



# Healthcare and the Fastest Growing Social Platform: **TikTok**

October 2023

# THE FASTEST GROWING PLATFORM AT A GLANCE



TikTok users spend an average of 26 hours per month on the platform

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TikTok now has 1.7 billion monthly active users (2023)

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167 million TikTok videos watched in an internet minute

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U.S. TikTok influencers at 18% have a higher engagement rate than the global average

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62% of U.S. TikTok users are women

# TIKTOK IS NOT JUST A GEN Z HUB

**It's also a unique healthcare ecosystem with its own intricacies and benefits.**

## Executive Summary

- TikTok is currently the fastest growing social network
- The platform is steadily growing popular among HCPs and patients, providing them with a fresh format to share their unique points of view
- The platform offers a natural way to complement Pharma's other marketing outreach efforts, including:
  - HCP Influencers
  - Patients Advocates
  - Paid Media Opportunities
  - Creative Research
  - Disease State Awareness and Unbranded Programs
  - Corporate Brand Awareness
- It's a low-risk proposition: On TikTok the content format is similar to other video-based platforms and the compliance approach would be similar to other social media programs.





# WHAT IS TIKTOK

TikTok is a social media platform for creating, **sharing and discovering short-form videos**. Users upload videos ranging from a few seconds to a few minutes in length to express themselves and engage with the community. They often incorporate music and creative editing effects.

Its rapid-pace format became famous for dance challenges and inventive lip-sync routines. But creators are using the platform to **discuss more complex issues as well**, with subjects ranging from healthcare to social accountability.

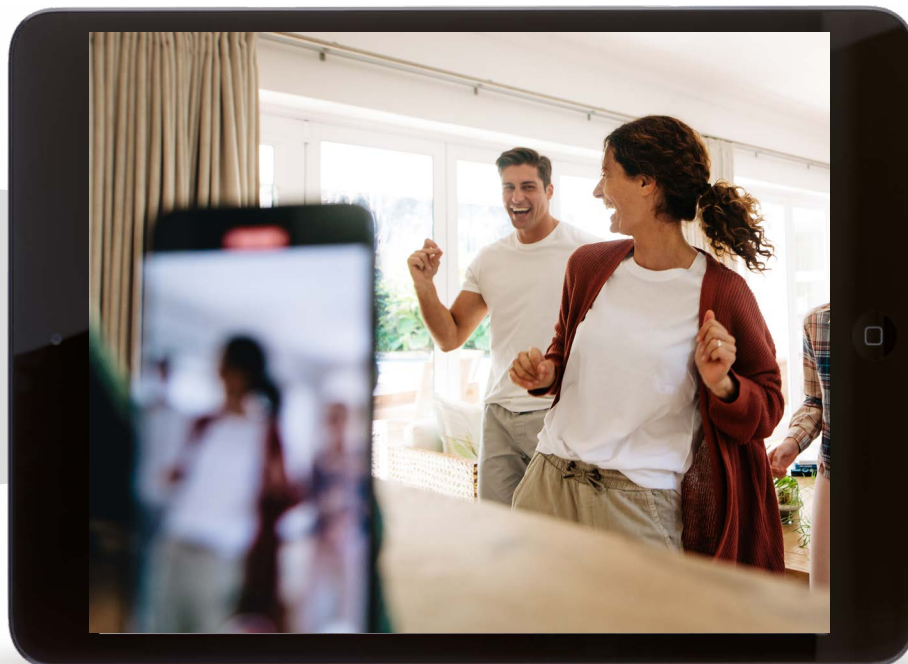
TikTok's surging popularity can be attributed to how different it is from other social media platforms. It stands out because it engages in an entertainment space rather than a lifestyle space. As such, it invites anyone to be a creator.

TikTok's content algorithm is still "pure" and has not been tainted by trolls, political bickering, and other unwanted content.

Unlike limited-circle communication apps like Snapchat, TikTok provides a truly creative outlet for users to share their content widely. And contrary to the perfect aesthetic cultivated by Instagram, TikTok offers a genuine user experience that encourages you to be yourself. Here, users celebrate talent and diversity in a way other platforms do not.

## A Little History:

TikTok is a story of two apps. The Chinese company, ByteDance, released a video-sharing social network app called Douyin in 2016. They named the international version of their app TikTok when they released it in 2017 to a global market. In 2018, TikTok merged with Musical.ly, an app that allows users to create lip-syncing music videos. This merger catapulted the app into a global powerhouse – combining Musical.ly's impressive music library with TikTok's short-form videos, inventive editing, and creative filters. The rest is history.



# **IT'S BIGGER THAN YOU THINK. NOT JUST FOR THE “COOL KIDS” ANYMORE, TIKTOK IS GROWING IN MAINSTREAM POPULARITY AMONG BRANDS.**

As with any newer social media platform, some companies are taking a wait-and-see approach before deciding how they want to engage with audiences. Currently over 8% of the Fortune 500 brands are on the platform, but the number is slowly growing. Amazon, Apple and Walmart are already using it.

