



TikTok marketing for buffet restaurants

Iris Lin

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor's Thesis

Product-based thesis

2022

Abstract

Author(s) Iris Lin
Degree Bachelor of Business Administration
Report/ Thesis Title TikTok marketing for restaurant business
Number of pages and appendix pages 63 + 12
<p>Not only have people's lives changed dramatically as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, but many industries, particularly the tourism and catering industries, have suffered significant setbacks. However, compared to many other businesses hit by the pandemic, the technology industry has performed better, with many tech firms even benefiting from the situation. Because of social distancing and changes in online user behavior, social media platforms offering video services have seen a significant increase in user favourability. The most high-profile from a marketer's point of view is the rapidly growing short-form video sharing app, TikTok.</p> <p>This is a commissioned product-based bachelor thesis aimed to find suitable TikTok marketing approach for the commissioning company, Haru sushi restaurant to connect with their audience and increase brand awareness. The final product of this work is a TikTok marketing guide for Haru restaurant, which includes information gathered in the theoretical framework and insights gleaned from interviews with an early adopter of restaurant TikTok marketing.</p> <p>The objective of this thesis was to figure out TikTok marketing opportunities for small restaurant businesses to grow their online presence and become more successful in the highly competitive catering industry. The empirical part of this thesis was conducted through email and mobile interviews to understand the current social media marketing situation and the needs of the commissioning company. The theoretical framework for this thesis draws from a variety of online sources about TikTok as a social media channel, video marketing, content marketing, Gen Z and TikTok trends. The framework also includes methods to effectively plan marketing in the restaurant industry.</p> <p>The thesis results suggested that TikTok is a well-suited marketing platform for restaurants, as the business can connect with the audience by providing entertaining, educational video content, and transparency regarding their products and brands. Organic content marketing is considered the most suitable and sustainable option for small restaurant businesses to implement on TikTok. In addition, establishing a presence on TikTok is effective in reaching out to Gen Z audiences, who are becoming significant in the consumer landscape due to their influence and spending power.</p>
Keywords TikTok, social media, organic marketing, restaurant industry

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1 Introduction

In today's digital age, an increasing number of people are shifting their focus from offline to online, making the online presence of a business more important than ever. Otherwise, businesses will be missing out on most opportunities to connect with their customers. The integral role of social media marketing has been recognized in every business for decades, and companies must stay ahead in the social media marketing landscape and new marketing trends to effectively connect with today's customers and stay competitive. In addition to those well-adopted social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, many businesses are already participated and explored the platforms that are favourable to younger audiences. The recent social media dark horse is no doubt to be TikTok, an emerging video-focused social networking service founded in 2016, which has exploded in popularity during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic as people spend more time at home looking for immediate sensory stimulation and connecting with the outside world. As a result, the massive growth in TikTok's user base and its popularity globally opened up new opportunities for businesses.

Moreover, in the current saturated social media environment, the capability of grabbing people's attention with static pictures or texts has been greatly weakened. Marketers should provide people with more in-depth sensory stimulation, such as videos, where dynamic pictures combined with stimulating sound effects or music, in order to grab the audience's attention more effectively. People's shortened attention spans and desire for instant entertainment have made short-form videos a new trend, because they are easy to consume and engaging. Also given the fact that the majority of TikTok's users are made up of Gen Z and Millennials (Lagman 05 July 2021), who are highly influential to future trends and have considerable purchasing power. It is crucial for businesses to understand the potential of TikTok and know how to engage with these audiences on the platform, in order to remain competitive and stand out in the market.

1.1 Objectives and limits of the work

This is a product-based thesis commissioned by Haru buffet restaurant, the final product will be a TikTok marketing guide for Haru restaurant. The commissioning party has very limited knowledge of the TikTok platform, and they are hoping to learn more about its possibilities for their restaurant business. The thesis is therefore made to provide guidance to support the commissioning company in planning their TikTok marketing. The goal for the final product is that it can help the commissioning party (and also other restaurants with similar needs) to have a more in-depth understanding of the platform, and it could help them to plan and develop upon a suitable TikTok marketing strategy in the future.

Since the restaurant industry was definitely one of the hardest hit industries due to the corona pandemic. The main reason for developing this thesis is to provide useful insights for small restaurants with a solid foundation upon which to establish their presence on a platform full of opportunities. The thesis aims to understand how restaurants can use the social service platform TikTok to become more successful in their niche, by taking a deep dive into the platform's user behaviors, algorithm, favorable content types and trends. The work is limited in the perspective of TikTok marketing approaches for the small restaurant industry. Other social media channels are not the main focus, but they may appear as references in this work. The thesis includes numerous figures to visualize the examples and findings.

1.2 Key concepts

This subsection presents key concepts essential to TikTok marketing, in order to make it more readable for readers who are unfamiliar with the topic of this thesis.

Call-to-action (also known as CTA) is a short sentence with compelling words used in marketing to encourage the audience to take a specific action. (Seobilitywiki s.a.)

Captions in a video refer the spoken content in text form. Adding captions to videos can make the content more accessible in any situation, because they are intended for audiences who are unable to hear the audio, whether due to hearing disability or simply not being able to play the sound. Additionally, captions are used to complement the relevant messages in video content. (TRINT 2021.)

Organic marketing is a long-term marketing strategy aiming to attract the audience naturally (organically) with non-paid methods, such as distributing relevant and useful content according to the audience's interest. By implementing this strategy, businesses are able to build brand awareness and connect with the audience in a sustainable way. (Oladipo s.a.)

Tone of voice is the communication style adopted by a company as a means of expressing its brand image and resonating with relevant audiences. (Pulkka s.a.)

Voiceover are spoken words of people not shown in the video, which are used to describe the narrative and add meaning to certain scenes. (Cambridge Dictionary s.a.)

2 TikTok as a social media platform

TikTok is a social app developed in 2016 by the Chinese technology company ByteDance. Today it is “the leading destination for short-form mobile video” with the aim of empowering creativity and bringing joy. (TikTok 2022.) The app allows users to create, discover and share short videos on their phones across the TikTok community as well to other social networks like Instagram and Facebook. The video service enables users to effortlessly make short-form videos in numerous fun ways. For instance, users can edit videos by altering the speed, adding filters and quirky effects, and utilizing massive music tracks and sounds that are copyrighted for their videos. (McLachlan 6 April 2022.)

TikTok is relatively young among social media apps, which was launched in 2016. But it is one of the most popular and fastest-growing social media platforms in the world. The app is available in over 150 markets and 75 languages (ByteDance 11 July 2019). According to Sensor Tower's most recent app data report, TikTok reached the milestone of 3.5 billion all-time downloads worldwide in 2022, and it was the most downloaded app in the first quarter of 2022 with more than 175 million downloads. (Sensor Tower 2022.) Meanwhile, according to Statista data from 2022, TikTok ranked as the sixth most used social media platform in the world, with 1 billion monthly active users (figure 1). Within just a few years of its launch, TikTok has appeared as a significant rival to social media giants such as YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook.

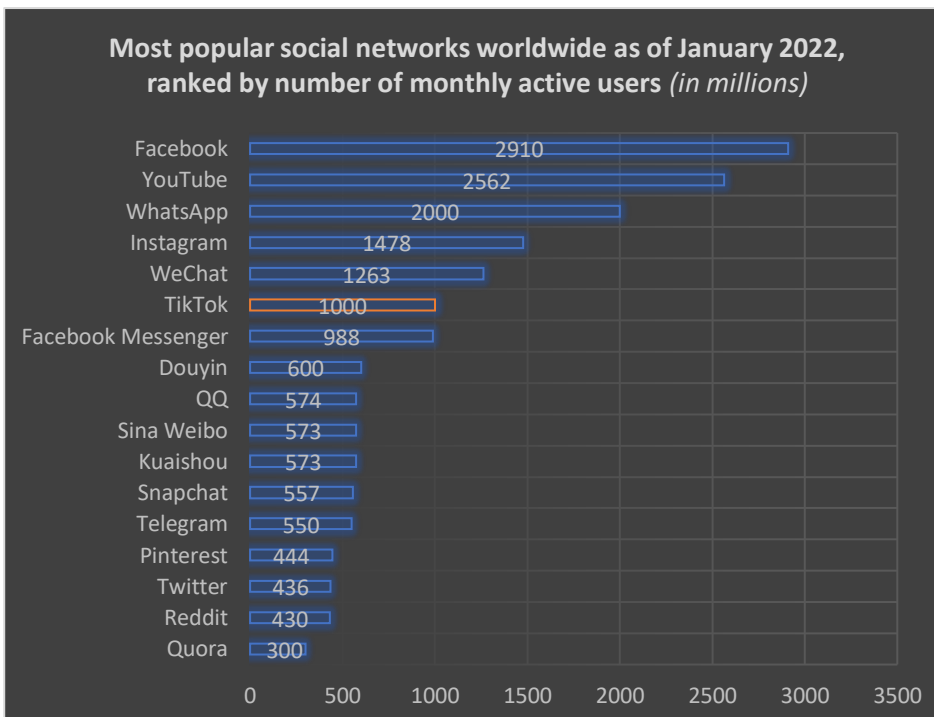


Figure 1. Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2022, ranked by number of monthly active users (in millions) (Statista 2022)

TikTok has proven to be particularly successful among younger audiences, with female users accounted for a larger percentage. According to data presented by Statista, as of January 2022, TikTok's global audience was composed of 42.6 % of female users aged between 18-34 years old, while males in the same age group accounted for approximately 31.5 % of the platform's user base (figure 2). Correspondingly, Wallaroo Media statistics indicate that 60 % of TikTok users are Gen Zers (Doyle 21 April 2022), who were born between 1997 and 2012, and their age range is 10-25 years old in 2022 (Warren 29 August 2022).

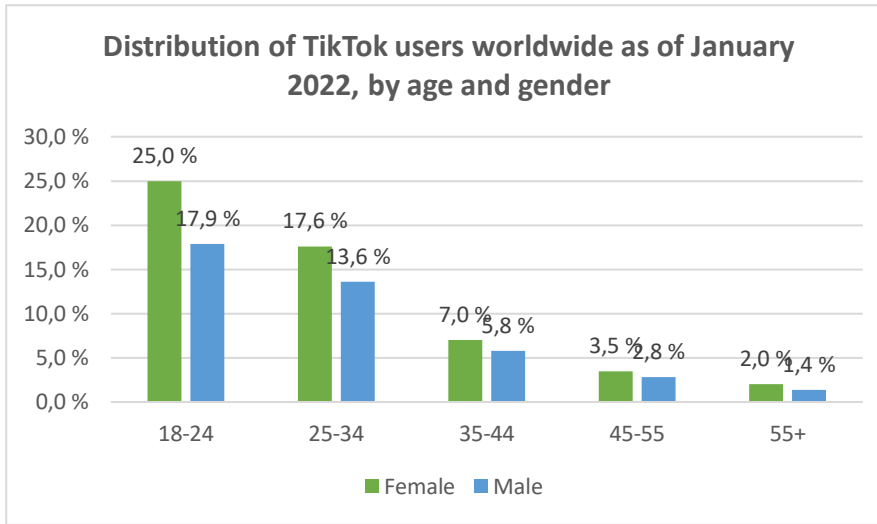


Figure 2. Distribution of TikTok users worldwide, by age and gender (Statista 2022)

Globally, 90 % of users access TikTok on a daily basis and spent an average time of 52 minutes a day on the app. (Dean 05 January 2022). In addition, according to the 2022 Socialinsider's social media benchmarks report, TikTok is currently the most engaging social media platform with an average engagement rate of 5.96 %. As for comparison, Facebook's average engagement rate of 0.13 % was recorded in 2021, and Twitter reached only 0.05 % of engagement rate, while Instagram scored an average engagement rate of 0.83 % (figure 3). With the shifts in users' attention to newer social media platform like TikTok, engagement on other social networks naturally declines. (Cucu 24 February 2022.)

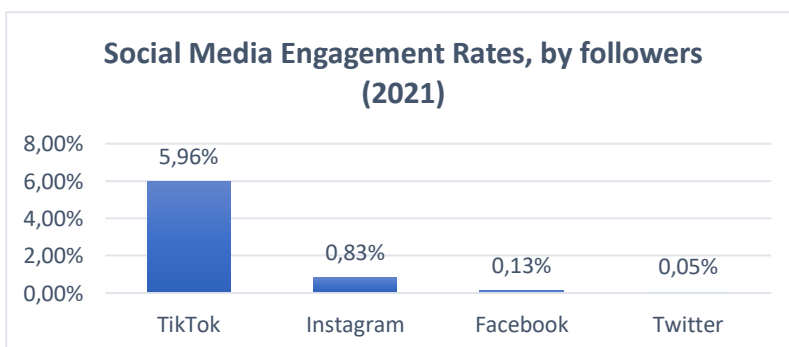


Figure 3. Social Media Engagement Rates, by followers (2021) (Socialinsider 2022)

All these data indicate that TikTok has become a social media platform that businesses can no longer ignore. With its explosive popularity and growing user base globally, TikTok would also be an excellent platform for businesses that are looking to reach international audiences. Businesses should utilize TikTok to grow their online visibility or even use it as a complementary social media marketing platform to serve well-established platforms like Instagram and Facebook.

2.1 TikTok interface

As figure 4 shows that the user interface of TikTok's homepage is very straightforward and concise, making it extremely easy for any user to navigate and master the app. Users can only interact with content with the most basic actions of Like, Comment, Save and Share, which reduces distracting elements and improves user attention and engagement with content.

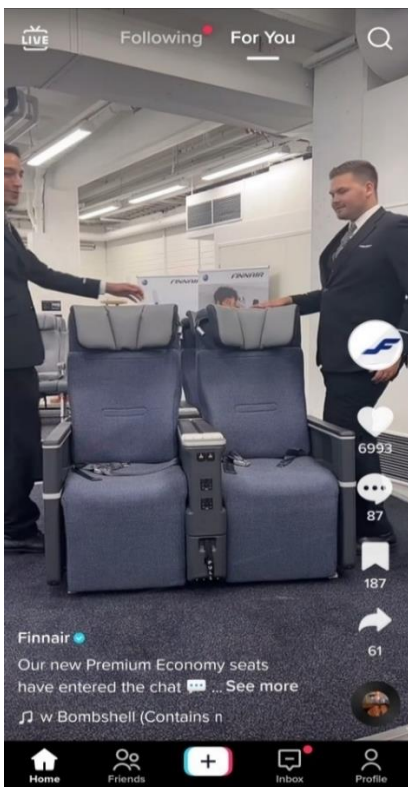


Figure 4. Screenshot of TikTok' homepage (TikTok 2022)

TikTok's homepage consists of four main feeds: LIVE, Following, For You, and Discover.

LIVE is a real-time feature that allows users to interact with content creators by commenting and sending virtual gifts (bought with money) during a live streaming (figure 5). TikTok only allows users aged 16 and above to start a live streaming, and gifts can be sent and received by users aged 18 and over. (TikTok 2022.)

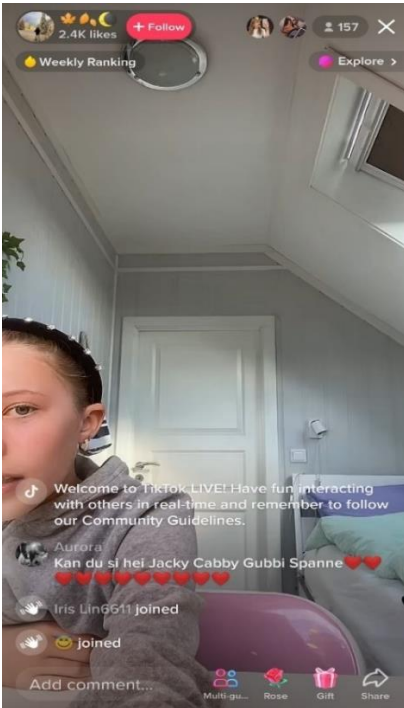



Figure 5. Screenshot of TikTok LIVE (TikTok 2022)

Following is one of the landing pages where TikTok users can see the newest videos published by their followed accounts.

For You is the default landing page when users launch the app, where videos automatically play with sound-on. The TikTok algorithm customizes this landing page with unique content based on each individual's interests and in-app interactions.

Discover is a search bar that presents in a magnifier icon  from which users can search for specific content and explore a variety of trending hashtags and soundtracks (figure 6). For content creators and businesses, this feed should be especially highlighted as it can help with finding content inspirations and keeping up with the latest trends.

Discover		
Users	Sounds	Hashtags
#	letsplay	5.2B views
#	eurovision2022	2.8B views
#	europeday	67.4M views
#	golf	33.3B views
#	grwm	42.4B views
#	thegreatmoosemigration	12.4M views
#	OOTD	72.1B views

Figure 6. Screenshot of TikTok's Discover feed (TikTok 2022)

Besides from the homepage, the TikTok interface also include the following parts:

- **Friends** is a tab where users can connect with their friends and see their in-app activities.
- **Plus** button in the middle of the app is where users can record or edit their videos. Figure 7 shows the video recording interface.

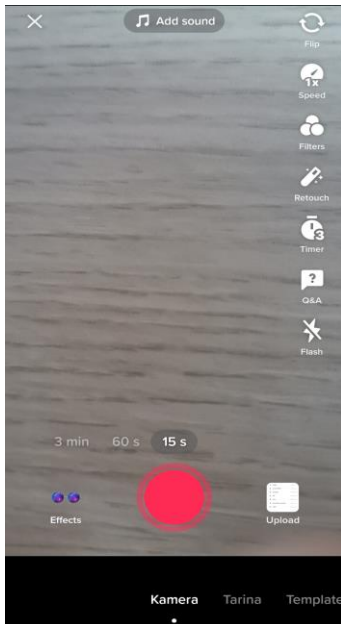


Figure 7. Screenshot of the TikTok recording page (TikTok 2022)

- **Inbox** is the page where it shows all the in-app activities and notifications such as received messages, video likes, comments from other users, and new followers etc.
- **Profile** is the page where users can check their account summary (e.g. total count of followers and received likes) and edit privacy settings. A Business or Creator account can also access the Analytics tool in this page.

