



goat

THE HOOK AND THE HOLD:

TOP BEAUTY BRANDS ON TIKTOK AND WHAT THEY'RE GETTING RIGHT

We compare 10 luxury, prestige and challenger brands to uncover the biggest learnings

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INTRODUCTION

TikTok **undeniably** changed the face of **beauty marketing forever.**

Its focus on short-form humour, copycat trends, and non-filtered aesthetics forced brands to **adapt their approach** to advertising.

Legacy brands had to let go of long adhered-to brand guidelines (well, to some extent), and challenger brands were able to blow up in a matter of months thanks to one viral video. Now, most brands in the beauty space see TikTok and TikTok influencer marketing as key social media and marketing channels. And despite the increasingly louder whispers of a US/UK ban, it doesn't look like this is set to change anytime.

But what does sustained success on TikTok look like for beauty brands?

Yes, you might have had a few successful campaigns. You may have even gone viral once or twice. But for plenty of beauty marketers, there's still a lack of confidence in what they're doing on TikTok.



It seems many brands are still making one of two mistakes:

1. Trying to retrofit traditional advertising into TikTok; creating content that doesn't feel native or engaging, not taking the time to understand the niche communities and trends, and just generally being a passive user, rather than an active user.
2. The other is what we call "The Ryanair Effect". Yes the likes of Ryanair, M&S Foods and Duolingo have absolutely smashed their TikTok strategy - but no, you do not need a mascot or a talking plane for a good TikTok strategy. The most successful brands have a distinct identity even whilst they get involved with wider TikTok trends.

In this report, we're going to examine **10 beauty brands**, across luxury, prestige and challenger, on TikTok to see what they're **getting right** and **what we can learn** from them.

Why compare luxury, prestige and challenger?

It's easy to say that brands like Fenty Beauty are smashing it - and they are! - but we need to acknowledge the different challenges and situations brands are in.

For example, it's a lot harder for Chanel or Clarins to get on TikTok, effectively breaking down decades of carefully curated brand-guidelines.

But there are learnings to be had from those getting it right. And it's not just legacy brands needing to learn from social-first brands. The learnings can go both ways.



KEEP IN MIND



A famous phrase for marketing is **“The Hook and The Hold”**. So when looking at their TikTok strategies, this is what we’re thinking about...

THE HOOK

How do you get that initial cut through? It could be a viral campaign or a trend that generates tonnes of UGC; essentially how do you get people to notice your brand above all the others on the platform?

THE HOLD

Now, once you have their attention, how do you keep it? TikTok moves so quickly it’s easy to be a flash in the trend pan, but TikTok can be a full funnel marketing channel. How do you keep your audience engaged and drive genuine action or behaviour change?

5 CHALLENGES FACING BEAUTY MARKETERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

1. A USER THAT KNOWS THE PLATFORM BETTER THAN YOU

Generation Z have grown up with social media as a part of their everyday lives. And this makes it tricky to market to them. The harsh reality is that they probably know the platform better than most Marketing Directors and they WILL call you out for getting it wrong.

In fact, the feedback loop has become even more instant (and intimidating) on TikTok. Earlier this year, TikTok creator Christopher Claflin [posted a video](#) labeled "Boomers are ruining social media", in which he called out Gap for having "the worst TikTok" he's ever seen. The video has over 750K views and people are even heading to Gap's own TikTok channel to reference it in the comments! This transparent feedback loop can be scary, but it's also a fantastic opportunity, as never before have brands been able to instantly gather so much customer feedback and sentiment.

2. CONSTANTLY CHANGING PLATFORMS

Let's be honest. Many brands have only recently got the hang of TikTok. For social media teams, there are now so many platforms to be across and it's difficult to know where to place limited resource and budget. Even YouTube Shorts is now emerging with over 1.5 billion active users, not to mention the likes of Twitch, Reddit and BeReal. How do you know where to invest and where to pull back?

3. COST OF LIVING

The famous "Lipstick Index" suggests that in times of economic crises, sale of lipsticks tend to go up. That's because people are less likely to have the disposable income to spend on more expensive items like cars, jewelry, clothes and holidays. But a lipstick can bring you that little bit of pleasure! Despite this though, all brands are going to be feeling the squeeze and marketers need to be particularly mindful in their advertising that they're hitting the right notes.



4. DEINFLUENCING

We couldn't not mention this exploding trend. At the time of writing, "deinfluencing" has 400 million views on TikTok and marketers have understandably been worried about what it means.

As part of this trend, influencers on TikTok will share the overhyped products they DON'T recommend buying. Intended as a response to over-consumption, it's had mixed responses with many saying that deinfluencing is in fact an overhyped trend in itself, and is just another form of "influencing".



Our Account Director Ellie Hooper says it does need to be looked at as a cultural reset - clearly consumers want influencer marketing to go back to its foundations of genuine peer-to-peer recommendations:

"For brands, it's done the job of reminding them that they need to be more considered in their approach to promotion. For consumers, it encourages them to take a step back and reimagine their approach to consumerism. And for influencers, it's a sign to adopt a more authentic stance on their partnerships in a bid to ensure followers trust their recommendations."



5. FULL FUNNEL TIKTOK MARKETING

TikTok isn't just for driving awareness, although it's still great for that. But as marketing budgets get tighter and CMOs feel the pressure to report on ROAS, it's becoming more and more crucial to demonstrate the effectiveness of TikTok as a revenue channel.

Brand marketers are having to look more holistically at TikTok and figure out ways of creating great, trend-led content with the potential to go viral, that also leads to demonstrable revenue.