**A snapshot of adopters who are laying the foundation  
for other brands to follow:**

# HOW ARE BRANDS USING TIKTOK?



Famous for signature sweet rolls, **King's Hawaiian** came to TikTok to increase awareness for their Slider Sunday initiative. The bread brand partnered with Mavrck, a badged TikTok Creative Partner, to source creators and produce high-quality content for the platform. The creators helped turn King's Hawaiian Sliders into a weekly ritual through a series of videos that appealed to a variety of audiences. Recipes like s'mores sliders, meatball sliders, and aloo tikki sliders were shared using #foodtok, and resonated with mouth-watering results in the foodie community.



**Ally Financial** realized a surprising number of Americans had no idea how to make their money work for them. To remedy this, the financial services advisor sought to educate Millennial and Gen Z audiences about the complicated topic in a fun and engaging way. The brand collaborated with TikTok music creators on a crowd-sourced hip hop track, dropping catchy beats that amped up financial literacy.



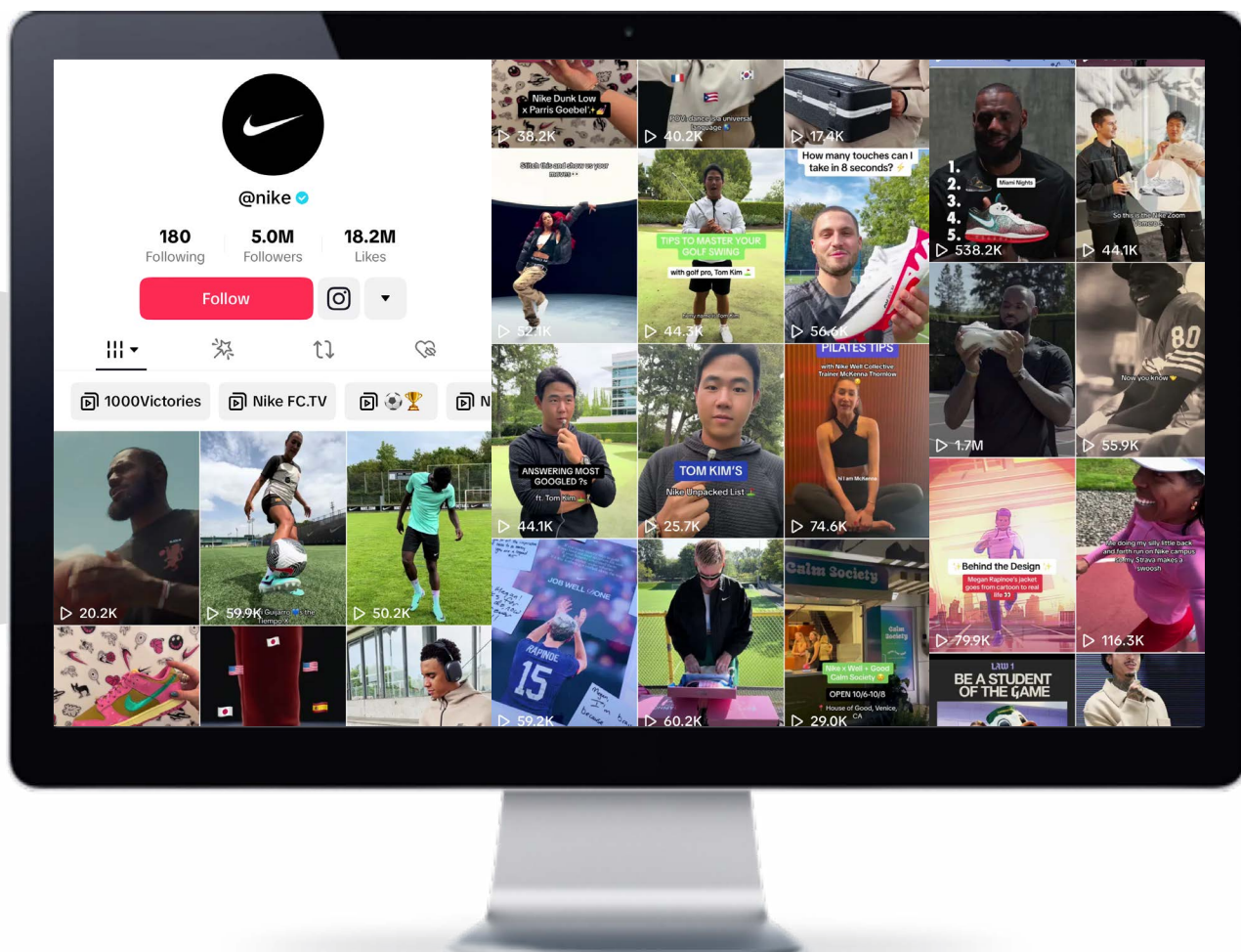
**Volkswagen** wanted to introduce the all-electric ID.4 SUV to an audience who may not have electric vehicles on their radar. TikTok creator Kurt Schneider is known for bringing inanimate objects to life through sound. For this campaign, he incorporated features of the vehicle – locks, beeps, clicks – and turned them into a captivating tune that became the cornerstone soundtrack of the vehicle. The promotion reached over 23 million users, with custom sound immediately capturing viewers' attention.



