not guarantee or predict future performance.