2.2 TikTok content types

TikTok focuses on short-form video content that are often presented in fun, interactive and approachable ways, ranging from 15 seconds to 3 minutes in length (Perez 1 July 2021). However, most of the videos in TikTok are less than a minute in duration, which could be attributed to the users' short attention spans as well as their need for fast entertainment. Content genre in TikTok used to focus on entertainment and comedy, but it has gradually evolved into a mature video service platform with content for all types of viewers and for every occasion; music, dance, lip-syncing, microblogs, fitness, beauty, cooking etc. In other words, regardless of the field, those who are able to adapt their content to the short-form video model can find a matching consumer group. Although the majority of content at the moment still seems to be entertainment-oriented (figure 8), there has also been an increase in educational and business-oriented content. (Midson-Short 24 May 2022.)

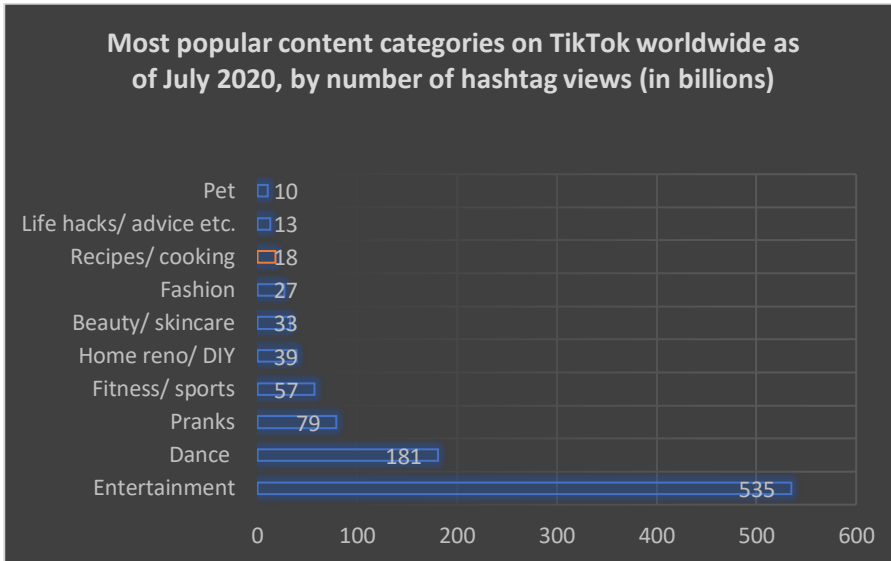


Figure 8. Most popular content categories on TikTok worldwide as of July 2020, by number of hashtag views (in billions) (Statista 2020)

In addition to general short video content, TikTok also has two special content formats: **Stitch** and **Duet**. A stitch is a video that incorporates clips from another user's video into the one being created by the user. This content format allows user to utilize a part of other's video as a part of their own video to turn it into something entirely different. And a Duet (figure 9) is made up of two videos in a split-screen that play at the same time, where left-side screen shows the user-generated duet video, and right-side screen plays the original video. This is a format that encourages content co-creation. (TikTok Help Center 2022)



Figure 9. Screenshot of a duet on @Pepsiglobal account (TikTok 2022)

3 TikTok in Finland

In Finland, the popularity of TikTok began to rise in 2018. According to TikTok's own estimation, as of November 2021 Finland has approximately 1.2 million monthly active users ranging in age from 13 to 55, and nearly half of the users are between the ages of 18-24 (figure 10). The app's users are made up of 56 % of female and 44 % of male. (Yliluoma 20 September 2021).

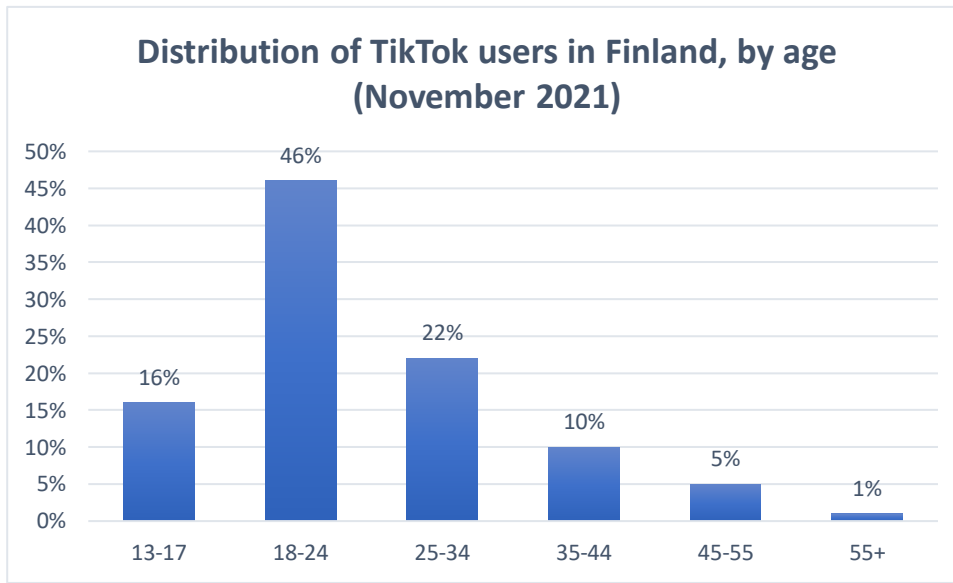


Figure 10. Distribution of TikTok users in Finland, by age (November 2021) (Louhos Digital Oy 2022).

Furthermore, TikTok has a high usage frequency in Finland. As of March 2022, TikTok ranked as the fifth most used social media app among Finnish youth (aged between 13-29), after WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat (MarkkinointiMaestro 2022). More specifically, Finnish users spend an average time of one hour on TikTok per day, of which 45 minutes spent on the For You page (Purmonen 20 August 2021).

In conclusion, TikTok's user demographics and usage frequency in Finland are similar to other countries, with the app being highly engaged and it is particularly good at reaching Gen Z (those born after 1997) users.

4 TikTok marketing methods

As defined by the Cambridge Business English Dictionary, marketing involves identifying what customers want, developing products and services around that information in order to make profits effectively. (Cambridge Dictionary s.a). In today's digital era, the most popular marketing method is social media marketing, which is the process of creating content for social media platforms to promote a brand, generate interest towards products or services, build a community, and drive traffic to business. And the content refers to the message used by a company to communicate online without selling. (Baker 28 June 2022.)

TikTok marketing falls within the scope of social media marketing, where creating and distributing short video content is best suited for the purpose of showcasing a company's personality and building a community. TikTok is an ideal social platform for all brands and businesses who sell tangible products. And due to the fast-paced nature of the platform, it is best suited for brands with comparable characteristics. Nevertheless, TikTok is also a good fit for businesses that provide intangible services, such as restaurant. Because the distinctiveness and vitality of a brand or company is more important than whether the service or product is intangible. TikTok provides businesses an excellent opportunity to engage especially with audiences aged 18 to 24, as this is the largest user demographic who made up the platform's user base. However, older demographics are constantly flocking to TikTok, so businesses with an older target audience should also consider TikTok as one of the marketing channels. The advantage of TikTok marketing is unquestionably brand awareness, a company can explode in popularity with well-crafted content. (Sampo Consulting 2021.)

In light of the findings in a 2022 GlobalWebIndex survey that most people use TikTok for entertainment consumption and looking for inspiration (Cyca 9 March 2022), so the best way to promote a company on TikTok would be provide value and share videos that interest the audience and make them curious enough to further check out on the business. Meanwhile, companies should bear in mind when marketing on TikTok (or any other social media) that people don't want to be advertised to any product or service, instead they want to be informed with interesting facts and inspired by entertaining content. Indeed, most of the viral videos on TikTok revolve around humour and authenticity (Propelrr 2021).

Compared to other matured social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, TikTok marketing is still in its infancy. But different marketing methods on TikTok can be divided into three main categories as follows:

- Organic content

- Influencer collaboration
- TikTok paid advertising

(Mika s.a.)

4.1 Organic content marketing

The term content marketing refers to the business practice of creating meaningful and useful content that adds value to consumers, as a means of promoting a company, brand, product or service in a direct or indirect way. Promotional content on the other hand, takes a back seat to bringing value to the online conversation happening across the social networks. (Gunelius 2011, chapter 1.) As concluded by Standberry (14 June 2022), "Content marketing in its purest form is nothing but the production and online distribution of content that is educational and informative in nature."

In TikTok, organic content marketing refers a non-paid marketing strategy of creating and sharing short-form video content that appeals to a business' target audiences. This is a strategy that gradually drives traffic to the business over time, rather than relying on paid methods to distribute content to a specific audience. (Riserbato 14 September 2021.) However, organic marketing doesn't mean that it is totally free. This marketing strategy still requires the investment of time and resources into content planning, creation, optimization and management.

The organic reach of TikTok is unparalleled compared to other social media platforms, and this platform is dominated by Gen Z and younger millennials. To get the most out of content, it is vital for businesses to understand how the platform's algorithm works and also learn about the preferences of their audience. Because people only want to see content that are relevant to them among the vast of content available. The simplest way to learn about the audience on TikTok is by locating popular videos and trends on the app's Discover tab as well as the For You page. Companies could then create content based on these trends, in order to engage with their audiences and demonstrate to them that the company is active and paying attention on their interests. (Propelrr 2021.)

4.2 Influencer marketing

An influencer is someone whose opinions have influence over other people, who might not necessarily be an expert himself/ herself, but he/she is always well-connected and highly influential in their fields (Gail Z 2017, chapter 2). And influencer marketing is the business practice of engaging influencers online to share brand messaging with their audiences in the form of sponsored content, with the aim of growing brand awareness and amplifying purchase intent. Influencer marketing can also help brands to find a fresh perspective. Giving the storytelling to influencers will allow other consumers to perceive a brand through their eyes and add a new personality into the brand.

(Sammis & al. 2015, chapter 1.) A powerful characteristic of influencer marketing is its sense of authenticity. Rather than presenting a cold one-way advertisement, an influencer's message appears as a recommendation from a friend, which builds trust with the target audience and encourages them to act accordingly.

As Geysler (21 April 2022) states, "Influencer marketing at its heart is like storytelling". It is important for companies partnering with influencers to give them enough freedom to tell stories in a way that keeps them authentic to their followers. It would be unwise to give influencers a ready-made script, because the influencers' followers will immediately notice if the video promoting a company's products is different from the influencer's usual video style, and they are likely to respond adversely. (Geysler 21 April 2022.)

TikTok is the creative hub for influencer marketing, and the power of influencer marketing is especially evident in TikTok. According to Upfluence research, influencers on TikTok have an average engagement rate of 17.96 %, compared with 3.86 % on Instagram and 1.63 % on YouTube. (Keyhole 2022.) Companies that struggle to come up with their creative for TikTok, collaborating with well-established influencers and creators would be an easy option to gain visibility and build awareness for their brands on the platform. Since influencers are aware of the latest trends, and they know what kind of content can drive their followers' engagement. (Geysler 21 April 2022.)

TikTok Creator Marketplace is the platform, where companies can find the most relevant creators and influencers to collaborate on campaigns or projects on TikTok (TikTok 2022). But this platform's function is not currently available in the Finnish market, so companies in Finland have to do some research and contact potential influencers by themselves if they want to utilize influencer marketing.

The following are **3R factors** that companies need to consider when choosing the right influencer:

1. **Relevance** refers to the state in which an influencer shares content relevant to a business and industry, with an audience aligned with the company's target demographics.
2. **Reach** is the number of people a company could potentially reach through the influencer's follower base.
3. **Resonance** is the quality of engagement the influencer can create with an audience relevant to the brand.

(Newberry 10 August 2021.)

4.3 Paid Advertising in TikTok

Marketing involves identifying customer needs and finding the best way to meet them, while advertising is a mean to support marketing objectives with paid methods. In other words, advertising is a

part of marketing (AMA 2022). In today's competitive marketing landscape, investing in paid advertising is an efficient way for businesses to get the desired marketing impact (such as awareness, sales and engagement) in a short time.

In TikTok, there are five paid options available for businesses to reach their target audience: In-Feed Ads, TopView, Brand Takeover, Branded Hashtag Challenge, and Branded Effects (figure 11). But currently only the first two ad formats mentioned are available on the Finnish market, because the TikTok advertising tools and models are still in the development phase (Fam Agency Oy s.a). However, with Millennials and Gen Z being primary users, businesses and brands can engage with a large amount of content-hungry and young demographics by investing in "TikTok language" speaking ads, as these ads can seamlessly blend in with organic user-generated content. (Johnstone s.a).

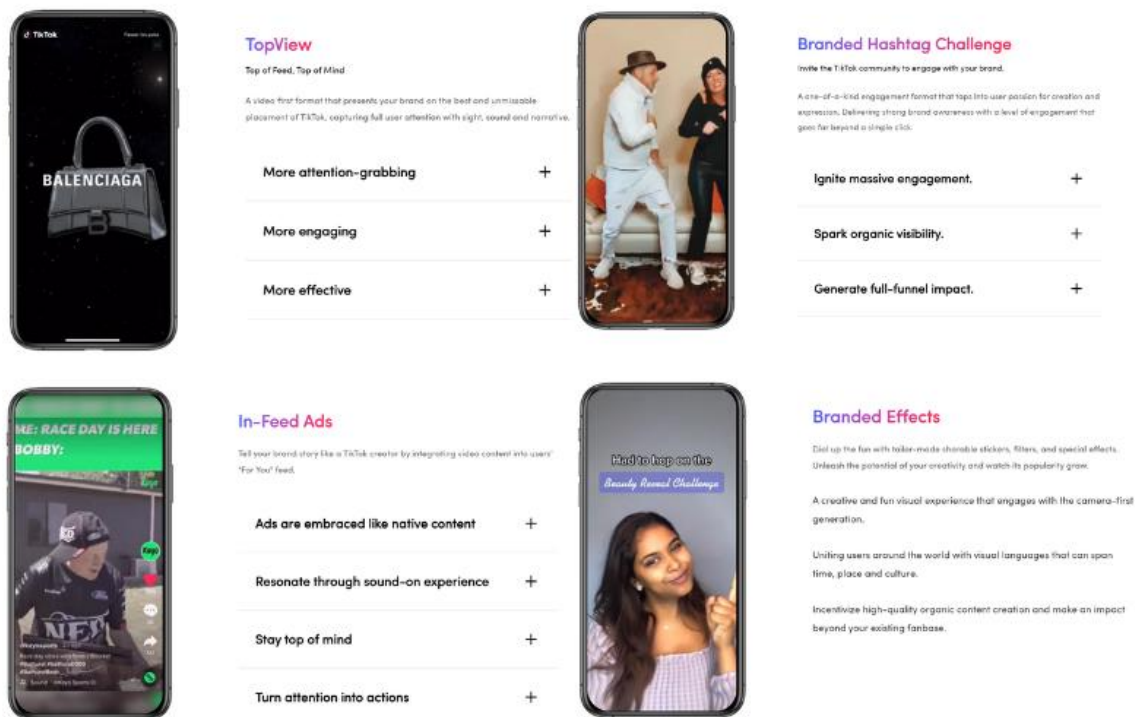


Figure 11. Example of TikTok ad formats (TikTok for Business 2022)

In-Feed Ad is a standard ad format that auto-plays with sound-on in between native user-generated videos as people scroll through the For You feed. As these ads have the same user interface as organic videos, they appear and function just like native videos in the For You feed. Users can interact with these ads by liking, commenting, or sharing them. The maximum length for this ad format can be up to 60 seconds long, which gives the chance for storytelling. However, TikTok recommends keeping video length in between 9-15 seconds for the best result. A CTA button can be

featured in the ad driving traffic towards an internal or external landing page, which will appear after showing the ad for 9 seconds. One thing to note is that in-Feed ads can be scrolled away pretty fast just like any other videos on the For You feed, if they cannot catch audience attention within the first seconds. (Lerer 14 September 2021.)

Top-view Ad is a video-first format that is effective in grabbing users' attention, because it makes the ad video the first post users see on their For You feed. The first 3 seconds of the ad are played in full-screen, followed by a smooth transition to the standard ad layout with copytext and a CTA button to guide the viewer to the next step. The length of top-view ads can also be up to 60 seconds, which offers an immersive viewing experience. (Yliluoma 20 September 2021.)

Brand Takeover Ads are available in both dynamic and static format, either as 3-second still images, GIFs, or videos up to 5-second in length. It appears right upon a target user opens the app and takes over the screen for a few seconds, then turns into a regular ad video with a clickable link that directs users to a landing page within the app. (Lerer 14 September 2021.)

Brand Takeover is an optimum advertising option for delivering massive awareness and driving conversion, since the message is placed right in front of the target audience. It also guarantees high reach and great performance due to the entire ad screen being clickable, and less distraction between the ad and the desired destination (Johnstone s.a).

Branded Hashtag Ad (or branded challenge) is an engaging format that encourages users to co-create content using their own creativity and contribute to an online movement with a hashtag created by businesses. This ad is divided into three placements within the app: the first being an In-Feed video about the challenge, the second is a featured banner of the challenge on the Discover page, and the third is the challenge's landing page, which displays a collection of videos submitted for the challenge from around the world. (Johnstone s.a).

Branded Hashtag is effective for brands to boost awareness, drive engagement, and build a bigger follower base. In addition, this ad format achieves a deeper connection with the audience because it allows them to become active participants instead of passive viewers. (TikTok For Business 2022.)

Branded Effects Ad is another engaging ad format that allows companies to create their unique shareable visual experiences, such as filters, stickers, and special effects for users to use for their videos on the app. This ad type allows users to interact with a brand in a fun way, and it is ideal for targeting a camera-first audience. To make the most out of the ad, brands can integrate them into a Branded Hashtag Challenge for a more immersive ad experience, or partner with some influencers to promote these effects. (Lerer 14 September 2021.)

