

TikTok
next



Shaped by people, powered by AI

**Irreplaceable
Instinct**



Contents

01

2026 Trend Theme: Irreplaceable Instinct

Audiences will move to retrain their irreplaceable instinct with real curiosity, conviction, and care that connect us.

02

Trend Signal 1: Reali-TEA

Fantasy is fading. In 2026, audiences will realign through the chaos to forge new realities together.

03

Trend Signal 2: Curiosity Detours

In 2026, audiences will seek new rabbit holes of curiosity through new doors of discovery.

04

Trend Signal 3: Emotional ROI

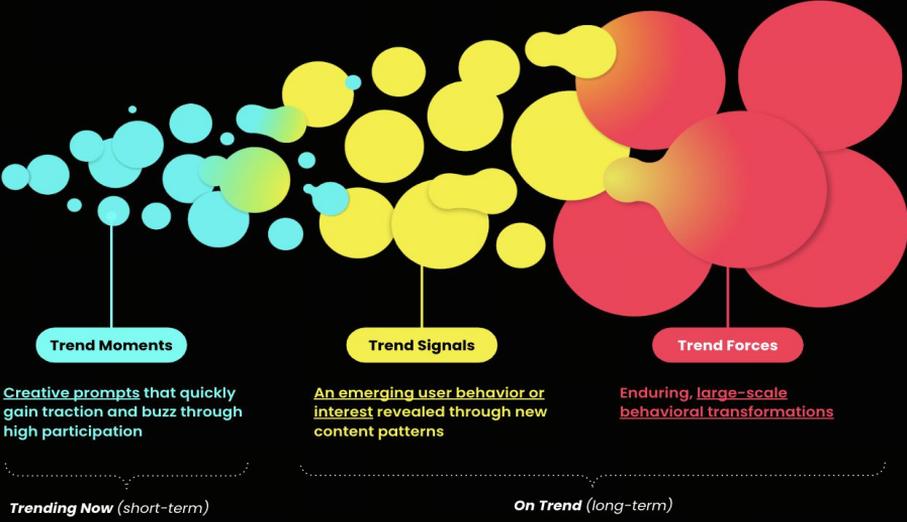
Impulse will lose to intention in 2026 as shoppers reward the brands that justify the why to buy, first.

05

What's Next

Actionable next steps to get ahead of this year's biggest shifts

TikTok Speeds of Culture



Foreword

When we first introduced TikTok’s trend methodology, Speeds of Culture, in 2021, our platform was already rewriting how trends move. Our community’s collective creativity spread signals faster than ever. We danced, we flopped, we made too much feta pasta, uncovered “who tf did I marry,” and cackled trying to assign meaning to “6,7.”

Today, culture has shifted into a new gear. It’s layered. It’s quick. It’s shaped by people changing direction fast, and marketers urgently need the tools to stay on top of these trends as they manifest and evolve in real time. That’s why we’ve rolled out new AI-powered tools to help marketers identify and capitalize on trends faster, digging into the stories, language, and behaviors that connect us.

This year’s report looks and feels different. Using TikTok’s own solutions, we analyzed trend data and collaborated with humans globally to understand how culture is evolving in real time and where it’s headed next. It has a new name, a new design, and more answers than ever. We’ve distilled insights into three key user forecasts for the year ahead, complete with more angles, accelerated by TikTok and backed by data no one else can provide.

We’re pulling back the curtain so marketers can use these same tools year-round to unlock insights for brands, agencies, creators, and even the most active TikTok comment warriors.

Let’s get into it!

Cassie Taylor
Global Head of Platform
& Trends Marketing



2026 Trend Theme



Irreplaceable Instinct

/i(r)rə'plāsəb(ə)l 'instiŋG(k)t/ noun; what technology can't replace: connection, curiosity, and presence, even when it's a little messy

Shaped by people, powered by AI

In 2025, when everything felt “too much,” people found ways to cope such as quiet quitting, avoiding intensity, and running on autopilot. But in 2026, audiences will move away from passive living toward active creation, retraining their irreplaceable instinct with real curiosity, conviction, and care that connects us.