THE HOOK AND THE HOLD: TOP BEAUTY BRANDS ON TIKTOK AND WHAT THEY'RE GETTING RIGHT



PART 1 LUXURY

Augustinus Bader

Estee Lauder

YSL Beauty

Charlotte Tilbury



AUGUSTINUS BADER

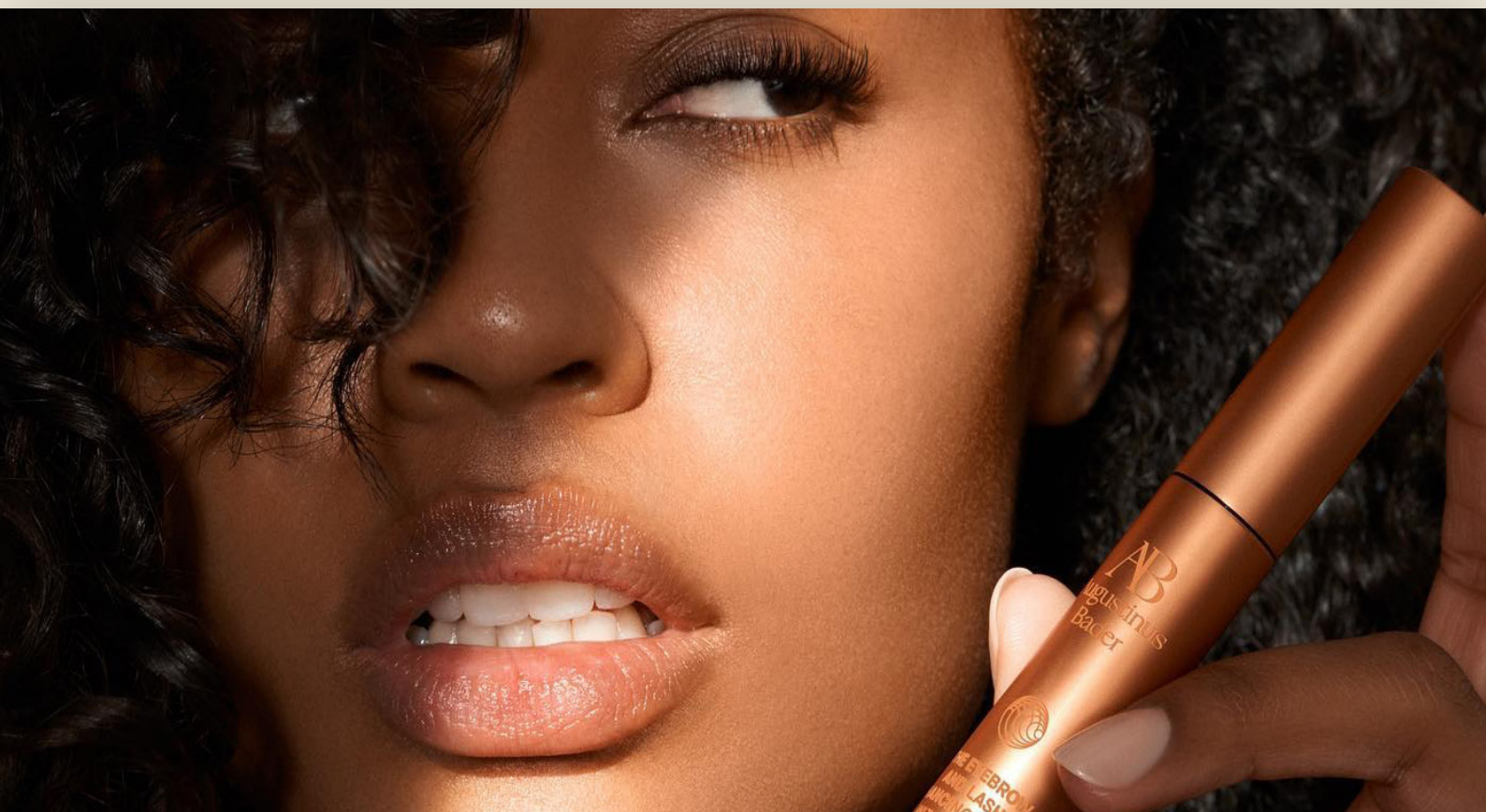


**80.5K FOLLOWERS.
203K LIKES.**

Augustinus Bader is the ultimate luxury skin and hair care brand.

It was developed by world-leading expert in stem cell research, [Professor Augustinus Bader](#), who in 2008 developed a groundbreaking wound gel that heals severe skin traumas without the need for surgery or skin grafts. It was this technique that inspired him to explore skin and hair care.

The Augustinus Bader Cream and the heavier Rich Cream have been their most viral products, with many obsessing over the immediate visible effects online, even despite the price tag.



THE HOOK

The brand uses influencers to “sell” the luxury pricepoint.

Augustinus Bader doesn't shy away from the fact that for many, this is a lot of money to spend on a beauty product, and you see this in many of the comments. Instead they work with influencers to explain why they would still recommend the product and to detail its scientific evidence in an engaging way. This helps to build trust rather than just coming from the brand itself.

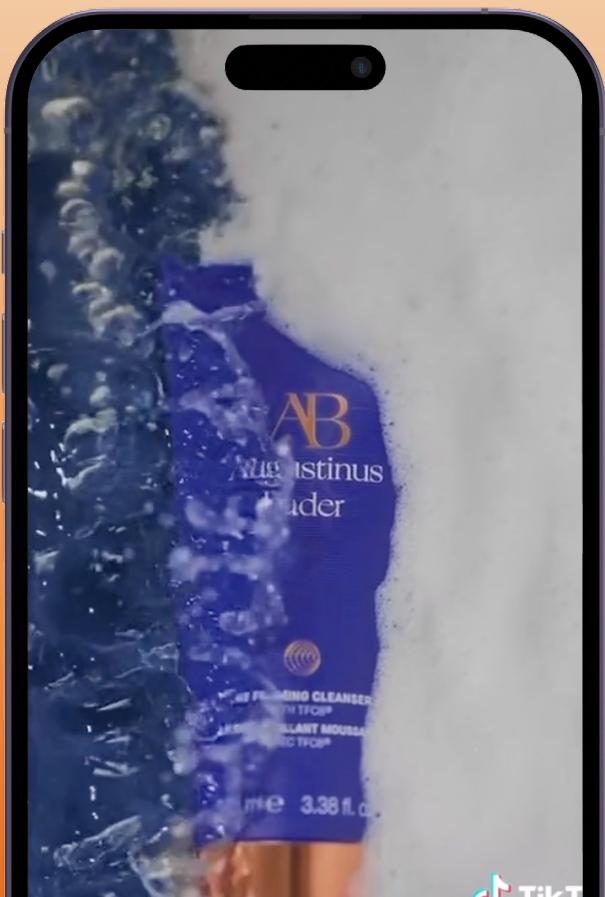
The brand has also started adding a face and personality to the brand. Whilst working with the Augustinus Bader team, we spotted an ongoing problem in that the name was often being mispronounced. [We helped them create a TikTok](#) where users were asked to pronounce the name, culminating in Augustinus Bader himself explaining how to say it. This was a great way of getting people to remember the brand, see Augustinus as a recognisable face behind it, and build intrigue. The TikTok has over 80K views with lots of positive comments.



