

# HOW BRANDS CAN GET IT RIGHT WITH TIKTOK ADS

TikTok is different. Here's what advertisers need to do on the fast-moving vertical video platform.

An Ipsos Point of View

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GAME CHANGERS



## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Advertising on TikTok means following the same fundamentals of good practice as for any other channel.

- Branding must remain a key focus
- Ads must be authentic to the brand
- Ads need to persuade

But there are some differences that are important to success in the TikTok world.

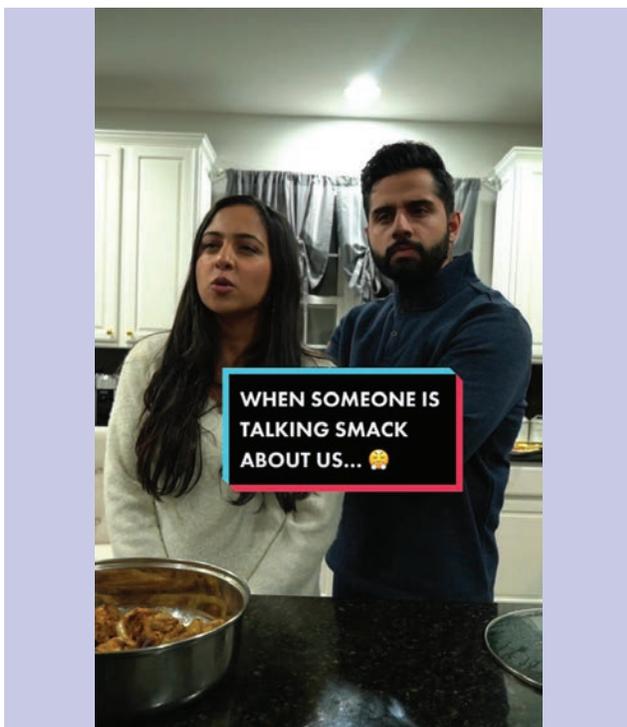
- It helps to look like native content
- You must hook viewers extremely quickly
- Try to max out on entertainment value
- Music is the soul of TikTok content

TikTok is the shiny new platform for advertisers, spawning a whole cottage industry of creators and how-tos to feed a narrative that there is a specialism to making effective spots for TikTok. Ipsos researchers set out to investigate that hypothesis by testing a selection of recent TikTok ads, using predictive measures of in-market effects, and comparing what we found with the fundamentals we know about how advertising works.

We will take you through a few ways that creatives may be developed differently on TikTok and look at how advertising fundamentals still need to be followed on any platform.

## Difference #1: Look like native content

The first difference that we found was that ads that appear on TikTok as “native ads” are better received than traditional ads. It is beneficial to blur lines between ad and content. Ad experiences that are in line with how consumers typically interact with the platform and feel natural to the content they are used to seeing—while keeping the brand central—tend to do better.



Source: Ads tested with Ipsos' Creative Spark Digital solution, N=150/Ad, U.S., Men & Women

An ad for Duolingo delivers unique, surprising, entertaining and humorous content, leading to high engagement and longer viewing times. The ad achieved significantly higher breakthrough than Ipsos' norms. The popular influencers featured use a dramatic skit to show how to use the product in a fun creative way.

### Entertaining and Engaging

**63%**

**Is Entertaining**  
—significantly above norm

**57%**

**Is Unique**  
—significantly above norm

## Difference #2: Hook viewers extremely quickly

An ad by Scrub Daddy shocks viewers into watching with its risqué theme. 86% of viewers watched at least 3 seconds of the ad and half watched over 20 seconds, producing strong recall. This ad gained the highest brand attention level of the ads featured in this analysis. Humor, even potentially polarizing jokes, can be effective on TikTok and many reported enjoying this ad.