To implement and manage ads, businesses can utilize two advertising tools, TikTok Ads Manager and TikTok Business Center. Ads Manager is used to create campaigns, build target audience profiles, design advertising content and so on. And the Business Center acts as the commander for Ads Manager, which is a functional dashboard for managing and creating multiple resources such as business accounts and assets, permissions including admin, analytics, and operator access. As shown in figures 12 and 13, these tools share a very similar interface to Facebook Ad Manager and Facebook Business Manager, making them very easy to navigate for those who are already familiar with Facebook and Instagram advertising. (Yliluoma 20 September 2021)

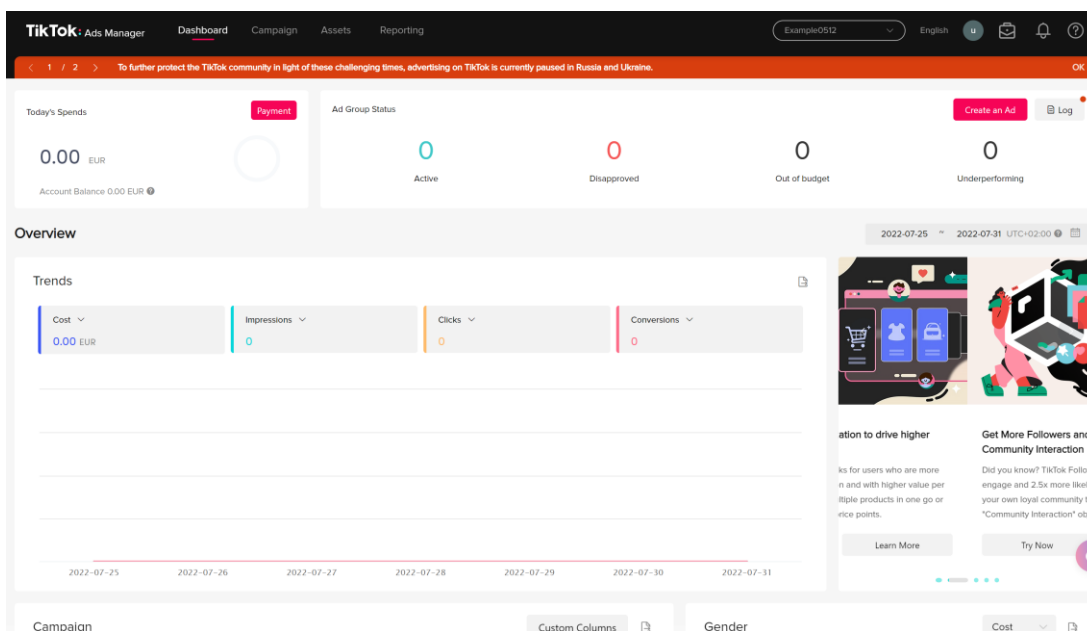


Figure 12. Screenshot of the TikTok Ads Manager interface (TikTok Ads Manager 2022)

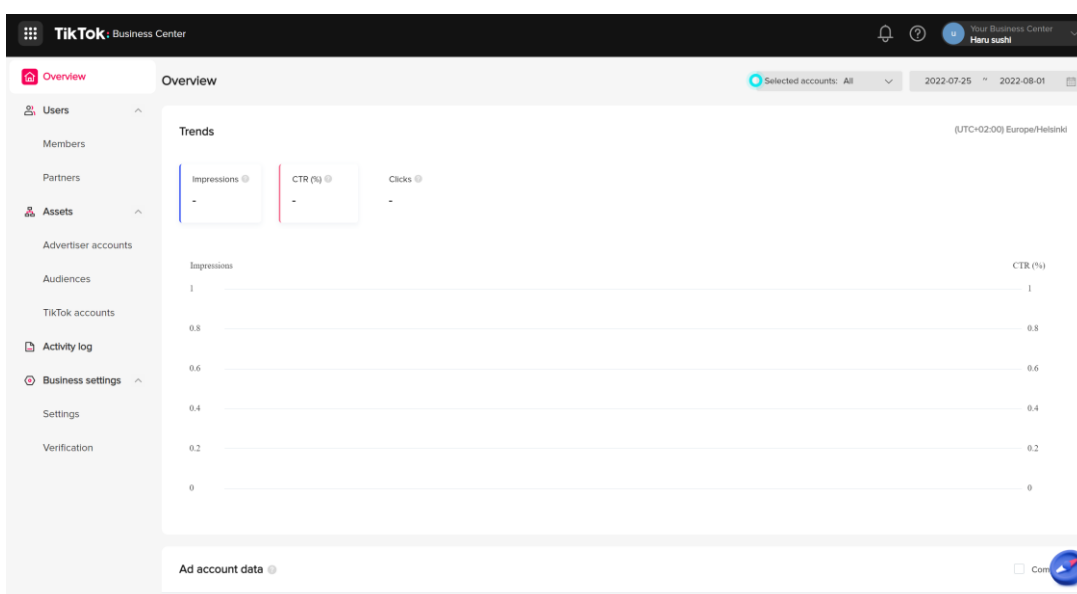


Figure 13. Screenshot of the TikTok Business Center interface (TikTok Business Center 2022)

5 The challenges in TikTok marketing

TikTok marketing mainly poses time and financial challenges for businesses. First, due to TikTok's video-centric nature, the static image content format is unable to connect with users, which in a sense limits the content output and requires higher content production costs. In addition, producing short videos is no easier than producing longer ones. Even a 15-second video can be challenging for a small business or creator to produce without assistance from a knowledgeable team. Indeed, TikTok creators have to devote significant efforts to content production in order to engage their audiences. Tiffany Jillian (@fromtiffanystable), a TikTok influencer who produces recipe videos on the platform reveals that "Shooting videos entails a lot of behind-the-scenes preparations. It is not just about shooting a video and publishing it; it's about telling a story through a visual medium." She also adds that "creating high-quality video that is engaging and worth watching over and over again is a time-consuming process that will always involve costs, which is a challenge that some professional creators are still facing". (Lagman 05 July 2021.)

Fortunately, user behavior on the platform suggests that some people don't mind watching grassroots or even low-value videos if the content is interesting enough. Therefore, by simply shooting videos with a smartphone and take advantage of TikTok's in-app features, such as tons of copyrighted music and audios and AR tools is enough to create videos for marketing on TikTok. Blending genuine wit with a subtle brand reference can generate a massive amount of awareness at little or no cost, and this is accomplished by balancing general humorous content with brand promotion. (Lagman 05 July 2021.)

As for paid advertising, there is also a financial challenge for small businesses. TikTok differs from many other social media platforms that allow flexible investment in paid methods. According to Yliluoma from a Finnish digital marketing agency, TikTok ads start at a daily minimum budget of 20 euros, which makes a monthly advertising budget of 600 euros. In comparison, Facebook and Instagram ads start at just one euro per day. However, despite its high advertising cost, TikTok paid ads can effectively reach a young generation that other platforms are struggling to retain. And it is possible to gain a decent amount of visibility for content at an appropriate price, since there isn't much competition for paid ads in Finland at the moment yet. (Yliluoma 20 September 2021.)

6 Planning TikTok restaurant marketing

This chapter includes fundamental theories and knowledge related to the process of planning TikTok marketing from scratch, which will be utilized to support the creation of the final product. The chapter starts with methods of setting marketing objectives and measuring outcomes, then moves on to the platform's algorithm and trends affecting content performance and discoverability. After that, efficient techniques for video content planning and ways to grab the audience's attention in today's marketing landscape will be covered. The last subchapters focus on a set of Gen Z trends and restaurant marketing ideas.

6.1 Applying the SMART framework to set goals

A social media goal is a statement set by a business concerning what it aims to achieve through a social media marketing strategy. It is vital to define metrics for monitoring achievements and establish clear goals reflecting specific needs that align with broader business objectives for social media marketing. Because it gives a clear direction for everyone in the company or project to monitor progress, hence better focus on achieving desired results collectively. Otherwise, marketing outcomes would be vague, making it difficult to evaluate the functionality and achievement of the current marketing approach. (Sides 24 June 2022.)

Figure 14 shows a definition of the widely recognized SMART framework for identifying marketing objectives that support long-term goals. The framework can be used to assess goals in terms of their suitability for driving different strategies or improving business processes. It also helps businesses with identifying a more structured approach to streamline marketing efforts. (Chaffey 16 March 2019.)

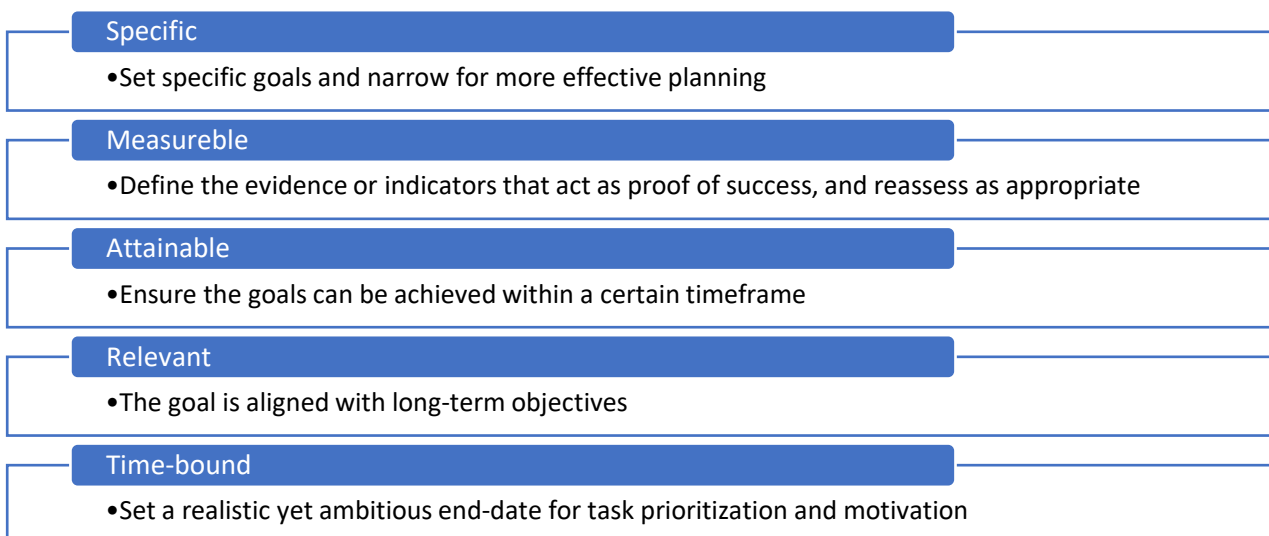


Figure 14. SMART framework for setting goals (Indeed 2019)

The first step in the SMART framework is to define **specific** goals and expectations. If the definition is too broad or vague, for example “make a profit”, it can lead to a lot of misunderstandings as everyone interprets it in their own way, especially when collaborating with an external team. (Indeed 2022.)

The next step is to set **measurable** metrics for goals, because they can help to keep every marketing team member on track with the goals, while serving as standards for assessing success and progress towards goals. (Indeed 2022.)

Following that is to review the long-term business goals and make sure that they are **attainable**. These goals should be aspiring yet realistic, and they can be adapted to the company's actual resources and capabilities by taking into account internal and external constraints. (Indeed 2022.)

Then, it is vital to ensure that the goals are **relevant** to the business over time, meaning that the short-term goals and metrics should be adjusted as the business grows (Indeed 2022).

The final step in the framework is to make the goals **time-bound** by defining a time frame for achieving them. This means giving the goals a start and end point, or setting a series of the time period in days, months, or quarters. (Indeed 2022.)

6.2 Measuring TikTok marketing

In addition to defining specific goals, it is equally important to measure and analyze the results achieved in social media marketing. This way makes it possible to find out what works to achieve the goal and what needs to be done differently. Identifying and measuring the right metrics enable companies to pinpoint the most effective strategy. For example, having a tons of video likes would be useless if they do not correspond to the goal of brand awareness. Therefore, the ability to correlate the data to broader business objectives is crucial in social media marketing. Companies need to evaluate whether their social media marketing objectives have been achieved by examining appropriate metrics, and determine these metrics in light of the marketing and business objectives. (Shiv & Stephanie 2012, chapter 20.)

To examine and analyze the marketing performance on TikTok, businesses can utilize the in-app Analytics tool. It provides insights such as an account overview, individual post performance, and targeted information about the account followers. The tool can be accessed by switching to a “Creator account” or a “Business account”. Both account types on TikTok are completely free and provide analytics in the same way as a Creator or Business account on Instagram (see figure 15). (Mika s.a.) Additionally, to get more complete picture of TikTok account activities, businesses can

employ some third-party analytics tools such as Google Analytics, Hootsuite, Socialinsider and many other paid and free options.

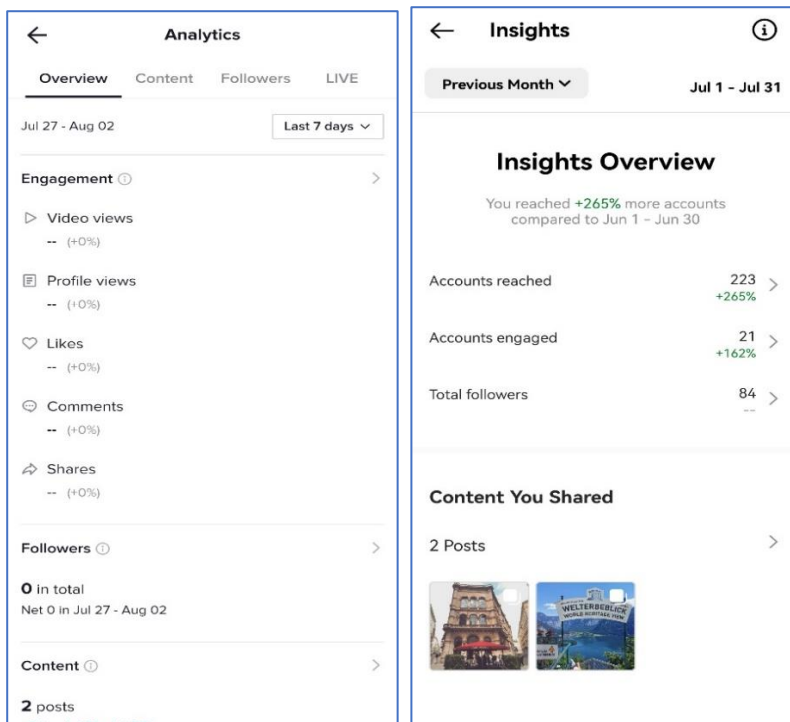


Figure 15. Screenshot of TikTok Analytics (left) and Instagram Insights (right)

The key metrics for tracking TikTok performance are divided into the following sections:

- Overview tab
 - Engagement rate
 - Profile views
 - Follower growth
- Content tab
 - Trending videos
- Followers tab
 - Follower activity
 - Videos your followers watched
 - Sounds your followers listened to
- Other metrics in individual video post analytics
 - Average watch time
 - Watched full video
 - Video views by section
 - Hashtag performance

Engagement rate is one of the most crucial social media metrics for evaluating the appeal of a post, this metric on TikTok indicates the amount of interaction the social content receives in relation to its audience reach. Engagement on TikTok is defined as the sum of views, likes, comments, and shares on a video, as well as profile views. Figure 16 shows the most common method for calculating the TikTok engagement rate, where the total number of likes, comments, and shares received within a certain timeframe is divided by the number of video views, then multiply the result by 100. (Stanciu 19 April 2022.)

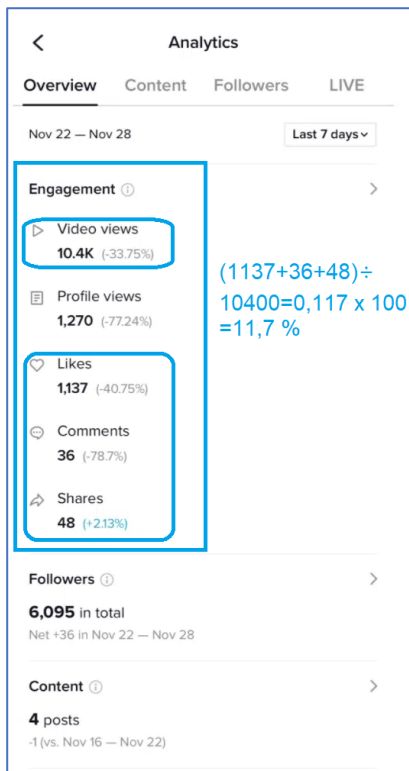


Figure 16. Calculating TikTok engagement rate (modified from original image by Hirose, Hootsuite 2022)

Profile views indicate the number of times a company's profile was visited within the selected time frame. This metric is useful in determining brand interest. It measures the number of people who liked the video enough to check out the company's profile, or people who are curious to see what the brand is doing on TikTok. (Hirose 26 May 2022.)

Follower growth assesses the change in follower numbers in the selected date range. This metric is one of the most important metrics to track, especially if the business goal is to grow brand awareness or establish a community. (Stanciu 19 April 2022.)

Trending videos shows the top nine most watched video of all posted content on an account. Identifying the best TikTok posts can get an insight of what type of content resonates with the

audience, making it easier to create successful content in the future. This metric needs to be monitored on a regular basis, as TikTok only provides insights into top-performing content for the past seven days. (Hirose 26 May 2022.)

Follower activity shows the times and days when a company's followers are most active on TikTok. By tracking this metric, businesses can find out the best times to post content, thereby increasing content reach to the target audience. (Hirose 26 May 2022.)

Videos your followers watched gives companies a sense of what content their followers are most interested in. It can provide companies with content inspiration by monitoring this section regularly, and it's also a good place to look for prospective collaborators. (Hirose 26 May 2022.)

Sounds your followers listened shows the popular soundtracks the company's followers have listened to, and this insight is useful because TikTok trends are often accompanied by audio files. The findings in this section can be used to plan and integrate into upcoming videos to increase their chance of being watched. However, the trends on TikTok change quickly, and companies should prepare for a quick reversal when using these findings as inspiration. (Hirose 26 May 2022.)

Average watch time shows the average time people spend watching the video. This metric tells how successful the content is at keeping the audience's attention. (Hirose 26 May 2022.)

Watched full video shows the number of times the video has been watched in its entirety (Hirose 26 May 2022). This is another metric that helps businesses in determining content resonance with their target audience and measuring content success.

Video views by section reveals the traffic sources of a post, common sources include the For You feed, Following feed, business profile, sounds, searches, and hashtags. This metric can tell effectiveness of featured hashtag and sounds if they are being utilized to boost exposure for a post. (Hirose 26 May 2022.)

Hashtag performance indicates the degree to which a post resonates with the audience by engagement. Hashtags have a critical role in a successful TikTok marketing strategy, as the correct use of hashtags allows content to gain greater exposure and reach the most appropriate audience. Hashtag performance on TikTok can be tracked by searching for the hashtag on the Discover tab, where the total number of views a hashtag has, its related hashtags, and top videos using that hashtag will appear in the results. (Stanciu 19 April 2022.)