THE HOLD

The brand continues to lean into the fact they are a high priced, luxury brand. And they do this with oddly mesmerizing TikToks that show their products in a fun, engaging way. This, [“Behind the scenes of our latest launch”](#) TikTok, is a great example. The product is a Foaming Cleanser and the advert itself features a dramatic water inspired video. What we love though is how they've adapted it for TikTok to show how the ad was made. In reality, the scene was just a bottle in a glass box of water with clever lighting and camera angles. People love to get a peek behind the curtain of a luxury brand in this way.

Interspersing this luxury content with relatable influencers helps to give the impression that it is a luxury brand, but one that's accessible and genuinely works.



ESTÉE LAUDER



**173.4K FOLLOWERS.
814K LIKES.**

Estée Lauder is up there with the most iconic and recognizable beauty brands in the world, ever since its founding in 1946.

It's always tricky though to take a brand with so much history and such a powerful identity, and bring it to new social-first generations. In recent years though, the brand has done an excellent job of shifting their perception, attracting a younger consumer, and still doing this in a way that feels true to their heritage.



THE HOOK

Wanting to make a splash on TikTok, the Estee Lauder brand knew to lean first on (arguably) their most famous product; the best-selling Double Wear Foundation.

They created a campaign called #MyShadeMyStory, which asked TikTok users to share personal stories about themselves. This could be related to their skin, and how they've grown to feel more confident and beautiful within it, or it could simply be about their heritage or even just a bit about their lives - take [this example](#) from @caitlinandleahh on being a first time mum.

The campaign was activated across the globe with hundreds of influencers, generating high UGC and engagement. The hashtag #MyShadeMyStory currently has nearly 300 million views.



THE HOLD

Once you've hooked people in with the product they already know and love, TikTok is then a great avenue for introducing others.

They're also continuing to build content around people's stories and personal histories. What we love most of all is the videos that really lean on the notion that Estee Lauder is a brand that travels through generations. For example, [this TikTok in which a creator uses their Advanced Night Repair Serum alongside her mother](#) who's been using it for decades. It builds on the idea that this could be passed down to others and brings a legacy brand into the modern world.

YSL BEAUTY



**146K FOLLOWERS.
970K LIKES.**

Similar to Estee Lauder, YSL Beauty is bound to an iconic name and brand, despite the fact that the beauty side of Yves Saint Laurent is owned by L'Oreal.

YSL have deliberately gone against the grain of many other beauty brands on TikTok. Instead of the 'millennial pinks', 'gen z yellows' and cheerful, comedic content, they're sticking with an on-brand dark and glamorous aesthetic.

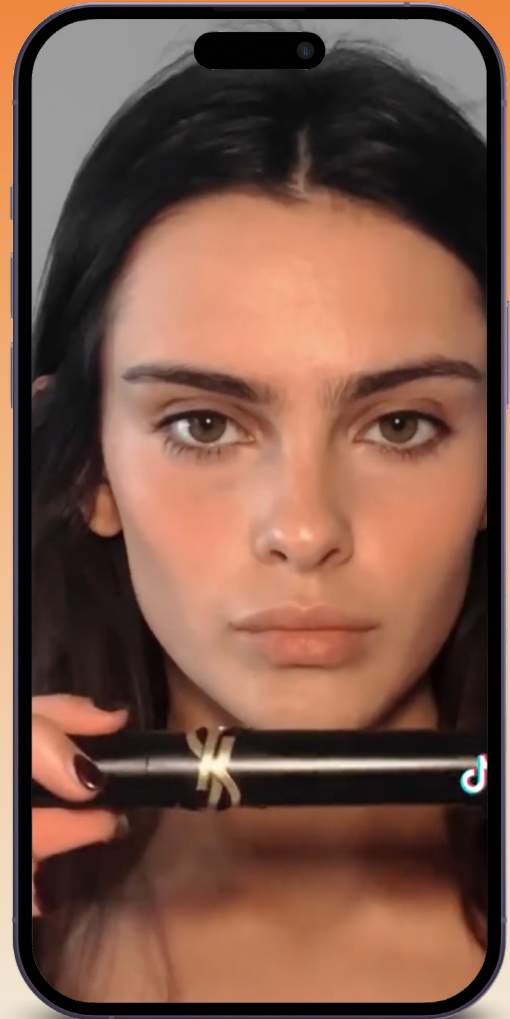
Risky, but it does make them stand out in a crowd.



THE HOOK

YSL Beauty regularly use words like “bold” and “daring” in their advertising, and this is the aesthetic they’re obviously trying to recreate through TikTok advertising. The sounds they use tend to be more intense with heavy beats, and the content is more seductive, sexy and risque. This helps make their content instantly recognisable.

