

TikTok | TBWA

Storytelling in the Next Creative Renaissance



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FOREWORD

Creativity used to be celebrated - not just by the industry - but by everyone. However, lately it seems even our enthusiasm for creativity has dimmed. We've started to reserve our brands' biggest creative efforts for rare moments, rather than the everyday.

I understand why. Creativity can be expensive and time consuming, and those two qualities aren't likely to be embraced at a time where budgets are under heavy scrutiny. But I do believe everyday creativity is worth pushing for - our partners, TBWA, have proved that time and time again with their work - so, at TikTok, we've built tech tools that will further enable creative ingenuity while streamlining the creative process with more asset volume, variety and value.

TikTok's mission has always been to inspire creativity and bring joy. And, for over one billion TikTok users around the world, we've delivered. From our hyper-personalised ForYou Pages to the culture-building communities we foster, TikTok is a platform that not only serves up creativity, but gives our users the tools to truly be creative.

And we continue to invest to do the same for our brand and agency partners.

By adding best-in-class smart technologies into that mix, we hope the more mundane aspects of each campaign will take care of themselves, giving marketers more time to truly drive creative impact.

With TBWA, we've put together this playbook to re-affirm the importance and power of everyday creativity and examine all the ways it can be harnessed, on and off TikTok. We hope this new way forward will lead us into the creative renaissance, where the best minds in our industry will be freed by technology to do what they really love: create.



Sincerely,
Shant Oknayan
Head of Global Business Solutions, TikTok

TBWA is an agency centred on Disruption®, a philosophy that's deeply embedded across our entire collective. Disruption® is in our DNA, pushing us to always challenge the status quo by asking better questions and striving to improve every process. This is how we have consistently unlocked the true potential of brands, and harnessed the power of creativity to shape their future.

It's no surprise then that we've chosen to partner with TikTok, a platform that truly embodies the spirit of evolution, reinvention, and boundless creativity. TikTok has revolutionised the way we create and consume content - and I say 'we' because I mean 'we'; it's not just GenZ - it's almost everyone.

This new wave of entertainment and engagement is immersive, its engagement reaches further: it sparks cultural movements. It provides our creators at TBWA with the means to transcend the usual storytelling boundaries for brands, to seamlessly co-create with audiences and engage with them on a level that was unattainable before.

Our hope, with this partnership, is to inspire a creative renaissance, where brands embrace technology to tread new ground and meaningfully connect with new audiences, and create new experiences. We invite you to embark on this journey with us, as we celebrate creativity, innovation, and cultural transformation.

Welcome to a new era of creativity.



Sincerely,
Sean Donovan
President, TBWA/Asia

LIST OF EXPERTS INTERVIEWED



Sofia Hernandez
Head of Global Business
Marketing, TikTok



Yasuhisa Masuda
Division General Manager,
Nissan Motor Co LTD., Japan



Henry Manampiring
Regional VP - Marketing,
RedDoorz, Indonesia



Abdulilah Wazni
Director of Marcoms,
Brand & Customer
Experience, Nissan MESA



Christan Sow
Head of Creative &
Content, designory,
Singapore



Dina Salem
Executive Social Media
Director, TBWA\RAAD,
Dubai, UAE



Rony Skaf
Executive Digital Director,
TBWA\RAAD, Dubai, UAE



Tessa Conrad
Head of Innovation
TBWA\ Asia



Paolo Juarez Broma
Managing Director,
TBWA\ Juice, Philippines



CJ de Silva-Ong
Executive Creative Director,
TBWA\ Juice, Philippines



Taku Nakamura
Head, 65db Tokyo, Japan



Asheen Naidu
Executive Creative Director
TBWA\Singapore



Monique Porteous
Social Media Business Director,
TBWA\Eleven
New Zealand



Chew Wee Ng
Head of Global Business
Marketing TikTok APAC



Anny Havercroft
Marketing Solutions
TikTok APAC



Evelyn Jimenez
Chief Commercial Officer,
DITO Telecommunity,
Philippines



Michael Reynolds
Head of Brand Marketing,
ANZ Bank, New Zealand



Bui Le Hong Ngoc, Beauty &
Well-being Lead, Unilever,
Vietnam



Naritta Vipulyasekha
Business Manager,
Nestle Water, Thailand



Gitanjali Sriram
Former Head of Marketing,
Taco Bell, Malaysia



Andy Yang
Head of Product & Engineering,
Ads Creative, TikTok



Hari Hendrawan
Chief Operating Officer,
TCP-TBWA\Indonesia



Nor Marlina
Creative Group Head
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Katrina Alvarez-Jarratt
Executive Creative Director
TBWA\ Sydney, Australia



Michaela Futcher
Head of Strategy & MD
TBWA\ MAL APAC



Emmanuel Sabbagh
Chief Strategy Officer
TBWA\ Asia



Jane Fraser
Regional Director, Marketing &
Corporate Comms, TBWA\ APAC

01

CMO's Dilemma:

When the Aberrant Becomes the Normal



FEAR HINDERS INNOVATION; RISK REWARDS WITH POSSIBILITY



We're all trying to do more with less, but don't let tightened budgets equal less impact and value. As economies around the world toss and turn, an obvious reflex for businesses is to reduce marketing budgets, with the ripple effect leading to big creative ideas being paused. **"I think the biggest barrier for creativity right now is fear, fear of failure,"** says Emmanuel Sabbagh, chief strategy officer at TBWA\Asia.

But is this the right approach, with decades of research claiming brands who disrupt in a downturn are rewarded by possibility?



Emmanuel Sabbagh
Chief Strategy Officer
TBWA\Asia



CJ de Silva
Executive Creative Director
TBWA\SMP Juice, Philippines

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CJ de Silva, executive creative director, TBWA\SMP Juice, Philippines, confirms, it can be quite hard to get a 'yes' from a client, or a budget for them to take a risk on an idea, when moments of instability or tension arise – but it's not impossible.

The brands who have broken away from the 'best practice in a downturn' rule book, and have discovered the possibilities of newer platforms, are the ones capturing attention, creating value, gaining recognition and being rewarded. This is where being truly creative gives you an edge.

"Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns and old ways," says Evelyn Jimenez, CCO of Filipino challenger telco DITO, one of de Silva's clients willing to take that risk.

Without creativity, we're just trapped in a feedback loop - and the same old thing won't work when you don't have the budget to buy yourself views. Brands that only work off the current best practices are limiting themselves to what was cool, not what will be. So rather than compromising on innovation, CMOs need to be strategic with the budget they have. Creative risk may be a tough sell to the CFO at first, but, as Bui Le Hong Ngoc, Unilever Vietnam's beauty and well-being lead says: "If the creative works well, it should yield better cost efficiency."



Evelyn Jimenez
Chief Commercial Officer
DITO Telecommunity

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PROSUMERS DON'T WANT POLISHED ADS

New technology, social and media platforms have brought the barriers to creating content way down.

