



A BRAND GUIDE · FOR MARKETING TEAMS

# The TikTok Influencer Playbook.

TikTok is not Instagram with shorter videos. The complete brand playbook for the platform's distinct mechanics — algorithm, content culture, TikTok Shop, creator selection, briefing, and measurement.

**7**

Parts

**5**

Shop Steps

**100:1**

Reach Possible

**3:1**

View Ratio Target

FOR BRANDS &amp; MARKETING TEAMS

# TikTok Playbook 2026.

*"TikTok distributes content based on engagement signals, not follower relationships. A creator with 20,000 followers can reach two million people with a single video."*

DOCUMENT

Resource 20

FOCUS

TikTok · platform-specific

AUDIENCE

Brands &amp; Marketing Teams

INSIDE THIS PLAYBOOK

Seven parts · TikTok-specific

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## INTRODUCTION

# Not Instagram with **shorter videos.**

TikTok operates on fundamentally different mechanics – algorithmic distribution, content culture, audience behaviour, and commerce infrastructure – that require brands to think differently about how they use creator partnerships.

The most consequential difference is distribution. Instagram reaches a creator's existing followers; TikTok reaches whoever the algorithm decides the content deserves. That single difference reshapes creator selection, briefing, content format, and measurement.

This playbook covers all seven: why the platform demands a different strategy, how to build a TikTok Shop programme, how to select and brief creators for the platform's culture, which content formats actually perform, and how to measure what matters – not vanity views.

Throughout, one principle recurs: trust creators who understand TikTok culture to execute a clear strategic brief in a way the platform's audience will actually respond to.

PART 01 · WHY TIKTOK DEMANDS A DIFFERENT STRATEGY

# Two differences that **change everything.**

**T**ikTok's mechanics diverge from every other platform in two ways that reshape how brands must approach it: the algorithm, and the content culture.

**The algorithm** distributes on engagement signals, not follower relationships — so follower count is a weak predictor of reach, and small creators routinely deliver extraordinary reach on individual videos.

**The content culture** rewards content that feels native to TikTok and punishes anything that looks like a polished advertisement. The audience has an extraordinarily well-calibrated sense of authentic versus forced — and responds to the former with engagement, the latter with scrolling.



PART 01 · STRATEGY

*"It feels like TikTok — not like an ad posted on TikTok."*

## THE ALGORITHM DIFFERENCE

# Followers don't predict reach.

## Instagram

### ~100K reach

A creator with 100,000 followers reaches roughly 100,000 people per post – with incremental reach based on engagement. Distribution follows the follower graph.

## TikTok

### Up to 2M reach

A creator with 20,000 followers can reach 2 million people with one video if the algorithm rates it high quality – because TikTok continuously tests content with new audiences and amplifies what performs.

**The implication for brands.** TikTok creator selection based primarily on follower count misses the platform's primary distribution mechanic. **Engagement rate, average video views relative to follower count, and content-format quality** are far more reliable predictors of campaign performance than follower size.

## THE CONTENT CULTURE DIFFERENCE

TikTok content that performs is almost always native to the platform – it feels like TikTok, not like a polished advertisement that happened to be posted there. The audience responds to authenticity with engagement and to forced content with scrolling.

Brands that brief TikTok creators the way they brief Instagram creators – high production requirements,

precise messaging scripts, multiple revision rounds – consistently produce content that underperforms. The most effective TikTok brand content looks effortless and sounds like the creator's natural voice. This does not mean abandoning brand standards; it means trusting creators who understand the culture.



The content that looks most spontaneous on TikTok is usually the most carefully considered. The skill is not in the polish – it’s in the hook, the pacing, and the cultural fluency. Brands that supply the strategy and let creators supply the execution win on TikTok. Brands that try to control the execution lose.

