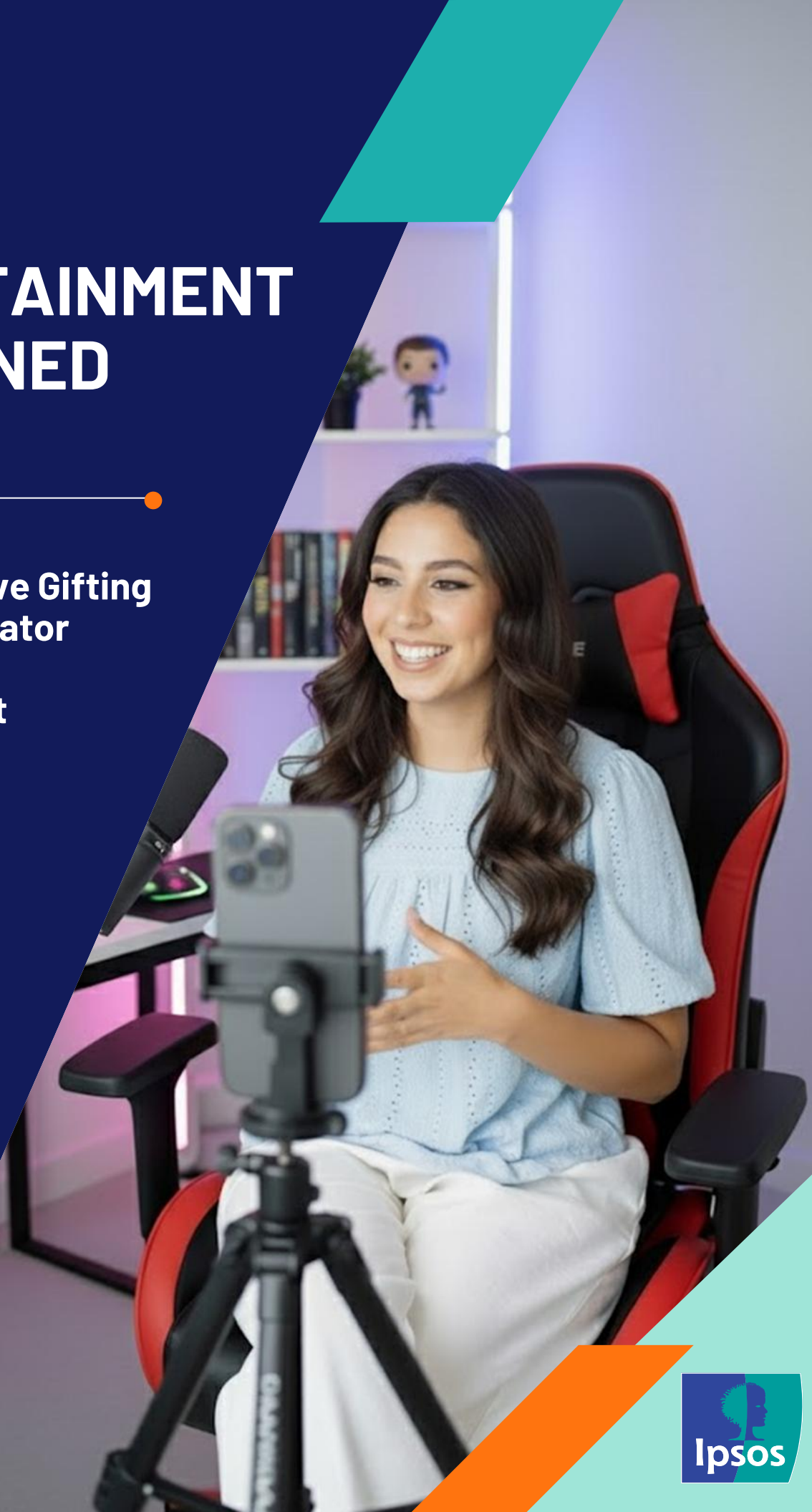


ENTERTAINMENT REDEFINED

How Interactive Gifting
Drives the Creator
Economy and
Entertainment
Revolution



Executive Summary

The relationship between creators and their communities has evolved dramatically since the early days of social media, when **viewer participation was one-directional — limited to likes, shares, and followers**. These gestures, while meaningful, **kept audiences at arm's length**. Today, livestream gifting has shifted that paradigm, **enabling real-time participation, appreciation and co-creation, creating a real sense of connection and engagement**. It is **fast becoming a mainstream cultural and economic force**, reshaping entertainment and redefining the creator economy.

85% of social media users surveyed are aware of livestream gifting¹

In this paper, we will utilize data from our **research and case studies** to demonstrate how livestream gifting is **redefining creator-viewer relationships, the entertainment landscape and the creator economy at large**.