Alongside this, they’ve successfully cut through the noise of other luxury beauty brands by tapping into current cultural and social media icons. Zoe Kravitz, Dua Lipa and Lil Nas X are ambassadors and they’ve featured them in videos. The Lil Nas X videos in particular really stand out with the artist releasing [a themed song](#) and showing backstage footage of the ad filming.



THE HOLD

YSL Beauty continues to put diverse and representative creators and ambassadors at the forefront of their content.

An example would be this video with Dua Lipa around the Libre Le Parfum. Whilst the perfume TV adverts are typically more visually impressive and based on emotion vs facts, this is where Dua can share her impressions of the perfume with more details.

They're also getting involved with trends like the [“dotting” makeup trend](#), but giving it a YSL Beauty look and feel.

CHARLOTTE TILBURY



**745K FOLLOWERS.
9.6M LIKES.**

Charlotte Tilbury beauty is extremely lucky in that they have such a famous, recognisable face in Charlotte Tilbury herself.

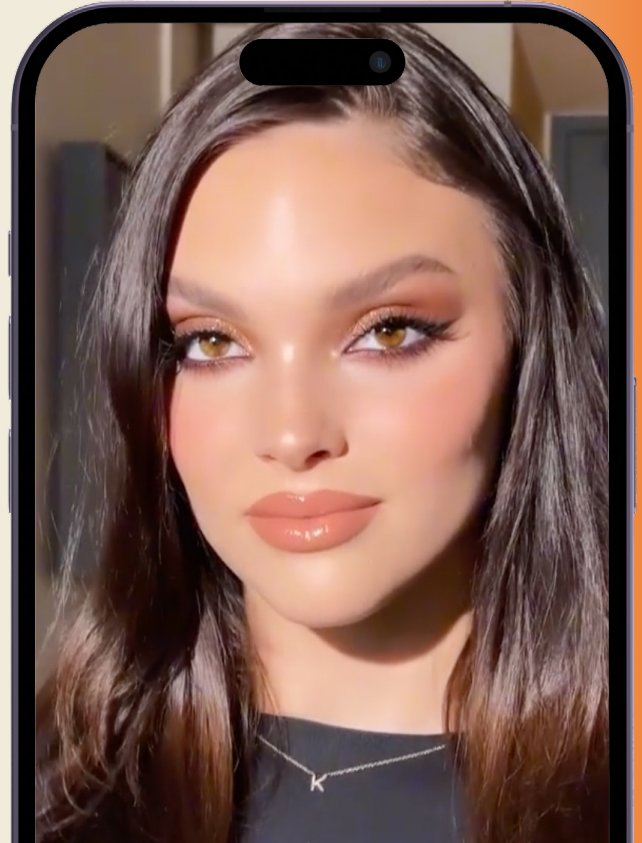
They've decided to leverage this, and while the account is listed as Charlotte Tilbury the Founder and makeup artist, it's the main channel for advertising.



THE HOOK

Everything about Charlotte Tilbury's brand screams glamor, Hollywood, movie stars and red carpets. And they haven't lost this on TikTok, even though the platform is renowned for more casual, unfiltered content.

Instead we have products showcased in front of Beverly Hills mansions, Paris apartments, lavish parties and city skyscrapers. Just like Charlotte herself, [the makeup](#) is sparkly, glittery, and ultimate Hollywood glamor, so the high-vis and filtered TikToks instantly jumps out on the For You page.

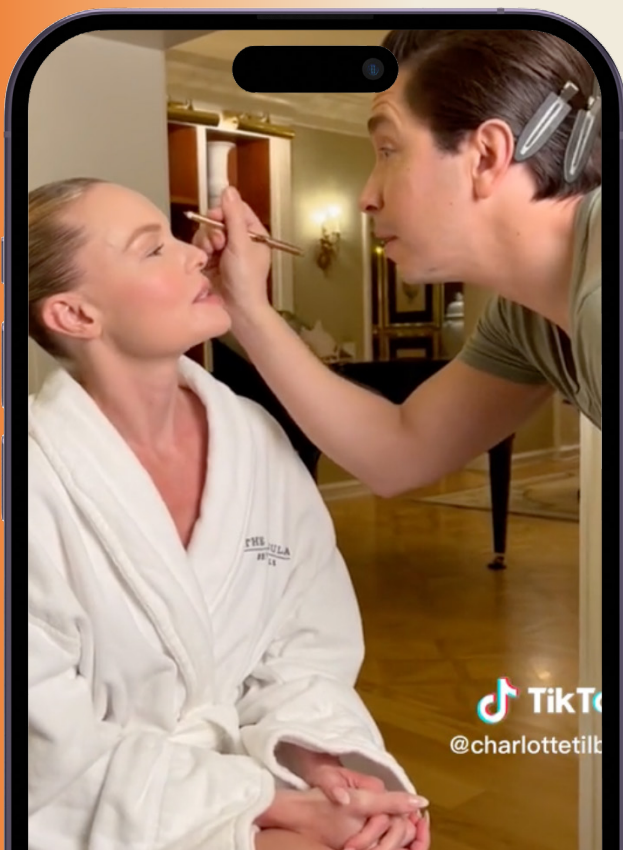


THE HOLD

Charlotte Tilbury is renowned for her extensive celebrity clientele and friendships. Following the brand on TikTok feels like an ultimate backstage pass to some of these people and experiences.

Whether it's showing the products being applied with different red carpet looks, or giving us a glimpse at the celebs' humorous sides (like [this TikTok](#) in which actor Justin Long jokingly applies lip liner instead of eyeliner to actress (and his girlfriend) Kate Bosworth's eyes.

Either way, their content is unapologetically "OTT" but it sure makes you want to be a Charlotte Tilbury girl!



PART 2 PRESTIGE

MAC Cosmetics

FaceGym

Tarte Cosmetics



MAC COSMETICS



**783K FOLLOWERS.
5.6M LIKES.**

MAC has been a dominant force in the makeup industry for a long time. Whether it's Kylie Jenner repping the products and causing a lipstick shade to completely sell out, or celeb collaborations with the likes of Nicki Minaj, they've always had their finger on the pulse of popular culture.

