

DARE TO BE A TIKTOK MISFIT

How KitKat shaped a cultural moment and championed brand success.

By Sonia Belgacem September 2023

IMAGE: NESTLÉ



Recently, KitKat Japan unveiled its noteworthy KitKat YOKUBARI DOUBLE ad on TikTok. Masterfully adhering to social media codes while injecting a burst of creative brilliance resulted in an authentic Misfits story.

Following an intensive year of research and meta-analysis by Ipsos on Brand Success, a new roadmap has surfaced, identifying three key ingredients of brand success. This newfound approach enables marketers to steer brand success by not only shaping peoples' expectations but also empathizing with them, coupled with understanding the intricate contextual role brands play in their lives. By forging strong connections and enhancing peoples' lives by actively shaping their expectations to the current context, brands are armed for success, and nowhere has this been more critical than on digital platforms like TikTok.

Unquestionably, TikTok has emerged as a rising juggernaut in today's digital landscape,

illustrated by the extraordinary influx of its user base. Additionally, it has fueled a fresh demand for short, interactive content. The platform documented the swiftest growth amongst digital platforms, outpacing numerous other platforms. Garnering more than 1.5 billion users worldwide in 2022, TikTok duly represents a vast chunk of advertising expenditure. Which is why mastering TikTok and exploiting it to its full potential is a prerequisite for marketers to captivate their audience.

Moving beyond the context, the core mantra for harnessing the creative power of TikTok, or any digital channel for that matter, is that content is, and will always be, king! In the advertising industry, one common factor of effective advertising remains steady over time: the quality of creativity. Ipsos data consistently demonstrates that creativity in advertising is a more effective way to spark brand growth. However, what renders a TikTok ad effective isn't identical to other platforms, a nuance the Japanese KitKat team have grasped well!

To commemorate its golden jubilee in the country, KitKat Japan introduced a fresh product fusing two existing variants: KitKat Yokubari Double ('double greedy').

To propel this launch, their team collaborated with the ad agency Wunderman Thompson Japan to evolve a wild, vibrant, and engaging TikTok video. This initiative saw KitKat joining forces with Piko Taro, a Japanese celebrity who shot to fame following his smash hit 'PPAP' (Pen Pineapple Apple Pen) in 2016.

The creative acumen woven within KitKat plays upon this viral 'PPAP', merging not a pen, apple, or pineapple this time - but rather two distinct KitKat versions. It's an ingenious leap into the burgeoning global trend of nostalgia (Source: [Global Trends | Ipsos](#)), all wrapped up in the lively PPAP music and dance featuring a captivating character. True entertainment personified!

In no time, the video generated millions of views, which is an intriguing case study for creativity – a true juggernaut for brand attention (branded memorability) and behavioural change.

KitKat “Yokubari Double”



INDEED, THIS CREATIVE IS A MISFIT, SWIFTLY INTEGRATED INTO POPULAR CULTURE

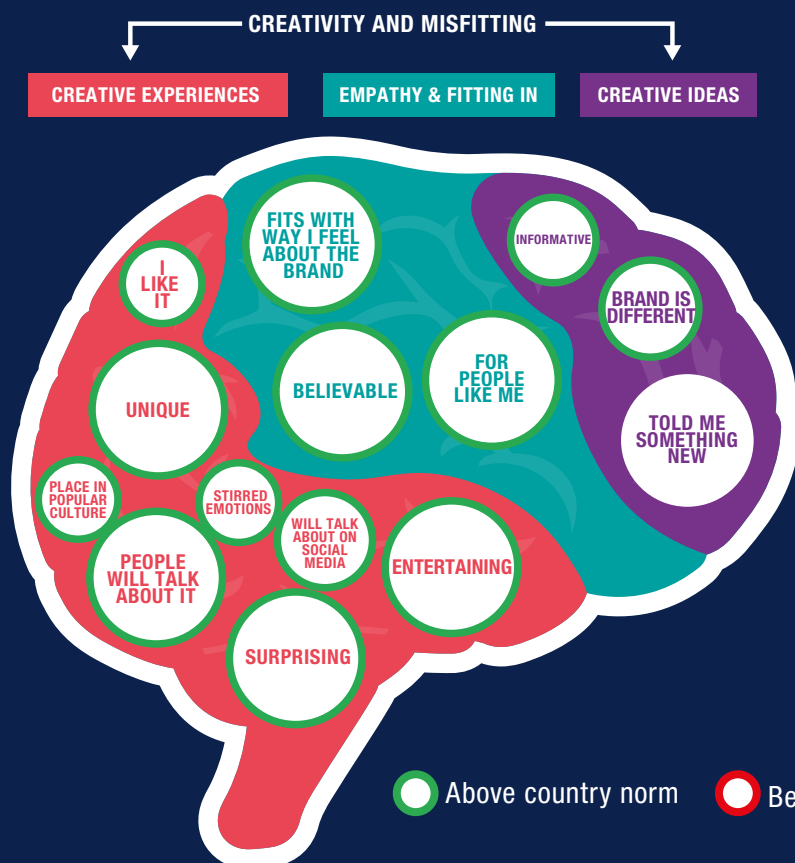
At Ipsos, we evaluated KitKat Yokubari Double using our signature creative evaluation offer, CreativeSpark. Unsurprisingly, our validated Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) confirmed that the creative carries significant potency to

etch KitKat into memory (brand attention), while also driving impact on the brand (behavioural change), getting the audience to crave the new product, as intended by the brand team; and confirmed by the in-market sales results.

