

TikTok

next



*Shaped by people, powered by AI*

**Irreplaceable  
Instinct**



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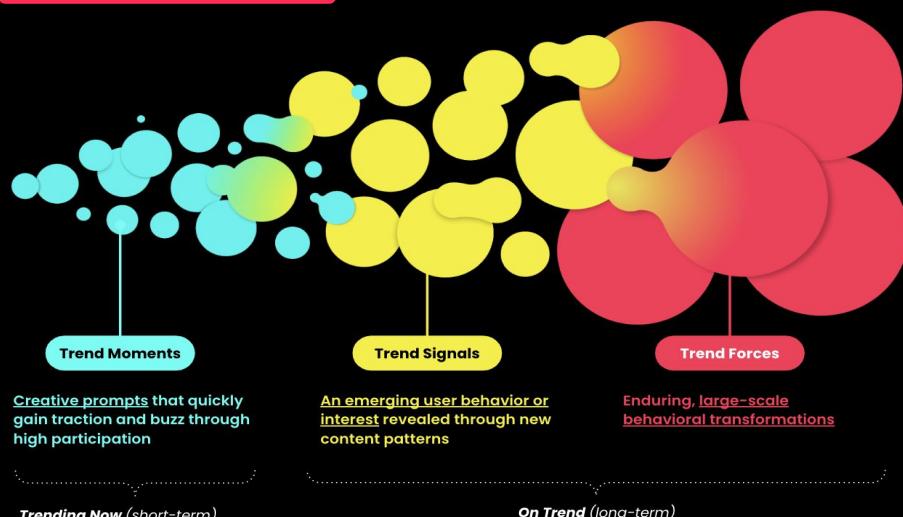
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## Foreword

When we first introduced TikTok's trend methodology, *Speeds of Culture*, in 2021, our platform was already rewriting how trends move. Our community's collective creativity spread signals faster than ever. We danced, we flopped, we made too much feta pasta, uncovered "who tf did I marry," and cackled trying to assign meaning to "6,7."

Today, culture has shifted into a new gear. It's layered. It's quick. It's shaped by people changing direction fast, and marketers urgently need the tools to stay on top of these trends as they manifest and evolve in real time. That's why we've rolled out new AI-powered tools to help marketers identify and capitalize on trends faster, digging into the stories, language, and behaviors that connect us.

This year's report looks and feels different. Using TikTok's own solutions, we analyzed trend data and collaborated with humans globally to understand how culture is evolving in real time and where it's headed next. It has a new name, a new design, and more answers than ever. We've distilled insights into three key user forecasts for the year ahead, complete with more angles, accelerated by TikTok and backed by data no one else can provide.

We're pulling back the curtain so marketers can use these same tools year-round to unlock insights for brands, agencies, creators, and even the most active TikTok comment warriors.

Let's get into it!

**Cassie Taylor**  
Global Head of Platform & Trends Marketing



2026 Trend Theme



# Irreplaceable Instinct

/ɪ(r)rə'pləsəb(ə)l 'instiNG(k)t/ noun; what technology can't replace: connection, curiosity, and presence, even when it's a little messy

Shaped by people, powered by AI

In 2025, when everything felt "too much," people found ways to cope such as quiet quitting, avoiding intensity, and running on autopilot. But in 2026, audiences will move away from passive living toward active creation, retraining their irreplaceable instinct with real curiosity, conviction, and care that connects us.

This year's trend signals were powered by AI, then shaped by human instinct. Our tools helped us surface patterns across countless videos, searches, comments, and communities. But the meaning, what people care about, where their attention goes, and how they spend their tight budgets, comes from understanding how our community on TikTok actually feels. We're rebalancing our lives, changes in economy, and another year of the "new normal". And we aren't backing down. It is in these moments of realignment that we rediscover what matters. TikTok is where people are exploring it all in true depth. This is where irreplaceable instinct shows up in real time.

That is our focus this year: helping marketers sharpen what makes them human. Tech like AI is not a replacement, it is a creative amplifier. When AI fuels the data and human instinct sets the direction, creativity does not just keep up with culture, it leads it.



# Shaped by People

## ***We turned data into trends using human insight***

We used our tools to analyze countless pieces of content, comments, and search queries. But the real magic came from the humans behind the data and the creativity on our platform. Partnering with brilliant minds around the world, we mapped the trajectory and velocity of today's trends to bring you our 2026 predictions.