TRANSFORMING ENTERTAINMENT

Today's viewers are increasingly looking for ways to enhance their entertainment experience. Livestream gifting allows them to do just that, by **enabling deeper, more meaningful content engagement through two key benefits**:



First, **beyond the traditional likes and comments, gifting offers a more innovative and interactive form of visibility**, enabling viewers to be **seen by creators, express themselves and show appreciation**, placing them **front and center in real-time**.



Second, it **facilitates co-creation** where **viewers can connect** and help **shape the creative direction** of their favourite creators.

With these in mind, **creators can re-evaluate their content strategy** to meet their audiences' needs and **embrace livestream gifting to elevate their approach to entertainment and content creation**.

Already, we are seeing how livestream gifting is **driving the creator economy**, unlocking **monetization opportunities** for creators beyond advertisement revenue and brand sponsorships.

1. TikTok Live Gifting Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, June/July 2025

Methodology



US, Total n=500



**TikTok Users & Non-Users
ages 18-49**



**10-minute, online device
agnostic survey**



**Surveyed
June/July 2025**

This research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, surveyed 500 individuals in US aged 18-49, including 300 TikTok users and 200 TikTok non-users who have used another social platforms in the past month. Conducted from June 26, 2025, to July 3, 2025. The 10-minute online survey required participants be aware of livestream gifting on any social/video platform. Mentions of “All other platforms” throughout this research is the average of: Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and Twitch.

Foreword – An Ipsos Perspective

In studying consumers and their digital behaviors, I've observed the remarkable evolution of how we connect online. I remember when the most meaningful interaction a viewer could have with a creator was a like, a share, or perhaps a direct message – gestures that, while appreciated, kept us at arm's length from the content we loved.

Today, I'm watching something fundamentally different unfold. Livestream gifting has introduced an immediacy and intimacy that those early interactions never could achieve. It's no longer about reacting after the fact – it's about being present, visible, and influential in the very moment of creation. **When a viewer sends a gift to the livestream, they're not just expressing appreciation; they're becoming part of the performance itself.**

What strikes me most is the positive energy this has unleashed. I've seen creators light up when gifts are activated in the livestream, not just for the popularity and engagement, but for the validation that their community is truly with them. I've seen viewers describe the joy of being acknowledged by their favorite creator in real-time, of knowing their gesture directly shaped what happened next. And I've watched viewers rally around creators and causes with a sense of collective purpose.

This isn't just about new features or monetization models – it's about human connection at its most authentic. The real-time nature of gifting has created a reciprocal relationship where everyone wins: creators feel supported, viewers feel seen, and communities feel united.

That's why partnering with TikTok on this research provided the opportunity to move beyond anecdotes. **The data reveals a shift in how digital communities form, interact, and engage.**

I invite you to explore these findings to discover how technology, when designed thoughtfully, can amplify our most human impulses – to support, to connect, and to celebrate together.

**Jessica Phan, SVP & Sr. Client Officer of
Tech & Media, Ipsos**

Content Summary

1.

The Rise of Community-driven Livestream Gifting



2.

**What Makes Gifts “Tik”:
Two Key Viewer Benefits from Livestream Gifting**



2.1.

Gifts Enable Self-expression and Convey Appreciation



2.2.

Gifts Enable Co-creation and Connection



3.

**Fueling the Creator Economy:
Strategies for Creators**





1. The Rise of Community-driven Livestream Gifting

1. The Rise of Community-driven Livestream Gifting

Driven by the advent of social media and gamification, entertainment has **evolved from a one-way street** into a **dynamic, two-way conversation**. With live streaming, audiences have gained a new avenue to actively engage and participate beyond likes and shares through **gifts as a key enabler**.

WHAT IS LIVESTREAM GIFTING?

Livestream gifting is a virtual feature that lets viewers **express themselves and participate in the livestream**. It is a way for the audience to move beyond passive viewing and become an active, visible part of the livestream. By activating gifts, **viewers can help shape the content**, engage with the creator, and stand out within the community. This feature transforms the viewer from a **spectator into a contributor**, strengthening the **bond between the creator and their audience**.

HOW DOES LIVESTREAM GIFTING WORK?

Viewers can purchase virtual items like coins or jewels, which they can use to activate virtual gifts. These gifts, which can be animated icons to stickers, **appear on the screen during the livestream**. This makes the viewer's interaction immediately visible to both the creator and the entire community, highlighting their contribution to the livestream.

Further, gifting **empowers viewers to help shape the creator's content**, making them a crucial part of the livestream experience. This is explored in detail in Section 2.2.

Gifting on TikTok LIVE has become a core activity on the platform.

68%

of TikTok users surveyed have tried Gifting on TikTok LIVE¹.

50%

of TikTok users surveyed are likely to use Gifting on TikTok LIVE in the next month¹.

