4 Ways to Leverage TikTok for Startup Growth

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

There is no doubt that TikTok has evolved beyond the new platform that businesses dismissed in early 2020 and even 2021. But what often remains overlooked is its strategic value for growing startups.

No surprise here — TikTok is still relatively uncrowded. It's growing exponentially. It's home to the largest asset in the industry, creator talent. What this means is that TikTok is a powerful experimentation channel that can take a startup from product-market fit to scaling faster than ever.

Here are four ways TikTok can become a growth driver for startups when the traditional growth hacking models don't deliver.

Related: TikTok Is the New Normal. 5 Reasons to Add TikTok to Your Content Marketing Strategy

1. TikTok is a rapid product-market fit testing channel

There are a lot of frameworks for product-market fit. For the sake of simplicity, we will follow Marc Andreessen's "The Only Thing That Matters" framework to make a case for TikTok. Product-market fit is the most important thing for a startup to accomplish — and it equals the combination of a good team, a good market and an offering with the potential to satisfy the market.

This is where TikTok comes in: it's the tool in a startup's arsenal to *find* the right market and its pressing need.

TikTok is inherently a platform for niche communities (or TikTok "sides") that gather around specific values and needs. Organically, the platform's algorithm caters the content to the right communities based on the value the content provides. On the paid side, TikTok allows a range of targeting options – from demographics to niche interests, hashtags and creator profiles the preferred audience follows – to put your content in front of your hypothesized "ideal" audience (market).

The creative medium that reaches the desired audience – short-form, unpolished video – is driven by organic storytelling – a more trustworthy format to convey the concept of the offering.

Put that all together, and you have an experimentation framework that helps quickly identify if there is a symbiotic match between the startup's offering (product) and the user need (market). Start by identifying:

- The "why": what market need(s) or opportunity area(s) the product can satisfy;
- The "what": the product and its key benefits that discern it from the competition;
- The "how": the exact technology behind the product that addresses the need.

Leveraging the hypotheses around these questions, develop creative that educates the potential users on how the product will improve their lives. Be clear on the problem-solution, the uniqueness of the product and the tangible results it helps the users achieve.

When the product-market fit is achieved on TikTok, it comes in the form of high engagement rates, clearly signifying strong resonance with the market.

Related: How to Use TikTok to Promote Your Business

2. Leverage TikTok as a top-of-funnel awareness driver

Building authority in the market can be challenging for any startup, and TikTok solves this by allowing brands to become easily recognizable and known for consistent value add.

An unspoken rule in startup growth is inspiring consumer trust and buy-in early. High LTV and retention build on this trust. This trust also fuels user loyalty and advocacy to fuel the startup growth loop.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of tactics to keep in mind when developing content for TikTok as a startup:

- **Tactic**: Educate and focus on being helpful to your end user.
    - Include how-to's, demos, explainer videos, etc.
- **Tactic**: Bring your community along your growth journey to get buy-in. Share backstories, the founder's passion for the market and how you plan on growing.
    - Include founder videos, team members, growth milestones, future release/new feature teases, etc.
- **Tactic**: Lean into the conversations your niche is already having to stay relevant and relatable.
    - Include trends (music, filters, references to larger cultural moments and events)

And always aim to provide value first and convert second.

3. Collect user feedback on TikTok to inform the growth roadmap

TikTok can be a powerful tool to create a feedback loop between the startup and the audience. The video comment section can house valuable feedback that will guide the team's

decisions, from roadmap planning to product messaging. There are a few things to look out for when analyzing content engagement:

- Is there anything that the users are confused about? Is there anything that proves to be a roadblock to converting them?
    - **Solutions**: improve user experience, improve landing page copy, add a feature to the product, create more content to provide clarity, etc.
- What particularly resonates with the audience, and is there anything specific they'd like to hear more about?
    - **Solutions**: build out the user experience, add more landing page copy, add a feature to the product, create more content to build on engagement, etc.
- Do their questions shed light on a wider variety of applications you might be able to solve?
    - **Solutions**: elaborate on the landing page copy, add a new feature to the product, create more content around the suggested topics, etc.

Related: 4 Steps to Grow to 1 Million Followers on TikTok

4. Create a flywheel of content you can leverage on other channels

The key to true startup growth is continuous experimentation. It spans multiple platforms to account for a broader range of audiences – which means that the learnings and assets from any TikTok test should be treated as a strong starting point on multiple channels.

There are a few ways to leverage TikTok learnings to expand the scope of experimentation.

- Repurpose assets from TikTok organically to Instagram Reels, Facebook Reels and YouTube Shorts.

- Reuse winning assets as dark ads on TikTok by adjusting the video’s messaging to a given funnel stage (awareness, consideration, conversion).
- Use the winning TikTok videos as top-of-funnel paid social ads across additional channels such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Pinterest.
- Use messaging that worked on TikTok across PPC, paid social, landing page copy, etc.

If this particular feedback and user engagement strategy seems beneficial, TikTok’s suite of advertising tools can amplify engagement and feedback loops further through Engaged Audience campaigns.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/4-ways-to-leverage-tiktok-for-startup-growth/444970