

Factors Contributing to Entrepreneurial Success on TikTok

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Introduction

In the era of digital transformation, TikTok has emerged as a dominant platform revolutionizing content creation and business promotion. Its popularity, particularly among Gen Z and Millennials, has made it a fertile ground for digital entrepreneurs. Through short-form videos, creators can showcase products, share brand stories, and directly drive e-commerce via TikTok Shop. This form of social commerce blends creativity, algorithmic visibility, and business acumen, lowering entry barriers for aspiring entrepreneurs (Montag et al., 2021). As TikTok evolves from an entertainment platform into a dynamic marketplace, identifying the key factors behind entrepreneurial success becomes increasingly important.

1. Entrepreneurial Creativity and Trend Adaptation

Creativity is at the heart of TikTok's content ecosystem. Entrepreneurs who consistently produce innovative and trend-aligned content are more likely to capture the user's attention and gain algorithmic traction. Viral trends, such as specific sound bites, hashtags, and challenges, serve as tools for product storytelling and emotional branding (Kaye et al. 2021). Creative storytelling also allows entrepreneurs to showcase products in a non-intrusive, entertaining way, thereby increasing consumer engagement. Moreover, several studies found that visual storytelling on TikTok enhances user recall and purchase intention significantly more than static advertisements on other platforms (Shamsuddin & Azman, 2025; Rahmadhani et al., 2023).

2. Digital Literacy and Algorithmic Awareness

Digital literacy encompasses understanding TikTok's technical features, such as the "For You" page algorithm, video optimization strategies, and the use of hashtags, captions, and engagement metrics. Entrepreneurs who optimize their content through A/B testing and analytics are more likely to be featured on users' feeds, thus increasing reach and engagement (Luo & Zhai, 2023). Proficiency in e-commerce tools like TikTok Shop, Shopify integration,

and external payment platforms further supports conversion and customer retention (Montag et al., 2021; Waheed 2025). In addition, platform-specific knowledge, such as best posting times and video editing techniques, allows for efficient content planning.

3. Consistency and Audience Engagement

Consistency in posting not only satisfies the platform's algorithm but also builds user expectations. Regular updates help establish brand identity and reinforce trust. According to Waheed (2025), consistency in social media branding significantly increases perceived reliability and customer loyalty. Furthermore, engaging with audiences through comments, live sessions, and user-generated content (UGC) can increase customer attachment and foster a community around the brand. This social interaction plays a critical role in converting followers into buyers (Dutta & Arivazhagan, 2025).

4. Personal Branding and Authenticity

Entrepreneurs who openly share their personality, background, and everyday experiences are more likely to cultivate a loyal follower base. Authentic content enhances relatability and fosters parasocial relationships with followers, which in turn boosts engagement and trust (Yi, 2023). A 2023 study in the *Journal of Relationship Marketing* found that self-influencer congruence positively affects purchase intention via sequential mediation by parasocial relationships and influencer credibility: followers respond more when they perceive personal alignment with the influencer, leading to stronger trust and higher purchase intent (Koay et al., 2023). Further evidence from beauty influencer research in 2024 shows that parasocial interaction and credibility together play a significant role in improving purchase intention, especially when followers perceive trust and expertise in the influencer (Purnamaningsih et al., 2024). Personal branding extends beyond visual aesthetics; it involves crafting a consistent tone, message, and value proposition. Intimate self-disclosure—sharing personal stories and daily experiences, also plays a key role in building trust and parasocial bonds. While congruence between follower and influencer can moderate this effect, greater self-disclosure generally fosters stronger relational ties and can influence purchase behavior (Koay et al., 2023). Influencers like Bella Poarch and KhabyLame exemplify how integrating personal narratives into content strengthens brand identity and drives monetization success through authenticity and parasocial engagement.

5. Micro-Influencers and Affiliate Marketing

Collaboration with micro-influencers, content creators with 5,000 to 50,000 followers, has proven effective due to their high engagement rates and niche appeal. Siddharta (2023) found that micro-influencers in Malaysia had engagement rates over 40%, outperforming celebrity influencers with larger followings. Affiliate marketing through TikTok's Creator Marketplace allows entrepreneurs to leverage influencer reach without heavy investment in paid advertising. This is particularly beneficial for small businesses seeking scalable promotional solutions (Abidin, 2021).

6. Financial Literacy and Business Management

In today's digital economy, content creators seeking long-term success must develop strong financial literacy and business skills. Managing diverse income sources such as ads, sponsorships, product sales, and affiliate marketing requires strategic financial planning, including budgeting, cash flow management, and profitability analysis (Wallage, 2023; Mou

& Faruk, 2024). Key financial practices include using analytics to manage ad budgets, optimizing ROI from influencer campaigns, controlling operational costs, and ensuring tax compliance and accurate reporting (Mohcine et al., 2022). Mastering these financial principles empowers content creators to make informed business decisions, optimize performance, and ensure long-term viability in a highly competitive online environment. Financial literacy plays an important role in providing the knowledge and skills to entrepreneurs in making informed decisions, managing resources efficiently, and lessening financial risks to sustain their business development (Gomes, 2025).

7. TikTok as a Social Commerce Ecosystem

TikTok's shift toward becoming a social commerce platform is evident through features like livestream selling, embedded shopping links, and creator partnerships. These tools create a seamless customer journey from discovery to purchase within the app. The phrase "TikTok made me buy it" illustrates the powerful influence of user reviews and peer-to-peer marketing. According to TikTok for Business (2022), 67% of users say the platform inspired them to shop even when they weren't actively looking.

8. Integrating Digital Entrepreneurship in Polytechnic Education through TikTok

Polytechnic institutions serve as critical platforms in equipping the next generation of entrepreneurs with the necessary digital and creative skills to thrive in the evolving marketplace. As TikTok continues to redefine how content is consumed and commerce is conducted, Polytechnics can strategically leverage this platform within their digital entrepreneurship curricula. By aligning entrepreneurship education with TikTok's unique business ecosystem, students can gain practical experience in areas such as trend-based content creation, algorithmic visibility strategies, and influencer collaboration. Projects such as designing marketing campaigns, launching simulated TikTok Shops, or conducting video performance analysis can be embedded in coursework to foster real-world competencies.

The entrepreneurial traits highlighted in this paper, such as creativity, digital literacy, branding, and financial management, are directly applicable to educational settings. Incorporating these into polytechnic modules through hands-on TikTok activities allows students to internalize both theoretical concepts and practical skills. Furthermore, assessments in digital entrepreneurship education can be enhanced by evaluating students on metrics similar to those used in TikTok's social commerce, including content engagement, audience targeting, and conversion strategies. This approach prepares polytechnic students not only to excel on the platform but also to apply these skills to broader entrepreneurial ventures after graduation. Overall, TikTok is not merely a tool for business, it is an experiential learning environment that Polytechnics can adopt to make entrepreneurship education more engaging, contemporary, and impactful.

Conclusion

TikTok has democratized entrepreneurship by providing a free and accessible platform for self-expression and commerce. Success on the platform hinges on a multidimensional skill set that includes creativity, digital fluency, consistent branding, and sound financial management. As TikTok continues to grow as a business tool, it is crucial that educators and policymakers incorporate digital entrepreneurship and financial literacy into curriculums. Supporting youth with the right tools and training will empower them to build sustainable ventures in the digital economy.

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