Courting love from the next generation of sneakerheads, **eBay** launched a branded hashtag challenge leveraging a custom song the brand commissioned featuring the lyrics, "got my sneaks on eBay." #LaceEmUp invited the community to slide on their favorite kicks and show off their unique dance moves. The challenge inspired over half a million people to join in – and positioned eBay as the place they'd buy sneakers in the future.



**Biohaven Pharmaceuticals** created Nurtec® ODT, a tablet approved to treat and prevent migraines. On TikTok, the brand used a playful cat to showcase the ease of using the medication. Age and interest targeting was utilized to engage like-minded users, capturing their curiosity and retargeting them with additional content.

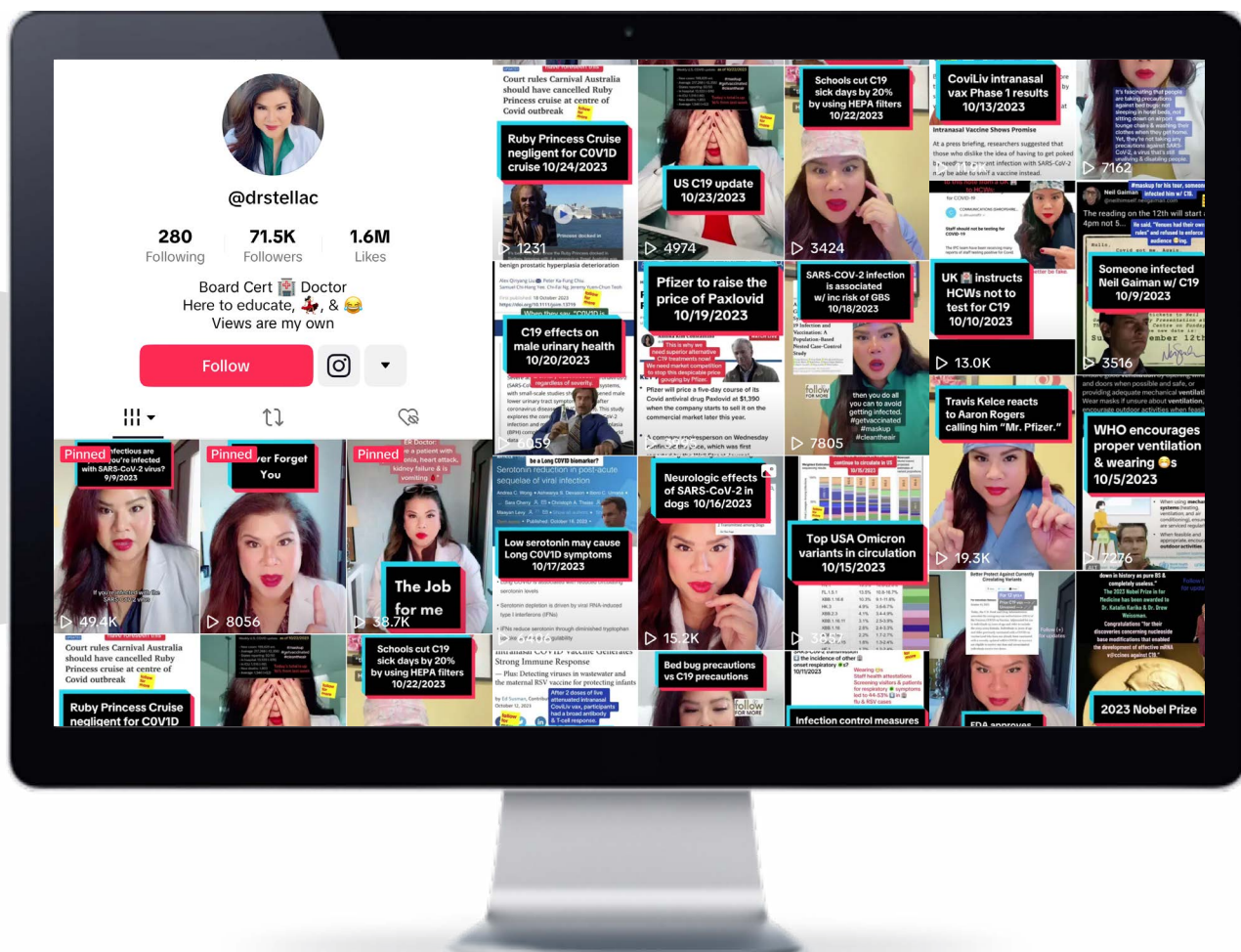


**Nike:** Building on the inspirational spirit of their brand, Nike uses the platform to **promote lifestyle tips, workout ideas, and fashion advice.**