1. TikTok LIVE Gifting Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, June/July 2025

How Livestream Gifting Appears Across Platforms

Each platform has cultivated its own distinct gifting culture, driven by the unique relationship between its technology and community.

As a baseline, many platforms have simple gift features to **provide viewers more visibility** within the livestream to improve **creator-viewer interaction**.



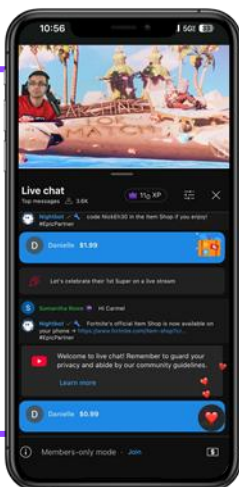
Facebook Live Stars:

Facebook integrates livestream gifting with its **'Stars' feature on Facebook Live**, where viewers can activate virtual 'Stars' to send to creators during live videos. Sending Stars can highlight your comments in the comments section, making you stand out to the creator for recognition.¹



Instagram Live Badges:

Similarly on Instagram Live, viewers can support creators during live videos by activating **digital 'badges'** – where a heart icon can appear next to the viewers' username and their name may be added to a list of supporters the creator can see for a certain amount of time.²



Twitch Cheers:

For Twitch, viewers can purchase **'Bits'** with real money to use for activating **special emotes and messages (Cheers)** in the chat to show support for the creator.³



1. Facebook Stars | Meta for Creators: https://creators.facebook.com/tools/stars/?locale=en_US

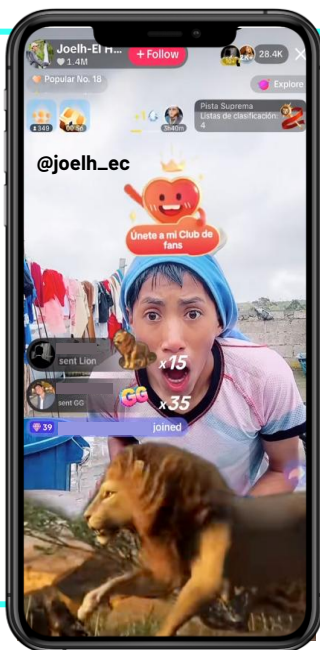
2. Instagram Badges | Instagram for Creators: <https://creators.instagram.com/earn-money/badges>

3. Cheering: for Monetized Streamers: https://help.twitch.tv/s/article/cheering-for-partners-affiliates?language=en_US

How Livestream Gifting Appears Across Platforms

TikTok and YouTube distinguish themselves with animated gifts within the livestreams.

Animated gift designs represent a distinct creative and technical frontier, involving dedicated R&D and advanced visual effects to deliver seamless, immersive experiences. While all livestream gift formats carry their own expressive power, animation **introduces a dynamic layer that can heighten engagement and transform the moment.**



TikTok LIVE Gifts

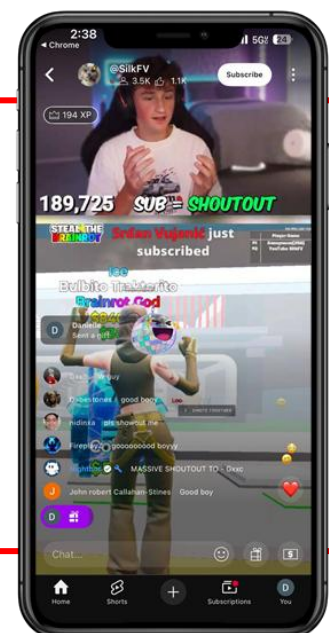
TikTok LIVE's Gifts are global and noticeably intricate, with hundreds of designs inspired by the online community – brought to life through vibrant 3-10 second animations.

These dynamic visuals enhance the viewing experience, **making appreciation feel personal and immersive.** By **maximizing visibility and interaction,** TikTok LIVE transforms gifting into a high-engagement, co-collaborative experience.



YouTube Live Gifts

Like TikTok, there are **animated gifts** on YouTube Live that viewers can activate for 3-10 seconds to show support to creators for a engaging experience. This feature is only available in the United States (as of September 2025).¹



1. Introducing gifts, powered by Jewels: <https://support.google.com/youtube/thread/307754858?hl=en>

A Curated Experience on TikTok LIVE

The hundreds of LIVE Gifts are the result of deep collaboration – designers, engineers, and researchers working across teams to craft each moment.

From **cultural research to animation tech**, every detail is tuned to **celebrate creativity and reflect community stories**. At the heart of it all: **a user and community first approach that makes appreciation feel personal, expressive, and platform-native**.