6.3 Diving into the TikTok algorithm

Algorithms are secret formulas adopted by social platforms to attract users and garner their attention by distributing the most relevant content to their feeds (Newberry 11 February 2022). So after setting TikTok marketing objectives and knowing how to correlate data with business goals, the next step is to grasp the TikTok algorithm that has a direct impact on content distribution.

The TikTok algorithm is a content recommendation system that analyzes video content and distributes videos based on users' interests on their "For You" feed. The feed also serves as the app's default landing page that is unique and tailored to every individual. In general, most of the contents are suggested to users according to their preferences and interests that are expressed through their in-app interactions, such as watching a video to the end, giving it a like, leaving a comment, or following an account. These are user interaction signals that help the recommendation system in learning the user's preferred content types. Then there are video information signals like sounds, hashtags, captions, effects and trending topics related to the content a user tends to look for on the "Discover" tab. If a user has engaged with content with similar signals before, the user's "For You" feed will appear with more content containing the same video information signals. (Newberry 11 February 2022.)

In addition to user in-app interactions and video information signals, the TikTok algorithm also incorporates "Device and account settings" such as language preferences, country settings, and categories of interest (food, travel, sport etc.) selected as a new user to optimize performance. Local content is given priority on TikTok, which means that users are more likely to see content published by local content creators. However, these settings have less influence on the content recommendation system, because they rely on one-time setting choices rather than active in-app engagements. (Newberry 11 February 2022.)

The TikTok algorithm makes it possible for businesses to abandon the "pay to play" mode, which means even without an established follower base or investing in paid methods, TikTok content has a better chance of reaching users. Compared to Facebook and Instagram, where businesses often have to put their advertising budget behind posts to increase content visibility if their accounts have very limited followers. (Pendrill s.a.)

Understanding the algorithm and getting the content in front of an audience is just the first step, and it doesn't necessarily affect the audience's decision to watch the entire video or even interact with it. Therefore, the following subchapters present the key elements of TikTok trends that can help marketers create interesting content, as well as the ways to locate them.

6.4 Keeping up with TikTok trends

TikTok trends are collections of videos grouped with popular hashtags, songs, or sound effects. New trends keep emerging every day, and they play a huge part in making TikTok one of the most creative and entertaining social media platforms. In order to create content that resonates with the audience on TikTok, it is important to stay on top of the latest trends and feature them into content strategy. By properly capitalizing on TikTok trends, businesses can improve their creative expression, maximize audience reach and engage more effectively with their audiences. (Maina 19 May 2022.)

6.4.1 Hashtags

A hashtag is present in the hash sign # followed by a word, phrase, acronym, number, or emoji. Hashtags have a strong role in the TikTok algorithm, where they are being used for content categorization and distribution. Adding hashtags to a video can help users identify digital content on specific topics of interest. And users can also contribute to trending or relevant conversations by using appropriate hashtags. (McLachlan 21 October 2021.) For example, if a user searches for the hashtag #foodie on TikTok's Discover tab, the recommendation system will display topic-related video content embedded with that hashtag. Likewise, a video uploaded using the hashtag #foodie is more likely to be distributed to people who have previously interacted with videos using that hashtag.

Hashtags are critical in an overall TikTok marketing strategy because they can be used to amplify content discoverability and visibility, increase engagement, keep up with the newest trends and find content inspirations, build a community around the business, and identify existing and potential competitors. With all these benefits, companies should plan and use hashtags strategically, focusing on the most descriptive hashtags to increase the content relevance to their audience. It should also be remembered that while popular TikTok hashtags are getting the highest interest, they naturally face greater competition for attention. Thereby, using only popular hashtags doesn't necessarily help maximize content discoverability. But containing overly specific words in hashtags also limits the likelihood of being discovered due to low search volumes. In summary, a post should ideally use 3-5 hashtags including popular and generic ones (e.g. #foryoupage) as well as a few niche ones (e.g. #cookingtips) to optimize reach. (Zote 3 March 2022.)

Generally, businesses can find relevant hashtag ideas on TikTok's Discover page by searching for product or content keywords. Figure 17 shows an example of a video with hashtag results by searching for #sushi on the Discover page. Also, looking at hashtags incorporated in trending videos on the For You page is another way to identify popular ones. Beyond the aforementioned

methods, businesses could find hashtag ideas by analyzing and referring to the hashtags used by direct or indirect competitors. All in all, building business-related hashtags must ensure that they are relevant to the content and ongoing campaign, easy to remember and self-explanatory, preferably incorporating the brand name or product. (McLachlan 21 October 2021.)



Figure 17. Hashtag inspirations from the Discover page (TikTok 2022)

In addition to in-app hashtag ideas, businesses could also use other online free tools to plan their hashtag strategy. For instance, a practical tool called “HASHTAG GENERATOR FOR TIKTOK” (figure 18) provides useful statistics such as the total number of posts using a specific hashtag, and the total views for posts using that hashtag, as well as a list of related hashtags. The tool can be accessed at <https://tiktokhashtags.com/>. (Zote 3 March 2022.)

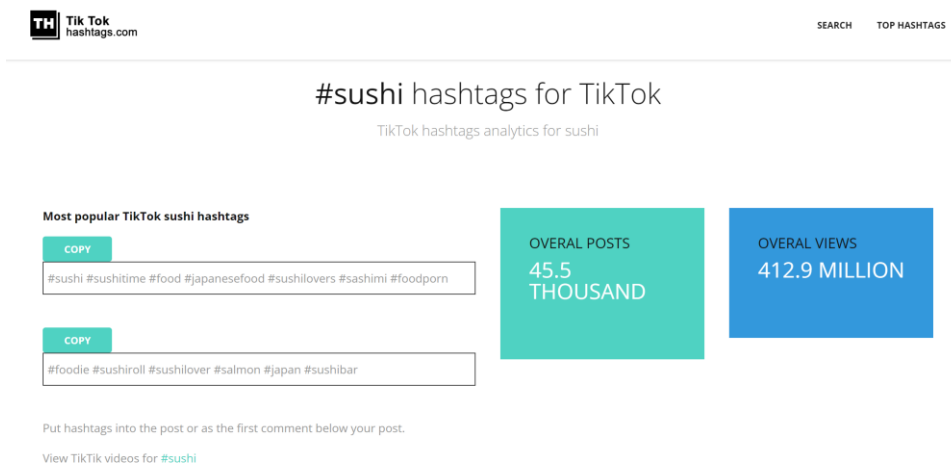


Figure 18. Screenshot of HASHTAG GENERATOR FOR TIKTOK (Tik Tok hashtags.com 2019)

6.4.2 Music and sounds

In addition to hashtags, sounds also make up a large part of TikTok trends. Since TikTok is a sound-on video platform where music and audio are at the core that fosters large-scale creative cooperation and in-app interactions. According to Kantar research, 88 % of users admit that sounds are an integral part of the TikTok experience. The platform's strong focus on sound allows content to stand out and resonate with a broad range of audiences, which leads to a greater emotional engagement. (TikTok for Business 2022.)

In TikTok (and other social media) marketing, music is a perfect weapon to win the war for attention, and it also helps businesses in connecting with their audiences on an emotional level. Because music has the ability to set off a tone and create an atmosphere for videos, pushing forward a narrative, driving emotions and resonating with audiences. Incorporating different types of music into a brand video can emphasize different messages, establish brand images, and shape audience perceptions. For example, indie songs are recommended for businesses looking to showcase their youthful and bold identities, whereas nostalgic songs and melodies that are familiar to older generations can be leveraged to engage with these audiences. (Skillman Video Group 2022.)

For choosing the right music for marketing videos, businesses can start by answering to the following questions:

- What is the core message and purpose of my video?
- Who is my primary target audience?
- What tone is appropriate for my video?

(Skillman Video Group 2022.)

First of all, whether the purpose of the video is to highlight certain features of a product, educate an audience, or interact with the audience, the choice of music should be based on reflecting and complementing key messages. Next, identifying the audience demographic can greatly help to make music choices tailored to these audiences' interests. Finally, it would be easier to choose the right music after setting the tone of the video. Because using improper music might cause confusion in the audience and deliver the wrong message. For example, a campaign video can increase involvement by embedding prominent music, whereas discreet music can better deliver news, but it won't work the other way around. (Skillman Video Group 2022.)

In addition to the aforementioned considerations for music selection, businesses should also evaluate music compatibility with their brand image. As every choice made surrounding a business reveals something about the brand, and the choice of music reveals the personality of the brand while also reinforcing specific message the brand is trying to convey. (Skillman Video Group 2022.)

There are multiple ways to find trending sounds within the app and using external tools. Firstly, the commonplace for finding new trends in TikTok is the For You page, where the music and sounds accompanying popular videos may be used as inspiration. But as stated earlier that the For You feed is tailor-made and the content varies from user to user, so businesses should utilize the TikTok Analytics (mentioned in chapter 6.2) to identify top sounds that appeal to their target audience in the “Sounds your followers listened to” section of the Follower tab. In addition, trending sounds can be located in the “Sound” section of the Discover tab, as well as in TikTok “Commercial Sounds” library that can be accessed by tapping the + icon at the bottom of TikTok home screen, then click the “Add sound” button on the Record Video page (figure 19). (Lin 4 May 2022)

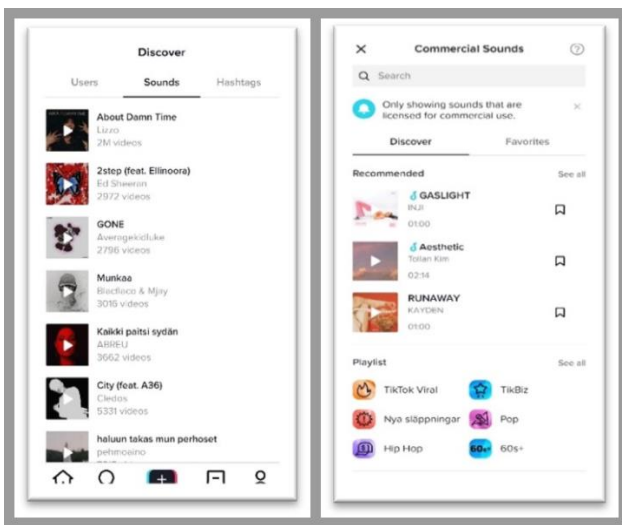


Figure 19. TikTok Discover tab (left) and Commercial Sounds library(right) (TikTok 2022)

In addition, the TikTok Creative Center (figure 20) is also useful for locating trending songs (and hashtags) by region and by industry, which can be accessed at <https://ads.tiktok.com/business/creativecenter/inspiration/popular/hashtag/pc/en>.

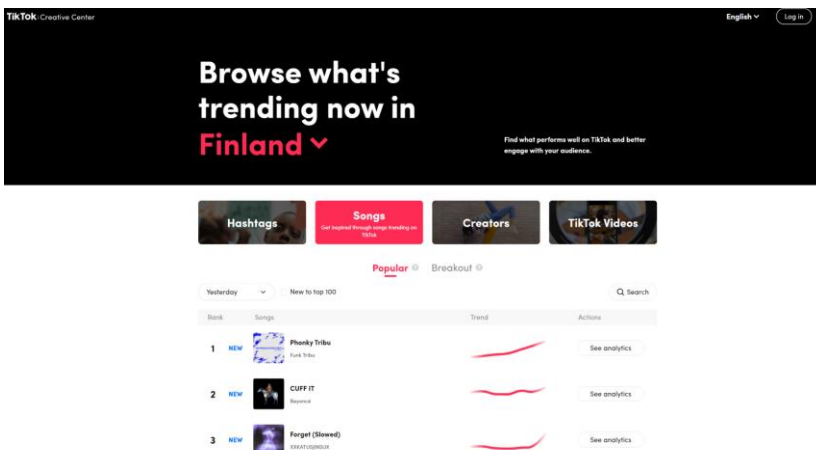


Figure 20. TikTok Creative Center (TikTok For Business 2022)

Besides from the app itself, top-ranked TikTok playlists can be found in leading music streaming service Spotify and video-sharing platform YouTube by searching relevant terms such as “TikTok hits”, “TikTok trending sounds”, “TikTok viral hits” etc. (see figure 21)

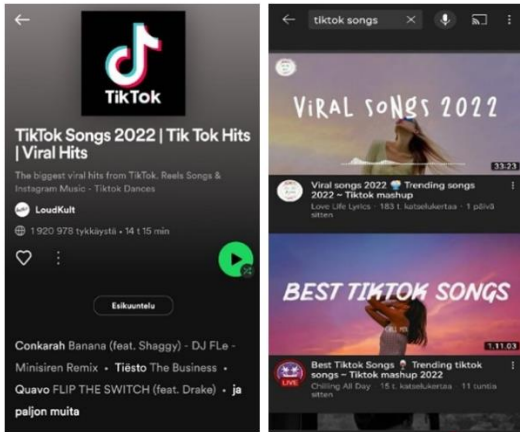


Figure 21. Trending TikTok playlists on Spotify (left) and YouTube (right) (Spotify 2022 & YouTube 2022)

6.5 Video content marketing techniques

Since TikTok is a video-centric platform, after capitalizing on TikTok trends to identify the interesting content that might engage the audience, businesses should maximize the marketing efforts by adopting the following proven video content marketing techniques:

- **Grab the audience’s attention quickly** within a few seconds so that they’ll stop scrolling. The solution to attracting audiences is to place an interesting hook at the beginning and deliver the promised content without wasting time and precision.
- **Deliver real value** to the target audience by being relevant, interesting, and engaging. For instance, value can be created by producing a video that is informative yet entertaining, so that the video is enjoyable and easy to consume.
- **Cross-post videos** on multiple channels can increase the content impact to a broader audience. As the user demographic on Facebook can be very different from TikTok, it is meaningful to leverage multiple video platforms to share content at the same time.
- **Optimize for silence** by adding video captions. Even though TikTok is a platform where videos autoplay with sound-on, it still makes sense to consider the situations where users need to consume video content without sound.
- **Add a CTA (call-to-action)** to increase video engagement or lead viewers to take a specific action, such as “Follower us and stay tuned with new content next week”, “Give this video a like if you find it useful”, or “Let us know what you think by leaving a comment”.

However, it is not recommended to place multiple calls-to-actions into a video. As being too salesy or aggressive might annoy the audiences, causing them to leave the video.

- **Maintain a consistent style** plays a big role in making videos stand out from the competition. A business can make its messages more memorable by keeping consistency in brand personality, and visual design in every video. For instance, using the same cast in videos that include human faces makes it easier for audiences to connect with content because it has a familiar element. Likewise, the dubbing in the video should keep a consistent style so that viewers can identify the brand more quickly.
- **Keep quality aspects in mind** when creating video. Although in TikTok, the videos don't need to be professionally produced, high-definition videos are more favored by users. In addition, the video format should be optimized for the TikTok platform. Vertical videos with a 9:16 aspect ratio would be preferable on TikTok, because most of its videos are consumed on smartphones.

(Standberry 14 June 2022.)

6.6 Overcoming the influence of the Goldfish Effect

The “Goldfish Effect” refers to the decline in human collective attention span and scattered minds caused by instant gratification and abundance of fragmented information in the digital age. According to a study conducted by the U.S. National Center for Biotechnology Information, the average human attention span narrowed from 12 seconds back in 2000 to an average of 8 seconds in 2013, which is one second shorter than a goldfish. (Tuite 21 October 2021.) As a result, businesses have a harder time competing for customers' attention to effectively deliver marketing messages, let alone getting people remember these messages or make an impact.

Gladly, there are some effective content marketing techniques to overcome the goldfish effect.

First of all, **learn about the audience** and listen to what they want and what interests them is key, this makes it possible to create content that is relevant and valuable to them. It is also necessary to optimize content and keep track of the viable ones so that they can be replicated and built upon in the future. (Newling-Goode 8 October 2021.)

Second, **leverage emotional elements**. Because they are very effective at resonating with people, as content that can elicit an emotional response can generate engagement and retention. But evoking emotion is not just about being funny, melodramatic, or making people cry, it is about tapping into what really matters to people. (Newling-Goode 8 October 2021.)

Third, create social media content around **contests and giveaways**. This kind of content works well in grabbing attention and driving engagement, because it offers free prizes as an incentive for people to take part. (Newling-Goode 8 October 2021.)

The fourth technique for getting attention is to **seize on trends**. By adding the most popular and relevant topic in content allows businesses to engage with people in real-time conversations, hence establishing a deeper connection. (Newling-Goode 8 October 2021.)

Last but not least, **interact with the audience** by reacting to their comments and replying with personalized responses. Considering that most people want their opinions being noticed, so the easiest way for a company to get attention is to pay attention to the audience first. In this way, the company can also strengthen the connection with its audience. (Newling-Goode 8 October 2021.)

6.7 Keeping up with Generation Z

As highlighted in chapter 2 of the theoretical framework, a substantial proportion of TikTok users (over 60 %) are Generation Z. It is important to understand the needs and trends of this generation in order to build an online presence on the platform dominated by them. Furthermore, staying on top of trends and creating corresponding content can quickly establish a connection with the audience on TikTok, and it also allows businesses to find new opportunities from constantly changing online behaviours. Therefore, this chapter aims to find out the most relevant Gen Z insights in two main parts. First, the preferences and expectations of Gen Z for the restaurant business, and second, how to effectively reach this generation on social media.

6.7.1 Gen Z trends related to the restaurant business

Gen Z is the true digital native and constitutes the largest demographic group in the world today, with an estimated 2.56 billion individuals by 2020 (Georgiev 19 January 2022). They represent a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and cultures, which is reflected in their eating preferences. They enjoy exploring different dining experience, fusion cuisines, and fresh and natural foods. To market to this generation, restaurants need to follow their dining trends and respond to them quickly. (Aaron Allen & Associates. s.a.)

The following are some of the most relevant restaurant trends among Gen Z:

- Face-to-face experiences
- Adventurous eating with a diverse plate
- Discount matters
- Environment-friendly concepts

(Aaron Allen & Associates. s.a.)

The true digital native Gen Z can be stereotyped of always being in the digital world and cares nothing but their technological devices. However, this generation values face-to-face dining experience with their friends and family and considers eating out as a joyful social activity in which they focus on enjoying the time. (Aaron Allen & Associates. s.a.)