How to grab our **attention**



### **Reali-TEA**

Fantasy is fading. In 2026, audiences will realign through the chaos to forge new realities together.

What we're **curious** about



### **Curiosity Detours**

In 2026, curiosity becomes the new currency as audiences dive deeper into new journeys of discovery.

What we **spend** our money on



### **Emotional ROI**

Impulse will lose to intention in 2026 as shoppers reward the brands that justify the why to buy, first.

# Powered by AI

## ***This year we moved faster by using our own tools***

Leveraging our own AI powered solutions, [TikTok One Insight Spotlight](#) and [TikTok Market Scope](#), we were able to test and validate our TikTok Next 2026 trend hypotheses against real-time data and brand interactions. We also explored high performing content across paid and organic with [TikTok One Content Suite](#), then workshopped new campaign ideas with [Symphony Creative Studio](#). With our full suite of solutions, marketers can move from trend insight to creativity within minutes.



**The Trends Shaping Your Industry Now**



**Turn Organic Talk Into Strategic Content**



**Multiply Your Creative Momentum**

### **TikTok Market Scope**

First-party analytics platform that turns audience behavior, content performance, and market trends into actionable insights. It unifies paid and organic data to show how people discover, talk about, and buy from brands on TikTok—helping marketers connect awareness to conversion in real time.

### **TikTok One Content Suite**

TikTok One Content Suite centralizes all of the organic content that mentions your brand—from creator marketing to TikTok Shop\* affiliate and earned media—into a single location, enabling you to seamlessly amplify genuine user-generated (UGC) content as Spark Ads.

### **Symphony Creative Studio**

Our suite of generative AI tools are designed to unlock creative potential at scale. Instead of repeating the same message, marketers can tell it in different formats, to engage audiences, prevent creative fatigue, and drive new behavior and sales.

# Reali-TEA

#ForcedToLockIn

#CultureForMe



#RealiTEA

#CommentReactStack

#SecondAccountFound

Trend Signal One

# Reali-TEA

Fantasy is fading. In 2026, audiences will realign through the chaos to forge new realities together.

Humanizing your brand goes beyond an AI avatar or chat bot, it's listening, learning, and sharing real stories that spill the tea, all the details, on how people actually feel. TikTok audiences have moved on from romanticizing life to embracing #TheGreatLockIn. We're no longer booking trips because we're only in our twenties once. We're hitting our thirties, forties, and fifties (kudos to TikTok's growing #MakeupOver50 family) and learning escapism isn't enough.

It's sharing Jet2Holiday horror stories, chaotic trip lore, and finding comfort in navigating life's chaos together that wins relatability and resonance. Quiet quitting has become loud cracking: setting boundaries, protecting peace, and chasing passions out loud. These are the moments that make us laugh, reflect, and feel human. TikTok is where creators and audiences celebrate the highs and embrace the lows together through humor, community, and connection.

**What's Done**

#delulu

#romanticizing

#digitalescapism

**What's Next**

Keywords powered by **TikTok One Insight Spotlight**

**#lockedin** 648k posts

From study to fitness goals, audiences are declaring a "lock in" mindset, building tribes of affirmation and accountability.



**#hygiene** 692k posts

Hear us out, we've seen a steady incline in creators sharing how they look and feel good by turning their everyday shower into a luxury maintenance ritual.

**#joblife** 235k posts

The fresh iteration of **#worklife** (5.2M posts), with more users returning to office or taking on non-traditional career paths, creators are sharing a day in their work lives to share new perspectives.



## Insight Learned

Audiences are turning the mundane into shared moments of humor, celebration, and relatability.

## What does this mean for brands?

### Marketer Takeaway

What part of your creative campaign can flex to meet the cultural "tea"? Use our tools to stay plugged into evolving language and aesthetics as you get closer to launch.

### Get Started

Go where real conversations happen. Tools like **TikTok One Insight Spotlight** and **TikTok Market Scope** track audience sentiment in real time. Listen, then create content that reflects it with empathy and wit.

**Pro Tip:** Routinely check "Vertical Insights" in TikTok Market Scope for a real-time look into the keywords, hashtags, creators, and searches in your vertical.



# Exploring Top Flavors of Reali-TEA

Flavors (emerging clubs) were shaped by tracking keyword and hashtag growth in [TikTok One Insight Spotlight](#) and [TikTok Market Scope](#), revealing where audience behaviors are headed.