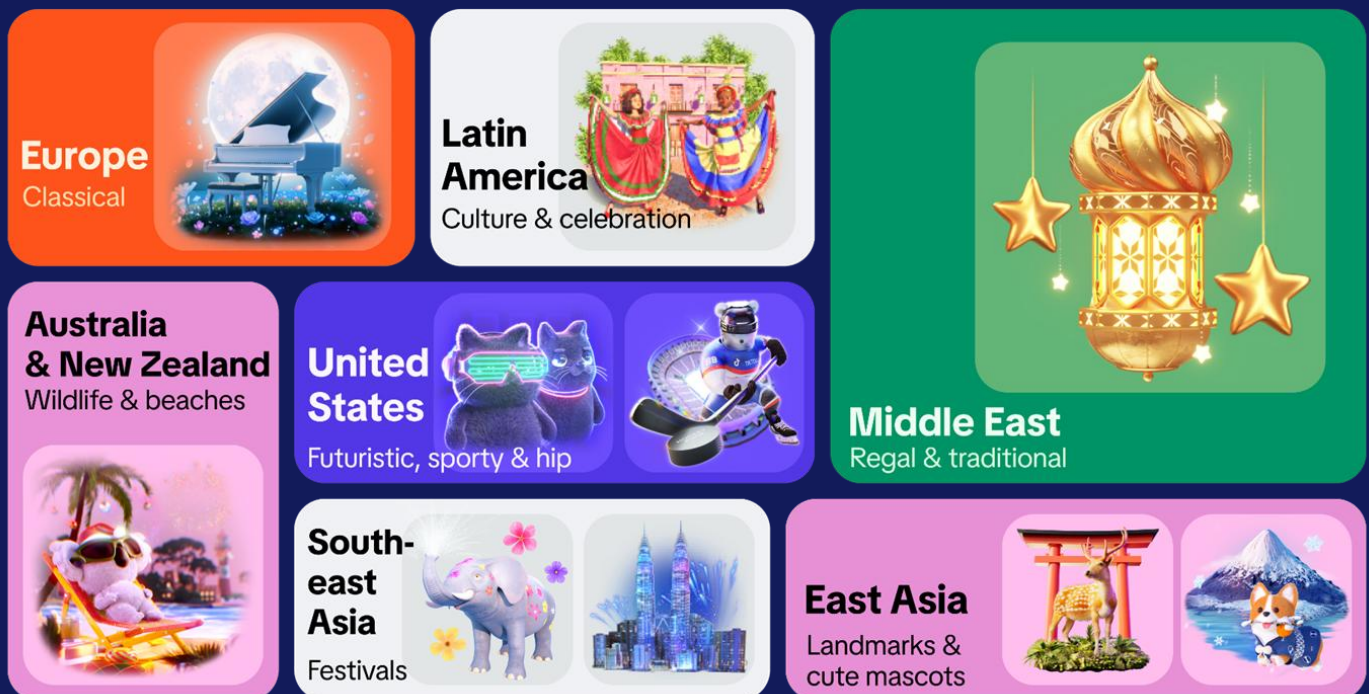
1 in 3 monthly TikTok users surveyed recognize that TikTok LIVE has a variety of virtual Gifts to choose from¹.

TikTok is a powerhouse when it comes to offering a curated content experience for its users.

True to that, we discovered a **wide variety of virtual Gifts, many of which are curated to cater to local communities' preferences**¹.

These provide great inspiration for entertainment, as the audience are inspired to activate Gifts to engage with the content.

Celebrating Local Communities



1. TikTok LIVE Gifting Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, June/July 2025



2. What Makes Gifts “Tik”: Two Key Viewer Benefits from Livestream Gifting

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1. GIFTS ENABLE SELF-EXPRESSION AND CONVEY APPRECIATION

Gifts on TikTok offers a vibrant and visible channel for viewers to **express themselves** and **show genuine appreciation for creators' content**.

This moves the viewer to think of LIVE gifting as the new, dynamic "like" button for LIVE streaming. It moves the viewer beyond passive consumption into active contribution.

Showing **appreciation**, **enhancing the viewing experience** with interactive elements, to **stand out/be noticed**, to **engage**, and to **celebrate** the creator's milestones are the top reasons TikTok users surveyed use LIVE Gifts¹.