Consumers are now prosumers, they aren't just consuming content, they're producing it, giving them huge influence. In fact, a 2022 study from Boston Consulting Group found that **79% of APAC shoppers started and participated in conversations about an item after purchasing it.** **"71% of users on TikTok said they take action after watching a TikTok video, whether it's buying, searching or further researching,"** says **Sofia Hernandez, head of global business marketing at TikTok.** "People say, I watched something, I learned something, I laughed." Unlike the shiny, filtered 'grams of the past, this action-spurring content is often rough and ready.



Sofia Hernandez
Head of Global Business
Marketing, TikTok

Michaela Futcher
Head of Strategy & MD
TBWA\MAL APAC



As influencer content gets more raw, the glossy, polished ads appearing in between posts look more and more like ads - making them easier to ignore.

"The best work I've seen [on TikTok] so far has been authentic, gritty, far from polished and largely looking nothing at all like an ad," Michaela Futcher, head of strategy and managing director, TBWA Media Arts Lab, Asia Pacific.

Marketers have to fight hard for attention on any platform - but over-curated craft is no longer the way to win. Ideas should stand out because they're audacious, not because they look out of place. That doesn't mean brands can't bring value in other ways. **"The scroll doesn't have to be mindless,"** says Futcher.

VIDEO CONTENT IS CRUCIAL FOR AWARENESS

Digital video overtook traditional TV in the content consumption race this year. According to Adobe's 2023 Digital Trends Report, 79% of senior APAC marketing executives say demand for content has significantly increased. But only 25% of brands rated themselves as 'good' at creating and delivering said content - suggesting the creation process can be cumbersome and difficult to pull off using traditional methods.

"What we are seeing on our platform is the rise in popularity of 'full funnel,'" says Chew Wee Ng, head of business marketing APAC at TikTok. "Performance clients are seeing brand lift from their mid to upper funnel activities." Ng points to TikTok research that shows when advertisers run brand and performance campaigns in tandem, they see **33% higher conversion rates, with 36% less cost per action.**



Chew Wee Ng
Head of Global Business
Marketing TikTok APAC

"For many years the mid-funnel has been underestimated and under-utilised, but over the past five years mid-funnel strategies have become bigger and bigger," says Sabbagh. "Engagement and consideration are the new awareness." In order to play in this 'full funnel' space, Sabbagh says, marketers need to connect with culture and digital content is the ideal way in. **As Futcher says: "Making culture as it happens, at the pace of TikTok, is the new critical brand KPI."**



WELCOME TO THE AGE OF NICHE

Content has always formed the root of culture. We used to gather in the millions to watch the same episode of television, then chat about it the next day. Now, monoculture has shrunk. One hundred and six million people sat and watched the MASH finale in 1983, but just 2.9M tuned in to watch the last episode of Succession, live. Instead of appointment viewing, we now take our own personalised content journey through a new wave of entertainment platforms.

This splintering of audiences and fragmentation of media makes it harder than ever to reach a mass audience - while costs can also be an obstacle. But there is another way in.

If you look at how culture works: it starts niche, then grows into something bigger. Comic books were for nerds for decades, now superhero films are as mainstream as they come; streetwear influences the biggest luxury designers; and K-pop has conquered the West many times over. And thanks to new entertainment platforms, the pace of that conversion from subculture to pop-culture has sped up.

While brands have fewer opportunities to make an impact via monoculture, the potential influence of subcultures is massive - and still growing thanks to platforms like TikTok. Subcultures may sound small, but many have global reach. And as their relevance expands, so will the relevance of the brands already connected to them. It maybe tempting to hitch yourself to whichever niche you think has the greatest potential for growth, but brands should actually engage with subcultures that share their worldview. Joining those conversations, authentically, is a shortcut to word-of-mouth promotion.

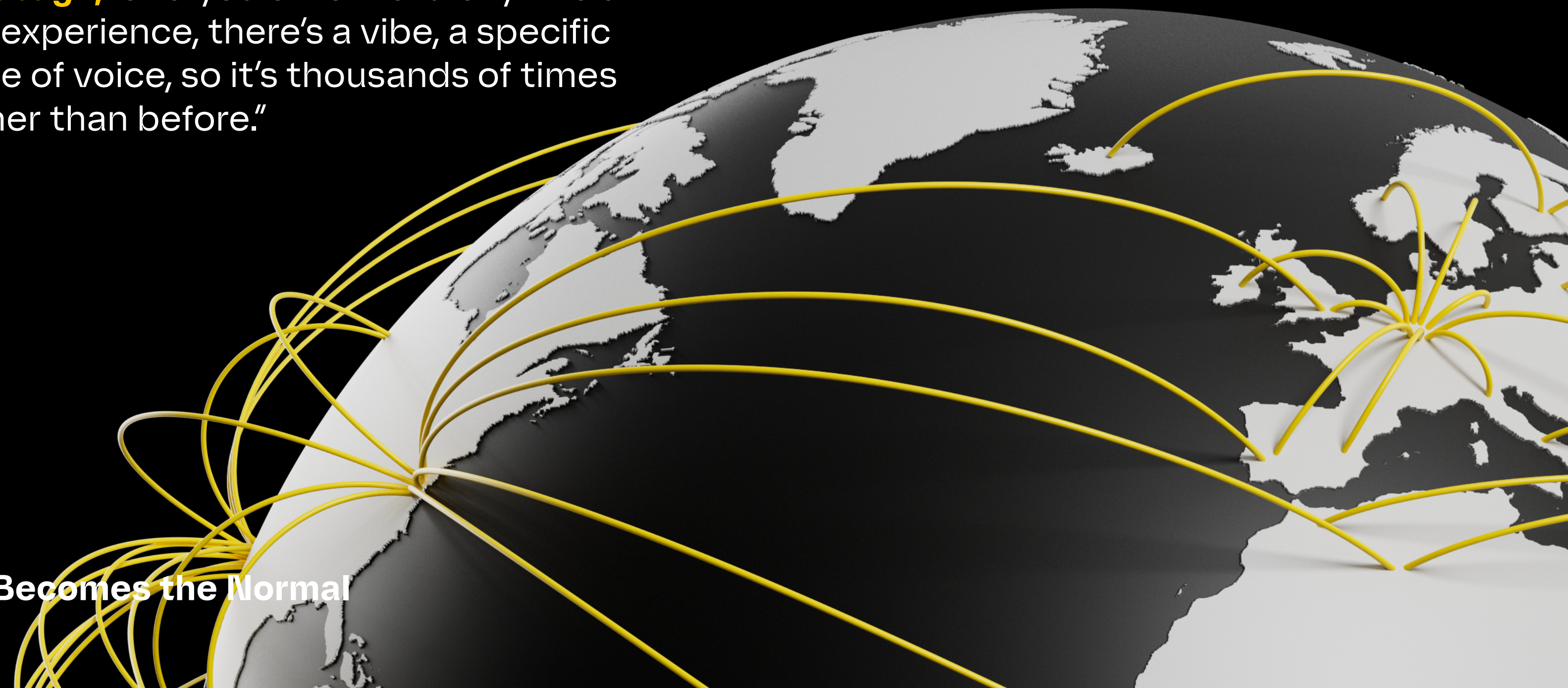


AN INTERNET FOR INSPIRATION OVER INFORMATION

We don't use the internet that differently today than we did prior to the pandemic, but research by GWI found there was one big difference: **people are looking less and less for information and more and more for inspiration.** That one change actually alters our entire experience - and how we experience brands.