Having grown up in the digital age, Gen Z is more open to embracing diverse cultures due to constant exposure to various cultures through online platforms. One of this generation's characteristics is their willingness to explore and try new things, so the trend of adventurous eating is igniting this generation's adventurous spirit. Dishes combining classics with more daring or unexpected ingredients may appeal to this generation. (Aaron Allen & Associates. s.a.)

Discounts are an important factor contributing to Gen Z's decision to spend on dining. According to a survey of 1,800 college students, the vast majority (78 %) spend most of their discretionary expenses on food and are willing to spend on dining out. But given the fact that younger students still have a smaller purchasing power compared to their older siblings, 93 % of survey respondents agreed that student discounts have a huge impact on their spending decisions. (Aaron Allen & Associates. s.a.)

Gen Z is strongly committed to environmental sustainability, so environment-friendly concepts are influencing on the dining decisions of this generation. As a Tufts University nutrition report highlights that 89 % of surveyed Gen Z consumers would choose to buy from companies that support social and environmental issues over those that do not. In light of this, restaurateurs could tap into this trend by adopting recycling programs and biodegradable packaging. (Aaron Allen & Associates. s.a.)

In addition to the above-mentioned trends, authentic ethnic cuisine and healthy eating are two trending topics among Gen Z. This generation enjoys exploring exciting flavours from all over the world and therefore, it is more important for them to experience that a restaurant is truly inspired by the culture represented by its cuisine, rather than authentic cooking techniques and ingredients. Furthermore, Gen Z was raised with humane animal treatment and sustainable food production standards that are now an integral part of their food choices. Menus with organic and sustainable ingredients can greatly increase their appeal to Gen Z customers. Thus, restaurants serving relevant healthy concepts can best communicate this idea by emphasizing terms like "fresh", "natural", "organic", and "sustainable" on the menu and online channels to attract Gen Z diners. (Rewards Network 2022.)

6.7.2 Reaching Gen Z on social media

According to Pew Research Center's study on Gen Z's economic and social impact, 73 % of Gen Z uses social media every day to interact with their friends and family, and over 70 % respondents confirmed that they influence the consumption decisions of their family (Cristea 13 September 2021). In light of this, businesses that can tap into Gen Z customers' interests on social media could have a great opportunity to reach their families and friends as well.

As the most educated generation, Gen Z is known for their efforts to combat climate change and their commitment to social justice matters. But one defining characteristic of Gen Z that businesses need to be aware of is that they are notoriously resistant to traditional advertising and consciously avoid them in any way possible. When forced to watch lengthy advertisements, they are less likely to engage with content and they may even avoid brands that deliver blatant ads on social media. (Burke 3 August 2022.) Thus, businesses aiming to successfully reach Gen Z, it is extremely important to understand and meet the expectations of this group.

The following approaches should be leveraged when targeting Gen Z on social media:

- **Provide information transparency** to earn the trust of this curious generation that is constantly questioning everything, because their curiosity extends to their food choices as well. Restaurants could effectively approach Gen Zers by clearly outlining their menu ingredients and sources, as well as providing information about the growing and harvesting processes. (Aaron Allen & Associates. s.a.)
- **Include humane and humorous elements** in content (especially for an inherently entertaining platform like TikTok), because most Gen Z consumers are looking for the human side of brands and want to interact with brands that reflect their personal values. Given this, video styles that appear more humane, such as "About me", "Tutorials", "How-Tos", and "BTS (Behind-the-Scenes)" are ideal for engaging with Gen Zers. (Waldenback s.a.)
- **Create content with authenticity** in mind, since Gen Z grew up using social media, they value authenticity and self-expression in online content above everything else. One way to set an authentic aspect of a brand is by promoting UGC (user-generated content), which appears more trustworthy because it showcases the viewpoints of other users rather than the brand itself. (Waldenback s.a.)
- **Partner with influencers** allows brands to engage with the ad-resistant Gen Z without appearing too aggressively in terms of selling. Because the opinions of influencers are perceived by Gen Zers as more personal and credible than a brand's own output. (Waldenback s.a.)

- **Communicate relevant brand beliefs and values** such as diversity, equity, inclusion, environmentalism, sustainability, climate change and world hunger to attract Gen Z consumers, as they place a high value on social and environmental concerns and are more likely to engage with businesses that share the same values. However, when communicating about social issues, businesses should always be cautious to find appropriate ways to express themselves to avoid embroiling in unexpected disputes. (Clark 1 August 2022.)
- **Combine creativity and interactivity** to effectively transform the audience from passive roles to active participants to fulfil their desire of being involved in content. (Kim 27 July 2021.) For example, businesses can utilize "Polls" and "Q&A" features on TikTok to encourage interaction while learning about the audience.
- **Respond to followers in a timely manner** to establish and maintain relationships with them. According to Sprout research, 41 % of Gen Z customers would choose to buy from a company that provides responsive customer service over a competitor. Therefore, a company's timely response to audience messages directly correlates to increasing brand loyalty and achieving financial goals. (Kim 27 July 2021.)

6.8 Restaurant TikTok marketing ideas

Many forethoughtful businesses have already realized the potential of TikTok and have established their brand-new presence on the platform. This subchapter explores restaurant marketing trends on TikTok to provide content ideas that can be adopted by the restaurant business. The key to implementing the following ideas is to naturally blend a company's own elements and personality into the content, while also taking into account the preferences of target customers.

Pendrill (s.a) addresses some ideas for marketing a restaurant on TikTok as follows:

- Display the full dining experience
- Teach a recipe or offer cooking tips
- Showcase new menu items or specials
- Run a TikTok restaurant contest or giveaway
- Highlight the post-COVID dine-in experience
- Promote takeaway and delivery service
- Utilize special TikTok effects
- Showcase BTS (behind-the-scenes) content

As a dynamic visual medium, TikTok offers restaurant businesses an excellent opportunity to present everything from its food to the dining room, giving viewers a sense of the restaurant's ambience in a way that photos alone cannot achieve. (Pendril s.a.) A good example of this is Hanko

sushi's TikTok video (figure 22), in which a man walks the viewers from the front door of Redi, the shopping mall where the restaurant is located, all the way to the sushi restaurant presenting the dining space, the bar, and decors in between.



Figure 22. Screenshot of Hanko sushi's TikTok creative (@hankosushi TikTok)

A big part of TikTok marketing is content value production, which includes offering unique values to audiences so that they will keep following the business for new information and inspiration. Teaching the audiences something simple but also relevant to the business, for example “The perfect ratio to make vinegared sushi rice” or “Make a spicy tuna roll with us”, is a great way to develop a professional brand image and a relationship with followers while promoting the restaurant on TikTok. In the long run, this puts a business at the top of mind with its followers and might even convert them into customers. (Pendrill s.a.)

Sharing videos of the restaurant's latest culinary creations is an excellent way to promote the business on TikTok, as this can excite customers about new menu dishes or daily specials by showing the finest side of food in a dynamic format. In addition, posting such videos around mealtimes might increase the appeal of the dishes even more. (Pendrill s.a.)

Running a social media contest is effective for businesses to drive engagement and increase awareness (Pendrill s.a), which was also discussed in chapter 6. For example, a sushi restaurant could arrange such content by asking the audiences to follow its account and have certain interaction on the post so that they can have a chance to win a take-away sushi set, a gift card, a free buffet, or accessories representing the restaurant culture.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, people are more cautious about dining in public places and they may want to know what the dining experience is like nowadays. Restaurants could therefore reassure the guests by showing the precautionary measures the team is adopting to keep them safe, for example the cleaning and sanitizing practices taken in dining areas and kitchen, safety equipment (e.g. gloves, masks, hair covers) used by chefs and servers and so on. In addition, the pandemic has increased the demand for takeaway and delivery service, so restaurants can also promote their travel-friendly menu items on TikTok to drive more orders. As a hint, people might be drawn to delivery options from restaurants that offer exclusive takeaway deals and thoughtful packaging. (Pendriil s.a.)

TikTok effects are special elements that can add more fun to a video and capture viewers' attention. Therefore, restaurants should also utilize these visual and audio effects to "stop the scroll" and get content noticed amidst a sea of competition from other videos. (Pendriil s.a.) Figure 23 shows an example of the well-known brand, MacDonalds expressing its playful side by adding the human face effect and a meme to a French fry.



Figure 23. Screenshot of McDonalds' creative utilizing TikTok effect (@mcdonaldssuomi TikTok)

A restaurant could earn more trust from customers by revealing some back-end operations, such as the dish preparation process. To deliver a positive impression with this content, it is important to make sure that the restaurant's kitchen is spotless, and that every staff follows proper hygiene and safety regulations. In addition to the kitchen, restaurants can take their audience behind the scenes into the dining room, the storage room, or even the executive office. BTS content works well for engaging consumers on a personal level, as this approachable content can create human connection and also satisfy audience's curiosity about the business operations. (Pendriil s.a.)

7 Benchmark restaurant TikTok marketing

The benchmark study aims to learn about TikTok marketing from early adopters in the same business field, in which the author selected two sushi restaurant chains that are operating in Finland to analyse their marketing activities on TikTok. By benchmarking the practices of these companies in the same industry, a restaurant TikTok marketing framework could be provided for the commissioning company to carry out their marketing development work. However, benchmarking does not always provide ready-to-use solutions, the commissioning company should apply and implement the findings according to their own resources (Meltwater 12 October 2021).

7.1 Itsudemo sushi

Itsudemo is a catering and sushi buffet restaurant chain founded in 2018, they have branches in all major cities in Finland, and their sushi bars and sushi boxes can be found in food markets of the retail cooperative organisation S-Group (Itsudemo 2022).

Itsudemo started their presence on TikTok this year in January 2022, they currently have over 4,000 followers on their account and their videos have nearly 50,000 accumulated likes.

Itsudemo's TikTok contents are mostly educational videos and tutorials that they built around the restaurant's main offering, sushi. As sushi is known to be traditional Asian food, Itsudemo shares accordingly Asian dining etiquette and tips related to sushi consuming, such as demonstrating "how to dip sushi with just the right amount of soy sauce", explaining the role of wasabi and sushi ginger played in eating sushi, those are also the best performing videos in terms of views and engagement (likes and comments).

Itsudemo also provide the audience with other value-added content, such as showcasing "how to fold a chopstick stand for picnic with the packaging of disposable chopsticks", "how to open the Japanese trendy drink Ramune" and some videos showcasing their new plates and cooking processes in cheerful ways. In addition, they have gamified raffle (giveaway) content consisting of scrolling pictures of different types of sushi, in which they ask the audience to comment on which sushi they stopped at when pausing the video to make such content (figure 24) more interesting. All the videos posted by Itsudemo are featured with delightful music and sound effects and humorous voiceover explanations, making the viewing experience of the business account enjoyable rather than giving the impression that it is all about advertisement.

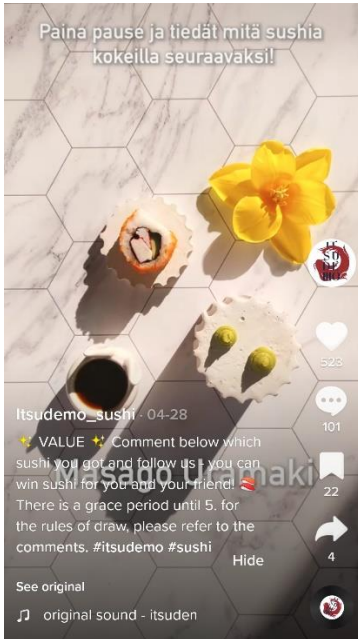


Figure 24. Screenshot of Itsudemo's giveaway creative (@itsudemo_sushi TikTok)

Itsudemo uploads a new video to the account every one to two weeks. And their videos are kept within one minute, with most of them in the length of around 30 seconds. Itsudemo's contents are easy-to-consume as the videos have changing scenes and humorous voice-overs. But the videos are not added with captions, which may limit the content consumption of some users. Their videos have been watched from the range of 40,000 to 200,000 times, which are quite impressive numbers. Also in the comment section, they received a lot of praises for being a fun and informative business account. In terms of interaction, Itsudemo tries its best to reply to each comment or gave likes to show its attention to the audience. They even made a tutorial video to teach the audience about chopsticks usage by taking into account users' comments.

To sum up, with Itsudemo as a reference, restaurants that offer cultural specialities could create content around the culture that represents the food, the origins of plates, country-specific dining etiquettes, and other interesting facts as a means to connect with the audiences. Restaurants should also take comments they received seriously and consider them as valuable assets, because social listening and interaction can help the business build the desired brand image and strengthen the connection with its audience by tapping into their interests and expectations from the company.

7.2 Hanko Sushi

Hanko Sushi as its name suggests, a sushi restaurant chain that was founded in 2009 in Hanko, a city in southern Finland. Now Hanko Sushi is the largest and most well-known sushi restaurant chain with 24 branches. They specialize in fresh and responsible ingredients. (Hanko sushi 2021.)

Hanko Sushi started their presence on TikTok May 2021, which was half year earlier than Itsudemo. The follower account of Hanko Sushi is less than 3,000, and only 19,200 accumulated likes for videos, although they have much more content compared to Itsudemo. There are two possible explanations for this result: one is that Itsudemo has used paid methods to reach a wider audience on the platform, and the other reason might be that Hanko sushi's organic content creatives resonate less with the audience. In addition, Hanko Sushi is less interactive in the comment section, where they rarely react or give a like to the audience's comments, which might have contributed to the overall engagement of their account being lower than Itsudemo's.

Hanko Sushi's TikTok account has four main content types (see figure 25), which are explained as follows:

- **Interactive content** is usually featured with a CTA, or a question that's either open-ended or close-ended to drive social interaction. A content example of Hanko Sushi is a video showing different clips of sushi menus and featuring questions like "Do you think you know your friend well enough? Which one do you think your friend would you pick?". In spite of this, a great way to spice up this type of content is to make the question relevant to the audience and their friends and family is.
- **Objective-driven content** aims to achieve specific goals by encouraging the audience to take certain actions, this type of content typically come with a CTA such as follow, comment, like and share. Hanko sushi has had multiple objective-driven content like contests aiming to growth their followers and increase engagement.
- **Value-added** content is any original, unique, or distinctive information that provides value to the audience by being relevant and fulfilling their search intent (Cline 29 March 2022). In terms of content value, Hanko sushi provides their audiences with company's transparency by introducing the origin and production process of their food supply, and they also have cooking tutorials and educational videos related to the food culture they represent to strengthen the professional brand image.
- **Promotional content** is designed to encourage purchase intentions by offering discounts or other benefits. Hanko Sushi for example, has provided the audience with a discount code in a video, in an attempt to boost online orders while also promoting their online store. But this type of content is more suitable for posting on Instagram or Facebook, because they allow businesses to add links to other websites on their posts or videos, and TikTok's organic videos are not allowed to incorporate links. Moreover, Hanko Sushi's promotional video begins with "summer offer" might make many users swipe away the video directly, because its selling intention is quite obvious. Therefore, this type of content in TikTok

should be done in a gamifying way, for example asking the audience “Can you find the hidden code in this video?” to motivate users to engage.

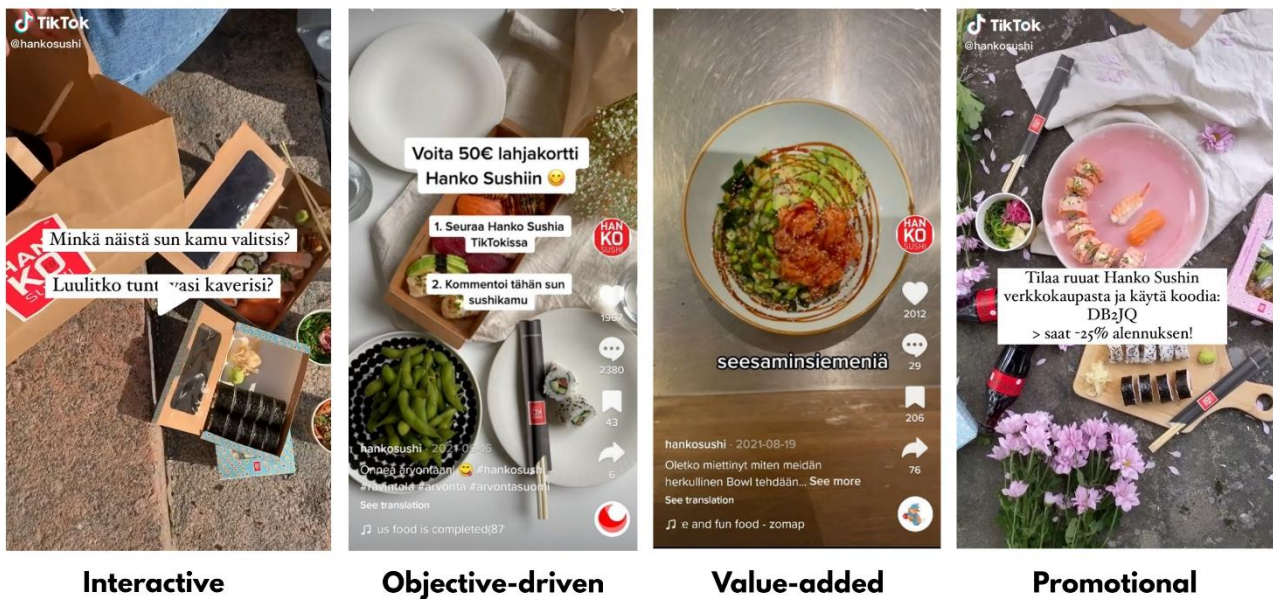


Figure 25. Example of Hanko sushi's TikTok content types (@hankosushi TikTok account)

Hanko Sushi's new videos are not uploaded on a regular basis; they usually post a new video to the account every one to two weeks, and occasionally once every three weeks. The video lengths range from 7 to 30 seconds, and each video comes with music and captions. However, only a few videos have dubbing, which leads to the overall video content narrative a bit bland. With this in mind, the commissioning company should add interesting narrations and voiceovers when creating videos for TikTok, so as to provide viewers with a more immersive watching experience.

