



THE TIKTOK PHENOMENON AND THE RISE OF SHORT FORM VIDEO

Why the aesthetics industry should pay attention to the hottest category of social media apps

IF YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE SCRATCHING their heads to understand how TikTok arose as the social network everyone, even the President of the US, is talking about, you're not alone. TikTok is a social media phenomenon.

It all started in 2016. TikTok is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance that was founded by software developer Zhang Yiming in 2012. TikTok started out as two distinct apps that ultimately merged; Musically and Douyin. Musically was founded in 2014 as a short-form app where users could create and share 15-second lip-sync music videos. Douyin was launched as a short-form video app in 2016.

Douyin's popularity skyrocketed and within a year, it had 100 million users and 1 billion video views daily! In September 2017, they expanded outside of China to select international markets as TikTok. The platform's fame quickly rose in Thailand, Japan, India, and other markets in Asia, and the US TikTok apps for Apple and Android devices popped up in 2017.

For Beijing-based ByteDance, the TikTok explosion was a happy accident. It was like a 'right place, right time' twist of fate. Finally, Musically switched over to TikTok in August 2018 and the rest is history.

The destination for short-form mobile video

The TikTok app allows users to create, share and discover 15-second videos that are set to music, or to connect a few short clips for up to 60 seconds and add special effects and filters. Short-form video content is trending in social media circles around the world.

Although TikTok started out by appealing to teens, its user base is growing. For example, in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, membership among 25-34 year-olds has now surpassed that among 16-24 year-olds.² As with Instagram, TikTok's users are ageing with the app; they are not ageing out when they hit a big birthday, but rather they are sticking with the platform as it matures.

As its base is rapidly expanding, the TikTok team is looking towards business accounts to use the app to connect with consumers as a marketing platform. On September 3, 2020 TikTok introduced 'TikTok For Business Marketing Partner Program.'³ TikTok for Business is a division of the platform that enables businesses to promote themselves. The social media platform offers multiple solutions for brands to increase engagement, like interactive polls and hashtag challenges, not unlike Instagram.

If you can't figure out how to create new content that works or it's not something that is in your wheelhouse, you can tap into TikTok's ad platform to increase your reach, or just create video content that attracts attention organically. TikTok ads appear in between videos on the app and may be created to appear similar in format to regular TikTok videos. However, there are many formats to choose from. You will need to create unique, short content to get noticed on the platform, and many brands now use a combination of organic video posts and ads.

Advertising options

In-Feed Native ad

Native ads look like regular TikTok videos and appear in users' feeds in-between content from friends and influencers. These are similar to ads on other platforms and provide a cohesive experience.

Brand Takeover ad

If you want to drive attention to a campaign, Brand Takeover ads may be a good choice. These are graphics that appear right when users open their TikTok. They appear to target individuals for a few seconds and then can direct users to a custom landing page. This is a way to attain 100% brand share of voice in a category or hashtag through images, videos or GIFs.

Top View ad

Similar to Brand Takeover ads in that they display full-screen graphics and can direct users to a landing page, these appear at the top of the For You page instead of right when the app is opened. So, they are the first thing users see upon opening the app for 5 seconds, which is a powerful marketing tool.

Branded Effect ad

TikTok features effects that users can include on their posts, like stickers, lenses, and AR filters. You can turn these into advertisements by adding your own branded images to these packs. For example, other users could have the option to use a sticker with your logo or the logo of a treatment or product you want to promote.

Hashtag Challenge Ad

For this type of ad, you can create a hashtag challenge and pay to have it featured on the TikTok discover page, so users are more likely to encounter it and participate.

How to use TikTok to promote your practice

Since TikTok's users are mostly comprised of teens and twenty-somethings to date, it is important to keep in mind their cultural and generational distinctions. To be transparent and sincere involves using their language and memes to effectively reach them. Pros recommend not to just create commercials or ads as TikTok is still a social media platform. The content you create should primarily be relevant and stay true to the ethos that attracted so many users to the app in the beginning. Thus, you can't really use the same content formats and features on TikTok that you are posting on Facebook or YouTube, or even Instagram. Each of these platforms boast their own user experience that is not really transferrable. TikTok is all video, but not the kind of long-form videos you might use for your YouTube channel to show a patient consult or a treatment experience. Rather you can take that video and reduce it to the most valuable

15 seconds or a string of 15-second clips to make it work and then set it to music.

