

B2B and TikTok - more compatible than expected?

By [Katherine McInnes](#), issued by [Meltwater](#)

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The B2B buyer may not scroll on TikTok during their working day. But do they do it afterwards? In the car or at home on the couch? Yes, probably.



After all, TikTok was [the first non-Facebook app to surpass 3 billion downloads](#). In fact, compared with other platforms, TikTok is 1.7x more likely to be used for [product discovery purposes](#). This might seem trivial for those who still think it's a platform for "the young", but they should remember that there are 25-year-old Gen Z entrepreneurs and investors out there who are hungry for inspiration and entertainment. For them, TikTok, with its engaging short-form videos and engaging storytelling, harmonises the dichotomy of information and amusement.

The lines in marketing have blurred ever since TikTok came into the picture. Its rise has created a shift in the way marketing is perceived, challenging preconceived notions about the role of platforms and their suitability for different marketing strategies. Despite this, one thing is clearer than ever: We need to stop equating LinkedIn with B2B influencer marketing. And, really, marketing in general.

No, B2B marketing is not just for LinkedIn

Just as Instagram feels natural for B2C companies, LinkedIn - the platform that focuses on professional networking and creates opportunities to drive sales, promote events, and attract new newsletter subscribers, has become synonymous with B2B.

Strategies, channels, and messages will always need to look different to some extent because of the fundamental differences in the customer journey. Still, this shouldn't limit out-of-the-box thinking or sustain outdated beliefs regarding marketing and social media channels. In fact, LinkedIn is not the only social media platform suitable for business-to-business and TikTok is not "just for young people" (the usage of TikTok among boomers experienced a [164% growth](#) between May 2022 and January 2023).

However, we need to acknowledge the reality that the media landscape is saturated with marketing messages in every conceivable way, particularly within the realm of social media. Since the audience is bombarded with information, brands need to put in that extra work to break through the noise to effectively capture attention and influence action.

Embracing emotion in B2B marketing

At its core, marketing is all about reaching and communicating with the right audience. With its clear focus on professional networking, it's no wonder that LinkedIn has become the go-to platform for B2B.

It also works well for influencer marketing, with ambassadors (as they are often called in B2B) working to generate interest in conferences and webinars or drive sales of products and services. These, unlike B2C influencers, who mainly need to convince emotionally driven consumers, are expected to create trust among customers through rational thought leadership messages.

Interestingly, however, [studies](#) show that, despite the usual reasoning, marketers have reasons to incorporate more emotionally driven messages in their B2B strategies. After all, even if the majority wouldn't admit it, B2B buyers are, to some extent, also making emotionally driven decisions. And this is where the discussion on creativity comes in.

By excluding innovative platforms and the content that circulates on them, B2B marketers are missing out. While not every context will be suitable for every business, not daring to explore may do more harm than good. That is not to say that disregarding data or analytics is the way to go, but it's about hitting the sweet spot where the rational and emotional aspects of decision-making seamlessly blend to create a compelling narrative. What creative storytelling brings to the table is a certain degree of emotional resonance to help the audience make sense of the data in a meaningful way - a way in which information is tactfully placed in context. In the end, both B2B and B2C seek inspiration, entertainment, and, most importantly, authenticity on social media. And that's where TikTok has a lot to offer.

It's time for B2B brands to step outside their comfort zone

In today's diverse digital landscape, businesses should, regardless of their B2C or B2B focus, acknowledge that different platforms offer different capabilities and that success lies in leveraging their distinct strengths to align with company objectives.

At the end of the day, it's all about branding. While the creativity and playfulness of the platform may feel unnatural for B2B initially, by partnering with the right ambassadors, B2B companies can be represented in the right way - even on TikTok.

So with that in mind, dare to think outside the B2B box and start experimenting. Who knows? Maybe your next ambassador is on TikTok.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katherine McInnes is the head of marketing, Africa at Meltwater.

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