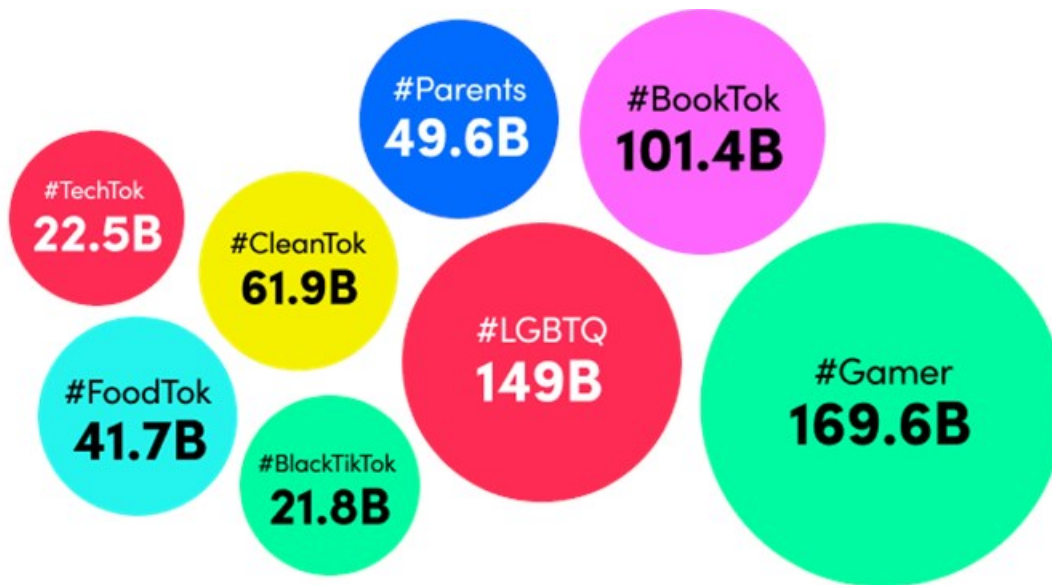


TikTok communities: Aligning with authentic connections in the digital space

By  Danette Breitenbach

10 Jul 2023

In 2010 it was the rise of search engines, and everything was set against a knowledge graph. Post 2010 saw the rise of the social channel, with everything set against a social graph. Now we are seeing the democratisation of content creation.



Source: © TikTok [TikTok](#) TikTok communities, such as BookTok with over 1.5 billion video views, offer brands the opportunity to reach consumers

Today's consumer consumes content relevant to them, leading to a content graph, so to reach the consumer brands have to understand what is relevant to consumers/users in terms of their passion and interest points.

This shift is so big, that of the big five social media platforms in South Africa, TikTok is now one of the most popular, according to the *South African Social Media Landscape 2023* study, recently released by brand intelligence consultancy Ornico and market research house, World Wide Worx.

"This shift has meant that anyone can, in their own right, become a creator. It has also led to the rise of *prosumers*, that is people who consume content, but at the same time produce content," says Greg Baille, sales lead for TikTok, speaking at the launch of the study.

Another shift is the one from influencers to creators. "Historically influencers have been based on popularity. Now the shift is into the creative world, where the impact is not popularity but expertise," explains Baille.



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SkinTok, FinTok and BookTok

While this has led to unique experiences for users, it has also led to the rise of community and community commerce on the platform, such as SkinTok, FinTok, and BookTok.

This, explains Baille, is when users connect around their passion points. “Essentially these communities are digital fireplaces being built out. We talk about world of worlds.

“For example, BookTok has over 1.5 billion video views and has revolutionised book sales across the globe.”

Brands can be part of these communities. Each community is an opportunity for brand marketers to connect their brand to a community where relevant.

"This can be through traditional marketing such as advertising (where the brand talks to their consumer), but if you go for this option, you need to crack the entertainment factor as 67% of TikTok users do not mind brand advertising if it is entertaining," says Baille.



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Opportunities for brands

The second opportunity is to talk through communities. “That is reaching consumers through the use of co-creators, and ultimately the community itself,” says Baille.

With almost 80% of Gen Zs ignoring and/or skipping advertisements completely, this is meaningful. “Brands can connect through the collaboration with creators which drives authenticity, trust, and relevance.

While there is the opportunity to co-create with creators, it goes beyond that to co-create with the community. “This creates community amplifications. This is when, for example, users review products that they use and like every day. As these grow, we see the rise of communities such as BookTok.”

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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