In 2018, if you wanted information on a product or a brand, you'd Google it. The brand experience would be jammed into a few lines below a link - that hopefully was one of the first five listed on the first page. **"While scrolling and searching, you now also discover products in TikTok," says Sabbagh,** "and you enter naturally into a full experience, there's a vibe, a specific tone of voice, so it's thousands of times richer than before."

This shift is a staggering opportunity for brands. Hilton, for example, which had been relegated to a name and price (or hidden below ads) on Google, can now greet searchers with tours of suites, restaurants and other swanky facilities.



Chapter Summary

Innovate, differentiate and then consolidate. Brands must achieve best practice but that's the bare minimum - if you invest and also innovate on subculture-centric platforms like TikTok, you'll get a strong ROI and also be a one-of-a-kind.

"You need boldness," says Christan Sow, head of creative and content, designory, Singapore. "Leveraging trending content approaches could mean veering off the typical brand path, and the risks and fear of backlash sometimes outweigh marketers' desire for innovation."



Christan Sow
Head of Creative & Content,
designory SG

Fight those fears, continue to push forward and try innovative new approaches to build up brand awareness.

02

Today's
Hero:

Creative
Technology

QUALITY AT SCALE

In this time of **'doing more with less'**, conventional processes can be deemed too slow. That's why today we're playing a new game, elevating the importance of our role to create quality platform ideas that sit at the centre of culture - and coming to life at the speed of culture. The good news is, an element of this new game includes new tech that enables us to achieve this speed and scale.

"It provides easy access to inspiration and enables swift feedback, allowing for agility and rapid improvements," says DITO's Jimenez, so we'll have more time to devote to big ideas. Though it may be tempting, using technology to simply churn out more of the same content isn't going to solve the problem of engagement. **"Of course you want reach, but you want your reach to actually mean something,"** says Tessa Conrad, head of innovation, TBWA\Asia.



Tessa Conrad
Head of Innovation
TBWA\ Asia

Instead of choosing 'crop, copy, paste', marketers can use these tools to upgrade their executions quickly, giving assets new value, or streamline the creation of bespoke content (which gets viewed for three seconds longer, and elicits 20% more emotion, on TikTok). **"It's a flip on the 'buy me an audience' approach of the last few years,"** says Futcher. "It forces us and our brand partners to think insight-first again."

Most importantly, the time and effort marketers save with the streamlined execution also allows them to spend more of their energy on building ideas generation and developing strategies that will truly disrupt. Adobe's 2023 Digital Trends report found that 41% of APAC marketing practitioners don't have the time to be creative; technology can be the solution to that problem if used correctly.

TikTok's new Recut, Remix, Reimagine framework, built to help enable creativity on its platform, includes automated tools designed to optimise ad deployment - exactly the stuff marketers would rather leave to bots. **"Fifty percent of a campaign's success is down to creative; and even more important, creative enables 47% of brand sales lift,"** says Andy Yang, Head of Product and Engineering at TikTok Ads Creative. "It's not always easy to execute creative, hence we created an ecosystem of support that solves problems across the entire creative process."



Andy Yang
Head of Product &
Engineering, Ads
Creative, TikTok

BRAND BUILDING IN VERTICAL

Digital ads aren't just for performance marketing; you can build brand equity with online videos. Just because it's easier to measure their short-term efficacy, doesn't mean they don't have long-term impact - and just because you're looking to target a specific audience, doesn't mean they're the only ones watching.



TikTok is often underestimated as 'just for Gen Z' but globally, **over 60% of TikTok's audience is now millennial-age or older.** "TikTok is all grown up," says **Conrad**, and brands can use it to authentically engage with and listen to consumers.

"Brands are leveraging TikTok's ability to grow brand metrics through the entire marketing funnel," says **Anny Havercroft, TikTok's head of global marketing solutions, APAC.** "We know from research the entertainment-centric nature of content on the platform drives 15% higher brand affinity, 14% higher purchase intent and 15% higher likelihood of recommendation." Sabbagh believes we haven't even uncovered one third of TikTok's creative potential yet.



Anny Havercroft
Marketing Solutions
TikTok APAC

"The platform's short-form videos and focus on creativity makes it easy for us to share our stories and products in a way that feels natural and relatable," says **Michael Reynolds, head of brand marketing at ANZ Bank in New Zealand.**

"Listening to our target audience on TikTok informs our content creation strategy, helps us to build stronger relationships and improves brand perception and relevance."