This year’s trend signals were powered by AI, then shaped by human instinct. Our tools helped us surface patterns across countless videos, searches, comments, and communities. But the meaning, what people care about, where their attention goes, and how they spend their tight budgets, comes from understanding how our community on TikTok actually feels. We're rebalancing our lives, changes in economy, and another year of the "new normal". And we aren't backing down. It is in these moments of realignment that we rediscover what matters. TikTok is where people are exploring it all in true depth. This is where irreplaceable instinct shows up in real time.

That is our focus this year: helping marketers sharpen what makes them human. Tech like AI is not a replacement, it is a creative amplifier. When AI fuels the data and human instinct sets the direction, creativity does not just keep up with culture, it leads it.

Shaped by People

We turned data into trends using human insight

We used our tools to analyze countless pieces of content, comments, and search queries. But the real magic came from the humans behind the data and the creativity on our platform. Partnering with brilliant minds around the world, we mapped the trajectory and velocity of today's trends to bring you our 2026 predictions.

How to grab our **attention**



Reali-TEA

Fantasy is fading. In 2026, audiences will realign through the chaos to forge new realities together.

What we're **curious** about



Curiosity Detours

In 2026, curiosity becomes the new currency as audiences dive deeper into new journeys of discovery.

What we **spend** our money on



Emotional ROI

Impulse will lose to intention in 2026 as shoppers reward the brands that justify the why to buy, first.

Powered by AI

This year we moved faster by using our own tools

Leveraging our own AI powered solutions, [TikTok One Insights Spotlight](#) and [TikTok Market Scope](#), we were able to test and validate our TikTok Next 2026 trend hypotheses against real-time data and brand interactions. We also explored high performing content across paid and organic with [TikTok One Content Suite](#), then workshopped new campaign ideas with [Symphony Creative Studio](#). With our full suite of solutions, marketers can move from trend insight to creativity within minutes.



The Trends Shaping Your Industry Now

[TikTok Market Scope](#)

First-party analytics platform that turns audience behavior, content performance, and market trends into actionable insights. It unifies paid and organic data to show how people discover, talk about, and buy from brands on TikTok—helping marketers connect awareness to conversion in real time.



Turn Organic Talk Into Strategic Content

[TikTok One Content Suite](#)

TikTok One Content Suite centralizes all of the organic content that mentions your brand—from creator marketing to TikTok Shop* affiliate and earned media—into a single location, enabling you to seamlessly amplify genuine user-generated (UGC) content as Spark Ads.

*availability varies by region



Multiply Your Creative Momentum

[Symphony Creative Studio](#)

Our suite of generative AI tools are designed to unlock creative potential at scale. Instead of repeating the same message, marketers can tell it in different formats, to engage audiences, prevent creative fatigue, and drive new behavior and sales.

Reali-TEA

#ForcedToLock In

#CultureForMe



#RealiTEA

#CommentReactStack

#SecondAccountFound

Trend Signal One

Reali-TEA

Fantasy is fading. In 2026, audiences will realign through the chaos to forge new realities together.

Humanizing your brand goes beyond an AI avatar or chat bot, it's listening, learning, and sharing real stories that spill the tea, all the details, on how people actually feel. TikTok audiences have moved on from romanticizing life to embracing [#TheGreatLockIn](#). We're no longer booking trips because we're only in our twenties once. We're hitting our thirties, forties, and fifties (kudos to TikTok's growing [#MakeupOver50](#) family) and learning escapism isn't enough.

It's sharing [Jet2Holiday](#) horror stories, chaotic trip lore, and finding comfort in navigating life's chaos together that wins relatability and resonance. Quiet quitting has become loud cracking: setting boundaries, protecting peace, and chasing passions out loud. These are the moments that make us laugh, reflect, and feel human. TikTok is where creators and audiences celebrate the highs and embrace the lows together through humor, community, and connection.

What's Done

[#delulu](#)

[#romanticizing](#)

[#digitalescapism](#)

What's Next

Keywords powered by **TikTok One Insights Spotlight**

[#lockedin](#) 648k posts

From study to fitness goals, audiences are declaring a "lock in" mindset, building tribes of affirmation and accountability.