Source: Ads tested with Ipsos' Creative Spark Digital solution, N=150/Ad, U.S., Men & Women

### Humour can help an ad become more memorable



*“I thought the ad was hilarious! It caught my attention immediately and went along with the trends of TikTok! I am interested to try their new product!”*

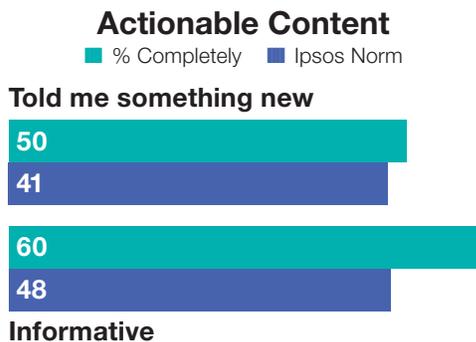
### Difference #3: Max out the entertainment

We have previously advised advertisers that they have two choices on digital platforms: Accept that people will quickly scroll away and tout your brand early or defy the odds and make advertising that is so entertaining it temporarily stops consumers' thumbs. Native is a good example of a brand succeeding at taking the second route.



Source: Ads tested with Ipsos' Creative Spark Digital solution, N=150/Ad, U.S., Men & Women

The use of a wise-cracking “scentaur” to introduce the benefits of Native natural deodorant is entertaining and informative, delivering this ad a high breakthrough score and above-average likelihood to drive behavior change.



### Difference #4: Music is the soul of TikTok

Unlike some of its platform competitors, TikTok is a sound-on environment, and Taco Bell makes good use of the power of music in its spot for Mexican pizza. The ad effectively engages viewers through catchy music, effects, and humor. It is rewarded with high brand attention.



Source: Ads tested with Ipsos' Creative Spark Digital solution, N=150/Ad, U.S., Men & Women

#### Catchy tune and recognizable audio logo



*“I thought the song was catchy”*  
*“The music’s lit. I should go Taco Bell”*

Taco Bell rounds out the effort with its memorable audio brand asset—the bell gong.

Ads on TikTok, however, still need to embrace the fundamentals to be successful.

## Fundamental #1: Branding must be a key focus

Brands don't have to choose between entertainment or branding. An ad for Crumbl Cookies uses strong branding right from the start while also entertaining and engaging audiences. Due to the book-end branding cues paired with the continuous sound of "CRUMBL," viewers clearly link the spot back to the brand. The cookies, regardless of shape, color, or flavor, also seem to be distinct for the brand.



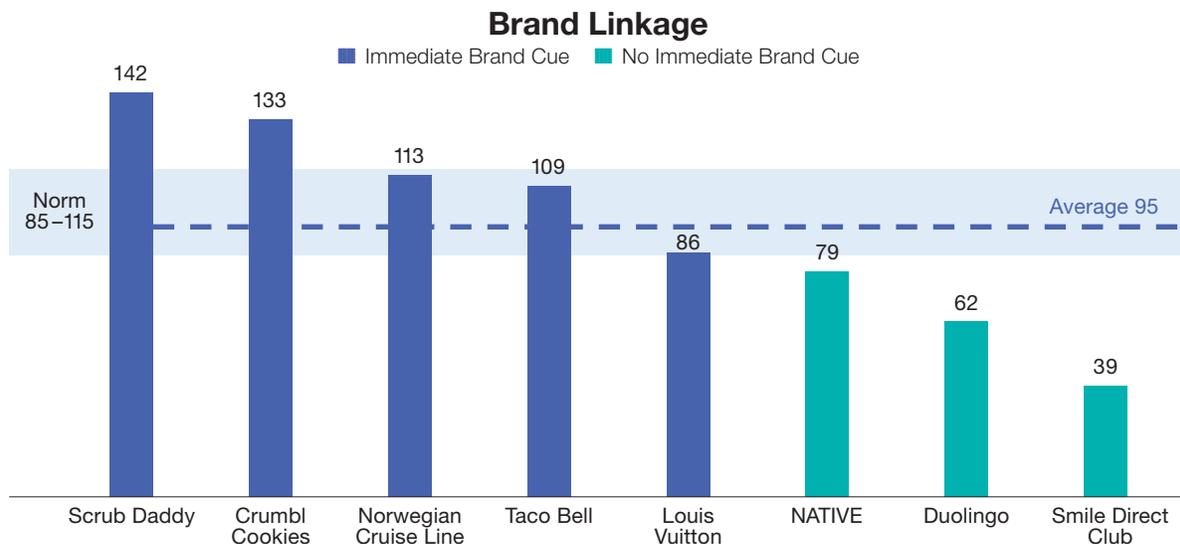
**Immediate Brand Cues through sound, logo and box**