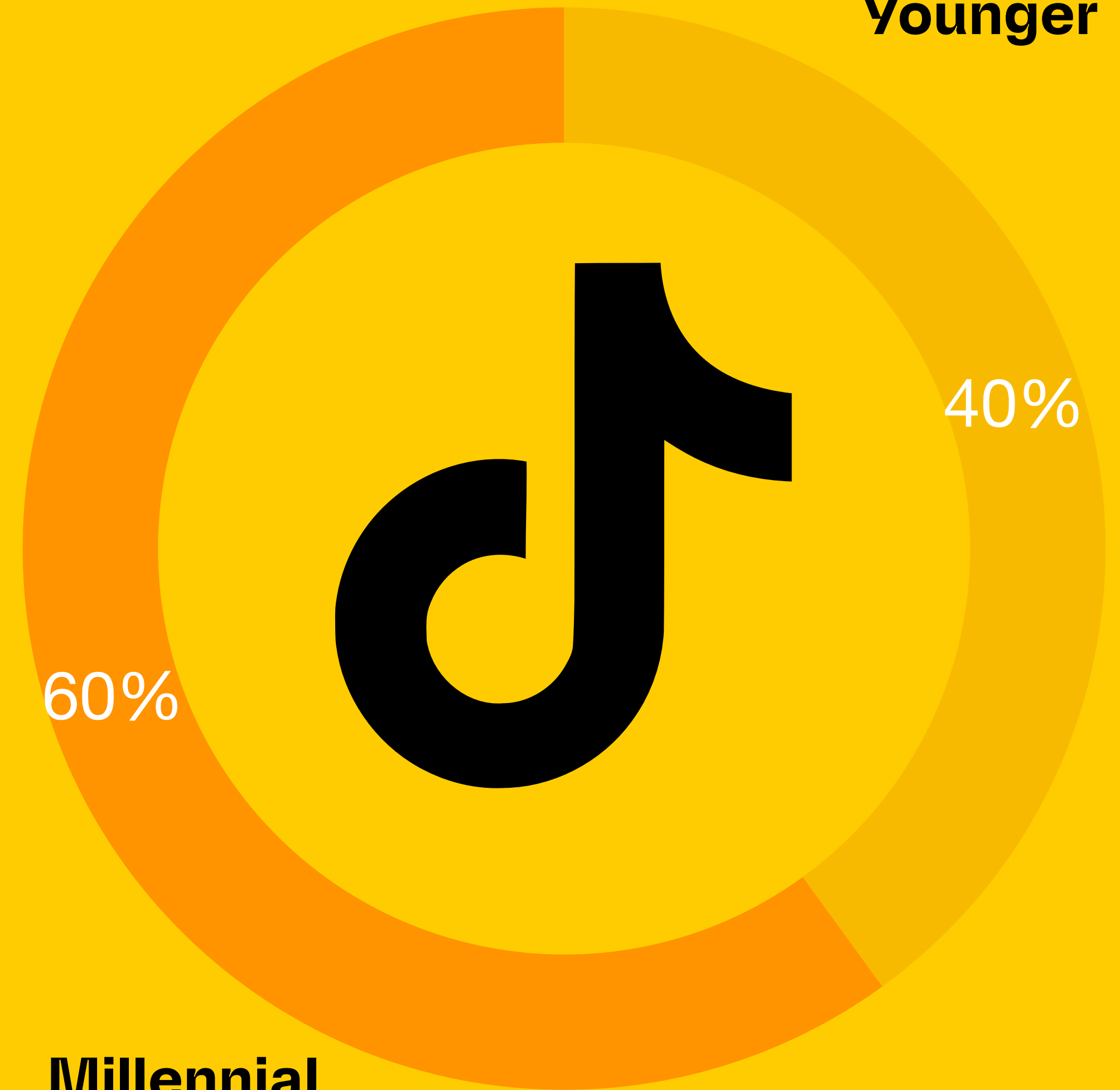


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Michael Reynolds
Head of Brand
Marketing,
ANZ Bank,
New Zealand

Listening has always been key, but with the deluge of information and data, it's easy to feel paralysed and stuck. It will be essential for marketers to listen, and actively encourage conversation with consumers, rather than just skulking through tracking data.

Gen Z or Younger



**Millennial
or Older**

BURSTING 'BUBBLES'



Monoculture is well and truly behind us, so marketers can't expect to reach *everyone* with a digital campaign like they used to with a TVC. But TikTok does have algorithm bubbles - pockets of content being fed to certain groups of people - that brands can utilise or become a part of.

"These algorithm bubbles can work for us because we have these diverse little worlds in TikTok that you can access," says de Silva. "It's not one centralised message you replicate over different media, we get to play with different insights, tones and even cultures." Brands can use creators to lean into these worlds, but it's also possible to Recut existing content to match up with these worlds.

The Recut section of TikTok's framework isn't just about changing the aspect ratio, it's about scouring through every brand asset available to find the right piece to speak to a specific audience, then adapting it to the platform using the multitude of TikTok tools like CapCut. Recutting work for these subculture bubbles can also give global brands the ability to make a more specialised connection. **"You can use TikTok to show how these global brands can be very charming when they are going at a local pace," says Sabbagh.**

TikTok gives brands wide access, but also the ability to hone in on passions. "TikTok is the heart of the internet subcultures that surpass demographics - and that can lead to the most meaningful, engaging brand building for brands," adds Conrad.



Tessa Conrad
Head of Innovation
TBWA\ Asia

CREATIVITY AS A PLAYABLE THING

Emerging tools and tech have enabled a new type of creativity not rooted in perfection and traditional craft, but a version of creativity that can be picked up and messed around with. **"I think the master of creativity is going to be the one who will give something to people that they can play with and make their own,"** says Sabbagh. This creativity is batted back and forth, evolving as it goes - like a video duetted a million times on TikTok.

"Finding the right balance between what we need to convey and immersing ourselves in the customer's perspective is crucial," says Yasuhisa Masuda, division general manager of Nissan Motor Co LTD.'s Japan marketing division. He sees TikTok as a space to co-create with fans. "One-sided appeals may cause customers who are enjoying what they like to skip the content," he says.



Yasuhisa Masuda
Division General Manager,
Nissan Motor Co LTD., Japan



In the **Classify Consent** campaign from non-profit **Consent Labs**, in **Australia**, clips from film scenes were uploaded to **TikTok** and overlaid with platform-standard text explaining why consent hadn't been given. The videos received six million views and, more importantly, sparked a dialogue with users because they were built to do so. Something as simple as overlaying text that is native to the platform being used can make a big difference.

C

**CLASSIFY
CONSENT**

A classification to call
out lack of consent



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Ensuring content looks native to TikTok is the focus of the Remix portion of its new framework. While every user's homepage is different, some sounds, filters, trends will help brands cut through. These will change constantly, so connecting to culture will still be essential, while TikTok tools will help in the execution. **As Asheen Naidu, executive creative director at TBWA\Singapore says: "The ability to have a dialogue with a specific community and have them interact with your brand, as opposed to merely advertising to them, is a wonderful opportunity."**



Asheen Naidu
Executive Creative Director
TBWA\ Singapore

Chapter Summary

New tech tools are enabling smarter creative executions. Brands can not only ramp up their creative output, but fine-tune it to match up with specific audiences and subcultures. Instead of simply cropping content to fit onto multiple platforms, brands can use new tech to create something hyper-relevant that people want to engage with, play with, and take ownership over.

"Marketers looking to target a wide spectrum of consumers should rethink audience segmentation," says Sow. "TikTok audiences are their most captive when they're served content that mirrors their interests. Instead of focusing on high impressions, marketers must understand that TikTok works better with smaller, but targeted reach."