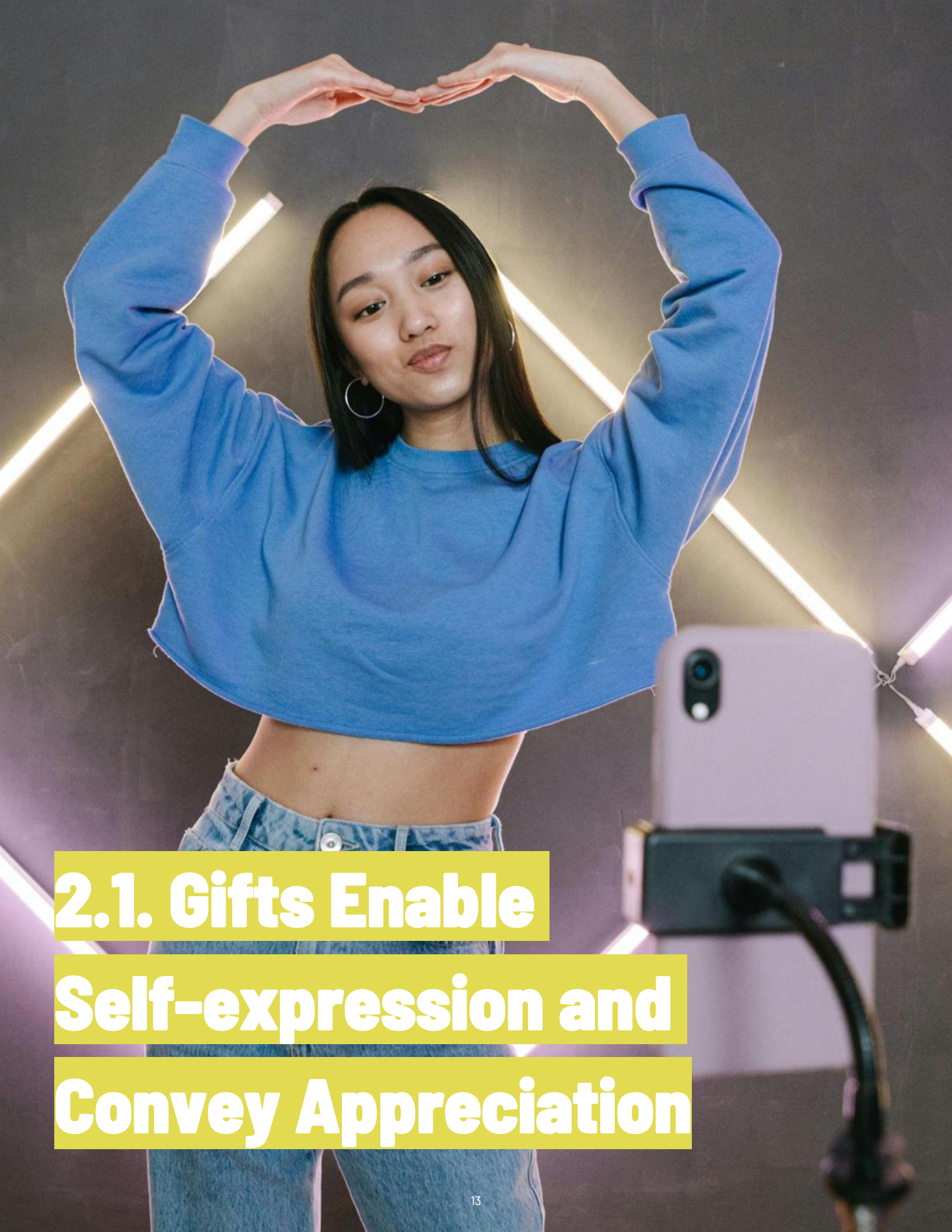


2. GIFTS ENABLE CO-CREATION AND CONNECTION

Gifting creates a **mutually beneficial relationship** where audience engagement influences creative output.

By activating Gifts on TikTok LIVE, viewers empower creators to be creative and react real-time, building a community of partnership within the creator's content capture experience.





2.1. Gifts Enable Self-expression and Convey Appreciation

2.1. Gifts Enable Self-expression and Convey Appreciation

Viewers across social media platforms crave active participation, with **top reasons for using gifts** being showing **appreciation, enhancing the viewing experience** with interactive elements, to stand out or **be noticed, to engage**, and **celebrating the creator's milestones**¹.

While gifting boosts visibility and interaction, a **top reason why TikTok LIVE users surveyed activate Gifts is showing appreciation for a creator's content**¹. This is unsurprising given TikTok LIVE Gifts are intricately designed and animated. Unlike likes or comments, which often fade into the feed, **LIVE Gifts enhance the content with moments of flair, making the viewer's presence and expressions of appreciation or affection unmistakable**. This visual richness transforms gifting into a shared experience. It's not just about getting noticed — it's about sharing the moment with the community.



"Gifts convey positive emotions. To express friendship, I would choose Gifts such as the Flower Overflow where a door opens and all the flowers flow down."

-- Zoelando, a top gifter

"Gifting to me is mainly to express support, making the LIVE creators happy when they see my Gift; or helping less well-known LIVE creators gain more visibility, congratulating them on being seen by more people."