**133**

**Brand Linkage**  
(Norm 85–115)

In addition, the connection between the brand name and Michael Buffer's iconic phrase "Let's get ready to (c)rumble" works hard to keep the brand front and center while being entertaining and humorous. Almost half of people (46%) watched 95% of the ad—the highest in this group of TikTok creatives.

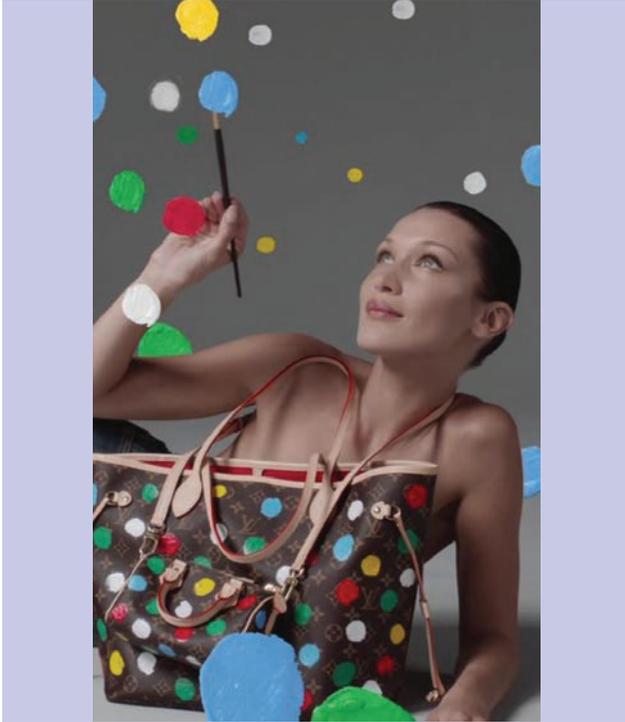
Source: Ads tested with Ipsos' Creative Spark Digital solution, N=150/Ad, U.S., Men & Women



Good branding early in the spot is key. When we look at the five ads with an immediate brand cue, brand linkage is 94% higher than those without an immediate brand cue.

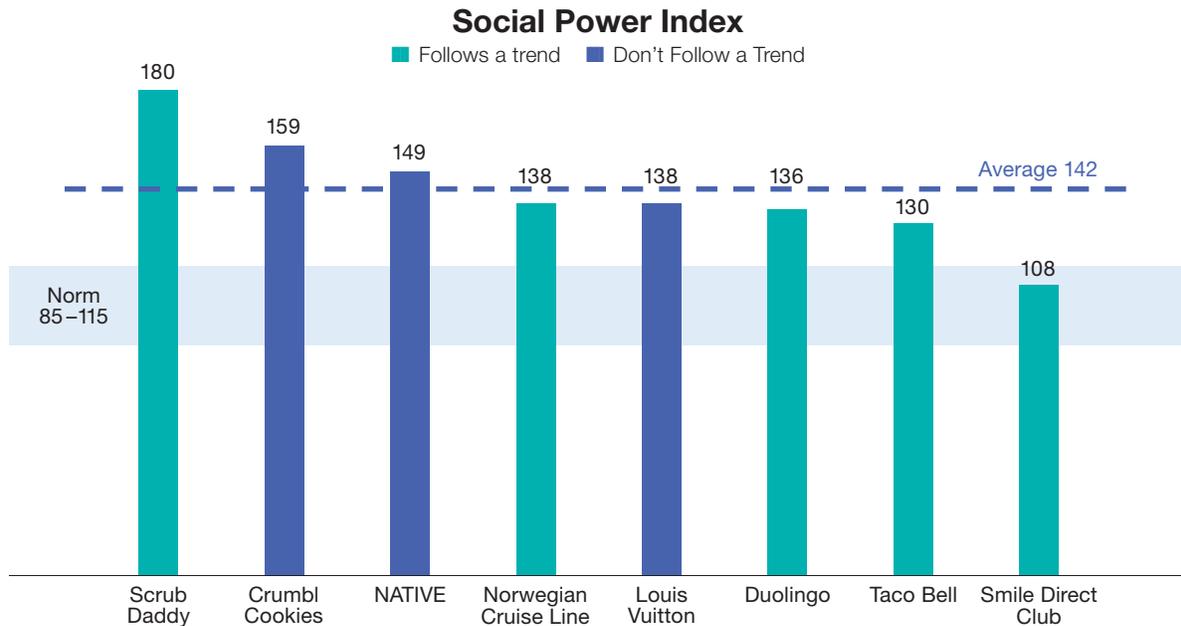
## Fundamental #2: Be authentic to your brand