Businesses that jumped on TikTok quickly have had the best chance of finding success before it became saturated with ads and promotions. New York City Plastic Surgeon Matthew Schulman has grown a significant TikTok following by starting early. 'As with any social media platform, there is an advantage to being an early adopter since it represents an opportunity to grow an influential account before the competition picks up and the ability to grow becomes harder. Just think about Instagram; anyone currently trying to grow their account is paddling upstream without a paddle,' he says.

He continues, 'With TikTok, I wanted to dip my toes early on. The growth and reach of my account has been meteoric when compared with the traditional platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. In just 10 months I have grown my TikTok account to three times what I have on my verified Instagram account that took over five years to build. My account (@realdrschulman) has over 11 million "likes" and many videos have been viewed several million times each.'

One of the keys to success is to interact authentically on the platform to make connections and create fresh content that is useful, entertaining, or inspiring. Ultimately, the goal is to get content that goes viral, but that is not always under your control. On TikTok, however, even small accounts have been shown to generate some good attention by creating genuinely interesting videos that stand out and take off. The app's content delivery algorithm is unique and anyone can get there with the right content, which incentivizes brands to try it out for an opportunity to get in front of a massive potential audience.

As Dr. Schulman explains, it's important to distinguish between marketing and branding. 'I am growing my TikTok account to help with branding. It makes my name more well-known across a wide demographic. I am not using TikTok to directly gain patients, i.e. marketing. Other social media platforms are better suited for that,' he adds.

The best TikTok content

TikTok is a naturally engaging video social media platform that can be used to attract the audience you want to convert into patients and customers. The platform encourages and responds to self-expression, creativity as well as activism.

According to plastic surgeon Anthony Youn in Troy, Michigan (@tonyyounmd), 'Although the majority of TikTok users are younger than our patients, I've found it to be a fun and valuable outlet for my creativity and to connect with the younger generation. Unlike Instagram and Facebook, it's a very dynamic app, which requires the user to be on top of the latest trends on the app. In addition, it's important for users to know the terms and >



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TIKTOK NEWS

President Donald J. Trump threatened this summer to ban TikTok in the U.S. citing national security concerns, and issued a series of executive orders that required ByteDance to sell its American assets.⁴ 20% of TikTok revenue comes from the US already. At the time of this writing, Trump has approved a sale to of TikTok to Walmart and Oracle. ByteDance would own 80% of TikTok Global.

Oracle said it would host data pertaining to American users on its cloud platform. ByteDance stated that Oracle would be able to review the app's source code, but the deal does not involve the transfer of its algorithms and technologies. We will have to see how this turns out.⁵

▷ conditions of the app, as revealing photos and videos are not allowed.'

Spend some time scrolling through your TikTok feed to see what other beauty and aesthetics brands are creating that may resonate with your target audience. You will find a wide range of content types, from dance, educational themes, humour, fitness, wellness, fashion, pets, sports, tutorials and advice. You may also find content centred around politics and activism, which is very popular on the app.

Essentially you can use TikTok to reach your audience by creating short-form video content, paying for ads, and influencer marketing. Here are some creative ideas for how to try to build up a following and generate engagement on the platform.

How-to videos

Brands and businesses may offer tutorials about the services they offer in a unique way. For example, a laser brand can demonstrate how a new device works or you can create a visual using the device on a patient, the provider applying numbing cream, or the instant glow achieved from a microdermabrasion session.

Unique stories

TikTok is ideal for sharing facts, trends or stories that are unique to your practice or brand. For example, 'It's Dr. Smith's birthday today and look at the chocolate the cake we made him,' or 'Nurse Jane got these gorgeous flowers from a patient who had a laser treatment and was so happy.' You can also show a team effort like a charity you support or a mission a surgeon volunteers to participate in.