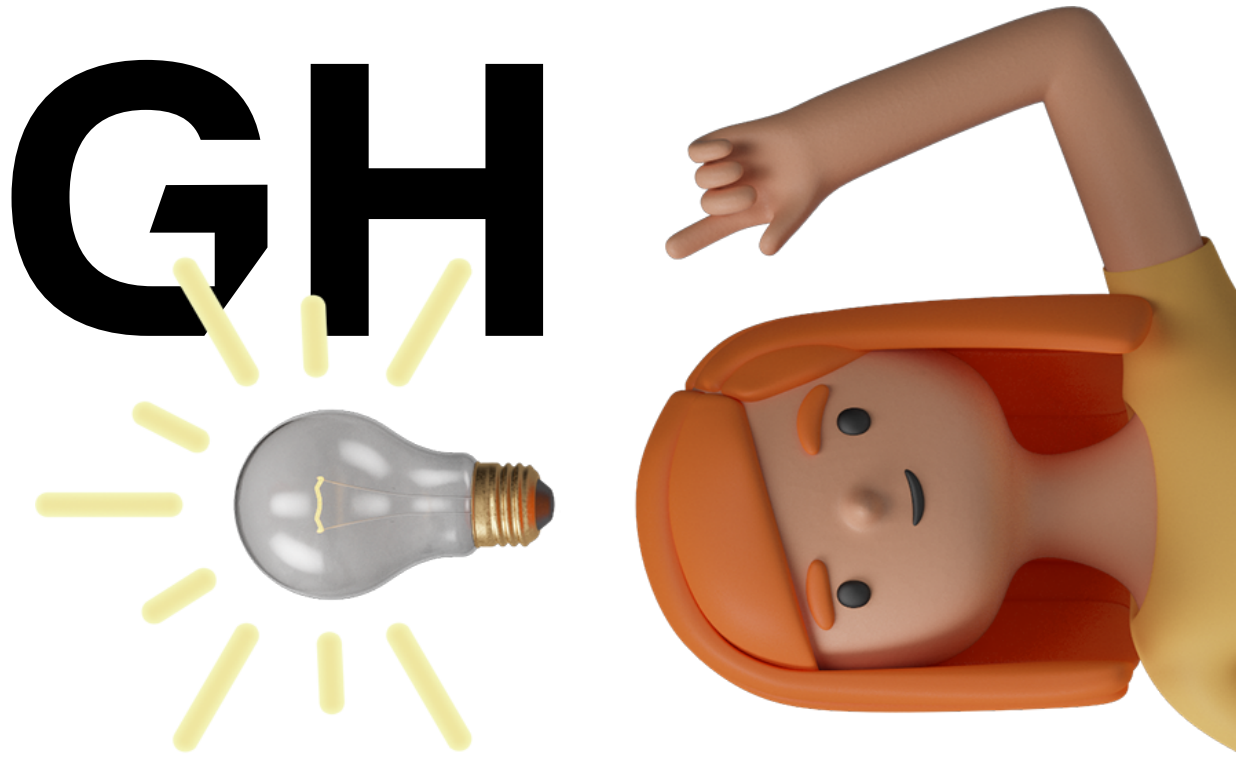
Christan Sow
Head of Creative & Content,
designory SG

03

Taking Creativity Up a Notch



SLEUTHING THROUGH SUBCULTURES



Broad culture has always been evident in the content we consume, but newer technologies give us access to micro-cultures worlds away from what we'd usually be exposed to. Trends are starting in the digital realm and then transferring into the real world, so by studying digital platforms marketers can not only uncover valuable cultural insights, but also equip themselves for what's going to happen next.

Connecting with culture is essential for creative work, especially on platforms that contain a huge amount of content. "TikTok is not like TV where anybody who can pay will have a role to play," says Sabbagh. "If you're not interesting enough, it's goodbye." The algorithm elevates what's interesting. "It lets sub-trends become major trends," says Fatcher. "But it happens fast."

Brands can use creators to leverage these trends and subcultures, but "what's more crucial," says Conrad, "is that brands themselves must be creators." The Reimagine section of TikTok's new framework provides different solutions, which build, engage and interact with communities; this enables brands to become core contributors to subcultures. Engaging a subculture that aligns with "what your brand stands for, what it offers people, and what it makes people feel," says Conrad, "results in a community to connect and create with rather than just an audience to speak to."

Abdulilah Wazni, director of marcoms, brand, and customer experience at Nissan MESA, suggests leveraging the unique cultural aspects of your region. "Incorporate local traditions, landscapes, and experiences to create an emotional connection with the audience," he says. At Nissan, they plan to use TikTok features like AR to add a bit more interactivity. "By encouraging user-generated content, we empower our audience to express their creativity and forge a deeper connection with our brand," says Wazni.



Abdulilah Wazni
Director of Marcoms,
Brand & Customer
Experience,
Nissan MESA

THE 'FULL FUNNEL' SHORTCUT TO SALES

As the potential of mid-funnel marketing continues to reveal itself, marketers are searching for the best ways to access that engagement and consideration. **TikTok often comes at the top of the list because its format naturally works to both showcase products and elicit reactions to them.**

"TikTok for me is *the* media of mid-funnel strategies because it's almost as though crushed into one place," says Sabbagh. "It's very tempting for our clients because it's a fast-track to purchase."

Users that have made purchase from the contents in TikTok



67%

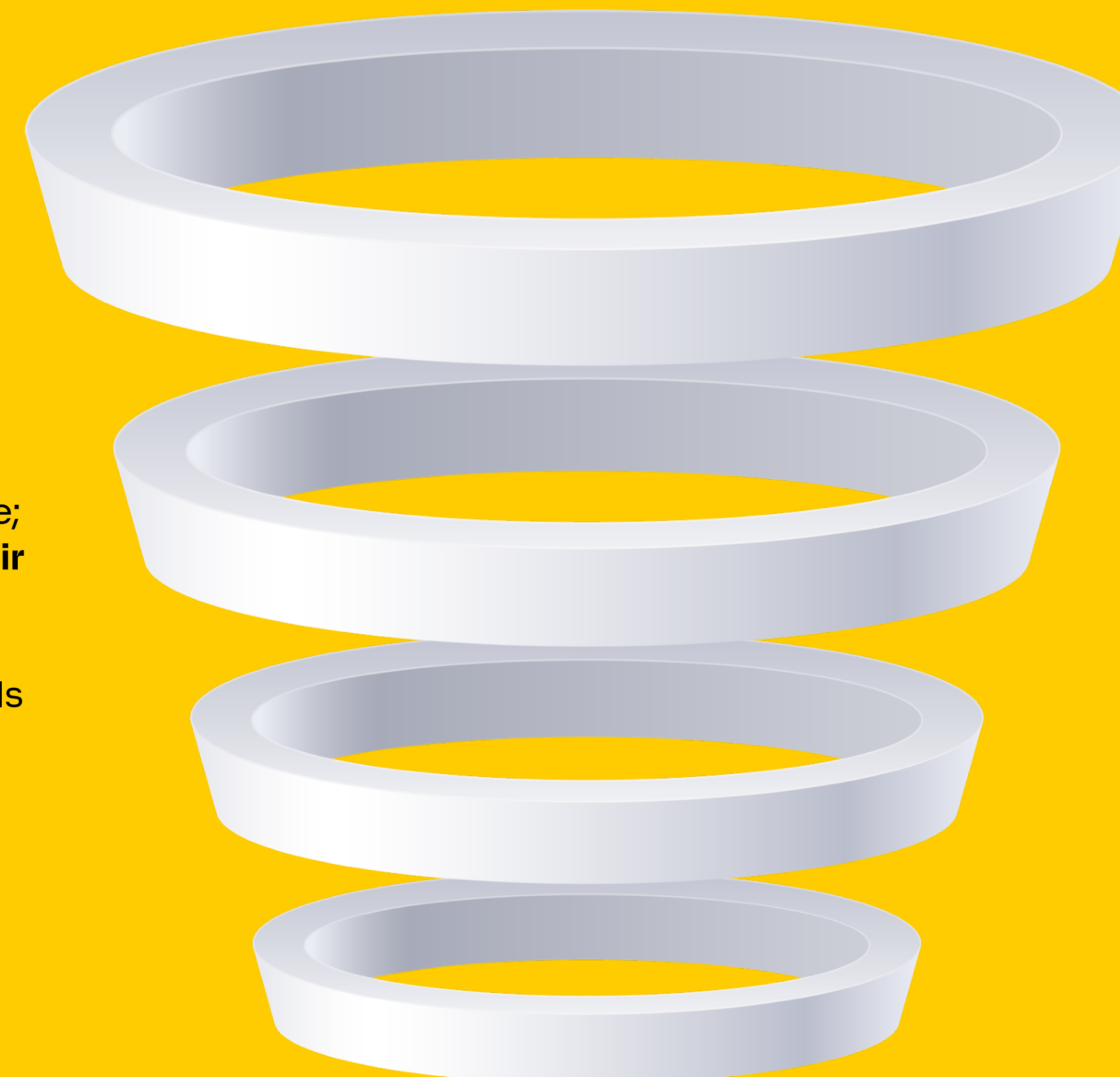
Users that just view contents from TikTok