**2-3s**

THE HOOK WINDOW THAT DECIDES DISTRIBUTION

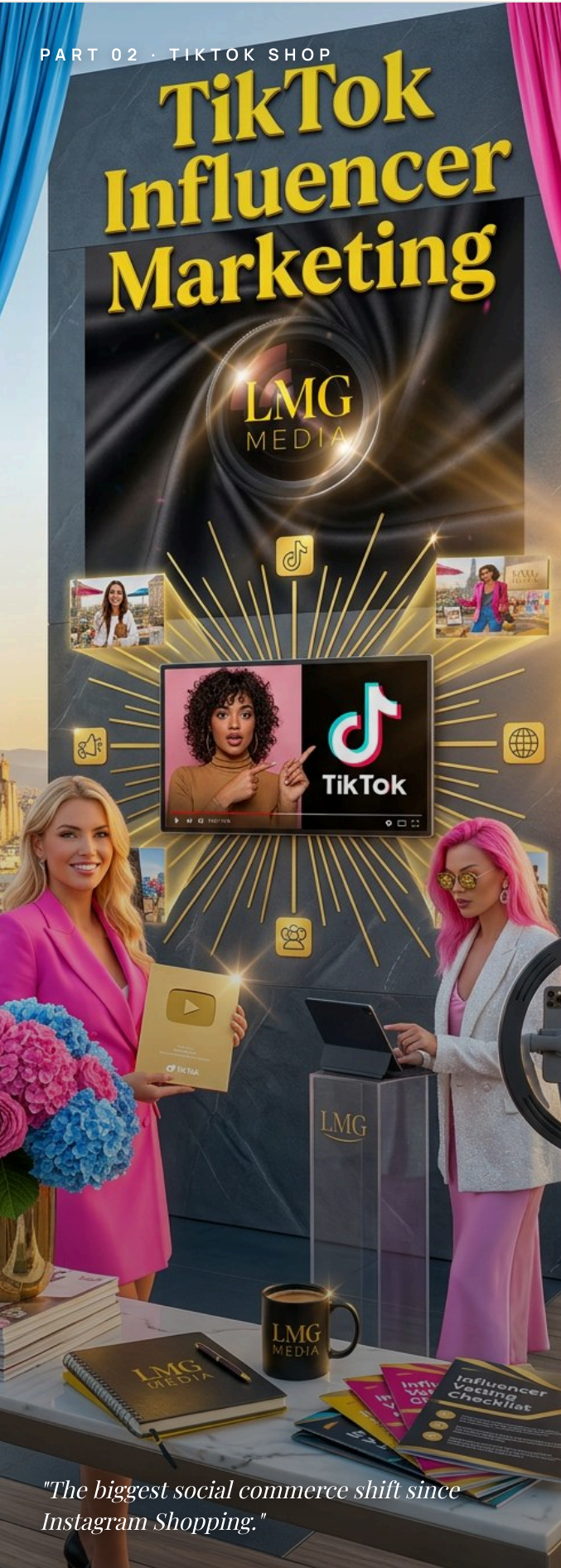
**3:1**

VIEW-TO-FOLLOWER RATIO SIGNALLING QUALITY

**3-8%**

HEALTHY ENGAGEMENT RATE ACROSS TIERS

***The brief that works.*** Define the non-negotiables – disclosure, product mention, link or code, brand-safety exclusions – and nothing else. Then trust the creator’s read of the platform. Over-specification is the single most reliable way to produce an underperforming TikTok video.



*"The biggest social commerce shift since Instagram Shopping."*

PART 02 · TIKTOK SHOP

# The game-changer for **ecommerce**.

**T**ikTok Shop creates a direct sales channel inside creator content – eliminating the conversion-killing journey from social discovery to external website.

Brands list products in TikTok Shop. Creators tag them through the affiliate programme. Viewers buy **without leaving the app**. Removing the redirect step removes the largest source of purchase abandonment in social commerce – so in-app conversion rates run substantially higher than link-in-bio traffic.

The next pages lay out the five-step programme to build one, from listing optimisation to performance scaling.