Staff introductions

Another good idea is to go around the practice and show what different people do and something about who they are. This can be a series of 15-second videos or do them one at a time and spread them out until you get through everyone in the practice. This tactic goes far to engage the viewer to see your business on a deeply human level, so they feel that they know who you are and what you do.

Product demonstrations

Show customers how a treatment or product works. For example, demonstrate how you treat leg veins or brown spots with topical agents and/or energy-based devices. Or walk users through a non-invasive body contouring session to demonstrate how easy and painless it is for the patient.

Case studies

Service businesses, like aesthetic practices and medspas, can use this concept to show their satisfied patients, 5-star reviews, and successful outcomes.

GET TO KNOW TIKTOK

- App: TikTok (Douyin in China)
- App users or 'Tiktokers' (considered a derogatory term)
- Number of users worldwide: 800M
- Countries where it is usable: 154 Countries
- Ranking among most used social apps: 6
- Alexa ranking: 412th most viewed site in the world
- Number of languages available: 39
- Number of regions it reached: 21
- Global offices: Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Dubai, Mumbai, Singapore, Jakarta, Seoul, Tokyo.

**Stats as of 9-20-2020 — influencer marketinghub.com/tiktok-stats/*

Before and after videos

This type of video can be used to showcase a transformation which is ideal for aesthetic practices. For example, skincare and peel brands may showcase a quick makeover using their products, or an aesthetic doctor may demonstrate a filler treatment. You can also do a video of the patient post-procedure and show a photo of her before she was treated if she consents.

Process videos

These show the process of what goes on behind the scenes, like a sneak peek into your practice or medspa. Show glimpses of what your practice does to deliver beautiful results with lip fillers, or how you treat acne, or tips from a dermatologist on applying sunscreen.

“ Although the majority of TikTok users are younger than our patients, I've found it to be a fun and valuable outlet for my creativity and to connect with the younger generation. ”

Calming videos

TikTok videos are not all funny, exciting, or ironic. Some people like to watch more low-key scenes to relax. For example, an aesthetician could show a close up of setting up for an anti-ageing facial, or close-up shots of how they do a facial massage.