## 1.5x

Millennial and Gen Z users expect brands to have strong community, and are **1.5x more likely** than Gen X+ to try a new brand because of its community.

Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Long-Term Value of a TikTok User Study 2025 (US results) conducted by Kantar



## 1.5x

TikTok users are **1.5x more likely** to **repurchase** from brands when ads allow them to interact with the advertised brand (ex. comments or co-creation)

Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Long-Term Value of a TikTok User Study 2025 (US results) conducted by Kantar



## Culture For Me

TikTok has become its own third culture, a space where heritage, context, and community collide to create something both shared and new. Here, identity expands beyond traditional demographics, shaped instead by interests and intersectionality.

[#thirdculture](#) [#kwave](#) [#expat](#)

## Forced to Lock In

As routines get stretched thin, audiences realign together by sharing hacks to outsmart meetings, packed schedules, and the Sunday scaries, like **@itssadja** using **Adobe Express** to stay locked in for the semester.

[#sundayscaries](#) [#healingseason](#) [#corporatemaxxing](#)

## Comment React Stack

A TikTok comment photo react is worth a thousand words. Audiences are building their comment react stacks, reviving memes on TikTok with shared photos of expressions instead of words. This isn't just engagement, it's creating culture in the comments.

[#meme](#) [#photocomment](#)

## Second Account Found

Strategic brands and creators are breaking out of one-dimensional molds on TikTok, launching new accounts to show new sides, like **Immi Ramen's** second channel for street interviews about defining happiness, tied back to their mission through ramen. It's human to be multifaceted.

[#drafts](#) [#unselfishvlog](#) [#advice](#)

## Case Study

### Knorr's Love Language Cooking Up Connection

Knorr tapped into Gen Z's redefined relationship norms, using TikTok to show that cooking with its products signals confidence, care, and modern desirability. Creator-led content featured real Canadians sharing their "green flags" in dating, naturally positioning Knorr as part of the conversation while driving traffic and engagement. The Valentine's Day campaign reached 1.68M users, generated 17M+ video views, and achieved standout engagement with 11+ seconds spent on the Instant Page—proving that authentic, TikTok-native storytelling can boost awareness and relevance among audiences.

+13%

website visitors  
moving from  
discovery to  
conversion



# HIDDEN GEMS CAR MODS PLAYLIST



CURIOSITY DETOURS

## CAR GRWM ROADTRIP PLAYLIST



Trend Signal Two

## Trend Signal Two

# Curiosity Detours

In 2026, curiosity becomes the new currency as audiences dive deeper into new journeys of discovery.

Our community noticed they were becoming over reliant on tech to get from A to B, and missing all the exciting discovery that can happen in between. But behavior on TikTok is shifting. Audiences now arrive with intention and leave with curiosity, finding trusted, unexpected answers that spark new rabbit holes. Searching on TikTok is like an outing that starts with one plan and unfolds into endless surprises. You come for one thing, and leave with **#datingtips**, **#cookinghacks**, and **#storytimes** that make the journey richer and more fun. It's out with running on autopilot, in with scanning TikTok comments for answers, searching "**my makeup type**," and staying tapped into what everyone's talking about. The best part? There's no single path to your brand, just countless opportunities for audiences to discover you through personalized recommendations built by organic audience interaction, interest, and intent.

What's Done

#autopilot

#npcmode

What's Next

#whattowear

#mymakeuptype

#cookinghacks

## 2 in 3

searchers on TikTok say a central reason for using it as a search platform is that they discover useful things beyond what they were searching for.

Source: TikTok Marketing Science Global Future of Search Study 2025 (Us and CA Results), conducted by WARC

## Billions of searches

happen on TikTok every day—**up more than 40% from last year**.

Source: TikTok Internal Data, Global 2025

## 1 in 4

1 in 4 TikTok users start searching within 30 seconds of opening the app.

Source: TikTok Internal Data, US, as of June 2024



@CashApp

Cash App spotlights niche small business paths in their "How I Make Money" series on TikTok.

## What does this mean for brands?

### Marketer Takeaway

This isn't about broadening your appeal, but about showing up meaningfully outside your core category. Use TikTok to identify surprising adjacent spaces, niche communities, or cultural moments that naturally align with your brand identity.