## BUILDING A TIKTOK SHOP CREATOR PROGRAMME

# Five steps, **in order.**

- 1 Product listing optimisation**

Before recruiting creators, ensure listings are fully optimised – high-quality images, compelling descriptions, competitive pricing, accurate stock. Creator content drives traffic; the listing quality determines conversion.
- 2 Creator recruitment**

Use TikTok's creator marketplace to find and recruit affiliate creators at scale. Focus on those genuinely relevant to your category with demonstrated TikTok Shop affiliate performance on previous campaigns.
- 3 Commission structure**

Standard TikTok Shop affiliate commissions run **10–25% of sale value** by category and margin. Set competitive rates – creators prioritise stronger-commission products when choosing what to feature organically.
- 4 Product seeding**

Send product to your most promising partners so they can genuinely try and authentically recommend it. Creators who have actually used a product produce significantly more convincing content than those working from product images.
- 5 Performance monitoring & scaling**

Track sales, commission, and conversion by creator weekly. Double down on creators who convert well; provide briefs and support to those with reach but lower conversion.

***The commission lever.*** Commission rate is not just compensation – it's a discovery mechanic. Creators browsing the marketplace for products to feature organically gravitate to stronger commissions. A competitive rate buys you organic creator interest you would otherwise have to recruit and pay for directly.

WHY IN-APP CONVERSION WINS

# Remove the redirect, **remove the drop-off.**

The single largest source of purchase abandonment in social commerce is the redirect from app to external website. TikTok Shop removes it entirely.

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>In-app</b></p> <p>CHECKOUT WITHOUT LEAVING<br/>TIKTOK</p> | <p><b>10-25%</b></p> <p>STANDARD AFFILIATE COMMISSION<br/>RANGE</p> | <p><b>15-20%</b></p> <p>COMPETITIVE FOR MOST<br/>CONSUMER CATEGORIES</p> |
|---|---|--|

*For affiliate programmes, flat fees give way to commission.* Where a standard video carries a flat creator fee, TikTok Shop affiliate arrangements replace it with commission on sale value – aligning creator incentive directly with conversion. For ecommerce brands, this is the most cost-efficient structure for scaling: creators are paid for results, not reach.

THE FIVE-STEP PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>1 · Listings</b>   | Optimise before recruiting – listing quality determines conversion    |
| <b>2 · Recruit</b>    | Marketplace creators, relevant category, proven affiliate performance |
| <b>3 · Commission</b> | Competitive rates drive organic creator selection                     |
| <b>4 · Seed</b>       | Real product use produces convincing content                          |
| <b>5 · Scale</b>      | Weekly tracking; double down on converters                            |

PART 03 · CREATOR SELECTION FOR TIKTOK

# Five signals that beat follower count.

**O**n TikTok, the metrics that predict campaign performance are not the ones brands instinctively reach for. Five signals matter more than reach.

**View-to-follower ratio**, **content-format fit**, **previous sponsored performance**, **audience demographics**, and **community culture** — in that order — tell you more about a creator's value than their follower number ever will.

The next page details all five, plus the tier rate benchmarks that remain useful for budget planning even where the algorithm makes tiers less predictive of reach.



*"A 30K creator at 150K views beats a 200K creator at 80K."*

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

# Five signals, ranked.

- 1 View-to-follower ratio**

Average video views as a percentage of follower count is more meaningful than follower count itself. A creator with 30K followers averaging 150K views is significantly more valuable than one with 200K followers averaging 80K — their content reaches well beyond their follower base.
- 2 Content-format fit**

TikTok has distinct formats — talking head, trend participation, educational, skits, product demos, GRWM. Ensure the creator's primary format suits your campaign. A comedy-sketch creator may be wrong for a product demonstration regardless of reach.
- 3 Previous brand content performance**

Does sponsored content perform comparably to organic, or does engagement drop sharply on paid posts? A significant gap signals audience disengagement with commercial content — one of the strongest predictors of poor campaign performance.
- 4 Audience demographics**

TikTok's creator marketplace provides demographic data. Verify audience age, gender, and geographic distribution align with your target customer before committing budget.
- 5 Community culture**

Review the comment section. Is the community positive, engaged, brand-safe? TikTok comments are highly visible and can amplify or undermine brand messages. A toxic community is a brand-safety risk regardless of reach.