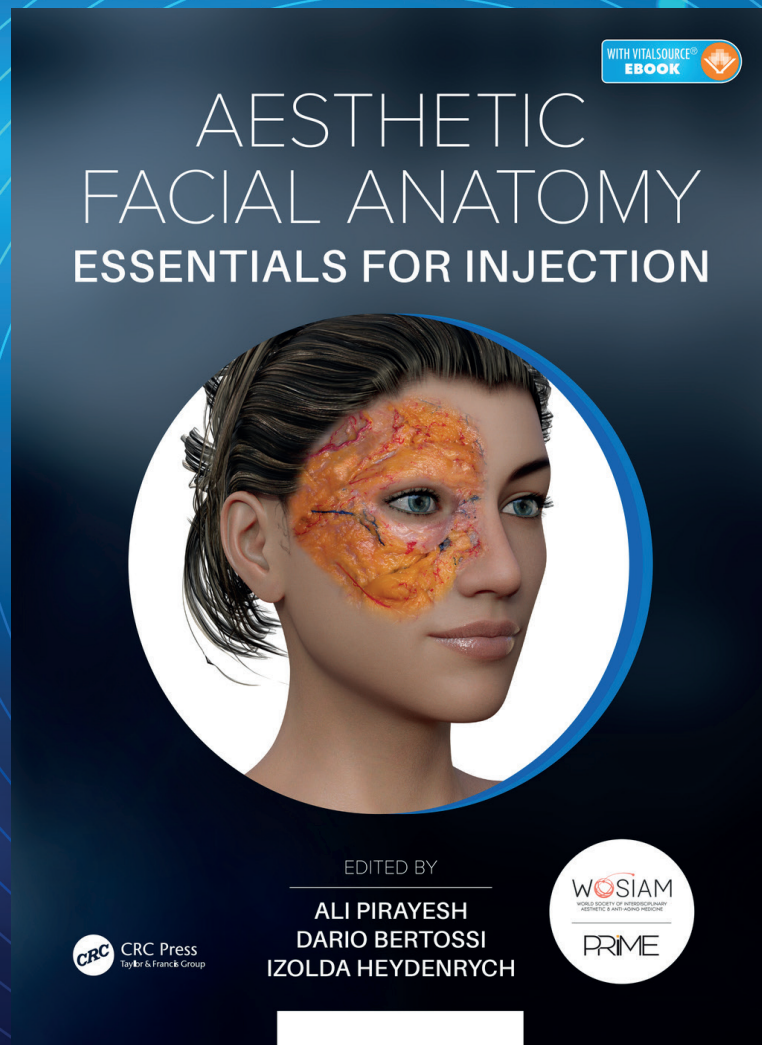
Song parodies

Music centric videos are quite popular on TikTok. You can create videos that are purely for entertainment value or change the words to make them more relevant to your brand or a specific theme you want to promote.

Hashtag challenge

There are loads of hashtag challenges circulating on TikTok to stimulate your creative juices. These occur when a user challenges others to make and post a specific type of content, and then tag them using a dedicated hashtag. Current challenges often centre around dance routines or lip-syncing. Brands can participate in existing challenges or create their own. This model serves as a content creation call to action that gets prominently featured in-app for users to create content around your brand or product. ▷





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▷ **Working with TikTok influencers**

Working with TikTok influencers can add another dimension to your marketing strategy. You will have to remunerate influencers as on any other platform, but the TikTok ad content is organic.

“ As with any social media platform, there is an advantage to being an early adopter since it represents an opportunity to grow an influential account before the competition picks up and the ability to grow becomes harder. ”

TikTok content is not the same as Instagram; TikTok is disruptive and inspirational, while Instagram is more aspirational. TikTok creators have a different set of tools that Instagram influencers have as TikTok is considered to have one of the most innovative mobile editing software. Whereas most Instagram influencers create high-resolution, well-designed images that mirror a brand's aesthetic, TikTok creators are into storytelling. They can create a story around a product or service and share that experience to their community through videos. They may spend hours editing their videos to perfect the content by adding music, background effects and other signature features.

Approaching TikTok influencers is pretty much the

TIKTOK vs. REELS WARS

Should you jump on TikTok, go straight to Reels, or have a presence on both platforms?

That jury is still out, but the safe bet is to dive into both and see what happens. If you have a large and engaged audience on Instagram, the introduction of Reels affords you the opportunity to share some unfiltered creative content in-feed. Another sharp contrast is that anyone who produces unique content can grow a great following quickly and potentially go viral on TikTok, whereas due to the Instagram model, Reels depends on your social footprint so that is less likely without a big budget or influencer strategy.

same as on other channels. You may reach out to influencers who have a substantial following that will resonate with your target audience. Choose influencers whose style and brand are in line with your own, but then let them use their own creativity to create the content that reaches their audience. Just like with Instagram or YouTube, you will gain access to the TikTok influencer's audience and they are in the best position to know what they want to experience.

The future of TikTok, the app to beat

As one would expect, there are also many TikTok copycats emerging, including Reels that was launched on Instagram in August in over 50 countries, including the US, UK, Japan, and Australia, on iOS and Android. Reels offers the distinct advantage of being part of the Instagram platform for ease of use, which seems like a huge benefit to business users. Remember when Instagram launched Stories to steal the thunder away from Snapchat? This strategy is not new for Team Zuck. However, if I were a betting woman, I would put my money on Reels becoming an essential feature for all of us on Instagram pretty quickly.

You can be active on one or several platforms with similar but not identical types of content, as there are certain nuances for each.

Other platforms offering some variation of TikTok's short-form video model include:

- Zinn
- Zigazoo
- Collab
- Byte
- Triller.

There are sure to be more like these popping up as the category has more than proven itself in a few short years.

The bottom line is that social media users like short-form videos set to music, so at a minimum, it is time to include that strategy in your marketing plan to stay on top of the trends.

Video content and especially short form video will continue to play a major role in how we communicate with patients, clients, and friends on social.

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