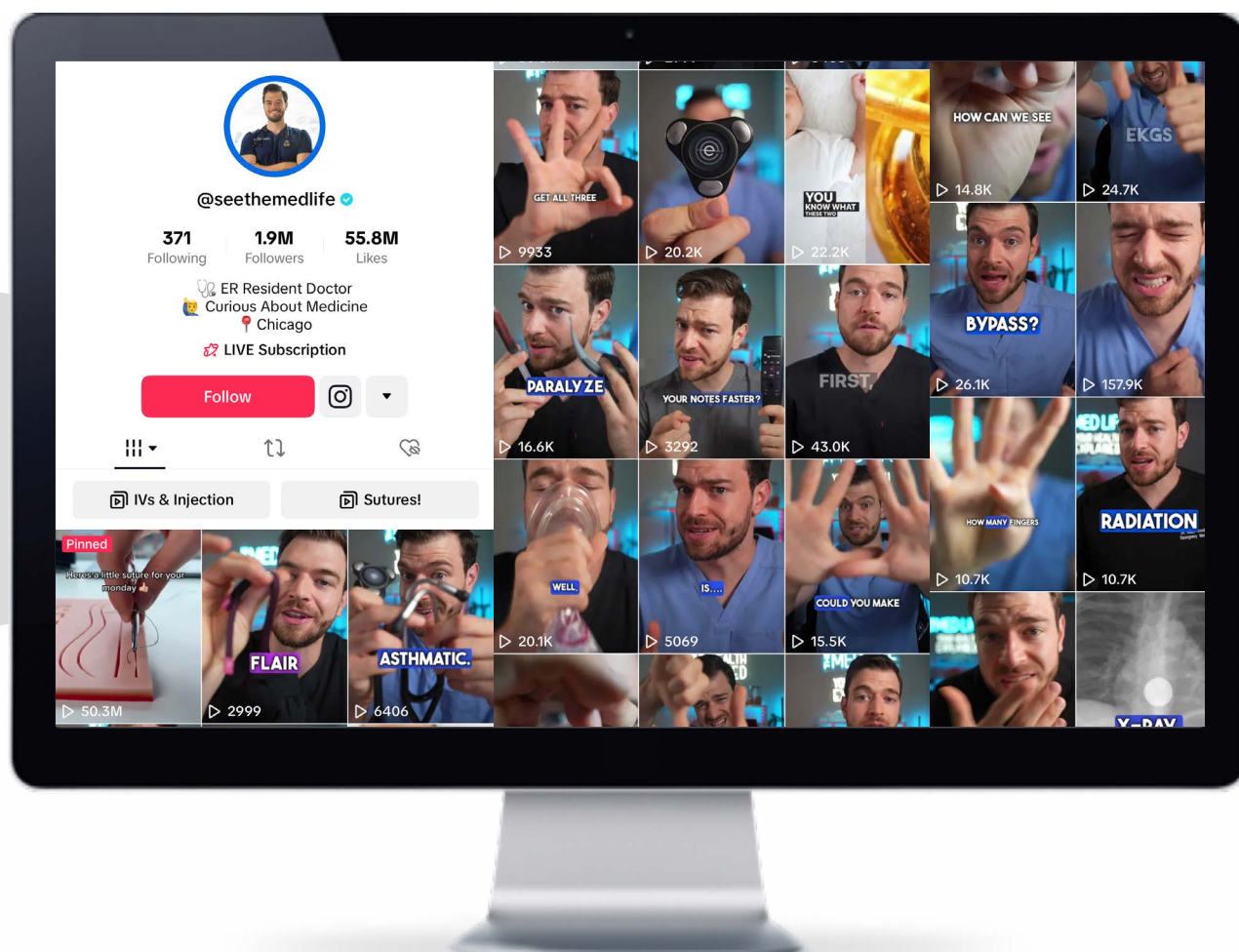
# THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY IS ALREADY ENGAGING



Dr. Stella prides herself on “education with dance and laughs.” She illuminates users on medical issues while grooving to some of the hottest songs on the platform. [@drstellac](#)



# THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY IS ALREADY ENGAGING

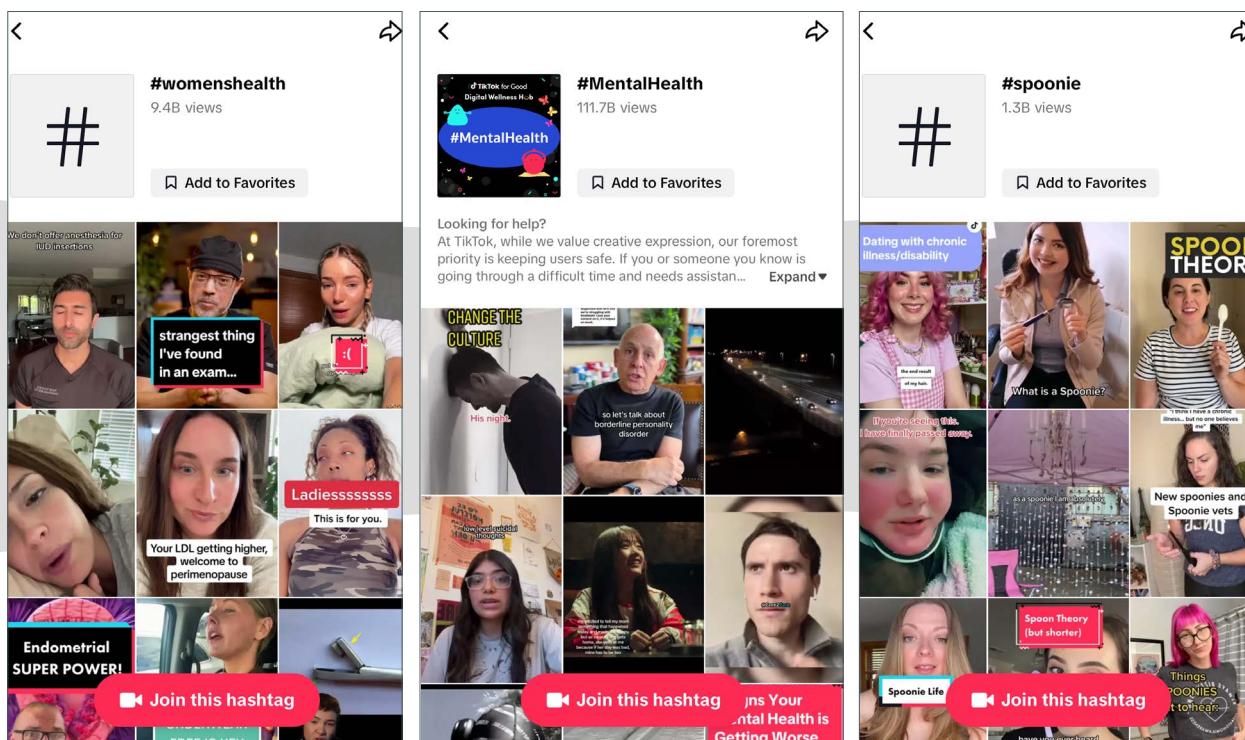


With nearly two million followers on TikTok, **Dr. Adam Goodcoff** is a resident who shares tidbits documenting what really goes on in the ER. He's happy to field random questions from his fans, too. [@seethemedlife](https://www.tiktok.com/@seethemedlife)

TikTok has already forged a number of active patient communities through an awareness of shared experiences.

Patients, advocates, and caregivers are using the platform to tell their stories and express their points of view.

These communities engage and gather through the use of hashtags, much like Twitter and Instagram. They also stage “challenges” for users, encouraging them to partake in an activity to bring awareness to a cause. The challenges often invite creative content creation such as dancing or lipsyncing.



## Women's Health

**#WomensHealth has over 9.1B views on TikTok.**

The platform is fostering dialogue among the community around a wide range of issues related to women's health. Topics include gynecological issues, STD awareness, mental health and much more.

## Mental Health

**#MentalHealth has over 108.3B views on TikTok.**

The platform has become a destination for groups to refuge and discuss challenges related to mental health. The community has galvanized around a variety of topics, including teen bullying, workforce dynamics, and self-care.

## Chronic Illness (Spoonie)

**#Spoonie has over 1.3B views on TikTok.**

“Spoonie” is a term coined by chronic illness blogger, Christine Miserandino. She used spoons to demonstrate how much energy a person with a chronic illness has each day, and how much is used doing simple tasks like washing or getting dressed. Individuals are using the platform to bring awareness around their chronic illnesses and the challenges they face in performing daily activities.

# WHY IS TIKTOK SO POPULAR?

**This is a complex question but it can be answered with two theories.**

**Psychological Theory:** TikTok is highly immersive and captures users' attention very quickly by targeting them with their favorite types of content through its algorithm.