CREATOR TIERS ON TIKTOK

# Useful for rates, **not for reach.**

Unlike Instagram, where follower tiers map reliably to reach, TikTok’s algorithm makes tiers less predictive of performance. A micro-influencer with 25K followers can consistently outperform a large creator with 500K if content quality and niche relevance are superior. The tiers below remain useful for rate planning.

| TIER        | FOLLOWERS | RATE RANGE · STANDARD VIDEO |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Nano        | 1K-10K    | \$75-\$350                  |
| Micro       | 10K-50K   | \$350-\$1,500               |
| Upper micro | 50K-100K  | \$1,500-\$3,500             |
| Mid-tier    | 100K-500K | \$3,500-\$10,000            |
| Large       | 500K-1M   | \$10,000-\$25,000           |
| Mega        | 1M+       | \$25,000-\$100,000+         |

**For TikTok Shop programmes, flat fees become commission.** Standard commission rates of **15-20% of sale value** are competitive for most consumer product categories – replacing the flat-fee structure above with performance-aligned compensation.

**The tier lesson.** Use tiers to budget, never to predict. The 25K creator who consistently hits a 5:1 view ratio is a better investment than the 500K creator at 0.4:1 – and costs a fraction as much.

## PART 04 · BRIEFING TIKTOK CREATORS

# The platform punishes over-specification.

TikTok briefs require a different approach from Instagram or YouTube. The platform's content culture punishes over-production and over-specification more harshly than any other. Four principles.

## Brief for entertainment, not features

The question is not "how does this product work?" but "**why would someone watch this?**" Brief around the entertainment hook — story, tension, reveal, relatable moment. Product integration is the outcome of good content, not the reason for it.

## Give latitude on format and hook

The first 2–3 seconds determine whether the algorithm extends distribution. Creators who know TikTok know how to write retaining hooks. **Prescribing hooks is one of the most reliable ways to produce underperforming content.**

## Specify non-negotiables, nothing else

Define what must be in the video — disclosure, product mention, trackable link or code — and what must not (brand-safety exclusions). Beyond these, allow the creator their genuine style.

## Brief for authenticity over production

Phone-quality video, natural lighting, unscripted delivery consistently outperform polish on TikTok. If a brief requires production quality that compromises the natural feel, revisit whether it's appropriate for the platform.

***The line that matters.*** Trusting creators is not abandoning brand standards — it's recognising that on TikTok, the audience's authenticity radar is the brand-safety mechanism. Content that feels forced damages the brand more than loose creative control ever could.

## PART 05 · CONTENT FORMATS THAT WORK

# High-performing formats, by category.

Understanding which formats perform in each category helps brands guide creative without over-specifying execution.

## Beauty & Fashion

GRWM, product first impressions, before-and-after, outfit reveals, styling challenges. Authenticity and real results drive the strongest engagement.

## Food & FMCG

Taste-test reactions, recipe integrations, grocery haul reveals, cooking tutorials. Genuine reactions — positive or mixed — outperform scripted enthusiasm.

## Fitness & Wellness

Workout demonstrations featuring the product, routine integrations, transformation progress content. Results credibility is essential.

## Ecommerce & Tech

Unboxings, honest reviews, "things I wish I knew before buying", comparison content. TikTok tech audiences are sceptical — honest reviews win.

## Lifestyle & Home

Day-in-the-life integrations, home setup reveals, product demonstrations in genuine living contexts. Natural integration into authentic daily life.

***The common thread.*** Across every category, the formats that win share one quality: they would exist as content even without the brand. The product earns its place inside content people already want to watch — it does not replace the reason to watch.

## FORMATS TO AVOID

# What the algorithm quietly buries.

## THREE FORMATS THAT UNDERPERFORM ON TIKTOK

- Scripted testimonial-style content.** TikTok audiences identify scripted delivery immediately and respond with disengagement. The platform rewards natural, spontaneous-feeling content – even if it was carefully thought through.
- Highly produced advertising-style content.** If a video looks like it could have aired as a traditional TV commercial, it will underperform on TikTok regardless of production quality.
- Trend participation that feels forced.** Trends work only when genuinely compatible with the creator's style and the product narrative. Forcing a product into an unrelated trend generates community mockery, not positive engagement.