Hanko Sushi's video views are ranges from 1,000 to 156,000. Except for their giveaway and contest content, the three best performing videos in terms of views and engagement (likes and comments) are all tutorials about cooking sushi rice, making the Hanko Sushi Bowl and chopstick usage. Each of the three videos received even more likes than the contest content offering a 50-euro gift card. Therefore, providing genuine content value and useful inspiration is crucial in TikTok marketing. And the worst performing video (in terms of views and engagement) belongs to the interactive one in which they present different sushi sets in dull takeaway boxes and include a CTA of "Comment on your favorite picnic food". With little or no plot change in the video, it appears a lot like an ad, which may not engage the audience. In fact, since the sushi boxes are made of recyclable carton materials, presenting this content from an environmental protection perspective could make it more relevant to the audience while conveying a responsible brand image.

In conclusion, restaurants could provide a richer experience to the audiences by combining various content types on TikTok. But most importantly, taking the time to learn about the target audience and offer the relevant content that really adds value to them is crucial, as the power of content value should be especially highlighted in TikTok marketing. Furthermore, meaningful interactions with the audiences are important in TikTok marketing, since nobody wants to engage with brands that only trying to sell them something with cold advertisements but don't care about what really matters to them.

8 TikTok marketing guide for Haru restaurant

This chapter describes the production process and design of the final product, which is the TikTok marketing guide for Haru restaurant. The guide was created in PowerPoint format (using a sushi restaurant-themed template created by Slidesgo), since it's easy to share between the company and its outsourced marketing team members and coordinate edits or updates as necessary. The guide did not include explanations on using the TikTok app to record videos, because the main goal was to find out the viable approaches for promoting restaurants on TikTok and to support the commissioning company in developing a TikTok marketing plan. And considering that the social media trends, especially TikTok trends change very quickly, the guide is intended as a short-term guide only. After acquainted with the basics of TikTok restaurant marketing, the commission party should be able to update or construct the marketing plan to meet their future needs.

The creation of this guide relied on marketing theories and the latest trends related to TikTok and the restaurant business gathered from the theoretical framework, and the empirical part included email and voice-call interviews with the commissioning company Haru's manager Jiaqi Yang, in order to find out the company's current social media marketing situation and their marketing resources. The empirical section also contained a benchmark study of two rival restaurants' TikTok marketing, and insights acquired via a semi-structured email interview with one of the benchmarking company Itsudemo, with the aim of defining a TikTok marketing framework for the commissioning company.

8.1 The commissioning company

Haru is a chain of sushi buffet restaurants situated at the centre of Helsinki, their restaurants are located in Fredrikinkatu (Haru 2015-) and Annankatu (Haru+ 2018-). As a buffet restaurant, Haru attach huge importance to fresh and high-quality ingredients that make a great flavour of food. A variety of sushi, salads and warm dishes made of upscale ingredients are available for lunch and evening. Haru prepares special Asian cuisine in addition to sushi, as part of their objective to constantly offer their customers with something novel. (Haru sushi Helsinki 2022.)

8.1.1 Current status of Haru's social media operations

As for social media marketing, Haru is currently focusing on organic Instagram and Facebook marketing. The social media marketing for two restaurants of Haru is carried out on same contents in both channels, because both Haru restaurants' operation mode, decoration style, and brand positioning are nearly the same. According to Yang, it is meaningless for them to have different pieces

of content for each social channel, since it will increase the difficulty of resource management, and it might confuse the guests with the thoughts of two different brands. (Yang 26 May 2022.)

The purpose for Haru to do social media marketing is to enhance brand recognition through social media platforms, in order to attract more new consumers. Their social media marketing strategy is to create an attractive brand image, stay active and provide services online to connect with audiences and ultimately convert them into offline customers. (Yang 24 May 2022.) Interestingly, Haru is not using localized strategy like many other sushi restaurants, instead, they seek to differentiate by creating a youthful and playful brand image through vivid images with playful feelings. Figure 26 shows the youthful and playful branding of Haru, and its comparison with two other sushi restaurants with a localized marketing strategy.

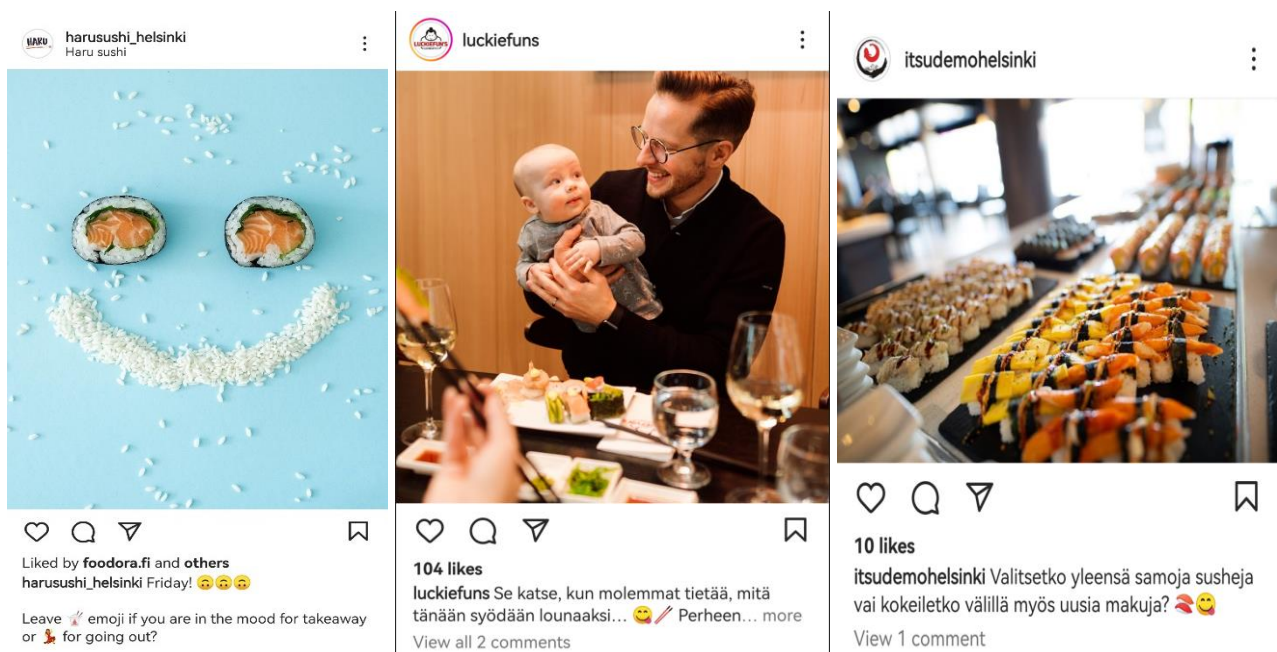


Figure 26. Brand image differentiation of sushi restaurants (Instagram @harusush_helsinki @luckiefuns @itsudemohelsinki)

In addition to Facebook and Instagram, Haru utilizes TripAdvisor, Google My Business, and their own website to distribute information about their business. Although Yang is aware of TikTok's rising popularity among young people, he had no idea how to get started due to a lack of resources to study more thoroughly on the platform (Yang 26 May 2022).

The commissioning company Haru has not set any metrics to examine their marketing efforts on social media, although it is extremely important in determining whether their current strategy is effective. According to Yang (26 May 2022), compared to social media marketing, he believed (26 May 2022) that WoM (word-of-mouth) has a more important role for their business, since many

visiting guests of Haru are introduced by their happy regular customers, and positive reviews on Google attracted considerable amount local and foreign customers to dine in. (Yang 26 May 2022.)

8.1.2 Marketing goals

According to Yang, the goal of Haru's social media marketing is to build a youthful brand image, so they can reach out to younger audiences online and become one of their favorite brands, and eventually convert them to face-to-face customers. (24 May 2022). Therefore, the SMART framework addressed in the theoretical framework is utilized to define clear marketing objectives that will help the commissioning company achieve their long-term goals of building a solid connection with the customers and increasing overall brand awareness.

For example, SMART marketing goals related to increasing brand awareness could be:

- Achieve monthly ___ follower growth
- Reach the accumulated video likes of ___ by November
- Reach the engagement rate of ___ % in TikTok in December

The specific numbers should be filled in by the commissioning company according to their own situation and needs. In this way, marketing priorities that help achieve the goals can be identified and marketing efforts can be clearly tracked.

8.1.3 Metrics to assess marketing performance

Shiv & Stephanie (2012, chapter 20) suggest that companies should assess social media marketing performance by examining appropriate metrics based on the company's marketing and business objectives. As the primary social media marketing goals of the commissioning company are to increase brand awareness and connect with the audience, the key metrics they should be tracking with the TikTok Analytics tool are profile views and follower growth, which indicate the number of users interested in the company, and engagement rate, average watch time and watched full video, which are metrics indicating how well the content is able to connect with the audience. In addition, brand mentions on the app should also be monitored, for example, the number of times the company has been tagged by other users within a certain timeframe.

Furthermore, brand awareness can be tracked by checking the company's own website traffic (new users, visits) on Google Analytics, or by searching its brand name on Google Trends, which gives an indication of the popularity of the search term in a specified time period (Google Trends 2022). The instructions for using these tools were excluded from the guide, because the author believed that the commissioning company' outsourced marketing professionals have the requisite knowledge.

8.1.4 Resources and budget

Haru has no dedicated social media marketer in-house, the content planning and production for Instagram and Facebook are done by a small outsourced team (of two partners), who help the company in publishing two organic image content twice a week and sharing user-generated content (UGC) on Stories. In addition to content production, the team also takes on most of the responsibility for social presence management, such as communicating with the online audience and replying to general questions (of opening hours and prices) and comments. The outsourcing cost for Haru's social media marketing is around 600 euros per month. Internally, Haru's management is in charge of contacting dissatisfied customers via private message and offering solutions, as well as designing on promotional content. (Yang 26 May 2022.)

The commissioning company has been working with their current marketing team for over two years, so the author recommends prioritizing the team to assist Haru's marketing operation on TikTok. Because the team already has a comprehensive understanding of the company's operation and social media audience, which could reduce the time for a new team to become familiar with their business operation. However, the company should first check with the team members about their capabilities of video production. In addition, the commissioning company should replan their resource and budget to include a new platform (TikTok) in the marketing strategy. And additional marketing efforts and time investment for each social platform should be discussed with the marketing team to find the best solution together. The author would recommend putting more effort into TikTok when the company starts on the platform, as other platforms like Instagram and Facebook have already established a solid follower base. However, budgets and resources should allocate wisely across platforms in order to grow the presence on a completely new platform while not ignoring the audiences on other platforms.

As stated in the theoretical framework, one of the biggest challenges regarding TikTok marketing is the need to invest considerable resources and efforts in video content creation. Also the interview with Itsudemo's marketing manager Xiao confirmed that compared to Facebook and Instagram, TikTok marketing requires more budget and resources to create actionable content, they have a monthly budget for TikTok marketing over 2000 euros, which includes content production and paid ads to boost video views and attract new followers. But they still face challenges in making videos that converts into actual sales. (Xiao 12 June 2022). Fortunately, the TikTok app can help in saving a lot of money and time in video production as long as a business plans its content well, since the app has a lot of video fine-tuning features, including numerous special effects and sounds, as well as a large selection of licensed music.

8.1.5 The target audience

The two restaurants (Haru and Haru+) of the commissioning company operate on the same concept and share the same brand positioning and attributes. Even though the differences in restaurant capacity and location lead to slightly different customer types, Haru restaurants are especially loved by young people due to their extensive and always fresh food selection and excellent price-quality ratio. (Yang 26 May 2022.) Furthermore, according to secondary data in the theoretical framework (chapter 3), the majority of Finnish TikTok users are between the ages of 18 and 34. As a result, Haru will be very likely to connect with audiences on TikTok in that age group.

Later on, when the company starts running their TikTok account, the in-app Analytics tool introduced in the theoretical part should be utilized to gain more comprehensive audience insights to improve the overall marketing strategy. Additionally, the author recommends further identifying the company's online audiences using other complementary sources like Instagram Insights and Facebook Page Insights. Because the more a company knows about its audience and their profiles, the better it can create an effective marketing strategy and relevant content to reach these people. Gender, age, interest, occupation, educational background, and location can all be used to narrow down the audience (Daneghyan 24 January 2020). An example in figure 27 is made to illustrate Haru's ideal audience.

Ideal audiences

Demographics	Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: 15–35 • Location: Helsinki • Income: middle-class (annual income 19 000–32 000 euros) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foodie & sushi lover • Pescatarian • Asian culture enthusiast • Socially active

Figure 27. An example of Haru's ideal audiences to reach on TikTok

8.2 Design of the guide

The guide consists of 21 PowerPoint slides, including a cover page, table of contents, nine main content chapters, and a credit slide for the template provider Slidesgo. The first chapter of the guide provides a brief introduction to TikTok's interface, and its subchapter explains how to switch to a Business account. So that the commissioning company, who is entirely new to the platform, could get an idea of how it works in general and will have access to royalty-free sounds for commercial use and the Analytics tool (only available for a Business account) that plays a huge role in TikTok marketing.

The second chapter introduces TikTok's user base in Finland and defines the audience that the commissioning company is most likely to reach. Because identifying the audience is essential for developing a viable marketing strategy to connect with them. The third chapter presents the TikTok marketing objectives created for the commissioning company using the SMART framework, and its subchapter outlines the metrics to measure relevant goals. The fourth chapter introduces the main elements that matter to the TikTok algorithm, because understanding the content recommendation system can greatly contribute to content discoverability by the relevant audience. The fifth chapter includes the suggested marketing strategy for the commissioning company based on their budget and resource, and its subchapter complements a list of guidelines that should be followed in TikTok marketing.

The sixth chapter presents a list with some content ideas and suggestions made for the restaurant business, as well as hashtag suggestions made specifically for the commissioning company in its subchapter. The seventh chapter offers content creation tips to assist the company in creating viable TikTok content. The eighth chapter of the guide shows how to locate content inspirations, and its subchapters are about locating trending sounds and hashtags, since both of which contribute to breaking through the TikTok algorithm to reach more relevant. Then the ninth which is the last chapter of the guide finalizes a checklist for doing TikTok marketing.

8.3 Recommended TikTok marketing strategy

As the theoretical framework stated, there are three ways to promote a company on TikTok: influencer marketing, paid advertising, and organic content marketing. Taking into consideration the commissioning company's limited resources and budget, organic content marketing strategy is considered to be the most appropriate option. Therefore, the guide focuses on organic marketing solutions that align with the commissioning company's actual situation, in which the outsourced team with two people will be responsible for producing video content and communicating with the audience. Paid advertising and influencer marketing on TikTok are excluded from this guide, however, if later on the commissioning company intends to raise awareness on certain campaigns or achieve ambitious marketing goals, the knowledge gathered in chapters 4.2 and 4.3 of the theoretical framework about the different paid options available in TikTok and the essential 3R factors in influencer marketing could be leveraged to replan the strategy with their marketing team.

A localized marketing approach was recommended to the commissioning company, because TikTok is a platform that prioritizes on local content. Featuring local language on content could greatly increase the likelihood of interacting with local customers, thus resulting in a higher level of engagement. But considering Haru's large number of foreign and tourist customers, the marketing strategy is left to the commissioning company's management and marketing team to decide.

In addition, the company should leverage their existing followers on established social channels like Instagram and Facebook to cross-post TikTok content. As the theoretical framework pointed out that promoting content outside the platform is one way to increase the impact of organic marketing. Also, the author would recommend linking the business TikTok account on its own website (figure 28) to increase visibility. Furthermore, the company could further increase its organic content reach by creating a YouTube account and sharing TikTok clips on “Shorts” section (figure 29).

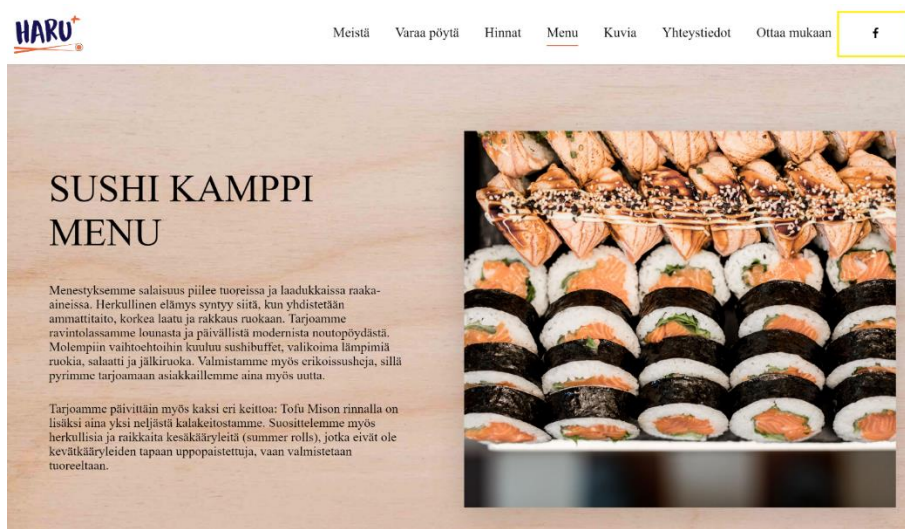


Figure 28. Haru sushi website (Haru 2022)

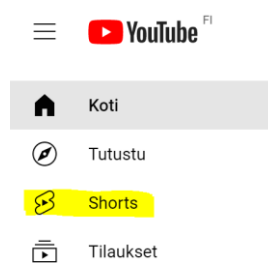


Figure 29. Screenshot of YouTube Shorts (YouTube 2022)

According to Xiao, Itsudemo’s outsourced team took in a total three weeks to produce a TikTok video (Xiao 12 June 2022). Since video production takes longer time, and the team needs time to familiarize themselves with the basics of TikTok. The recommended content posting frequency for the commissioning company Haru would be once a week. After all, quality is more important than quantity.

Finally, based on the TikTok marketing benchmark study of two rival restaurants, only building up a restaurant profile and posting content is not enough to engage with the audience meaningfully. Paying attention to the audiences and interacting with them are equally important in TikTok marketing. Therefore, besides posting relevant content regularly, the commissioning company needs to

actively interact with the audiences and respond to comments and feedback in a timely and approachable manner. The role of humor in TikTok was highlighted in the theoretical framework, which also applies to brands trying to connect with the platform's users. When communicating with the audience, it is recommended that Haru uses a humorous tone instead of being repetitive and overly formal. Figure 32 shows a comparison of the tones of voice of the two brands, Pringles' hilarious communication tone is a clever way to leave users with a favourable impression of the brand.