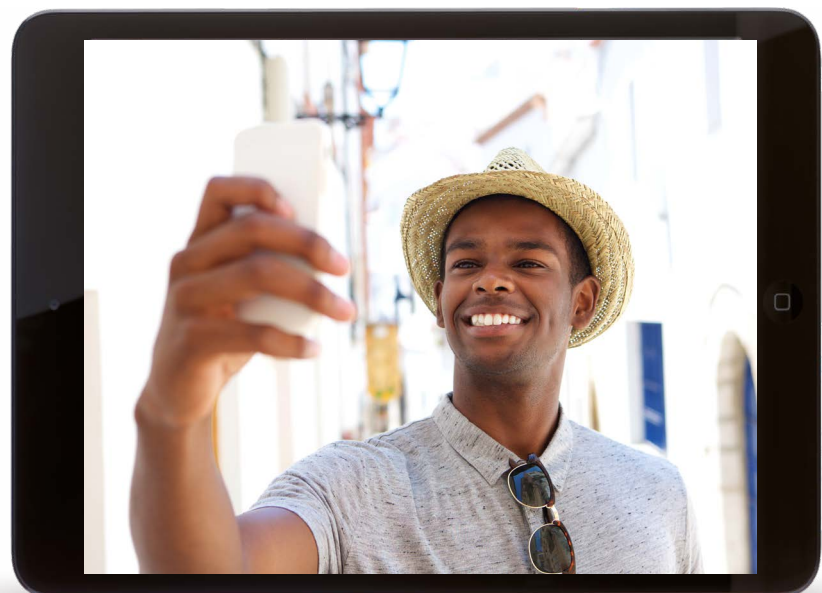
- **Simplicity at the core:** Simple swipe interactions are all you need.
- **Ease of navigation:** The content takes the whole viewport, while secondary content (creator's name, description, music, and reactions icons) are smartly positioned in the thumb access zone.
- **Stats tell the story:** The number of views, likes, comments, and shares allow the user to form an opinion about the video quickly. The more likes it has, the more likely it's worth viewing.
- **The infinite feed:** Users can swipe for interesting content almost eternally. It's the same variable-rewards principle slot machines use: You don't know what you'll get next, so you keep on swiping.

**Gratification Theory:** TikTok moves beyond passive content consumption to active participation.

- Creators yearn to expand their own social networks.
- Creators seek fame through engaging content, resulting in a plethora of entertaining videos for viewers.
- The platform consistently rewards self-expression and creativity.
- The algorithm is still pure and advertising has value to viewers.

**LiveWorld's POV:** The stickiness of TikTok is based on its unique feature set and the instant gratification it provides – resulting in more creators and brands flocking to the platform.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 the platform provided a perfect mix: distracting content and very little divisive politics. Unlike other social platforms, it offered an uplifting experience at a time when people were looking for an escape.

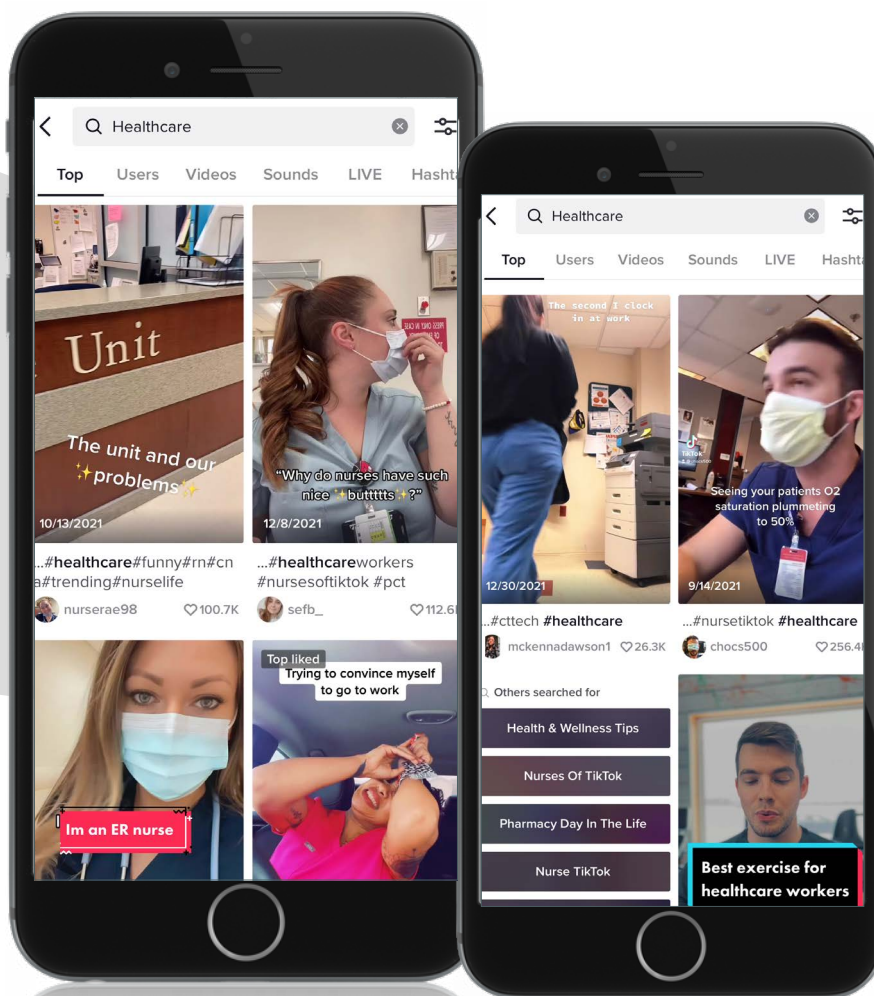




# WHY SHOULD HEALTHCARE AND PHARMA CARE?

TikTok affords the perfect format for pharma brands to serve up **simple, bite-sized information to help educate users about complex topics**.