[#hygiene](#) 692k posts

Hear us out, we've seen a steady incline in creators sharing how they look and feel good by turning their everyday shower into a luxury maintenance ritual.

[#joblife](#) 235k posts

The fresh iteration of [#worklife](#) (5.2M posts), with more users returning to office or taking on non-traditional career paths, creators are sharing a day in their work lives to share new perspectives.



Insight Learned

Audiences are turning the mundane into shared moments of humor, celebration, and relatability.



What does this mean for brands?

Marketer Takeaway

What part of your creative campaign can flex to meet the cultural "tea"? Use our tools to stay plugged into evolving language and aesthetics as you get closer to launch.

Get Started

Go where real conversations happen. Tools like [TikTok One Insights Spotlight](#) and [TikTok Market Scope](#) track audience sentiment in real time. Listen, then create content that reflects it with empathy and wit.

Pro Tip: Routinely check "Vertical Insights" in TikTok Market Scope for a real-time look into the keywords, hashtags, creators, and searches in your vertical.



Trend Signal One

Exploring Top Flavors of Reali-TEA

Flavors (emerging clubs) were shaped by tracking keyword and hashtag growth in [TikTok One Insights Spotlight](#) and [TikTok Market Scope](#), revealing where audience behaviors are headed.

1.5x

Millennial and Gen Z users expect brands to have strong community, and are **1.5x more likely** than Gen X+ to try a new brand because of its community.

Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Long-Term Value of a TikTok User Study 2025 (US results) conducted by Kantar

Culture For Me

TikTok has become its own third culture, a space where heritage, context, and community collide to create something both shared and new. Here, identity expands beyond traditional demographics, shaped instead by interests and intersectionality.

[#thirdculture](#) [#kwave](#) [#expat](#)



Forced to Lock In

As routines get stretched thin, audiences realign together by sharing hacks to outsmart meetings, packed schedules, and the Sunday scaries, like [@itssadja](#) using **Adobe Express** to stay locked in for the semester.

[#sundayscaries](#) [#healingseason](#) [#corporatemaxxing](#)

1.5x

TikTok users are **1.5x more likely** to repurchase from brands when ads allow them to interact with the advertised brand (ex. comments or co-creation)

Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Long-Term Value of a TikTok User Study 2025 (US results) conducted by Kantar

Comment React Stack

A TikTok comment photo react is worth a thousand words. Audiences are building their comment react stacks, reviving memes on TikTok with shared photos of expressions instead of words. This isn't just engagement, it's creating culture in the comments.

[#meme](#) [#photocomment](#)



Second Account Found

Strategic brands and creators are breaking out of one-dimensional molds on TikTok, launching new accounts to show new sides, like **Immi Ramen's** second channel for street interviews about defining happiness, tied back to their mission through ramen. It's human to be multifaceted.

[#drafts](#) [#unselfishvlog](#) [#advice](#)

Case Study

Knorr's Love Language Cooking Up Connection

Knorr tapped into Gen Z's redefined relationship norms, using TikTok to show that cooking with its products signals confidence, care, and modern desirability. Creator-led content featured real Canadians sharing their "green flags" in dating, naturally positioning Knorr as part of the conversation while driving traffic and engagement. The Valentine's Day campaign reached 1.68M users, generated 17M+ video views, and achieved standout engagement with 11+ seconds spent on the Instant Page—proving that authentic, TikTok-native storytelling can boost awareness and relevance among audiences.



+13%

website visitors moving from discovery to conversion

HIDDEN GEMS CAR MODS PLAYLIST



CURIOSITY DETOURS

CAR GRWM ROADTRIP PLAYLIST



Trend Signal Two

Trend Signal Two

Curiosity Detours

In 2026, curiosity becomes the new currency as audiences dive deeper into new journeys of discovery.

Our community noticed they were becoming over reliant on tech to get from A to B, and missing all the exciting discovery that can happen in between. But behavior on TikTok is shifting. Audiences now arrive with intention and leave with curiosity, finding trusted, unexpected answers that spark new rabbit holes. Searching on TikTok is like an outing that starts with one plan and unfolds into endless surprises. You come for one thing, and leave with [#datingtips](#), [#cookinghacks](#), and [#storytimes](#) that make the journey richer and more fun. It's out with running on autopilot, in with scanning TikTok comments for answers, searching "[my makeup type](#)," and staying tapped into what everyone's talking about. The best part? There's no single path to your brand, just countless opportunities for audiences to discover you through personalized recommendations built by organic audience interaction, interest, and intent.