-- Peter, an active gifter



TOP 5 REASONS TO ACTIVATE LIVESTREAM GIFTS ON TIKTOK¹



Base: Have Recently Used Live Gifting



2.2. Gifts Enable Co-creation and Connection

2.2. Gifts Enable Co-creation and Connection

LIVE Gifts connect audiences with creators by enabling viewers to visibly enhance the livestream, enabling immersive interaction — **much like immersive theatre where the audience becomes part of the experience**. Interactive gifts on livestream platforms foster meaningful co-creation in three key ways:

- **Provide visible real-time feedback:** When activated, gifts appear in the livestream and are visible to the creator and other viewers. This real-time feedback encourages creators to refine their content as they go along, to align more closely with audience interests.
- **Enhancement of Content and Atmosphere:** Animated gifts inject energy into livestreams, creating a lively, engaging environment. These gifts often inspire expressive reactions from the creators, increasing the entertainment value for all.
- **Active Viewer Participation Through Requests:** Viewers send specific gifts to express their wishes, prompting creators to respond with shoutouts, or tailored performances. **This interaction deepens collaboration and connection.**

Pictured below: LIVE creators can dance along to the "Rhythmic Bear" Gift.

More than 40% of TikTok users surveyed that use LIVE gifting, view LIVE gifting as a unique way to engage with creators and their content.¹



Livestream gifting can also foster deeper connections by enabling creators and viewers to **engage offline through shared interests that naturally extend from their online communities**.

1. TikTok LIVE Gifting Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, June/July 2025

2.2. Gifts Enable Co-creation and Connection

CASE STUDY: VANESSA'S VERY OWN BAKING SHOW ON LIVE

Vanessa (@deliciousnessbakery), a valedictorian from The Culinary Institute LeNôtre, founded Deliciousness Bakery inspired by her late mother's joyful catchphrase – "mmm, deliciousness." Fueled by a lifelong dream of owning a bakery and hosting her own baking show, Vanessa turned to TikTok LIVE to share her creations and the heartfelt stories behind them.

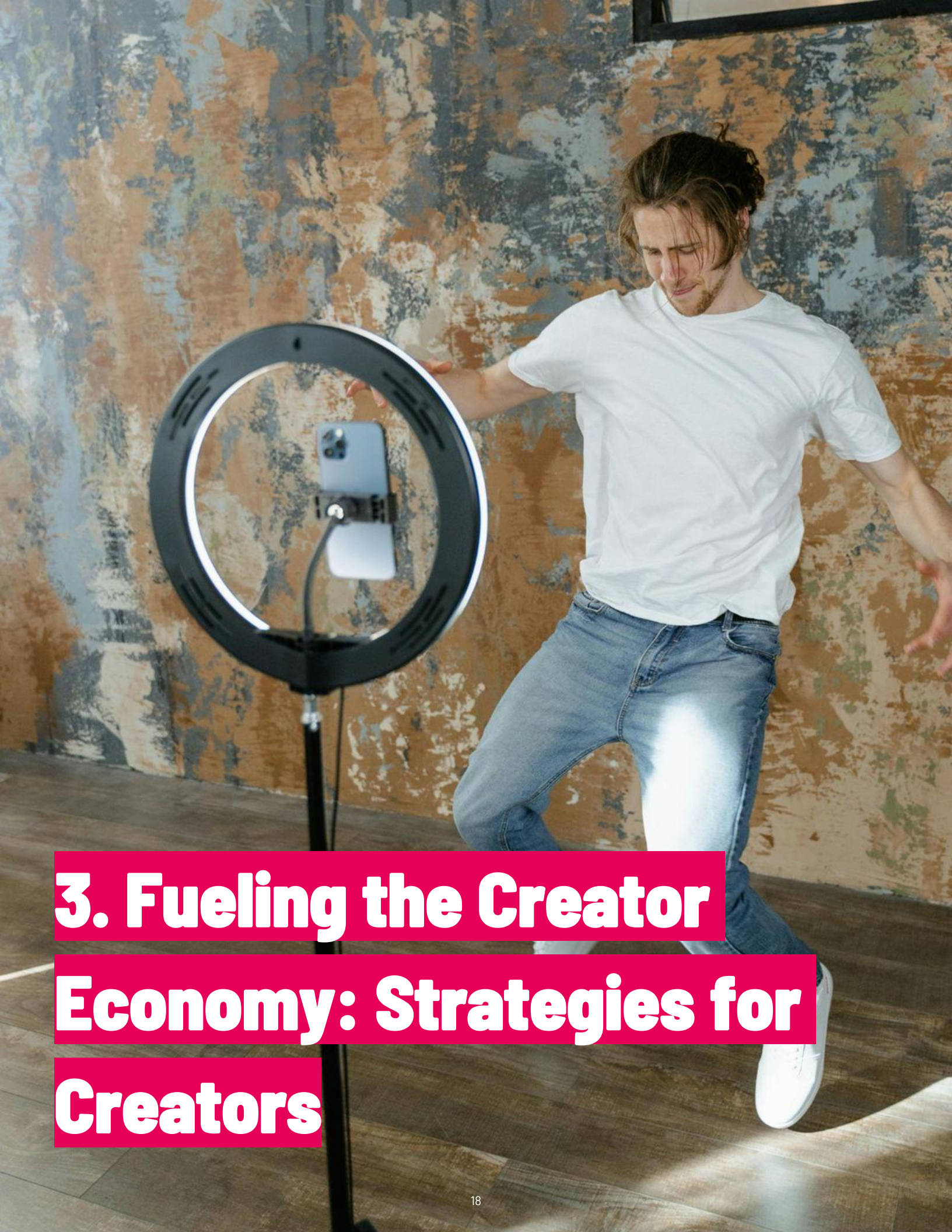
On LIVE, she found the **perfect space to connect authentically with her audience** – chatting with viewers in real time, answering baking questions, and even taking recipe suggestions on the spot. **Supported by LIVE Gifts, Vanessa deepened her bond with fans** who not only **sent her encouragement, recipe ideas and requests**, but also sent animated Gifts in the LIVE stream **she'd dance along to**.