- Users on TikTok are forging communities by providing their unique points of view of living with a given condition. Pharma has an opportunity to recognize and celebrate these communities and creators through resources and targeted content.
- TikTok is changing the role of social media during the diagnosis path with patients and caregivers using insights from creators during their HCP office visits
- Nurses, MDs, and other HCPs are already using the platform to share important information with their audiences.
- While Instagram and Snapchat still specialize in the under-35 audience, TikTok even though it trends younger (currently Gen-Zers) the platform is growing among Millennials and Gen-Xers.





# TIKTOK OFFERS MANY UNIQUE BENEFITS FOR HEALTHCARE & PHARMA

## HCP and Patient Influencers

Currently the greatest potential for pharma marketing is unbranded content through HCP influencers and patient advocates. By identifying and working with a range of health care influencers on the platform, we have a powerful opportunity: share educational messages across a variety of therapeutic areas in an authentic, accessible and potentially high-reach way.

## Paid Media Opportunities

TikTok offers brands a wide range of paid media tactics ranging from brand

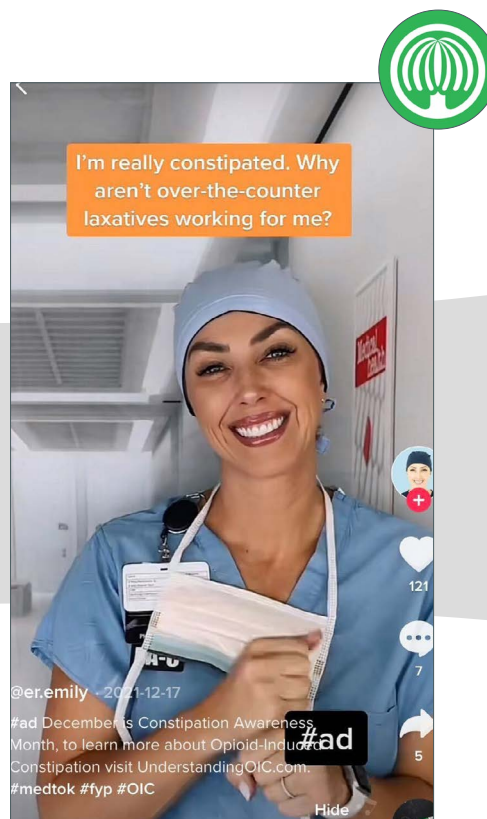
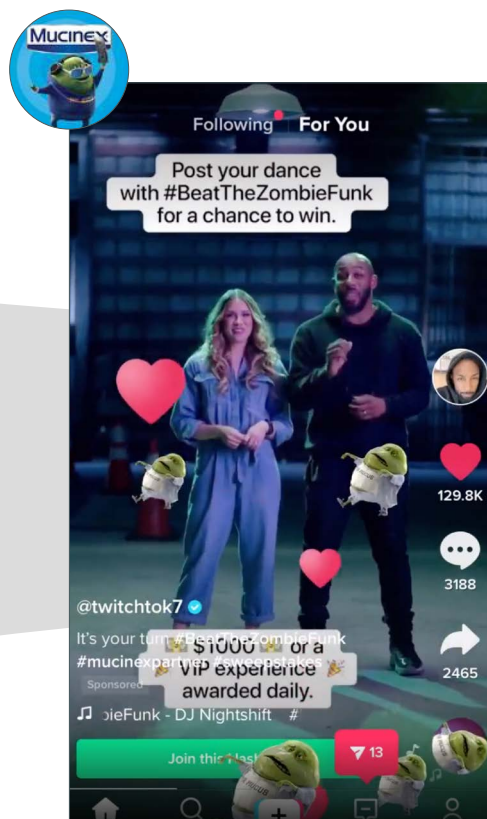
takeovers, where ads appear when viewers open the app, to sponsored hashtag challenges which are promoted challenges to engage viewers and drive participation and awareness

## Creative Research

Pharma has an opportunity to leverage examples outside of its walls. A benefit of having presence on the platform is observing the high-performing content of other participants and deciding what to incorporate into your own brand content strategy.



## Case studies illustrate how healthcare and pharma are already engaging with TikTok audiences.



**Mucinex:** To raise awareness of its Nightshift product line with Gen Z, Mucinex created a Branded Hashtag Challenge utilizing their cartoon mascot, Mr. Mucus. Fully embracing platform capabilities, Mucinex placed TikTok's first-ever Branded Effect in the OTC category at the center of their campaign. The result: tens of thousands of TikTokers from all walks of life celebrated their own zombie moves with Mr. Mucus to #BeatTheZombieFunk.

**Salix:** Through a campaign timed to coincide with Constipation Awareness Month, Salix Pharmaceuticals partnered five leading healthcare workers who are active on TikTok. The brand leveraged the lively short-form videos to provide education on several types of constipation, including opioid-induced constipation.