An ad for Louis Vuitton authentically expresses the brand’s creativity and aspirational vibe, staying true to its brand essence. Bella Hadid is perceived to be an authentic brand ambassador and the iconic tote bag is visually prominent throughout.



Source: Ads tested with Ipsos' Creative Spark Digital solution, N=150/Ad, U.S., Men & Women

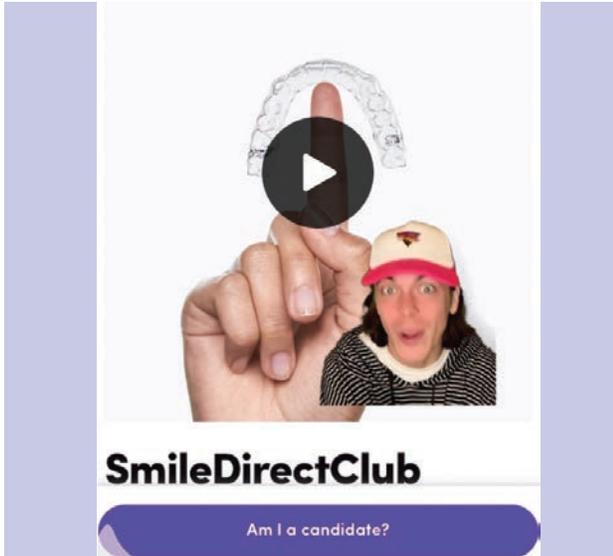
This results in high scores for the ad for “fitting with the way I feel about this brand.” Brands on TikTok need to consider carefully before piggybacking on trends, a practice which might grab attention fleetingly. However, consumers are highly attuned to brands straying from their core values and personality to court popularity. Our analysis showed that social power is just as strong for brands like Louis Vuitton, Crumbl, or Native, which aren’t following trends as for other brands which do. Viewers are more likely to talk about an ad online based on positive creative experiences like uniqueness, surprisingness, and likability of the ad.



Please see here for our Ipsos whitepaper on Social Power, [We don't need to talk about ads](#), March 2021. Social Power Index: Metric based on validation to in-market social conversation outcomes for campaigns: volume of mentions measured through Synthesio.

### Fundamental #3: Remember the importance of persuasion

An ad for Smile Direct Club persuades by combining information with a strong call-to-action. Using TikTok creative trends, it scores above norm for “told me something new,” and leads consumers to consider following through with taking action.