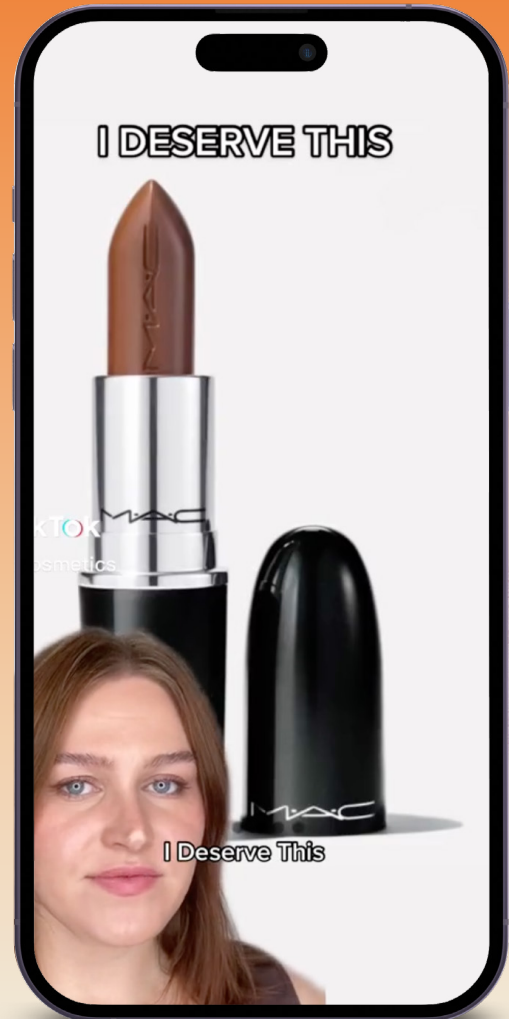
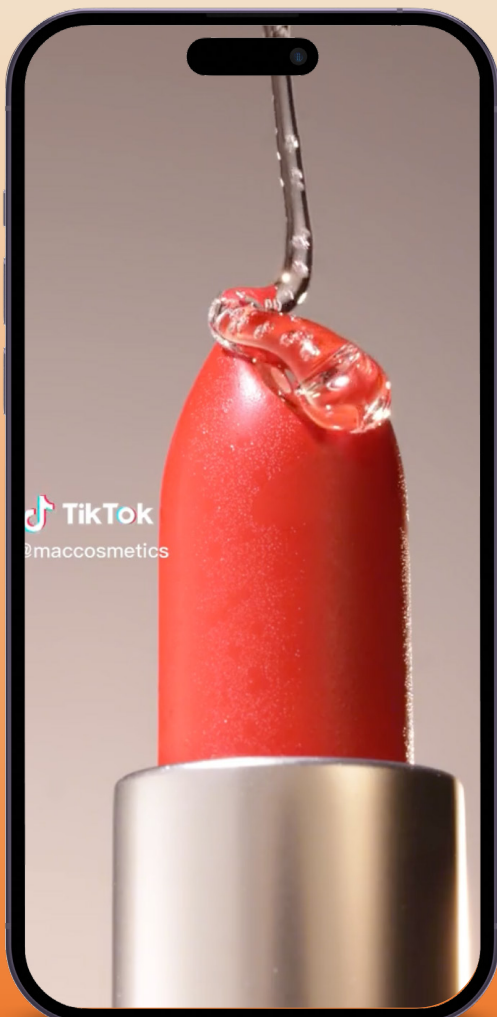
But faced with up and coming brands, backed by Gen Z favorites, like Rare Beauty (Selena Gomez), Kylie Cosmetics (Kylie Jenner), and REM Beauty (Ariana Grande), they could have been in danger of losing their crown!



THE HOOK

MAC Cosmetics is all about color and attitude, and the brand leans heavily on trending challenges and sounds to showcase this. [An example](#) is this take on ASMR, which while visually pleasing is paired with a loud, brash trending sound. Similarly [this video](#) based on makeup for St Patrick's Day.

They also ran a hugely successful campaign for their MACStack Mascara. With this they paired an original sound called Mac Stack which had lots of suspense, and users applied their mascara and makeup along to this. A simple concept but the results were incredible with hundreds of UGC and #macstackmascara reaching over 285 million views.



THE HOLD

The brand keeps their audience coming back with a continuous flow of trends, challenges and repeatable formats.

Examples include videos like "Is MAC lipstick kissproof", "What your favorite lipstick shade says about you" and "ASMR Lipstick Unboxing". They also acknowledge MAC customers and fans with content like "[MAC Cosmetics' most unhinged shade names](#)"; a TikTok making fun of some of their ridiculous shade names like "Get rich quick" and "I'm listening". It's a feedback loop which makes the customers feel like they're being listened to and are part of the content.

FACEGYM



**699K FOLLOWERS.
5.7M LIKES.**

The so-called “Home of facial fitness”, FaceGym is an intriguing brand made up of skincare products, tools and in-store facial “workouts” and massages.