43%

That's why bookstores have a 'BookTok' section and Amazon pages have an 'As Seen on TikTok' badge; **"because when true branding comes through on TikTok, it drives people to put their money where their love is," says Conrad. "Hence the 'TikTok made me buy it' phenomenon."**

Shoppertainment is the next level of this. Marketers have been talking about it for years, but it still feels largely untapped globally. "It's extremely popular throughout Asia, but perhaps a bit less 'premium' than brands feel they should be," says Fatcher. "There is such an opportunity to reimagine the Shoppertainment experience for a brand in a cool way." Yet another area primed for experimentation.



Case study -

Hot Hipon - Oishi Prawn Crackers

TBWA\SANTIAGO MANGADA PUNO, Makati City

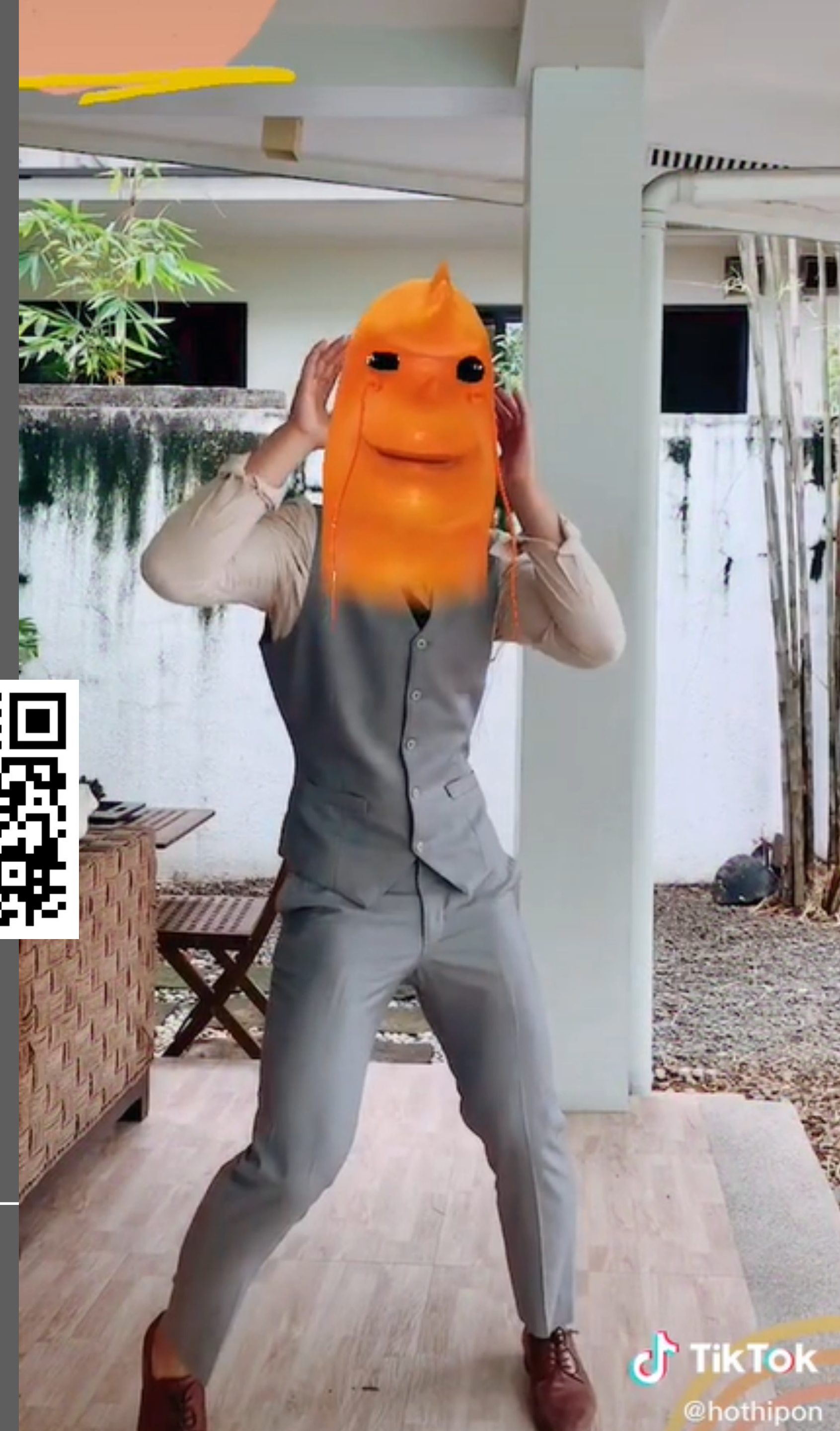
When Oishi came to TBWA\SMP with a brief, they asked for a TV spot, but left with a virtual prawn-headed influencer: Hot Hipon shrimpfluencer. In the Philippines, the term for prawn is Hipon, but colloquially it's also a cheeky reference to describe someone's face, which might not 'match up' in appearance to their body. Born out of a local influencer insight, TBWA\SMP created a TikTok filter of a prawn head, and used it to form a virtual influencer - with an accompanying dance challenge.

Usually snack brands play at the top and bottom of the marketing funnel: big Super Bowl spots for awareness and in-store signage or deals for conversion - but Oishi hit the middle. In the 12 weeks following the campaign's release, home consumption of Oishi grew by 7.7% compared with the previous year - despite the overall category being in decline.

"We crushed the funnel and we got the maximum results with less money," says Sabbagh



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TURNING CREATIVE ASSETS INTO TOYS

A huge portion of the content we consume everyday is a remixed version of something else that existed before, and these twists are no longer limited to visuals.