Source: Ads tested with Ipsos' Creative Spark Digital solution, N=150/Ad, U.S., Men & Women

**Smile Direct Club convinces viewers to act**



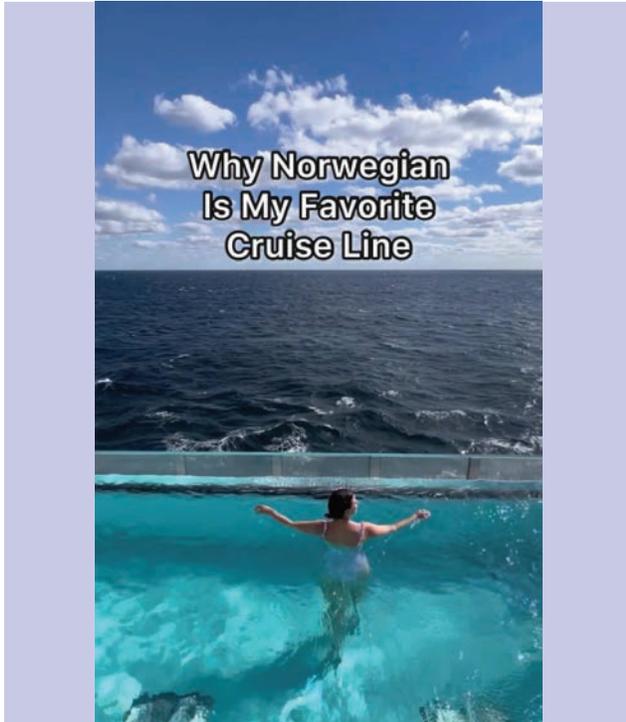
*“It seemed informative enough that I’d actually go checkout the website and what all entails the process to join.”*

*“I was surprised it was as easy as the man was saying it was. Didn’t know it would work as fast as 4–6 months. Feeling like looking into it a bit more now.”*



## And finally, showcasing a TikTok champion that pairs strong platform execution with solid ad fundamentals.

Norwegian Cruise Line brings visually appealing shots of the cruise experience along with a native creator testimonial to make a highly effective ad.

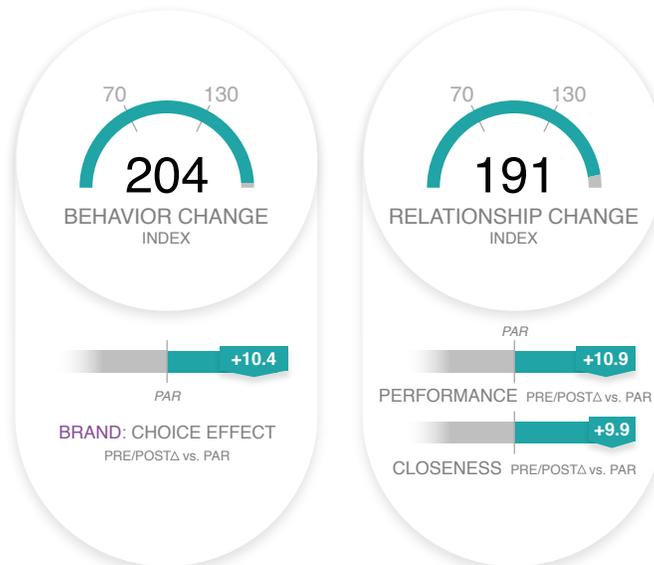


Source: Ads tested with Ipsos' Creative Spark Digital solution, N=150/Ad, U.S., Men & Women

The use of camera phone footage fits with organic TikTok content and makes the ad believable and relatable, leading to positive perceptions of the brand. It follows the trend of a “day in the life of” and feels like an authentic recap of a passenger’s positive experience, allowing it to blend into the feed. A third of viewers played at least 95% of this ad, and the average view time is 10 out of 20 seconds—so this organic approach may help with retaining attention.

Norwegian’s brand is highlighted in multiple see-say syncs that include text overlays. Visually appealing, fast-paced shots of Norwegian’s amenities are informative and differentiating, making the ad persuasive.

### Persuasive because ad has new news with demos of amenities



## Summary

Overall, brands have the freedom to break more rules on TikTok, but the communication development process is still the same. The Creative Excellence Team at Ipsos can provide the tools, insight, and guidance to maximize the effectiveness of your digital creative.

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