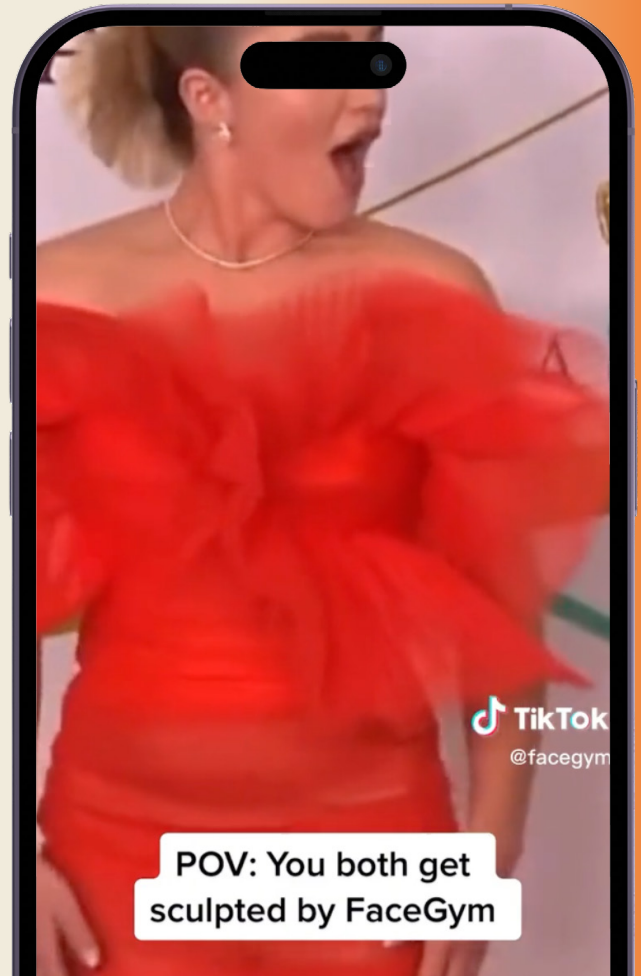
The brand has steadily grown since it was founded in 2015 by Inge Theron, and now has multiple locations in the UK and US. One of its key marketing channels has without doubt been social media, with TikTok being a priority.



THE HOOK

For the average TikTok user, the idea of a facial workout was something completely new, so FaceGym needed to do an education piece through social.

They worked with influencers to really showcase the benefits and after-effects of their signature workouts, also posting videos that highlight the expertise and reasoning behind each step.



THE HOLD

Once they'd got the key information out there about what exactly FaceGym is, they could then start to be more playful with their TikTok content.

Now they're really focused on selling the "feeling" that you get after using FaceGym.

Popular TikToks like [this one](#) with Taron Edgerton and Florence Pugh (over 155K views), and [this](#) "My boyfriend after discovering FaceGym" (130K views) don't go into details about the product but are communicating the after effect in a humorous way.

TARTE COSMETICS



**933K FOLLOWERS.
14.7M LIKES.**

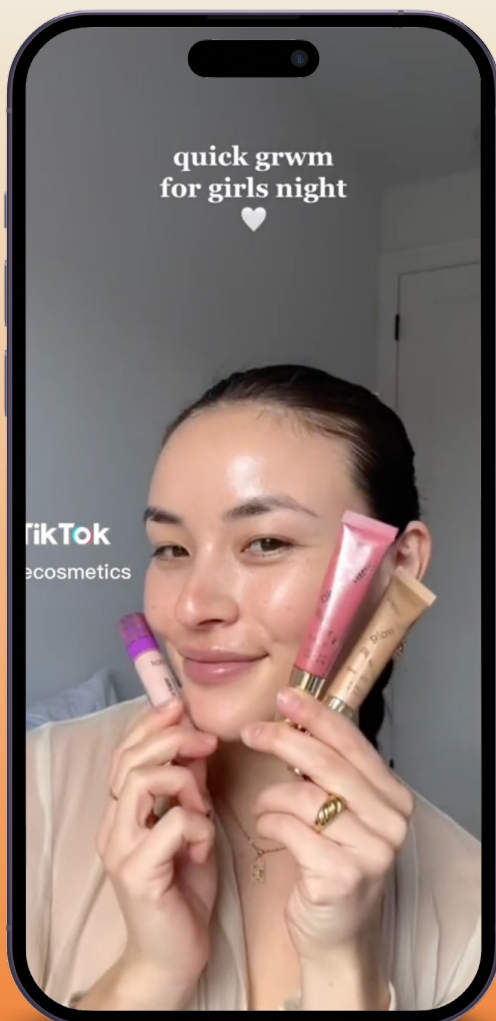
Ok, so Tarte may have taken some heat this year after its - potentially unwise - "Tarte Dubai" influencer trip, but it still deserves a mention for many of the things it HAS got right.

The controversial trip itself generated a lot of backlash thanks to the perceived insensitivity of hosting such a luxury abroad trip for influencers in the midst of an environmental and economic crisis. However, it can't be denied that it still created a huge amount of buzz and PR around the brand.



THE HOOK

In the early days of their TikTok, Tarte were heavily focused on tutorial style content, with hacks, how-to's, and makeup looks/tips. They were clearly looking to hook in genuine makeup lovers who wanted to learn different skills, and they put makeup artists and creators front and center.



THE HOLD

Now Tarte has expanded but still with influencers as their focal point.

As well as make up artists and influencers, they're featuring their own brand employees with funny videos like this "[Explaining TikTok trends to our CMO](#)" video. They're also using a similar tactic to small social media managers, whereby they post a video trend with a caption like "This took some convincing so please don't let it flop". It's a classic way of getting people to root for the Social Media Manager and want to support the brand further.

PART 3 CHALLENGER

Florence by Mills

Estrid

Glow Recipe



FLORENCE BY MILLS



3.2M FOLLOWERS.
54M LIKES.

Florence by Mills was created by Stranger Things actress, Millie Bobbie Brown (aka Mills) and named after her grandmother, Florence. It's also in memory of Millie's friend Olivia who passed away from Acute Myeloid Leukemia, and the brand provides support for the Olivia Hope Foundation.

Already a Gen Z favorite, Millie has based the ideals around the brand on self-love and self-expression, with the products all listed as clean, vegan and cruelty-free.

Launched in 2019, Florence by Mills has already picked up an impressive 3.2 million followers; the most of any on this list!