What's Done

[#autopilot](#)

[#npcmode](#)

What's Next

[#whattowear](#)

[#mymakeuptype](#)

[#cookinghacks](#)

2 in 3

searchers on TikTok say a central reason for using it as a search platform is that they discover useful things beyond what they were searching for.

Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Future of Search Study 2025 (Us and CA Results), conducted by WARC

Billions of searches

happen on TikTok every day—up more than 40% from last year.

Source: TikTok Internal Data, Global 2025

1 in 4

1 in 4 TikTok users start searching within 30 seconds of opening the app.

Source: TikTok Internal Data, US, as of June 2024



[@CashApp](#)

Cash App spotlights niche small business paths in their "How I Make Money" series on TikTok.

What does this mean for brands?

Marketer Takeaway

This isn't about broadening your appeal, but about showing up meaningfully outside your core category. Use TikTok to identify surprising adjacent spaces, niche communities, or cultural moments that naturally align with your brand identity.

Get Started

Use [TikTok One Content Suite](#) to dig deeper into organic brand mentions and see how the community really talks about your brand. Connect with creators to turn authentic content into paid campaigns, or use these insights to craft creative that speaks the audience's language.

Pro Tip: Use TikTok One Content Suite as a source for search insights, it surfaces up to **44x more results** than manual search on our platform.

Source: TikTok Data Science Internal Analysis, April 2024

Emotional ROI

#cafeathome

#tastemaker

#richinlife



Trend Signal Three

Trend Signal Three

Emotional ROI

Impulse will lose to intention in 2026 as shoppers reward the brands that justify the why to buy, first.

Consumers may be cutting back on “non-essentials,” but they’re also expanding what counts as essential, and emotions are driving that line. It’s no longer just about grabbing the cheapest shampoo or bread; it’s about running to TikTok to find the shampoo that truly works for your **hair type**, or turning **bread-making** into a ritual that supports wellness. Purchase decisions are increasingly prevalidated, with audiences weighing emotional ROI just as much as financial cost. People may get the data from AI, but they come to TikTok for the human spark: the joy, discovery, and delight of shopping from their favorite tastemakers before they hit “buy.” The “why to buy” has never mattered more, and audiences are gravitating toward brands and TikTok voices that offer real context, not just a sales pitch.

What’s Done

[#viralbuy](#)

[#influencers](#)

What’s Next

[#tastemakers](#)

Tāst,mākər; noun, a person who decides or influences what is or will become trendy

Are you a Tastemaker?

Foundational Organic Audience

Who is the community you want to serve, and how can you consistently show up to provide real value and earn their trust?

Leverages Tools to Understand your Audience Better

Are you using audience tools (ie: Creator Search Insights, TikTok Next Trend Forecasts, TikTok One Insights Spotlight) and programs (Creator Community) to uncover who your followers really are, how they buy, and what truly matters to them?

Selective about Partnerships

Are you partnering with brands and creators that genuinely fit your lifestyle, content, and community, ones you’re proud and excited to represent?

What does this mean for brands?

Marketer Takeaway

Don’t let the pressure to sell show. Shoppers are redefining what’s essential not by price, but by meaning, joy, and belonging. Justifying the why to buy means anchoring your product in their identity, community, and the moments that bring them joy.

Get Started

With **Symphony Creative Studio**, you can quickly adapt a single asset across languages, formats, and styles—so your creative meets the Emotional ROI of different audiences. If your audience is feeling stressed, test ASMR-style visual hooks, cozy gaming scenes, or varied voiceovers to see what resonates most.

Pro tip: Use these fast, low-lift concepts to inform and evolve your broader creative strategy.



[@jasontsay](#)

Minimalist at heart Jason turns every product recommendation into a story, decoding the dollars and the artistry behind what makes it a real gem.