*“On TikTok it has evolved into audio memes,” says de Silva. Just like a visual meme, an audio meme takes an original sound or music track and reinterprets it to use in a different context. **“So your audio could go viral, instead of the whole film,” she says. That’s what happened earlier this year when Nestlé Pure Life Water and TBWA\Thailand worked with a songwriter and singer to develop an original song for the summer - in lieu of a traditional ad campaign. The T-Pop track, Hot or Cute, became the number one trending song on TikTok, and currently 1.7m videos have been created using it.***

Viral audio clips used to have another name - jingles - but TikTok’s audio focus brings a whole new dimension to it. Users can play with the audio, make it their own, and have their version go viral as well.



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Case study -

McDonald's Japan - #TIRORITUNE

TBWA\Hakuhodo Inc. Tokyo

#TiroriTune M

TRIGGERING WITH SOUND, NOT SIZZLE with TikTok

Challenge: McD meets Gen-Z

Idea: Create a McFries culture by using "that" familiar sound

Execution: McFries x Dance

McDonald's Japan have already attempted many times to reach the Gen-Z market. However, the brand had yet to find the right content teens want to see and interact with. How could we get the Gen-Z to love the McDonald's brand?

We focused our attention on the "Tirori" sound the fries make at McDonald's when the McFries are ready. This is a highly recognizable sound not just by the McDonald's Crew, but by anybody who has ever eaten at McDonald's. We thought the reason that if we effectively use this sound, we could turn McFries into a cultural icon for teens.

We noticed that the internet was already filled with user-generated content using the "Tirori" sound. So we launched McDonald's first official dance content on TikTok using this sound. What we created were just 4 tutorial videos danced by popular teen influencers in Japan.

Results:

Social Reach
195,000,000
views (TIKTOK JAPAN RECORDS)

85,000
user generated videos (TIKTOK JAPAN RECORDS)

After trying and failing to engage the Gen Z market in more traditional ways, McDonald's Japan wanted to find a way to create some interactivity. With TBWA\Hakuhodo Inc. Tokyo, the brand turned to TikTok, hoping to drive some user-generated content.

In Japan, the sound that the McDonald's fries make when they are finished cooking is widely recognised - and called TIRORI. So, jumping on that insight and awareness, TBWA\Hakuhodo Inc. used the sound as the base for a TikTok dance challenge, turning a visual icon into sound. It took off, and many of the teens they were targeting went into McDonald's to film their dances. Store visits went up 35% and it reached 9 million TikTok users.

"TikTok has its own language," says Sabbagh, and this campaign took a heritage product and translated it into something the TikTok audience could understand, connect to, and have fun with.

Chapter Summary

Brands currently have an unprecedented opportunity to show off their personality - or establish one for the first time - by becoming creators themselves. "Success doesn't always come in the form of view counts," says Sow. Instead of worrying about impressions, brands should consider the type of impression they're leaving - do consumers want to take action, respond to, duet with, or reimagine the content they're producing?

"The same things which have always mattered in brand building ring true," says Futcher.

Know your audience, think behaviour first, don't make your audience do something unnatural to scale, be entertaining. Don't undervalue the impact you can make on platforms like TikTok - if you use them correctly. "Campaigns on TikTok should be approached as a separate brief," says Sow. "The platform is evolving every day, with new trends always emerging, and its e-commerce transforming robustly... So the only way forward is to try something new each time." The good news is TikTok's Recut, Remix, Reimagine framework streamlines the process.



Michaela Futcher
Head of Strategy & MD
TBWA\ MAL APAC

04 The Next

Creative Renaissance



LEAVING STATIC ADS IN THE DARK AGES



This new age is about progress over perfection. We will build ideas that don't start and stop with the agency, but rather move out into the world and grow into something different.

Just as the Ride-thru work from McDonald's Philippines has had multiple iterations - some crafted, some more digitally native - creative work won't simply exist to be on display. **"We will lose a lot of those masterpieces that suddenly came from nowhere, and required six months of work to deliver,"** says Sabbagh. "But we'll have more of that work that suddenly, in front of our eyes, changes the pace of culture to create something that was never expected by the one who initiated the original creative."

This type of creativity is more adaptable and customisable, and for it to work brands will need to step back, take a deep breath, and let go of their need for total control. As more people get involved - whether it's hired influencers, content creators or regular consumers - the creative will get richer (even if it does look a bit of a mess).

Case study -

Throwing Shade At Tanning - Melanoma Institute

TBWA\Sydney

"Sometimes creatives and agencies can be reluctant because it feels like you're giving away control," says **Katrina Alvarez-Jarratt, executive creative director, TBWA\Sydney.** But, she says, if your idea is clear and you have communicated it well with your collaborators, you don't need to worry. TBWA call this giving an idea 'big handles' - when an idea is well-defined enough that other people can grab it and make it their own, but they can't take it somewhere undesirable.

"That campaign was unbelievably successful for us, because we let the creators grab hold of it, run with it, produce some totally wild content," says **Alvarez-Jarratt.**

One creator basted themselves like they were a melanoma turkey, and while that might seem nuts, every creator knows their audience.



Katrina Alvarez-Jarratt
Executive Creative Director
TBWA\Sydney

To get the message out about how dangerous tanning can be, the Melanoma Institute and TBWA\Sydney worked with around 20 content creators on TikTok. The central theme was set - Tanning, that's cooked! - but the agency and non-profit let creators interpret it however they liked, no matter how wild.