THE HOOK

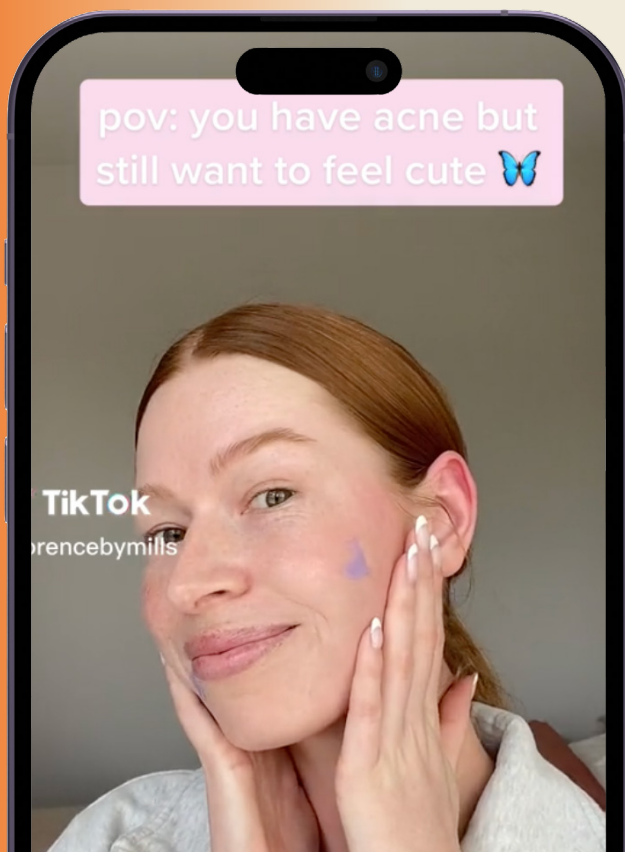
Of course, naturally it helps that Florence by Mills already has one of the hottest Gen Z actresses as the Founder and Face of the brand, but they still really capitalized on their social media marketing, even being named one of the hottest brands in terms of Instagram reach, engagement and Google searches.

On TikTok, they keep a very consistent aesthetic of the lilac branding color and other soft pastels (known to be popular with Gen Z and millennials!). The content is also completely targeted towards this Gen Z audience, using influencers and their own employees to make the brand feel uber-relatable (this [behind the scenes](#) of a photoshoot is a great example).



swimming under the eyes
brightening gel pads

best for: dull looking skin



pov: you have acne but
still want to feel cute 🦋

TikTok
@frencebymills

THE HOLD

They keep their Gen Z fans coming back for more with [positive and uplifting content](#) that really speaks to their brand value of self-love and self expression.

TikToks like this one titled "[pov you have acne but still want to feel cute](#)" are relatable and fun. Most importantly, they still keep the music and "feeling" from the video uplifting rather than serious, making something like acne just an everyday thing that no one should feel insecure about!

ESTRID



**704K FOLLOWERS.
19.7M LIKES.**

Estrid describes itself as “more than just a razor company”.

In fact, they’re “on a mission to change gender-based discriminatory pricing, because you should never pay more for being you. You’re always in control and invited to our party, no matter why or how often you choose to shave.”

This approach is a far cry from the types of shaving brand advertising we were used to seeing, which often left women in particular feeling insecure about perfectly normal body hair.

The mission is working, and the brand has attracted hundreds of thousands of fans.

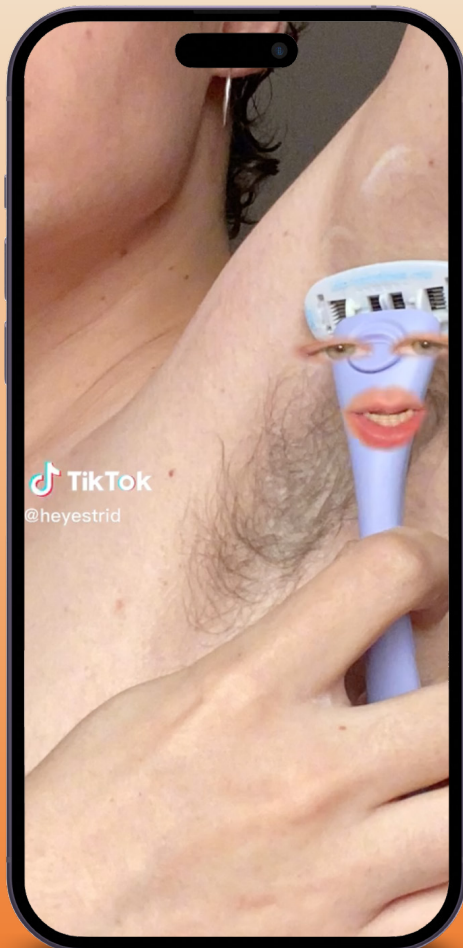


THE HOOK

The first thing that stands out with Estrid's TikTok (and general advertising) is that they actually show hair!

Yes, this seems mad that this would even be a surprise, but it's shocking to see how many hair removal brands are still unwilling to show actual body hair in their advertising.

But Estrid put hair front and center, like [this video](#) declaring it as "armpit day". This immediately grabs attention and works particularly well on TikTok, as it's sure to be noted in the feed and generally users of the platform prefer this type of unfiltered, raw content to the perfectly filtered advertising we're used to seeing.



THE HOLD

It's not just the shock factor though. Estrid is killing their entire TikTok strategy with just how funny and real the content is.

They use a mix of genuinely helpful, "hack" style content such as "How I got rid of strawberry legs" and "What are your top shaving tips for black girls?", with hilarious videos that everyone can relate to, including "[When you failed to secure a boyfriend in time for cuffing season but that means you won't have to shave till Spring](#)" and "When you forget to shave but everyone wants to go swimming".

They also truly live by their values of diversity and representation in their videos and influencer choices. Plus, they regularly invite influencers to "takeover" their TikTok for a week, creating hilarious content for their own channels and no doubt attracting many more fans.

GLOW RECIPE



**365K FOLLOWERS.
5M LIKES.**

Glow Recipe has had a couple of viral products already on TikTok, including their Watermelon Glow Dew Drops and Watermelon Glow Pore-Tight Toner.