With Gifts becoming both motivation and feedback, she **grew her rewards by more than six times and expanded her audience nearly threefold** – all within just six months in 2024.



"TikTok has massively improved my discoverability and helped get my name out there.

I don't think my business would be as successful without TikTok LIVE."



3. Fueling the Creator Economy: Strategies for Creators

3. Fueling the Creator Economy: Strategies for Creators

In the increasingly competitive world of entertainment, livestream gifting has emerged as a key element whereby creators can engage users and monetize meaningfully while creating content they and their communities love. In 2025, TikTok estimates that,

>60K US creators

will receive rewards worth more than the median part-time monthly income¹

1 in 5 US creators

will receive rewards the first time they go LIVE¹

In several cases, we have seen how rewards from gifting allow creators to **pay closer attention to viewers' content preferences, collaborate and connect to improve their craft**, as well as **reinvest to elevate their production quality for sustainable rewards**.

Compared to a traditional advertising or sponsorship-driven model, gifting democratizes success. **Creators do not need to have millions of followers** in order to start monetizing their livestream content. On TikTok and YouTube, creators can start livestreaming and monetizing as long as they are aged **18 and above**, and have a **follower count ranging from 50 to 900**. This **empowers diverse talents to thrive on LIVE** for content such as **music, storytelling, education, cooking, travel, art and more**.



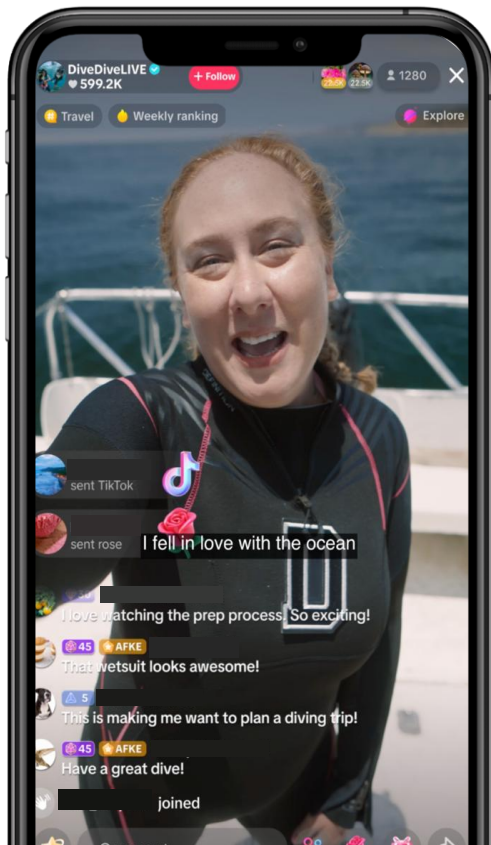
1. Estimated based on Q1 2025 rewards data. Median income data taken from US Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://www.tiktok.com/live/creators/en-US/article/tiktok-live-fuels-economic-impact-US?name=undefined>