Trend Signal Three

Why to Buy = $2(E^2) + T$

E² = Expanding Essentials

E² = Evidence Economy

T = Tastemakers

Essentials for TikTok audiences are centered around new wellness goals

The TikTok comment section is trusted for community reviews

Creators are winning favor by evolving storytelling beyond impulse tactics

FOR EXAMPLE:

- ✗ **OUT:** Because it's cute
- ✓ **NEXT:** Because it brings me joy
- ✗ **OUT:** 2 hr gym sesh
- ✓ **NEXT:** Lifestyle gym membership to work out & work remotely
- ✗ **OUT:** Expensive group dinner tabs
- ✓ **NEXT:** Themed dinner parties at home

FOR EXAMPLE:

- ✗ **OUT:** "Viral"
- ✓ **NEXT:** "Day 36 of using this product"
- ✗ **OUT:** Staged scenarios
- ✓ **NEXT:** Real world testing
- ✗ **OUT:** Copy & pasted claims
- ✓ **NEXT:** Crowdsourcing reviews from comments

FOR EXAMPLE:

- ✗ **OUT:** "Hype"
- ✓ **NEXT:** "Most recommended"
- ✗ **OUT:** General lifestyle
- ✓ **NEXT:** Niche series
- ✗ **OUT:** High follower count
- ✓ **NEXT:** High comment engagement



Marketer Takeaway

Join the emotional ROI math club. You offer the why based on their new realities, then they'll handle the how it all makes sense.

Case Study

From Browsing to Buying Driving High Value Performance

Ashley Canada used TikTok-first content to highlight furniture in authentic home settings, showing products from multiple perspectives to align with shopper intent and sentiment. By leveraging Smart+, the brand dynamically served the most relevant content to potential customers, outperforming standard Catalog Ads. The campaign drove 191% higher website ROAS, 58% lower cost per acquisition, and a 533% increase in add-to-cart rate, proving that showcasing products in context with intent-driven content can boost conversion and efficiency across the funnel.



+191%
higher website
Return on Ad Spend
vs. Business as Usual
campaigns

Training Your Irreplaceable Instinct

Trend Signal One

RealI-TEA

Fantasy is fading. In 2026, audiences will realign through the chaos to forge new realities together.

Get Started

How will you understand the flavors of audience's new realities so you can better reflect how they feel today?

Trend Signal Two

Curiosity Detours

In 2026, curiosity becomes the new currency as audiences dive deeper into new journeys of discovery.

Get Started

What unexpected paths are audiences taking to discover your brand, and what can you offer that makes their detour worth staying for?

Trend Signal Three

Emotional ROI

Impulse will lose to intention in 2026 as shoppers reward the brands that justify the why to buy, first.

Get Started

How is your brand proving its real, everyday value beyond price, through meaning, proof, and tastemakers?

In action: Food & Beverage example

1 From Insight

Identify top trending hashtags in Food & Bev category from [TikTok Market Scope](#)

Let's take a closer look at #booktok

Top 5 trending hashtags

1	#tiktokshop	413,818
2	#starbucks	351,720
3	#booktok	323,776
4	#storytime	318,464
5	#foodie	302,425

2 To Exploration

Search for videos that mention both your brand and "booktok" from the TikTok community in [TikTok One Content Suite](#)

Explore inspiration or instantly request ad authorization to spark creator content into ads

Content Suite

Discover and manage all your brand-relevant organic content across TikTok creators' posts that are predicted to perform well in paid ads. [Learn more](#)

Find Spark Ads Manage Branded Content Saved videos Data

Request authorization (3) Authorized for Spark Ads (1625) Launch

Contains: booktok X Search by keyword, creator name, Sort by

3 To Strategy

Generate a video concept in minutes with [Symphony Creative Studio Text to Video](#) feature

Prompt input: Scene of a cozy kitchen with warm morning tones, a cat, book, and tea on the table, with hands opening a fresh croissant from a bag



TikTok Academy

Learn more about our trends and solutions with our POV and Create video series.



TikTok Next Hub

Explore our web experience for a more interactive look at emerging trends.



 TikTok
next



**THANK
YOU**

Legal Disclaimer

This document is the property of TikTok Inc., and has been prepared by TikTok Inc. solely for informational purposes. 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. Results may vary.