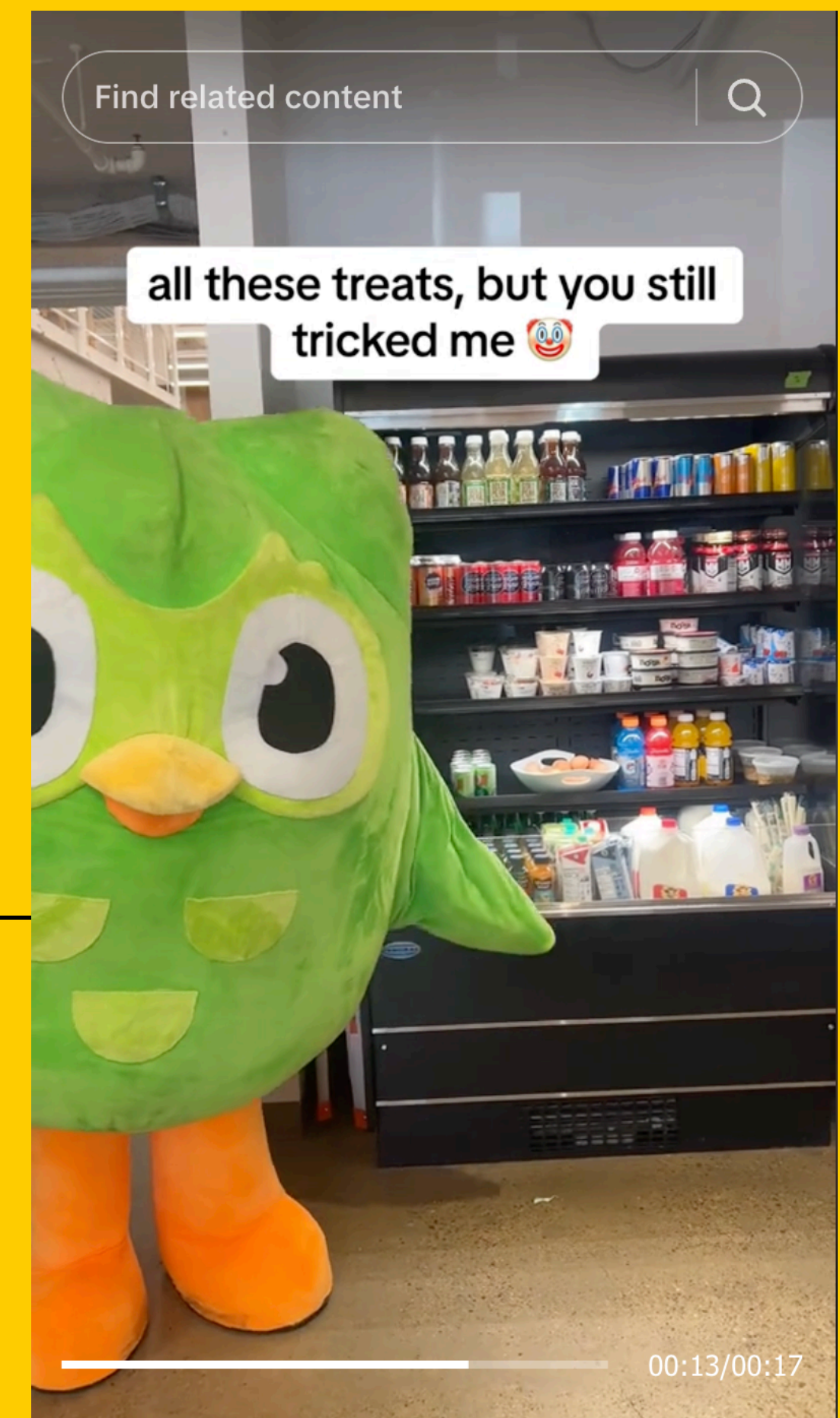
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AUTHENTICITY REBORN: EMBRACING VULNERABILITY

Marketers and brands love the word authenticity, so much so that it's almost lost its meaning. In the Creative Renaissance, authenticity gets a second chance and levels up to incorporate vulnerability. Brands are baring their souls, digging into themselves to discover what they truly care about and what they want to be - and are communicating those values to the world.

"I feel like I'm almost allergic to the word authenticity now, because everyone is using it," says Conrad, "but I do think the creative renaissance on TikTok comes from a place of vulnerability." When brands are vulnerable, authentic, they can truly connect. The Duolingo TikTok account is a great example of this. The social media manager running it has free reign to post as she pleases; scary for the brand, rewarding for the audience. "TikTok is a way to show the human side of your brand," says Naidu. "This is a space where a community can go behind the scenes and get to know you more intimately." So don't be afraid to embrace that - consumers are into it.

"Brands seek audiences," says Conrad, "but what are they going to do that's going to make audiences seek them out?"



BRINGING NEW STORYTELLERS INTO THE LIGHT



Even in this age of abundance, people crave quality content - not in terms of polish, but in terms of how it can enrich their lives. While the original Renaissance was exclusive to a select few, in this modern one many forgotten voices also get a bit of the action as people search for content with a bit more depth.

People are craving a certain type of creative curation when it comes to ideas and concepts, but it goes beyond production polish; people are looking for more meaningful types of content.

"To get to the Renaissance, we need new masters in terms of storytelling," says de Silva. "We need new Da Vincis and new Boticellis, who can tell stories and train artisans." But when we get those master storytellers, they won't be limited to the same Western art as the previous Renaissance. "With TikTok, a lot more marginalised groups have their own platform," says de Silva.



Thanks to technology connecting us not only to marginalised cultures, but also to niche subcultures like teapot painters and ASMR mukbangers, there is a much more fluid exchange of ideas. As well as bringing more storytellers to light, that mixture of disparate perspectives and experiences will only continue to spur on more creativity.

CJ de Silva
Executive Creative Director
TBWA\SMMP Juice, Philippines

Case study -

Galing DITO - DITO Telecommunity

TBWA\SMP Juice, Makati City

The Filipino telco sector is dominated by two huge players, with deep pockets and superstar spokespeople. To build up its awareness, challenger brand DITO took a big swing in the opposite direction: it championed emerging, hyperlocal talent from TikTok. **"The platform allows us to connect with diverse individuals and build a community,"** says chief commercial officer Evelyn Jimenez. **"We ensured that we stayed 'on trend' while adding our unique local touch."**

With such a limited budget, this TikTok-first campaign seemed like a big risk to DITO. **"They did away with a lot of the TVCs and put their budget into the Galing DITO execution instead,"** says Paolo Broma, managing director of TBWA\SMP Juice. But the risk paid off; DITO improved overall brand awareness by 38%; spontaneous awareness by 73%; and brand desire by 76%.



Paolo Juarez Broma
Managing Director
TBWA\SMP Juice, Philippines



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"We recognise that being on the platform allows us to connect with people on a deeper level and make meaningful impact," says Jimenez. **"We also believe that TikTok's creative environment encourages brands to step out of their comfort zones and stay relevant to their audience. It offers a unique opportunity to explore creativity and engage with users in innovative ways."**



Evelyn Jimenez
Chief Commercial Officer
DITO Telecommunity

Chapter Summary

In the new Creative Renaissance, connection is pivotal. Brands can create an abundance of content, but if it doesn't inspire a reaction then it won't make a difference. A shortcut to this is vulnerability. Consumers don't need perfection, they prefer a ragged-edged work in progress that they can build on and make a connection through.

"TikTok is prime for brands to plant a stake in the ground and create content that users care about and will connect with," says Conrad. "Similarly to the birth of TV, books and music - they're designed to share, entertain and inform the public, without losing the raw vulnerability required to build community."

Whether it's by championing new creatives or building characters of their own, brands need to entice audiences with something more exciting, or interactive; an experience beyond a standard ad.



Tessa Conrad
Head of Innovation
TBWA\ Asia

FINAL THOUGHTS

Technology is your friend: As budgets tighten, CMOs often pull back on what's perceived as a creative risk, but that's a mistake. Instead of cutting down on creative ideation, streamline your other processes (TikTok's Recut, Remix, Reimagine framework can help you with that).

Grab attention with a difference: Creative impact isn't only possible through big expensive TV executions, brands should continue to work with people who understand the brand power of vertical video.

Build a fandom: Connect with subcultures through creators or with your own branded personas; niche worlds have global impact. Be vulnerable; share your unfinished work, let people play with it, get weird - you'll find an incredibly engaged audience when you do.



APPRE- NDIX: EXPERT INTER- VIEWS



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