Case studies illustrate how healthcare and pharma are already engaging with TikTok audiences.

8 million  
Invisalign  
smiles



**Invisalign:** The brand partnered with TikTok creators to share their authentic experiences with Invisalign treatment. They invited each creator to produce content that felt natural to their own style and voice while sharing their own unique perspective. The campaign was bolstered by In-Feed Video and Spark Ads.

CeraVe



**CeraVe:** Seeing sales explode overseas primarily due to the popularity of its products on TikTok, CeraVe amplified their campaign across multiple channels in the Australian market. To increase brand recall and make use of TikToks audio features, the team developed a catchy jingle for the TopView promotion that included the brand's name. This was coupled with additional content from popular TikTok creators.

**LiveWorld's POV:** TikTok is gaining popularity with players within the healthcare ecosystem. HCPs are harnessing the platforms to become Digital Opinion Leaders, while patients and caregivers are using the platform to form connections with like-minded communities. Furthermore, generational changes in transparency are normalizing living with medical conditions – making TikTok the perfect platform to foster dialogue and authentic engagement.



# WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PHARMA?

The FDA mandates how pharma brands can advertise across all channels including social media.

Prescription drug advertisements must present **a fair balance** between information relating to risk and information relating to benefit. In addition, risk information must be presented with a prominence and readability reasonably comparable to claims about drug benefits.

Prescription drug advertisements must contain risk information in each part, as necessary, to qualify any representations and/or suggestions made in that part about the drug. The risk information may be concise if supplemented by a prominent reference to the presence and location elsewhere in the advertisement of a more complete discussion.

Throughout the years, pharma marketers have navigated how they present fair-and-balanced information to audiences on social media.

TikTok's short-form video format may seem like an attractively novel platform – but marketing should understand that launching on TikTok is very similar to engaging on other platforms:

- TikTok allows videos up to 10 minutes in length; This is ample time to present all required information including ISI using a prerecorded post.
- TikTok sponsored content features a click-through to a website; Brands can link out to brand.com with the appropriate information.
- TikTok has an ads API that can be used to moderate comments and monitor for Account Executives via monitoring platforms such as the LiveWorld Software. Note: The organic content API is in development and is not available yet.

**LiveWorld POV:** The pharma industry is no stranger to video content on social media. So translating these proven approaches within TikTok's ecosystem means there is a low-risk entry to this promising platform while staying compliant.





# HOW CAN PHARMA GET INVOLVED ON TIKTOK?

## 5 Questions to ask prior to diving in:

- 1. How can TikTok help the brand reach its business objectives?** Consider the platform's reach and its demographics, and how that relates to fostering brand awareness and providing education or support to the intended audience.
- 2. How will the brand measure success on TikTok?** TikTok's views are auto-played and align to more standard video impression metrics, so brand managers can use standard engagement metrics to benchmark success.
- 3. How will TikTok be incorporated into the brand's content strategy?** Because TikTok is a dynamic social platform, brands need to consider how creating, publishing, and engaging with content on TikTok synergizes with content themes on their other social platforms.
- 4. What is the brand's policy around engagement and moderation?** Through the TikTok API, brands can moderate the platform to ensure they are compliant.
- 5. How often should the brand revisit its TikTok strategy?** The channel is evolving quickly. Adhering to a quarterly review is a good practice, allowing brands to access content themes, influencers, hashtags, and content choices.

## Select Opportunities to Test, Learn and Grow

**Partner with HCP and patient advocacy influencers to highlight how your brand's mission aligns with their goals.** Content on TikTok is seen as more authentic compared to other social sites. Viewers are flocking to the social platform to get real life POVs regarding creators' treatment journeys and be educated by HCPs.

**Use paid ads to bring awareness of your brand, utilizing longer TikTok videos to incorporate the needed ISI.** Pharma markets have already been creating compliant advertising on other social platforms. With TikTok's ability to host longer-form content, markets can ensure all FDA regulations are met.

**Launch a disease state awareness page on TikTok, educating users using quick-hit videos featuring graphics, music and kinetic text.** In addition to its pure algorithm, another reason for TikTok's stickiness is its ability to create engaging content using graphics and music. Harness these features to create "top 5 lists" or "truths and myths" videos, addressing topical questions related to disease state education.

# **FYI: THINGS CHANGE IN AN INTERNET MINUTE, ESPECIALLY ON SOCIAL MEDIA.**

To ensure you have the most up-to-date info about TikTok or any other social platform, please contact LiveWorld.

# ABOUT LIVELORLD

**LiveWorld is a digital agency and software company specializing in social media solutions that help companies build stronger customer relationships.** We provide consulting, strategy, and creative along with human agents, conversation management software, and chatbots for digital campaigns and social media programs.

Our solutions empower companies to deepen relationships with customers, professionals, patients and healthcare providers with emotion driven behavior change through conversations and campaigns with a human touch.



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