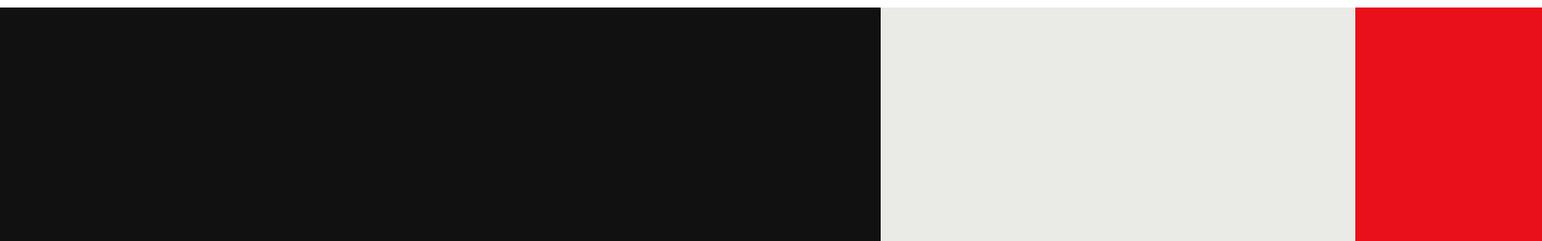


# What short-video marketers should know about UGC

Article



Before brands embark on short-video marketing, one of their key considerations should be the pros and cons of user-generated content (UGC). Marketers have had to learn to be comfortable with showing their brand messages in the midst of UGC on social media—and that's been harder than ever, thanks to the recent rise in negativity and misinformation on

some platforms. But to excel in the short-video format, especially on TikTok, marketers must also be willing to tap ordinary users for inspiration, participation, and viral distribution.

**Inspiration:** Trends pop up quickly in short-video venues. Whether it's a viral dance move, a meme, or food-preparation techniques like tortilla hacks and whipped coffee (also known as Dalgona coffee), it's important for marketers to keep an eye on what's bubbling up among users—and be prepared to act fast.

Sometimes the trend is applicable to many brands, like with Dalgona coffee. Spirits maker Pernod Ricard used social listening in short-video apps to not only spot the trend, but also discover that users were making “boozy” versions. That led the marketer to develop a series of social media posts (distributed on platforms other than TikTok due to users' ages) that highlighted how its brand Kahlúa paired well with the whipped coffee drink.

Other times, the trend is applied a lot more specifically. When a TikTok user posted a video in late 2020 asking General Mills' Cheerios brand to remake a classic TV commercial, the brand listened and responded with a heartwarming remake in which the original actors reprised their roles.

**Participation/distribution:** An essential component of marketing on TikTok is encouraging average users to participate in a marketing campaign by uploading their own versions of challenges, or by distributing videos of themselves playing with branded effects to others using the brand's hashtag.

This can leave some marketers with a conundrum. “I know exactly what I want to say [in marketing],” said Simon de Beauregard, global director at Pernod Ricard. But the challenge is, as he put it, “How much of it is brand-led content and how much of it is left to the consumer to create or adapt our content to whatever they want to say to the world?”

To best put UGC into action, short-video marketers should:

- **Use social listening to know when users are talking about your brand in their videos, and to keep tabs on new trends.** That's how e.l.f. Cosmetics got its start on TikTok. “We were seeing, without any effort or work from the brand side, that there was a pretty sizable organic presence already built on TikTok,” said Gayitri Budhreja, vice president of brand at e.l.f. “There were over 3 million posts against the hashtag #elfcosmetics that we had absolutely nothing to do with. So, we knew that there was appetite for our brand on this platform.”

- **Put guardrails in place to mitigate brand safety mishaps.** Handing over brand assets to consumers isn't easy, but the most successful companies in this space have been willing to do it. The key is to give consumers the tools in such a way that inspires them to be creative and positive—something e.l.f. has encouraged in its work with short videos. When it launched its #eyelipsface challenge in 2019, it combined a catchy, original song with a dance challenge awarding prizes to participants. “That’s a dimension that I think TikTok absolutely excels in, this idea of creating content that is participatory in nature,” Budhraj said.

To learn pro tips for TikTok, Instagram Reels, and other social entertainment platforms, Insider Intelligence subscribers can read our recent report:

Report by Debra Aho Williamson Mar 16, 2021

## Marketing in the Short-Video Landscape