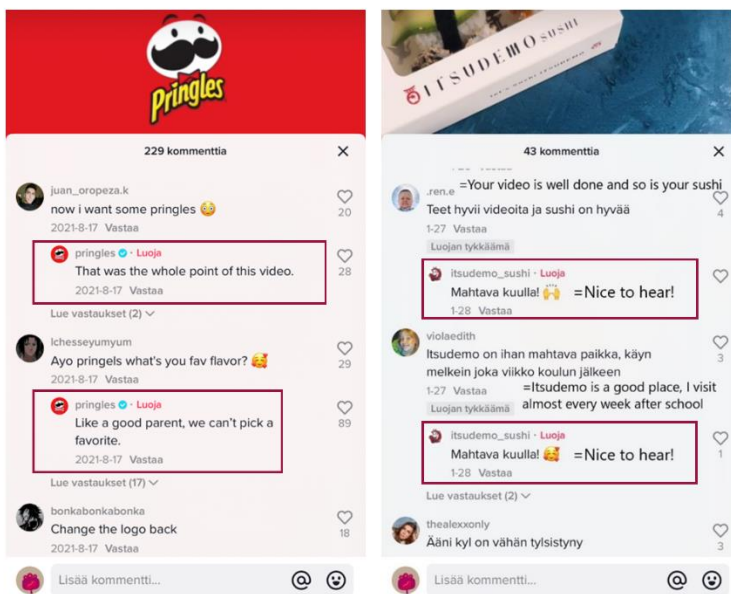


Figure 32. Example of tones of voice (@pringles @itsudemo_sushi TikTok 2022)

8.4 Content suggestions

The theoretical framework emphasized the avoidance role of cold advertising in organic marketing, so the key is to focus on producing videos that are educational and entertaining in nature. Also according to the benchmark study on two restaurants' TikTok marketing profile, cooking tutorials and educational videos have demonstrated huge popularity among the platform's users. The interview with Itsudemo's marketing manager, Xiao further confirmed that for restaurants, educational and tutorial videos the most viable content types to reach new TikTok audiences. He also pointed out that challenges and influencer content can lead to good results (Xiao 12 June 2022). In light of these findings, the commissioning company could start their organic TikTok marketing by producing relevant content types on topics of in-house recipes, culinary culture, dining etiquette, and trends in the catering industry. When a company provides practical advice or valuable information to its audience, they will see the company as an authority in their niche and become more loyal. Additionally, according to the restaurant TikTok marketing trends mentioned in the theoretical framework, the commissioning company could create content around "behind-the-scenes" to

highlight employees (chefs, servers) and owners, “restaurant contest or giveaway” to drive more engagement, “dining experiences” to showcase the ambiance, as well as “memes” and “special TikTok effects” to entertain and connect with the audiences.

Since TikTok revolves around trends, actively searching for trending topics relevant to the business within the platform and creating content around them is a good way to engage with users. The author would also suggest the company create content formats that are native to TikTok, which are “Stitch” (a combined video with different clips) and “Duet” (two videos in a split-screen), in order to become more integrated into the TikTok community. A Stitch idea for the commissioning company could be for example, showing specific ingredients in a video and asking the audience to Stitch with those ingredients and get creative with their cooking ideas. And a content idea for Duet could be “cook with me”, where the company showcases how to make a sushi roll (or other recipes) and ask the audience to Duet with them. Stitch and Duet videos could be also produced by leveraging other foodie creators’ content.

Considering that TikTok users place a high value on authenticity of content, the commissioning company should adopt user-generated content (UGC) (figure 30) in organic marketing, because it is an excellent way to build trust with the audience. If not receiving enough UGC on TikTok, the author suggests combining a TikTok giveaway or contest to encourage more users to share videos of their favourite sushi (or other dishes) from the restaurant. And since the commissioning company has been receiving a lot of photo and video tags and mentions on Instagram from users who visited the restaurant, the company could ask the Instagram audiences for permission to share their content on TikTok. But it should be noted that the UGC of static pictures need to be made into a short video, because the static picture format is not appealing on a video platform.



Figure 30. Screenshot of a UGC on TikTok (@mamaghanouch TikTok)

Furthermore, in a Gen Z dominated platform, the TikTok marketing strategy should be tailored to this generation's attributes in some way. The theoretical framework stated multiple ways for a restaurant to engage with this generation on social media, which include offering short and concise content, business transparency, student specific discount, giveaways, interactivity and timely responses, content across social platforms, as well as highlighting humorous and genuine aspects, healthy concepts, authentic ethnic cuisine experience, environmental and society concerns, and adventurous eating. The commissioning company could tap into the last-mentioned (adventurous eating) trend by showcasing innovative fusion of Haru (such as the blueberry chicken wings shows in figure 31) or specialty menus. It would be even better if the cooking process and ingredients could be shown in the video, as Gen Z place a high value on creativity and information transparency. Lastly, it is important that the commissioning company constantly keep itself up to date with Gen Z's dining and social media trends to optimize its content marketing approaches.

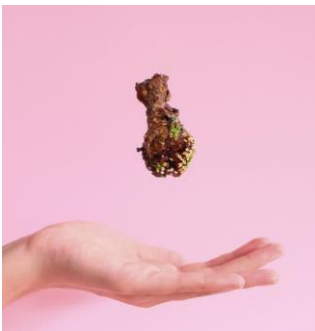


Figure 31. The innovative fusion of blueberry chicken wings (@harusushi_helsinki Instagram)

8.5 Content creation tips

TikTok videos can be 15 seconds to 3 minutes in length, but the company should aim for 21-34 seconds to keep viewers engaged, because videos within that duration were proven to have the best performance according to TikTok creative audit (TikTok for Business 2022). In addition, there are multiple ways stated in the theoretical framework to increase video content engagement, which include learning about the audience to offer relevant content; riding on the latest trends to engage the audience in real-time conversations; placing a “hook” at the beginning of the video to capture the audience’s attention quickly and motivate them to watch all the way through; using hashtags and sounds to improve the algorithm’s ranking; adding captions to optimize for every usage tendencies and situations; and integrating interactive elements such as questions and CTAs to encourage interactions; optimizing video format for the TikTok platform with a 9:16 aspect ratio.

8.6 Locating content inspirations

The theoretical framework mentioned multiple places where businesses can find content inspiration, including the For You feed, the Discover page, the TikTok Analytics tool, and the TikTok Creative Center. In addition to these, good inspiration sources for the commissioning company would be foodie TikTokers and influencers who focus on producing content related to cooking and recipes, the author would especially recommend @emilymariko, whose ASMR cooking videos are mainly incorporated with fresh vegetables and fish, which are also the main ingredients that make up the plates at Haru restaurant. By observing relevant influencers, the company could obtain useful editorial styles, and rhythms and structures for content presentation. Also, the official TikTok for Business account (@tiktokforbusiness) provides a lot of creative tips for business to succeed on TikTok. Therefore, the commissioning company should follow the account to keep updated to new features and inspirations.

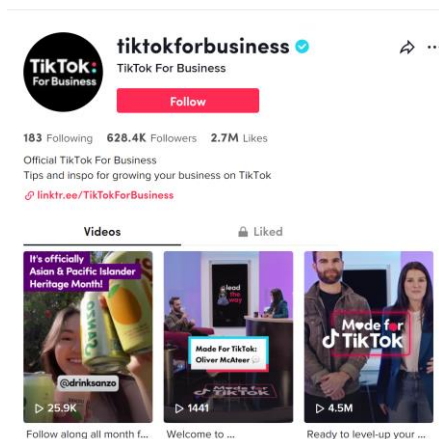


Figure 33. Screenshot of @tiktokforbusiness account (TikTok 2022)

Moreover, the company should keep on track of both direct and indirect competitor restaurants like @Hankosushi, @Itsudemo_sushi, @pfchang, @mcdonaldssuomi who have successfully accumulated likes and built their follower base on TikTok. By observing their best performing contents, the commissioning company can get more inspirations to connect with its audiences.

On top of aforementioned in-app sources, the company could find inspirations outside the box. A recommended free tool is Google, which shows the most up-to-date popular topics and the ongoing viral trends online audiences are looking for. By finding content that people are likely to be interested in, the company could increase the chance of going viral. The tool can be accessed at <https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=FI>.

9 Discussion

The main objective of this thesis was to find out the marketing opportunities on TikTok for restaurants, and create accordingly a guide base on the findings to help the commissioning company to expand their online presence on a brand new platform. The TikTok marketing guide which is the product of this thesis was built upon the theoretical framework gathered from online resources of reputable blogs and e-books related to social media marketing planning and TikTok marketing. For the empirical part, the author started with an email interview to find out the starting point of the commissioned company, such as their resources and budget, knowledge of TikTok marketing, and expectations for the work. After having defined their situation, the author proceeded to develop the initial structure of the work. The subsequent empirical part after the theoretical framework had constructed was a benchmark study of the TikTok accounts of two local restaurants that have similar product offerings to the commissioning company. In addition, a semi-structured interview with the marketing manager of one of the benchmarking companies was conducted in order to support the guide with some practical restaurant marketing examples.

The thesis successfully identified the marketing opportunities for the commissioning company and developed grounded guidance through theoretical support and empirical practices benchmarked against real-life companies and insights from interviews. The final product of this thesis can be used by the commissioning company and restaurants of similar attribute to discover TikTok as a marketing medium. The guide consisted of nine main content parts: an introduction to the platform's basic navigation and interface; the platform's user demographics and the company's audience parallel; the key factors in planning TikTok marketing (goals, metrics, budget); the fundamentals of the algorithm; suggested marketing methods based on the research; content suggestions for the restaurant; tips for creating TikTok content; sources for locating new content inspirations; and a summary of points to be considered when marketing on TikTok. With the utilization of the guide, it would be easier for companies to quickly establish an overview of the platform and develop a TikTok marketing strategy according to their own needs and capabilities.

The success of the guide is measured through qualitative indicators, which is the feedback from the commissioning company. The final outcome presented a guide that the commissioning company was happy with; according to their feedback, the guide is helpful for them getting acquainted with the platform and with the useful information in the guide, they were able to prepare themselves for TikTok marketing. Although they were previously aware that TikTok was quite popular among young people, they didn't have the resources or the opportunity to spend enough time researching how they could join it. They believed that with the support of this guide, the threshold for them to plan TikTok marketing will be lowered. However, they will need to work with internal

management to reallocate marketing budgets and resources appropriately. For now, they have no way of demonstrating the effectiveness of the suggested TikTok marketing strategy yet, as they haven't started the actual marketing operation there. (Yang 22 October 2022.)

After having worked on the thesis, the author believed that the future social media marketing landscape will be more video-centric, so it would be beneficial for companies to start exploring marketing opportunities with videos. Because people's attention is increasingly distracted by fast entertainment like TikTok, short-form videos that are concise and contain strong emotional elements will be adopted by more businesses to create deeper emotional connections with online audiences. While Instagram and Facebook are still the platforms used by most companies to connect with audiences, these platforms are seeing a diminishing influence on connecting with younger generations. However, since the threshold for producing videos is still relatively high for small businesses, even short-form videos need time and resources to plan for storytelling and visual and audio design to be able to appeal to the audience. This might explain why many businesses are still quite hesitant to join the platform.

9.1 Key findings

The key findings in this work indicated that TikTok is a marketing platform suited for restaurants and other businesses targeting younger audiences, because the platform is made up with 60 % of the Gen Z users who are between the ages of 10 to 25 years old in the thesis writing moment. And according to the data collected in the theoretical framework, TikTok currently has the opportunity to reach approximately one fifth of the Finnish population. Among the platform's 1.2 million Finnish users, nearly half of them are aged between 18 and 24, with a relatively equal proportion of females (56 %) and males (44 %) (Yliluoma 20 September 2021).

To effectively engage with the savvy generation who are socially and environmentally conscious, businesses should showcase the humane and authentic aspects of their brands. Sales-oriented content should be avoided as they can be off-putting to the younger generation, and in the worst case, lead to a decline in brand favorability. The research also suggested that restaurants with smaller budgets can adopt organic TikTok marketing to sustainably connect with the audiences by providing value-added video content, such as business transparency, educational and tutorial content. Furthermore, due to the fact that the main purpose for users using the app is to look for entertainment, it is important for businesses to produce content that is entertaining and interactive in nature. Incorporating content with trending hashtags, sounds, captions, as well as effects could help to break through the TikTok algorithm to make the organic video more efficient in reaching relevant audiences. Some video marketing techniques also needed to apply in producing content for TikTok

to make the most impact, such as starting the video with an interesting point, adopting familiar elements (e.g. same casts, visual design), and adding interactive elements (e.g. CTAs, questions).

Finally, social listening plays an important part in TikTok (any) marketing, because the cornerstone of successful marketing is knowing one's audience. Actively interacting with audiences can help businesses better identify their needs and find new opportunities based on meaningful feedback.

9.2 Relevance, reliability and validity

The subject of the thesis is relevant to the current marketing landscape, because video contents and especially short-form videos are becoming prevalent in social media when engaging with the online audience. TikTok's profile and user base have grown by leaps and bounds since the pandemic, and there are no signs so far showing a decline in the platform's popularity. This thesis topic is relevant for companies aiming to connect with the younger generation, especially Gen Z who will have enormous spending power in the near future. Although converting directly into sales is still difficult with TikTok, but it is ideal for businesses to show their approachable sides and engage with people, because building relationships with online audiences in this digital age is crucial to the long-term growth of a brand.

The development of theoretical framework was mostly relied on online sources, as the subject studied in this thesis is a novel one that has only become popular in recent years. To ensure the reliability of the thesis, the author used the most up-to-date sources possible and referred to blogs written by reputable marketing solution providers such as Hootsuite, HubSpot, buffer etc. Comparisons between sources were also made to ensure the accuracy of the data and information. However, the validity of the results of this thesis may change over time as the social media environment and industry trends are constantly changing.

9.3 Reflection on own learning

As the topic of this thesis is very relevant to the time, the author was very motivated and interested in the working process of acquiring knowledge in this area. However, the author faced some challenges in this process. Firstly, the most challenging part was delimiting the scope of the project and outlining the structure. Because social media marketing and the social platform TikTok are both broad subjects, the author needed to constantly reflect on what was really important to the subject matter. Also due to the novelty of the subject matter, it was difficult to find relevant literatures in the library, so most of the references needed to be compared through multiple online sources to ensure the reliability. Therefore, the development of a theoretical framework for this project took more time than expected. Then, another challenging aspect was time management. Having to find time to write the thesis on top of working in a fast-paced international technology company led to

inefficiency. Therefore, the author had to leave the job with the aim of focusing on completing a project that herself was satisfactory with.

The author's strength in writing the thesis were her work experience in the restaurant industry, so it was easier for her to get started with the industry insights. She also benefited from experience gained during her internship assisting with social media marketing tasks. However, the main social media marketing platforms that the author was exposed to during her internship were Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, and her work experience did not contribute much to the establishment of a theoretical framework. So this came to the author's weakness; she did not know much about the TikTok platform when beginning her thesis and had to learn a lot of new things in order to build the theoretical framework. Because TikTok is a platform with its own unique user profile, features, and trends.

Through working with the commissioning company, the author developed her skill in combining theory with practice. All in all, working on this project gave the author an opportunity to expand her knowledge about social media marketing and gain an in-depth understanding of an emerging social media platform that is considered critical in the future marketing landscape. The knowledge and skills acquired through this project will greatly assist the author in laying the foundation for her future marketing career.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview with of Haru sushi's manager

Questions:

1. Do you get any help for doing social media marketing from external SoMe marketing expertise? Or are you managing the business account by yourself or an internal team?
2. What is your current social media marketing strategy?
3. How do you see the online presence of your business?
4. Are still images the most shared content on your business social media accounts? What is the brand image you want to build for Haru on social media?
5. What's your purpose of doing social media marketing?
6. What do you wish to achieve by doing social media marketing?
7. How do you interact with your customers on social media?
What are the challenges your business is facing in social media marketing?
8. Are you familiar with TikTok or TikTok marketing?
9. What possibilities do you know of using TikTok marketing?
10. Will you consider utilizing TikTok to grow your business or to engage with customers? If not, what's the reason?
10. What challenges do you see in conducting TikTok marketing?

Answers:

1. We have an outsource team to manage our Facebook and Instagram. Most of the content planning is done by outsourced team, and when we have decided to do promotional activities, we will ask them to help publish them on the accounts.
2. Our strategy is to build online connections with the audience and convert them into face to face diners.
3. Online platforms are the medium for us to stay connected with our customers, we have promotional and giveback activities time by time, and the social media channels are the output for us.
4. Our content on social media focuses on playful and vivid pictures, because our intention is to create a youthful brand.
5. For us, the ultimate goal is to enhance brand awareness and attract new customers.
6. We will try our best to interact with each customer's message in the most friendly tone. If we received angry comments, we contact them by private message, try to understand the reason for their dissatisfaction, and provide solution, usually discounts or a free buffet.
7. I have no experience with TikTok, it is something new to me
8. Not sure... That's why I hope to know more about this platform through your work.
9. I will probably enter the platform, although I don't know much about it. After all, new social platforms are worth trying to keep up with the times.
10. First of all, TikTok is a quite new social platform. We don't know much about it, and we don't know how to start with it. Secondly, time and resources is needed to plan for the activities. So, a simple guide to learn about TikTok marketing will be very useful for us.

Appendix 2. Interview with Itsudemo's marketing manager (benchmarking restaurant)

Q1: When did you start to do marketing on TikTok?

We started the Tiktok account in the year 2022, which is this year.

Q2: Do you get any help from external professional marketers for doing TikTok? Or are you managing the business account by yourself or by an internal team?

Yes, we are currently using external professionals to manage our Tiktok account. However, we are considering running the Tiktok in-house and putting it on the schedule already.

Q3: Why did you decide to do TikTok marketing for Itsudemo? What possibilities do you know of using TikTok marketing?

As we all know, Tiktok is one of the promising social media platforms, which is growing users continuously. We want to use the platform to reach more audiences. And integrate with other digital methods to boost sales. (Ultimate goal)

Q4. How do you see the online presence of your business?

I believe that every platform needs time to show the result, but also to present the results will acquire a comprehensive plan of collaboration with multiple platforms' support.