**Why "looks like an ad" is fatal.** On feed-based platforms, an ad-like post is simply skipped. On TikTok, the algorithm reads low completion and engagement as a quality signal and suppresses distribution – so an over-produced video doesn't just fail to convert, it fails to reach. Production value the audience reads as "advertising" is actively penalised.

## PART 06 · MEASURING TIKTOK PERFORMANCE

# The metrics that **actually matter.**

## PRIMARY METRICS

| METRIC                         | WHAT IT TELLS YOU  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Views vs follower count</b> | Ratio indicates algorithmic distribution beyond existing audience. <b>Above 3:1</b> suggests the algorithm is actively amplifying – a strong quality signal. |
| <b>Engagement rate</b>         | (Likes + comments + saves + shares) ÷ views. <b>3-8%</b> is healthy across tiers. Saves and shares are the highest-value signals.                            |
| <b>Promo + UTM attribution</b> | Direct commercial attribution at creator level – essential for CPA and creator-mix optimisation.   |
| <b>TikTok Shop metrics</b>     | Product views, add-to-cart rate, conversion rate, revenue per creator – granular ecommerce data inside the platform.   |

## SECONDARY METRICS

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Comment sentiment</b>  | Highly visible and influential – positive amplifies, negative damages and is public. Monitor in real time. |
| <b>Save rate</b>          | <b>Above 2%</b> on product content is a strong leading indicator of conversion.                            |
| <b>Profile visit rate</b> | High rates indicate strong audience interest and awareness impact beyond the video.                        |

## WHAT NOT TO MEASURE

# The vanity metrics that **mislead.**

## Looks impressive

### 500K views

0.3% engagement rate. Reach without resonance – the algorithm tested it widely and the audience didn't respond.

## Actually won

### 50K views

8% engagement rate. Fewer views, but every commercially meaningful metric is dramatically stronger.

#### TWO METRICS TO IGNORE

- Total views without context.** A 500K-view video at 0.3% engagement has underperformed a 50K-view video at 8% on every commercially meaningful metric. Views without engagement context is a vanity metric.
- Follower-count growth on the creator's account.** Irrelevant to brand campaign performance – the creator gaining followers does not advance your commercial objective.

**The discipline.** Always pair a reach number with an engagement number. The brands that optimise TikTok well are the ones that refuse to celebrate views in isolation – because the algorithm will happily generate views for content that converts nobody.

PART 07 · TIKTOK VS INSTAGRAM

PART 07 · TIKTOK VS INSTAGRAM

# When to choose which.

Both platforms have a role in most consumer brand programmes. The decision of where to concentrate investment depends on campaign objective and audience profile.

TikTok leads on **under-30 audiences, brand awareness at scale, and ecommerce via TikTok Shop**. Instagram leads on **30-45 audiences, luxury positioning, and sustained brand building**. The next page lays the two side by side, factor by factor.



*"Both platforms have a role — the question is where to concentrate."*

TIKTOK VS INSTAGRAM

# The decision matrix.

| FACTOR                       | TIKTOK             | INSTAGRAM      |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Target audience under 30     | ✓ Primary          | ✓ Secondary    |
| Target audience 30-45        | ✓ Secondary        | ✓ Primary      |
| Ecommerce / direct sales     | ✓ Primary · Shop   | ✓ Strong       |
| Brand awareness at scale     | ✓ Strongest        | ✓ Strong       |
| Luxury / premium positioning | ⚠ Use carefully    | ✓ Primary      |
| Long-form product evaluation | ✗                  | ✗ Use YouTube  |
| Sustained brand building     | ⚠ Lower shelf life | ✓ Stronger     |
| Cost efficiency              | ✓ Lower rates      | ⚠ Higher rates |

***The combination, not the choice.*** For most consumer brands the answer is not TikTok *or* Instagram but the right split between them – TikTok for under-30 reach and Shop conversion, Instagram for 30-45 audiences, luxury positioning, and the sustained presence that TikTok’s short shelf life can’t provide.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

# The playbook in **seven lines.**

If you remember nothing else, remember these seven – the difference between treating TikTok as a platform in its own right and treating it as Instagram with shorter videos.