The Creators' Perspective: LIVE Gifts Have Real Impact

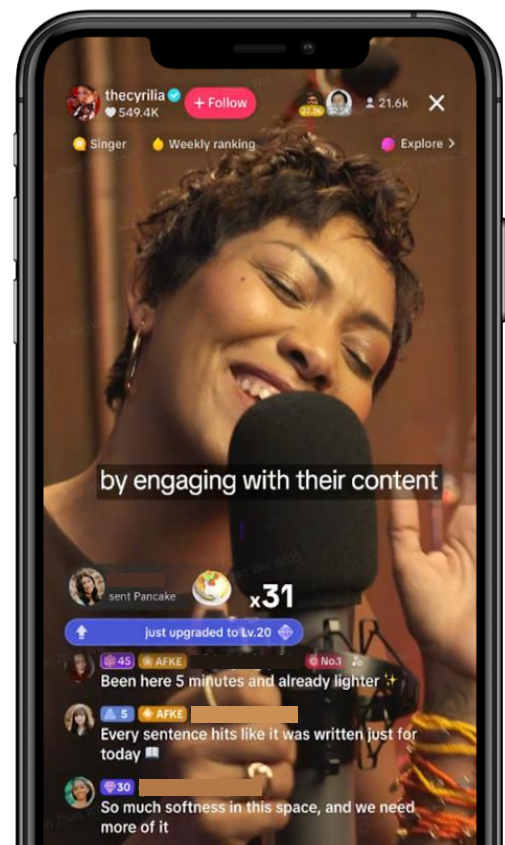
For creators, **audience engagement becomes part of the creative process** and drives meaningful impact beyond the platform. **Successful creators leverage Gifts as real-time feedback, empowering them to co-create, refine content quality, and deepen engagement.** This momentum translates into **tangible career growth and lasting impact off-platform.**

In the words of TikTok LIVE creators:



"While the Live Gifts from my community are virtual, the impact can be real."

- @divedivelive, TikTok LIVE's first scuba diving creator



"I moved to a new city to chase my dream of becoming a musician. I decided I was going to do TikTok LIVE, and that was the start of this amazing journey."

- @thecyrilia, TikTok LIVE music creator

Beyond Monetization to Mobilizing the Community

Charity campaigns like **TikTok LIVE's collaboration with the Make-A-Wish Foundation** illustrate how LIVE creators can leverage Gifts to channel their viewers' collective enthusiasm and expression, **mobilizing support for meaningful causes that generate real, shared impact.**

In the Make-A-Wish campaign on TikTok LIVE, viewers could send particular Gifts, such as a 'Wishing Star', with TikTok LIVE pledging a donation for each one sent. This transformed simple gestures into meaningful real-world contributions, supporting a fundraising goal of \$250,000.

Community Drive: At the heart of these campaigns lies the desire for connection, contribution, and the joy of being part of something bigger than oneself. Livestream gifting taps into these deep emotional and experiential drivers, **empowering creators to rally their communities toward positive causes.**



CASE STUDY: CRYSTAL'S MUSIC BRINGING HER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Crystal (@crystalpercussion) is a middle school social studies teacher by day and a percussionist by night. Encouraged by her students, she joined TikTok and never looked back. Now, she goes LIVE daily, turning her classroom energy into performances that reach audiences worldwide.



Thanks to TikTok LIVE's powerful discoverability, Crystal's music has reached millions of viewers, and even led to gigs at major events like the FIFA Club World Cup.

LIVE has also **brought her community together — her students, their families, and fellow teachers now tune in to cheer her on.** Through TikTok LIVE, Crystal shares her passion for music and **inspires others to take the stage and explore their own talents.** She also **reconnected with her former 8th grade student on LIVE and was invited to prom with her.**

A Case Study: Gabriella Gomez

Gabriella Gomez (@thegabriellagomez) is a former marketing executive who successfully transitioned to a full-time content creator on TikTok LIVE. **Her story provides a powerful example of how a creator can build a sustainable career by leveraging a platform's built-in monetization features, including livestream gifting**, to earn rewards beyond traditional sponsorship deals.

Gomez's career is built on her ability to engage with her audience in real-time. She streams daily, focusing on interacting with every single comment. This high level of personal engagement is what drives her overall revenue, with livestream monetization accounting for an estimated 90%.

As part of International Equal Pay Day on September 18, 2025, she joined other talented creators on **TikTok LIVE's "She Talks Money" series** about women in finance where she shared about how to build a livestreaming career.

Versatility and Benefits:

- **Audience-Centric Monetization:** Gomez's success highlights a business model where a creator's rewards are influenced by the community's support, rather than corporate partnerships. This puts the focus on building a strong, loyal following.
- **Financial Independence:** By prioritizing livestream gifting, Gomez has achieved financial independence. This allows her to maintain creative control and authenticity, as she isn't beholden to sponsored content or brand messaging.
- **The Power of Engagement:** Her strategy of responding to every comment demonstrates that for this model to work, the creator must provide immense value through direct, personal interaction. This transforms the livestream into a collaborative space where the audience feels seen and appreciated.



Acknowledgements

About TikTok

TikTok's mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy.

TikTok's global headquarters are in Los Angeles and Singapore, and its offices include New York, London, Dublin, Paris, Berlin, Dubai, Jakarta, Seoul, and Tokyo.

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