### Get Started

Use **TikTok One Content Suite** to dig deeper into organic brand mentions and see how the community really talks about your brand. Connect with creators to turn authentic content into paid campaigns, or use these insights to craft creative that speaks the audience's language.

**Pro Tip:** Use TikTok One Content Suite as a source for search insights, it surfaces up to **44x more results** than manual search on our platform.

Source: TikTok Data Science Internal Analysis, April 2024



# Follow the Scent

## How TikTok Market Scope Maps Fragrance Discovery

1

### 1. Started with TikTok Market Scope

We began by analyzing top global searches in the beauty vertical to understand what consumers were most curious about.

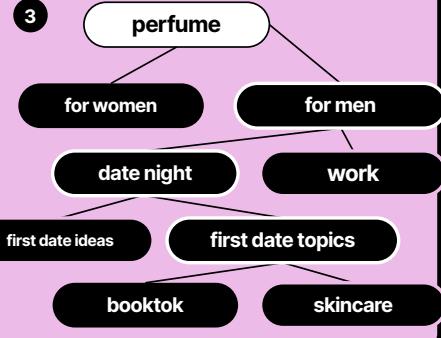
#### Identified the Leader

“Perfume” emerged as the clear frontrunner, signaling a strong and growing interest in fragrance.

2



3



4

#### Expanded the Lens

From there, we examined related search terms to uncover the broader motivations and discovery journey behind perfume on TikTok.

#### Built Context

This layered approach allowed us to map not just what users were searching for—but why and how they were exploring scent discovery on the platform.

#### Insight Learned



Audiences interested in perfume can enter their search through booktok, skincare, and first date preparation. Set your perfume brand in these contexts to connect with an audience actively exploring in your category.

### Case Study

## From Batteries to Biases

### Duracell's Unexpected K-Pop Connection

Duracell didn't just find fans—it found stans. By tracing TikTok search journeys, the brand uncovered an unexpected connection between its batteries and the K-pop community, who rely on Duracell to power the glowing light sticks of their favorite idols. What started as a niche discovery has become a powerful new growth audience and a top priority for 2026.

“Across all markets we grew **483% in follower growth** which K-Pop has a large part to play in this, finding an audience and a trend where our brand could authentically engage has been massively rewarding.”

**Christina Miller**

Chief Social Officer of VML EMEA

Did you know?



# Emotional ROI

#cafeathome

#tastemaker

#richinlife

Trend Signal Three

## Trend Signal Three

# Emotional ROI

**Impulse will lose to intention in 2026 as shoppers reward the brands that justify the why to buy, first.**

Consumers may be cutting back on “non-essentials,” but they’re also expanding what counts as essential, and emotions are driving that line. It’s no longer just about grabbing the cheapest shampoo or bread; it’s about running to TikTok to find the shampoo that truly works for your hair type, or turning bread-making into a ritual that supports wellness. Purchase decisions are increasingly prevalidated, with audiences weighing emotional ROI just as much as financial cost. People may get the data from AI, but they come to TikTok for the human spark: the joy, discovery, and delight of shopping from their favorite tastemakers before they hit “buy.” The “why to buy” has never mattered more, and audiences are gravitating toward brands and TikTok voices that offer real context, not just a sales pitch.

**What's Done**

#viralbuy

#influencers

**What's Next**

#tastemakers

Tāst,māker; noun; a person who decides or influences what is or will become trendy

## Are you a Tastemaker?

### Foundational Organic Audience

Who is the community you want to serve, and how can you consistently show up to provide real value and earn their trust?

### Leverages Tools to Understand your Audience Better

Are you using audience tools (ie: Creator Search Insights, TikTok Next Trend Forecasts, TikTok One Insight Spotlight) and programs (Creator Community) to uncover who your followers really are, how they buy, and what truly matters to them?

### Selective about Partnerships

Are you partnering with brands and creators that genuinely fit your lifestyle, content, and community, ones you’re proud and excited to represent?

## What does this mean for brands?

### Marketer Takeaway

Don’t let the pressure to sell show. Shoppers are redefining what’s essential not by price, but by meaning, joy, and belonging. Justifying the why to buy means anchoring your product in their identity, community, and the moments that bring them joy.

### Get Started

With Symphony Creative Studio, you can quickly adapt a single asset across languages, formats, and styles—so your creative meets the Emotional ROI of different audiences. If your audience is feeling stressed, test ASMR-style visual hooks, cozy gaming scenes, or varied voiceovers to see what resonates most.