**SEVEN TAKEAWAYS**

- Select on engagement and view ratio**, not follower count – the algorithm distributes on quality, not the follower graph.
- Native content wins.** Anything that looks like an ad is penalised in distribution, not just skipped.
- TikTok Shop is the conversion advantage** – in-app checkout removes the redirect that kills social commerce.
- Set competitive commission** – it drives organic creator selection, not just compensation.
- Brief the hook and the non-negotiables, nothing else.** Prescribing execution produces underperforming content.
- Measure engagement, saves, and attribution** – never total views in isolation.
- Run TikTok and Instagram together**, each for the audience and objective it serves best.



TIKTOK CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST

# Nine checks before launch.

Confirm all nine before the first creator posts.

**TIKTOK PRE-LAUNCH · NINE CHECKS**

- 01 · Creators selected on view ratio, not follower count
- 02 · Content-format fit confirmed per creator
- 03 · Sponsored-vs-organic performance checked
- 04 · Audience demographics verified in marketplace
- 05 · Comment-section culture reviewed for brand safety
- 06 · Brief defines hook latitude + non-negotiables only
- 07 · TikTok Shop listings optimised (if applicable)
- 08 · Commission rates set competitively for the category
- 09 · Promo codes + UTM attribution live and tested

# TikTok Influencer Marketing

## LMG MEDIA

● ACTIVE TIKTOK CREATOR NETWORKS

*TikTok-native strategy — built for the algorithm, not against it.*

### ABOUT LMG MEDIA

# Where Quality Brands Meet **Iconic Influence.**

LMG Media is an influencer marketing agency with active **TikTok creator networks** across fashion, beauty, ecommerce, fitness, and lifestyle categories — in markets including London, New York, Dubai, Los Angeles, Miami, and Paris.

If you would like support building a TikTok influencer programme or a TikTok Shop creator strategy — from

creator selection to briefing to performance scaling — get in touch.

*Platform data and benchmarks reflect LMG Media campaign experience and market research as of 2026. TikTok's mechanics evolve frequently — always verify current algorithm behaviour and TikTok Shop features against the platform's own documentation.*

[Start Your Campaign →](#)

[Get in Touch](#)

lmg.media

## HOW WE WORK WITH BRANDS

# The playbook, **run for you.**

Every part of this playbook is something we run for the brands we work with — as an end-to-end TikTok partner, or on the specific stage where you need support.

**01****Creator selection**

TikTok-native vetting on view ratio, format fit, and community culture — not follower count.

**02****TikTok Shop setup**

Listing optimisation, affiliate recruitment, and competitive commission structures that drive organic interest.

**03****Native briefing**

Briefs that define the strategy and the non-negotiables — and trust creators with the execution.

**04****Performance scaling**

Weekly tracking on the metrics that matter, doubling down on converters.

[Start Your Campaign →](#)[Get in Touch](#)[lmg.media](#)

## NOTES &amp; DISCLAIMER

# How to use this **playbook.**

The benchmarks, rate ranges, and commission figures in this playbook are drawn from LMG Media's TikTok campaign experience and market research. They are **directional reference points** – not guarantees.

TikTok's platform mechanics evolve faster than any other major social platform. Algorithm behaviour, TikTok Shop features, creator marketplace tools, and commission norms all change frequently. Always verify current

platform behaviour against TikTok's own documentation before launching.

Rate ranges vary significantly by category, market, creator quality, and the specifics of each partnership. The view-ratio and engagement benchmarks are starting points to validate against your own campaign data.

Where this playbook references other LMG Media resources, those documents contain the detailed frameworks behind the summaries here.

***The one rule that doesn't change.*** Whatever shifts in the platform's mechanics, the core principle holds: supply the strategy, trust creators with the execution, and measure engagement over reach. That is what makes TikTok work – and it has survived every algorithm update so far.



*Where Quality Brands  
Meet **Iconic Influence.***

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*Algorithm*

| *Shop*

| *Brief*

| *Measure*