The campaign was a perfect fit for our 'Yokubari Double' innovation (= 'Double Greedy') which combines two of our core flavors into one Fusion concept. The consumer response was outstanding both in terms of engagement and business results, with a 40% growth over last year's innovation.'

Olivier Jakubowicz

Business Executive Officer, Confectionery Business Group, Nestlé Japan



BRAND ATTENTION INDEX: 186

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE INDEX: 143

Indexes are Ipsos proprietary measure for effectiveness either for brand attention and short-term behaviour change using our best-in-class method CreativeSpark.¹

In this instance, the fine blend of advertising and entertainment is what we, at Ipsos, term as Misfits ([more on Misfits here](#)), and KitKat's Yokubari Double is a shining example of a true Misfit ad.

The ad possesses all the essential attributes of a strong Misfit:

- 1. **A remarkable creative experience:** By tapping into popular culture through a partnership with the well-known character, Piko Taro, the creative offers a unique, entertaining experience that audiences relished.
- 2. **Solid empathy and fitting in:** The ad imparts a narrative that aligns with what the Japanese anticipate from KitKat, already revered for its eclectic flavors. It's fresh creative demonstrating brand continuity, fitting perfectly with the brand's DNA - common feature in Japanese culture invoking empathy, establishing a strong audience connection. The ad's influence is not restricted to tapping into popular culture; it actively contributes to it, extending the legacy of Piko Taro. Importantly, it produces a sense of intimacy and relevance for the TikTok audience.
- 3. **A clear, compelling creative idea:** The freshness of the product is vividly pronounced and thus readily understood by the audience. Importantly, this notion is delivered in a highly entertaining manner, breaking some anticipated chocolate demonstration conventions, thereby fortifying brand difference, and increasing desire for the new product.

In categories such as chocolate bars, where the brand decision process tends to be automated, resulting in impulse purchases, it's imperative for brands to consistently live in the minds of its target audience. Maintaining visibility and reminding people of the brand's essence is crucial. Through its entertaining, pertinent, and innovative creation, KitKat Yokubari Double has carved an indelible imprint in the minds of consumers, creating a cultural moment in the lives of TikTok users.



HOW KITKAT YOKUBARI DOUBLE MANAGED TO BE A MISFIT SUITED FOR TIKTOK

While building on the creative principles of Misfits, KitKat Yokubari Double video does especially well within the context of TikTok.

TikTok users expect short, trending video formats aligning with their interests. While being a Misfit is paramount to grabbing attention, providing content that seamlessly fits within the platform for user engagement is equally pertinent.

In an artistically intriguing adaptation, KitKat Japan tactfully handles the topic of context, laying the foundation for a formidable presence on TikTok, an arena that demands creativity.

The singularities that make them stand out, defining rules in the game of TikTok creativity includes ([TikTok learnings](#)):

- a. **Look native:** The visually vibrant KitKat Yokubari Double advertisement is a perfect match for the lively TikTok landscape. Propelling beyond the orthodox ad narrative, the creative team brilliantly curated a trend-setting approach, famously synonymous with TikTok. Sparking a ripple effect, KitKat Japan and their agency ignited a video contest, inspiring viewers to participate with their version of the Yobubari Double dance, creating a community bonded by creativity and fun.
- b. **Hook quickly:** The video cleverly plays with contrast, using Piko Taro's serious demeanor at the beginning as a set up for the subsequent unexpected amusing dance. This stark contrast combined with visual elements like the floating KitKat Yokubari Double, captures watchers' curiosity from the get-go, inviting smiles and spontaneous dance-alongs.
- c. **Max out entertainment value:** The ad celebrates the philosophy of unadulterated entertainment. The selection of social icon, Piko Taro, as the face of the project, further amplifies the entertainment value without eclipsing the brand. Skillfully weaving humor, dance, and a catchy tune the ad creates an appealing blend of elements that leaves a lasting imprint, embedding the brand deeper into consumer minds.
- d. **Music as the soul of TikTok:** The significance of music and lyrics to this ad is beyond doubt. Not only do they serve as vehicles of entertainment and surprise but are instrumental in communicating the unique dual-flavored KitKat offering. The ad leverages the resonating impact of audio cues, driving advertising effectiveness. The creators ingeniously adapted an existing music piece, reworking the lyrics to carve a brand-specific narrative, and emphasized the new product's attributes.