Q5. What's your purpose in doing social media marketing?

1. brand exposure
2. brand image
3. customer community
4. boost sales

Q6. What kind of brand image do you want to build for Itsudemo on social media? Is TikTok your priority platform on social media?

Throughout the social media, we would like to present our brand personality of:

1. We care about product quality
2. We have our company culture
3. We are a brand with a vivid personality

INS and Fb are our priority platforms.

Q7. What kind of content works the best on TikTok to reach new audiences? And what doesn't work?

Based on our recent content, educational posts have the best views. However, based on my study the most popular contents of Tiktok are in those categories (Which apply to us):

1. Challenge
2. Educational
3. Influencer
4. Tutorial

Q8. How do you interact with your customers/ followers on TikTok?

Our content is most educational posts, the external partner has a person running our community that the person is responsible for interacting with our audiences.

Q9. What are the challenges of doing TikTok marketing?

To make a hit video that can convert to sales.

Q10. What are the differences between doing marketing on TikTok and other social media channels (Instagram/ Facebook)?

1. I would say budget.
2. On top of that, I need to create a fine video that requires more resources. - Energy spending

Q11. How long does it take to create a video post on TikTok, from planning to completion of the video?

Our external partner will spend about 3 weeks drafting the script, planning, shooting, and editing it before posting it.

Q12. What is your monthly budget for TikTok marketing?

Over 2k.

Q13. Have you run TikTok paid ads before? Or do you have any plans to invest in TikTok paid ads in the future?

Yes, we are using paid ads now to boost views and gain more followers.

Appendix 3. TikTok marketing guide for buffet restaurant



TABLE OF CONTENTS	
01	TikTok interface A brief introduction of the user interface and step-by-step guidance on switching to a business account
02	Target audience Identifying your audience demographics
03	Marketing budget & goals & metrics SMART goals based on Haru's needs and key metrics to track
04	TikTok algorithm The most important elements contributed in the TikTok algorithm
05	Marketing methods Suggested TikTok marketing methods for Haru, and important rules of dos and don't
06	Content suggestions Suggested restaurant content ideas
07	Content creation tips Tips for creating viable TikTok content and a list of hashtag suggestions made for Haru
08	Inspiration sources Suggested marketing methods and important notes
09	TikTok marketing checklist Important notes on TikTok marketing

01

Introduction of TikTok interface






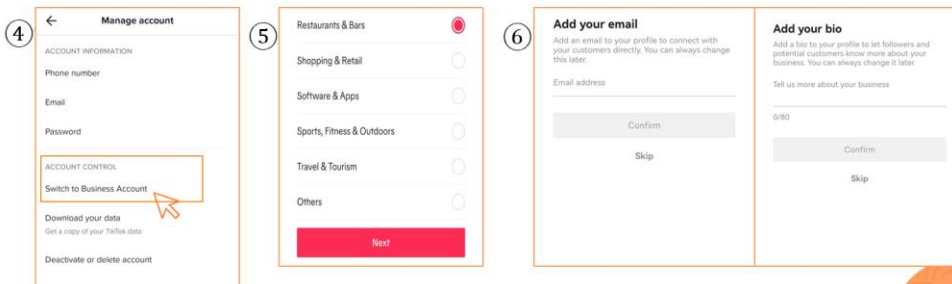
TikTok's interface consists of the following main feeds:

1. **LIVE** is a feature that allows users to interact with content creators in real time by commenting and sending virtual gifts during live streaming.
2. **Following** is the landing page showing users the newest videos published by their followed accounts.
3. **For You** is TikTok's default landing page when launching the app, where recommended videos automatically play with sound-on.
 - The TikTok algorithm customizes this landing page with unique content based on each individual's interests and in-app interactions.
4. **Q=Discover feed** is for searching specific content and exploring trending hashtags and soundtracks.
5. **Friends** is a tab showing a user's connected friends' in-app activities.
6. **+ button** navigates to the video recording/ editing page.
7. **Inbox** shows all the in-app activities and notifications
 - E.g. received messages, video likes, comments, new followers etc.
8. **Profile** is the page for checking account summaries and editing privacy settings.
 - E.g. total count of followers and received likes
 - Ps. A Business or Creator account can access the Analytics tool in this page

01-1

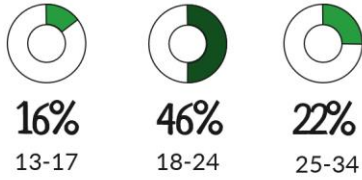
Switch to a Business account

1. Open Profile page. 
2. Find the icon with three bars in the upper right corner. 
3. Click on **Settings and Privacy** and then **Manage account**.
4. Click on **Switch to Business Account** on ACCOUNT CONTROL.
5. Choose the category of **Restaurants & Bars**.
6. Add your **business email** and a descriptive and concise **bio** then it is ready. 

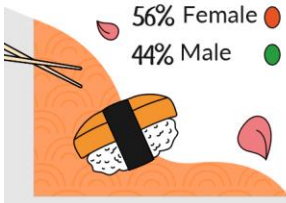


02 TikTok audience

Age



Gender



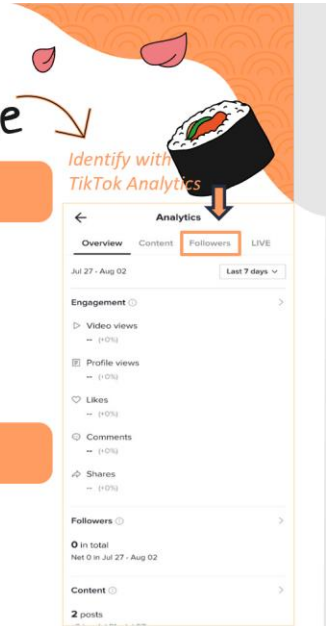
Haru's audience

Demographics

Age: 15-35
 Location: Helsinki
 Income: middle-class

Profiles

- Foodie & sushi lover
- Pescatarian
- Asian culture enthusiast
- Socially active



Further identify with Instagram Insights, Facebook Page Insights

03 Resource & Budget

- Be prepared for the fact that TikTok marketing is time-consuming, as engaging video content production requires significantly more time, and trends are changing all the time.
 - For reference: a short video could take up to 3 weeks from drafting the script, planning for storytelling, filming, and editing
- Re-allocate the marketing budget on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok according to Haru's resource
- Remember to make good use of TikTok in-app editing features, as they can help the company in saving time and money on video production



03-1 SMART marketing objectives

- Achieve monthly _ follower growth
- Reach the accumulated video likes of _ by January 2023
- Reach the engagement rate of _ % in TikTok in December 2022



These objectives support the long-term goals of **increasing brand awareness** and **building a connection** with the online audience.



03-2

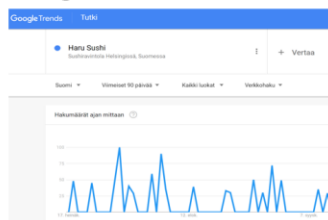
Metrics for brand awareness

In-app Analytics tool

- Engagement rate: $((\text{likes} + \text{comments} + \text{shares}) \div \text{video views}) \times 100$
- Profile views
- Follower growth

Other

- Google Analytics: new users, page views
- Google Trends: brand name search volume





03-2 Metrics for audience engagement

In-app Analytics tool

- Engagement rate:
 - $((\text{likes} + \text{comments} + \text{shares}) \div \text{video views}) \times 100$
- Follower growth
- Trending videos (Content tab)

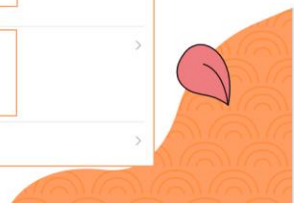
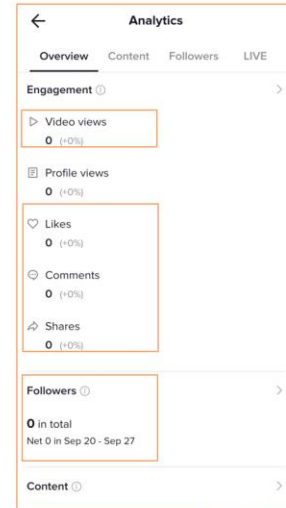
Individual video post analytics

- Average watch time
- Watched full video

Total Play Time	--
Average Watch Time	--
Watched full video	--
New followers	--

Other

- Mentions (@) from other users



04

TikTok algorithm

Not interested in...

- × The number of **followers** of an account
- × The number of **accumulated likes** on a profile

Interested in...


- ✓ Prioritizing local content
- ✓ **User interests expressed through in-app interactions:** watched full videos, likes, comments, followed an account
- ✓ **Video information signals:** sounds, hashtags, captions, effects

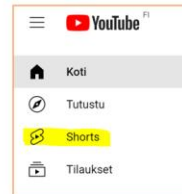
- ✓ Also users' **Device and account settings:** language preferences, country settings, and categories of interest (food, travel, sport, etc.) selected as a new user

05



Marketing strategy

- Organic marketing + localized strategy
- Publish a short video every week **NEW**
- Stand out with a hilarious tone of voice
- Actively engage with the audience and respond to comments, reviews, and other messages 
- Cross-post videos on other channels (Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube)



05-1

Tone of voice

Recommended tone of voice:

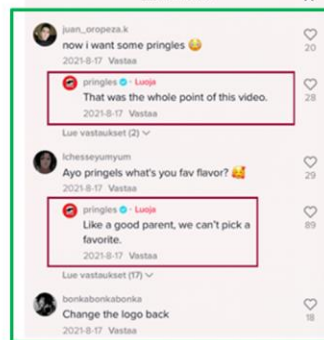
- hilarious
- cheerful
- playful
- youthful

Because...

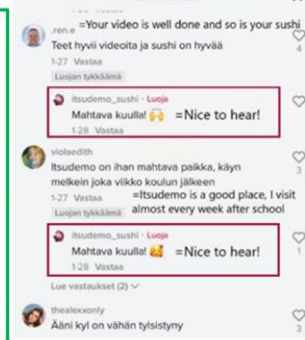
TikTok revolves
around HUMOR



229 kommenttia



43 kommenttia





05-2 TikTok marketing DOs and DON'T

✓ Dos

- ✓ Learn about your audience
- ✓ Be humorous and authentic
- ✓ Jump on trends that fit with the brand
- ✓ Provide useful and value-added content
- ✓ Provide business transparency
- ✓ Quality over quantity
- ✓ Social listening

✗ Don't

- ✗ Be too serious
- ✗ Post solely static images
- ✗ Make sales-oriented content
- ✗ Forget to interact with the audience



06 Content suggestions

Educational

- Cultural-related
- Dining etiquette

Tutorials

- Sushi bowl, sushi handroll, sushi rice, wakame salad, etc.
- Cooking tips
- New menu dishes

UGC

- E.g. a video made from a collection of user-generated pictures

BTS

- Kitchen operations
- Staff interview
- Warehouse tour

Funny

- TikTok effects + funny memes related to the business
- Duets (e.g. Cook with me)
- Stiches

Other

- Contest & giveaway
- Student exclusive discount
- Showcasing new culinary creation
- Dining experience (e.g. aspects of hygiene, ambiance, human connection)
- Business transparency (e.g. origins of ingredients)
- ASMR cooking

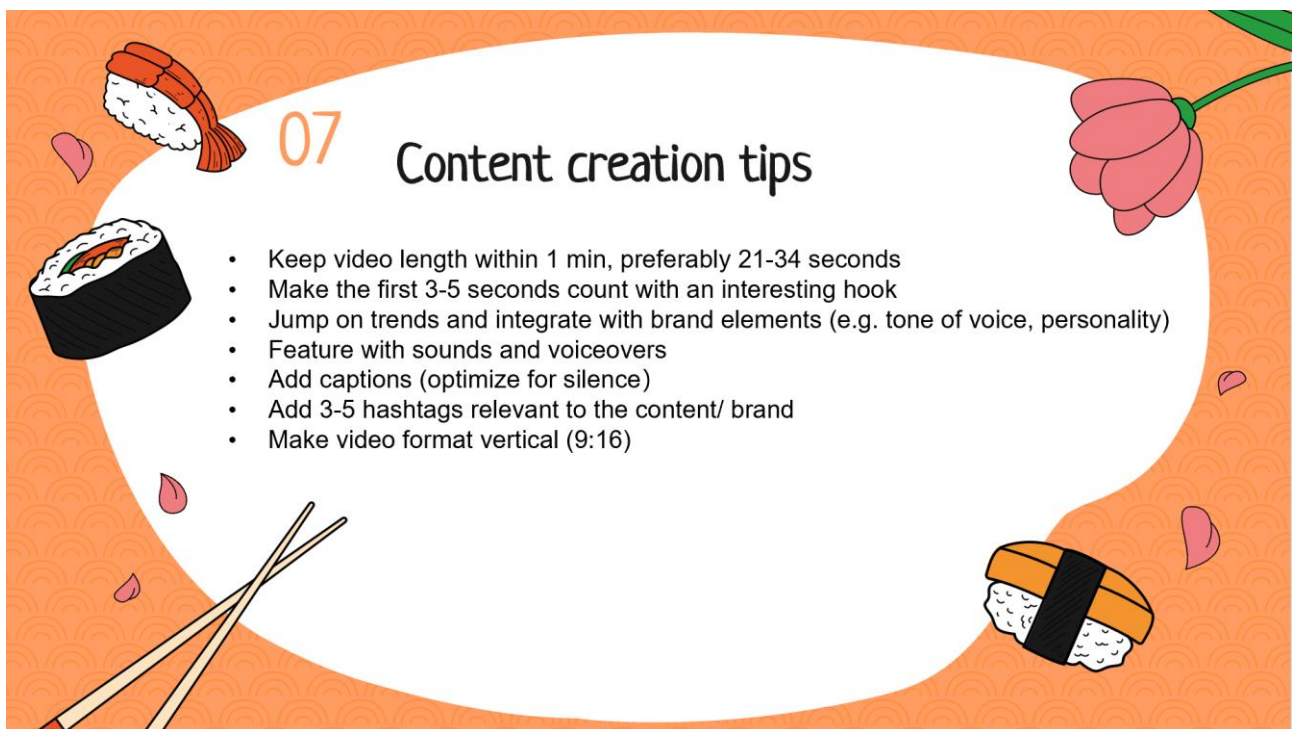




06-1 Hashtag suggestions

#harusushi #sushi #restaurant #homeofsushiexperts
 #Helsinki #Freda #Annankatu #allyoucaneat
 #foodie #food #tiktokfood #FoodTok #FoodTikTok
 #cooking #recipe #tips
 #howto #behindthescenes #BTS
 #salmon #avocado #vegan

 Addition recommended tool: [HASHTAG GENERATOR FOR TIKTOK](#)



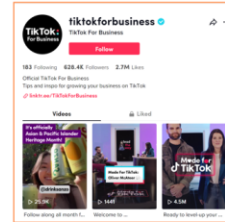
07 Content creation tips

- Keep video length within 1 min, preferably 21-34 seconds
- Make the first 3-5 seconds count with an interesting hook
- Jump on trends and integrate with brand elements (e.g. tone of voice, personality)
- Feature with sounds and voiceovers
- Add captions (optimize for silence)
- Add 3-5 hashtags relevant to the content/ brand
- Make video format vertical (9:16)



08 Locating content inspirations

- 💡 For You page
- 💡 Discover page
- 💡 TikTok Analytics tool
- 💡 TikTok Creators: e.g. @emilymariko, @tiktokforbusiness
- 💡 Direct or indirect competitors' accounts: e.g. @itsudemo_sushi, @hankosushi, @pfchangs, @mcdonaldssuomi
- 💡 [TikTok Creative Center](#)
- 💡 Google Trends



08-1 Locating trending hashtags

In-app

- For You page**
 - check the hashtags used in other trending videos
- Discover page**
 - search for content/product keywords



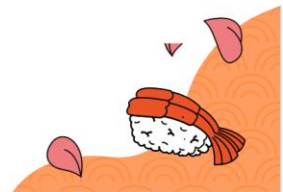
#sushi

Other sources

HASHTAG GENERATOR FOR TIKTOK

#sushi hashtags for TikTok

Most popular TikTok sushi hashtags	OVERALL POSTS	OVERALL VIEWS
#sushi #sushilove #food #japanesefood #sushilovers #sushim #foodporn	45.5 THOUSAND	412.9 MILLION
#sushie #sushitv #sushilover #sushim #sushi #sushitop		



08-2

Locating trending sounds

In-app

For You page

- check the sounds and music used in other trending videos

Discover page

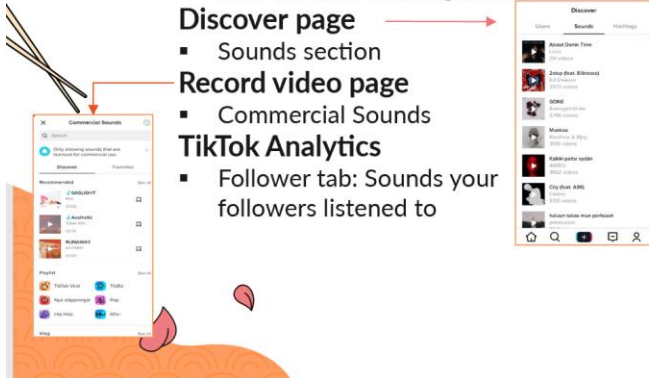
- Sounds section

Record video page

- Commercial Sounds

TikTok Analytics

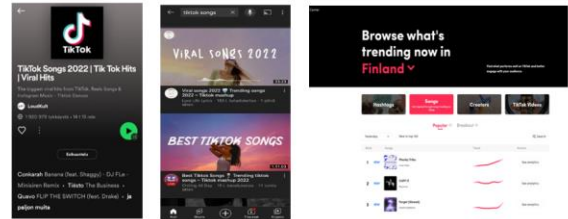
- Follower tab: Sounds your followers listened to



Other sources

Spotify YouTube

- Search terms like "TikTok hits", "TikTok trending sounds", "TikTok viral hits" etc.



And [TikTok Creative Center](#)

09

TikTok marketing checklist

- Understand your audience
- Be humane and approachable
- Be responsive to comments and feedback
- Post new content regularly
- Keep track of metrics and goals
- Social Listening (comments, reviews, brand mentions)
- Provide as much transparency as possible about the business
- Promote outside the platform