**Pro tip:** Use these fast, low-lift concepts to inform and evolve your broader creative strategy.



@jasontsay

Minimalist at heart Jason turns every product recommendation into a story, decoding the dollars and the artistry behind what makes it a real gem.



## Trend Signal Three

# Why to Buy = $2(E^2) + T$

$E^2 =$  Expanding Essentials



$E^2 =$  Evidence Economy



$T =$  Tastemakers

Essentials for TikTok audiences are centered around new wellness goals

The TikTok comment section is trusted for community reviews

Creators are winning favor by evolving storytelling beyond impulse tactics

### FOR EXAMPLE:

- ✗ OUT: Because it's cute
- ✓ NEXT: Because it brings me joy
- ✗ OUT: 2 hr gym sesh
- ✓ NEXT: Lifestyle gym membership to work out & work remotely
- ✗ OUT: Expensive group dinner tabs
- ✓ NEXT: Themed dinner parties at home

### FOR EXAMPLE:

- ✗ OUT: "Viral"
- ✓ NEXT: "Day 36 of using this product"
- ✗ OUT: Staged scenarios
- ✓ NEXT: Real world testing
- ✗ OUT: Copy & pasted claims
- ✓ NEXT: Crowdsourcing reviews from comments

### FOR EXAMPLE:

- ✗ OUT: "Hype"
- ✓ NEXT: "Most recommended"
- ✗ OUT: General lifestyle
- ✓ NEXT: Niche series
- ✗ OUT: High follower count
- ✓ NEXT: High comment engagement



## Marketer Takeaway

Join the emotional ROI math club. You offer the why based on their new realities, then they'll handle the how it all makes sense.

### Case Study

## From Browsing to Buying Driving High Value Performance

Ashley Canada used TikTok-first content to highlight furniture in authentic home settings, showing products from multiple perspectives to align with shopper intent and sentiment. By leveraging Smart+, the brand dynamically served the most relevant content to potential customers, outperforming standard Catalog Ads. The campaign drove 191% higher website ROAS, 58% lower cost per acquisition, and a 533% increase in add-to-cart rate, proving that showcasing products in context with intent-driven content can boost conversion and efficiency across the funnel.





# Training Your Irreplaceable Instinct

## Trend Signal One

### Reali-TEA

Fantasy is fading. In 2026, audiences will realign through the chaos to forge new realities together.

#### Get Started

How will you understand the flavors of audience's new realities so you can better reflect how they feel today?

## Trend Signal Two

### Curiosity Detours

In 2026, curiosity becomes the new currency as audiences dive deeper into new journeys of discovery.

#### Get Started

What unexpected paths are audiences taking to discover your brand, and what can you offer that makes their detour worth staying for?

## Trend Signal Three

### Emotional ROI

Impulse will lose to intention in 2026 as shoppers reward the brands that justify the why to buy, first.

#### Get Started

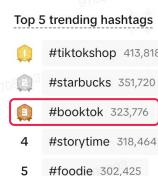
How is your brand proving its real, everyday value beyond price, through meaning, proof, and tastemakers?

## In action: Food & Beverage example

### 1 From Insight

Identify top trending hashtags in Food & Bev category from [TikTok Market Scope](#)

Let's take a closer look at #booktok

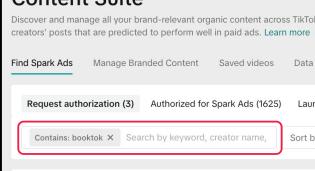


### 2 To Exploration

Search for videos that mention both your brand and "booktok" from the TikTok community in [TikTok One Content Suite](#)

Explore inspiration or instantly request ad authorization to spark creator content into ads

### Content Suite



### 3 To Strategy

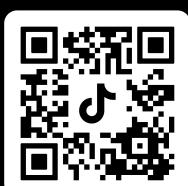
Generate a video concept in minutes with [Symphony Creative Studio](#) Text to Video feature

Prompt input: Scene of a cozy kitchen with warm morning tones, a cat, book, and tea on the table, with hands opening a fresh croissant from a bag



### TikTok Academy

Learn more about our trends and solutions with our POV and Create video series.



### TikTok Next Hub

Explore our web experience for a more interactive look at emerging trends.





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**THANK  
YOU**

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