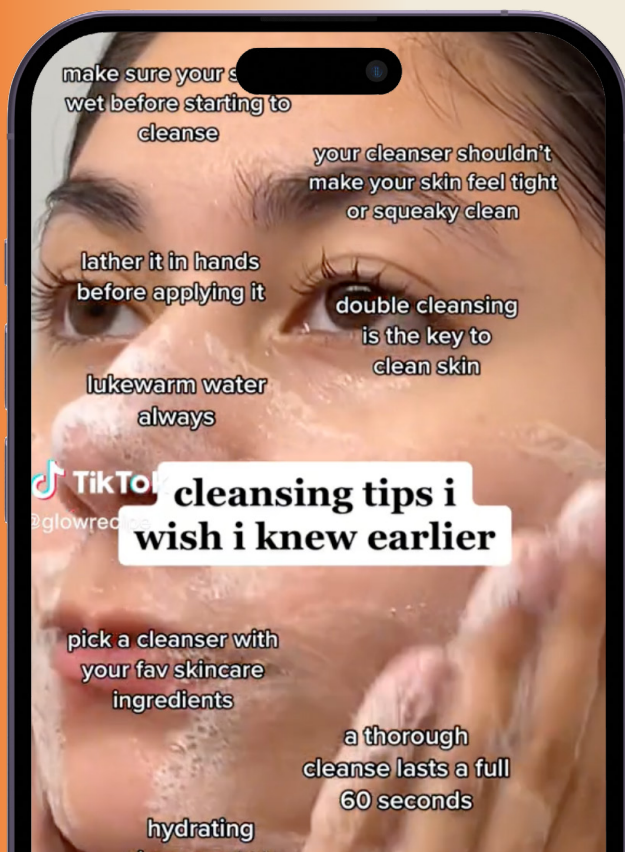
The millennial pink and pastel color scheme has proved highly popular with younger audiences, and they've really invested in social as a key marketing channel.



THE HOOK

Glow Recipe is a K-beauty brand and originally really leaned into this, working with a number of Korean beauty and skincare creators, and tapping into trends from this industry (the “Glass Skin” trend for example).

They also make a use of a lot of trending sounds such as the “Me? Obsessed with you” sound in [this valentine’s day video](#), as well as sharing skincare knowledge and tips like [“Are you cleansing properly?”](#)



THE HOLD

Glow Recipe has kept things innovative, becoming one of the first brands to experiment with TikTok Shopping. They built a digital storefront within the TikTok app, then used Product Links so that any spotlighted products could be linked to a new page for more details. A great way to drive more engagement and conversions through the platform!

OUR 5 TIPS FOR BEAUTY BRANDS ON TIKTOK

Taking a look at all of these brands, and pulling on our own expertise working with **top brands** like Nivea, Beiersdorf and The Body Shop on their social media and influencer marketing strategies, **here are our 5 key takeouts.**





01

02

SPOTLIGHT YOUR STAR PRODUCT

Most beauty brands have one or two stand-out products that are most beloved by your audience. For Estee Lauder, it was the Double Wear Foundation, for Augustinus Bader, it was the Rich Cream, and for Glow Recipe, it was the Watermelon Glow Dew Drops.

Yes, you want to get customers interested in your other products and new launches, but use these stars as regular stop gaps to drive engagement. Don't have a star product yet? Pick one and start "faking it till you make it" on TikTok.

DON'T SHY AWAY FROM WHAT YOU ARE

The brands we've featured range from ultimate luxury (Augustinus Bader) down to more affordable challengers (Florence by Mills).

If you are a luxury brand, lean into this and give every video a splash of luxury. Similarly, if you're a legacy brand, take inspiration from Estee Lauder and show how the brand has evolved and been beloved by multiple generations of women. Take your TikTok community on a journey.

03

PUT CREATORS AND INFLUENCERS AT THE FOREFRONT

All the brands on this list regularly work with a diverse range of influencers on TikTok. They'll not only have the influencers posting on their own channels, but will also repurpose their content on the brand channel and through paid ads. It's also a great idea to let influencers "take over" your TikTok channel for a period of time, allowing them the creative freedom to share their style of content.

04

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE FUNNY. . .

Yes, this may seem a strange tip for TikTok marketing; the platform that's known to be hugely based around humor and skit style content.

But if your brand just isn't like that, don't try to force it. The likes of YSL Beauty are doing their own thing without constantly adopting trending funny sounds and challenges.

TikTok is now about so much more than just humor; beauty brands can have success through informative, impressive, beautiful or educational style content. Don't feel you HAVE to be the next Ryanair.

05

ALIGN YOUR TIKTOK CHANNEL WITH YOUR BRAND VISION

Often, we see brands on TikTok doing something completely different to the rest of the brand. And while every marketing channel needs to be treated individually, they also need to make sense to the consumer.

Brands like Charlotte Tilbury, Estrid and Florence by Mills have done a great job of bringing their overarching brand personality (whether that's glamor, fearlessness or self-love) to their TikTok marketing, but just doing it in a TikTok specific way.

WHO IS THE GOAT AGENCY?

Goat is a global, award-winning social-first marketing agency.

Since 2015, Goat has been at the forefront of the social media and influencer marketing industry. Our team of experts has worked with hundreds of brands to drive awareness, engagement, conversions and brand love through long term social media strategies and best-in-class influencer campaigns.

With specific expertise in [TikTok](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Twitch](#), our team is always on top of the latest trends and platform updates. Within the beauty sector itself, we've worked with the likes of Nivea, The Body Shop, Augustinus Bader, Superdrug and Beiersdorf. Get in touch with us to find out how we could help you:

- Create an effective organic and paid social media strategy to achieve your brand's objectives.
- Work with influencers that will deliver results at every stage of the funnel.
- Consolidate your TikTok and wider social media/influencer marketing strategy across different platforms and territories.
- Stand out amongst other beauty brands and get cut through for your brand message!

You can also check out our [Blog](#) for all the latest guides, events and insights from our team.

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