In conclusion, the video's format, aesthetics, tonality, and beyond all, the well-strategized collaboration and 'personality' choice infuses

the creative output with an intuitive relevance that resonates profoundly within the TikTok environment.

WHAT IGNITES THIS COLLABORATION?

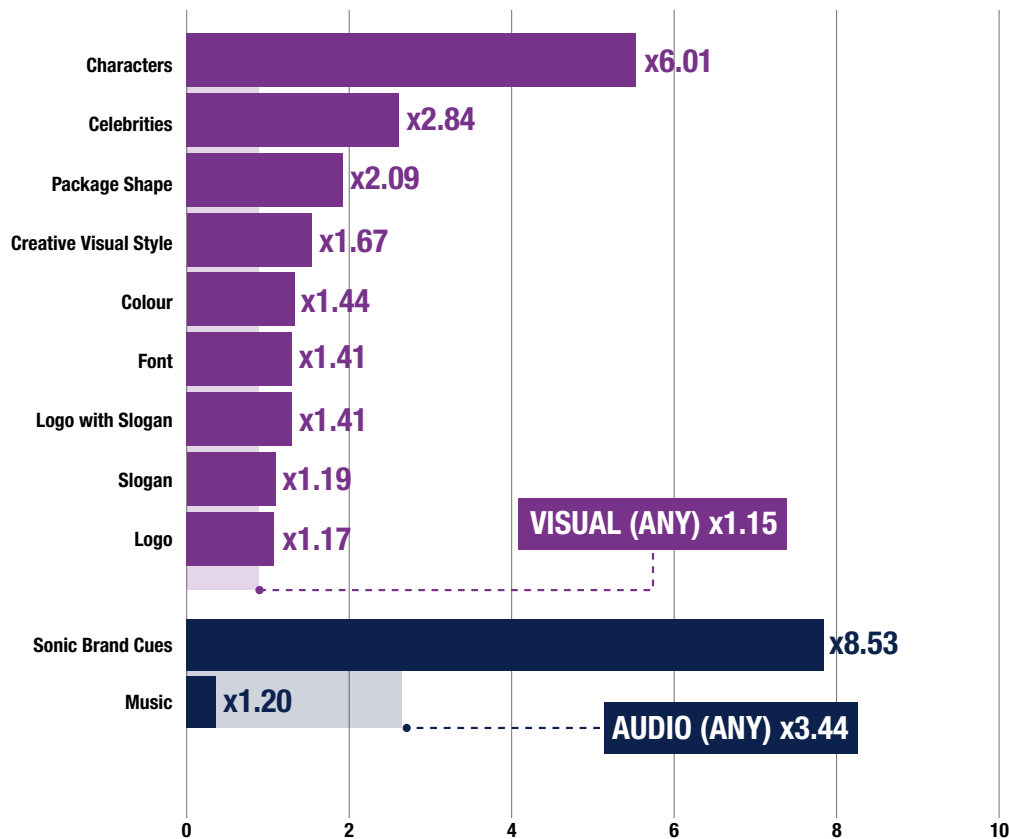
Collaboration with celebrities and influencers on TikTok is immensely trendy; we know from our work on brand distinctive assets (The Power of You) that such celebrities can be effective attention catalysts in creativity.

One of the major pitfalls a brand could face while allying with a celebrity is the risk of being overshadowed. The celebrity could potentially hog all the limelight, thereby compromising the role and presence of the brand in the narrative.

In this specific scenario, KitKat Yokubari Double is far from being obscured. Instead, it leverages the collaboration to full effect.

Piko Taro surfaced in 2016 as an extravagant character renowned for his song: Pen-Pinapple-Apple-Pen. The video rapidly went viral, clinching the number one spot on the Billboard Japan Hot 100, a first for such a short single, and transcended Japanese borders within only a month post release. It spontaneously wielded user-generated videos of people recreating the iconic moves of the character. Fast forward seven years to 2023, KitKat and Piko Taro were fused together as an ideal match.

Average likelihood of an ad featuring different brand asset types being high vs. low performing on branded attention²



In our creative assessment, more than 70% confirmed the character's presence strongly augmented their engagement with the creative, with nearly universal recall of KitKat being the advertised brand.

Furthermore, the reappearance of Piko Taro, after a period of silence, evoked a wave of nostalgia among the audience, subtly counterbalanced by the novelty injected by KitKat - memories of a beloved brand inducing freshness: the perfect blend!

The KitKat team strategically tapped into a past viral trend to shatter the customary culture of uniformity with something refreshingly novel.

In the end, this creative is a perfect Misfit ad, seamlessly integrated into the TikTok context, underpinning popular culture in Japan, resulting in a success worthy of celebration!

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SOURCES:

1. Source: Ipsos Creative|**Spark** ad amongst sample of n=150
2. Source: Ipsos Creative Excellence Video Ad Meta-Analysis, 2,015 USA cases



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