



Tips to Unlock Opportunity on TikTok

TikTok may connect you with followers you wouldn't otherwise reach, helping you raise funds and awareness.

By Tiffany Rivers

TikTok is now among the fastest growing social-media platforms, particularly popular among Gen Zers. While its primary purpose may be entertainment, more and more nonprofits are turning to TikTok to inform, educate, engage, advocate, and actually raise funds – as well as drive traffic to their websites.

Consider the case of It Gets Better (itgetsbetter.org), a nonprofit organization with a mission to uplift, empower, and connect lesbian, gay, transgender, and queer youth around the globe. It Gets Better launched their #FavoriteTeacher campaign on TikTok to give users the opportunity to acknowledge the important role of educators in the lives of teens and to show how important it is for LBGTQ+ youth to have supportive adults in their schools. The campaign

ran on TikTok's Discover page for 24 hours and TikTok ads were launched simultaneously.

Within the first few weeks, It Gets Better saw a 41% increase in follower growth week over week (compared with 8% growth for the previous weeks) and a 500% increase in site traffic. Views of #FavoriteTeacher generated 104 million views in just four days.

While these results are impressive, it's important for nonprofits to consider several tips before diving into the world of TikTok, including:

Decide if TikTok is right for your nonprofit. Building a presence on a new social-media platform can be a huge undertaking. Before stepping in, first assess if TikTok is effective in reaching your target audience. Remember: approximately 62% of TikTok's audience is between the ages of 10 and 29, according to Comscore.

It's also helpful to know what trends are circulating on TikTok and to see if you can attach yourself to them. These trends are constantly changing, and the best way to know

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which content, audio, hashtags, or concepts are going viral on the platform is to engage with the Discover page. Think of this page as the hub for the most popular content on the app.

Engage the right talent. TikTok prioritizes raw, real, unedited and people-first videos. Overly polished photos, videos, and graphics won’t cut it. Think about whether you have employees willing and able to make engaging videos – or the budget to hire creators and influencers.

Having an employee kick off your TikTok account is a great starting point, but it’s not the only way. TikTok’s creator marketplace is the platform’s official collaboration center that connects organizations with creators to execute paid and reward-based campaigns. This is a great starting point for nonprofits that are new to TikTok.

Keep content “entertainment-first.” Remember that TikTok is an entertainment platform first and foremost. Make sure you’re reserving the right content for the right channels.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) is a great example: They use Facebook to share tips and articles about dog care to establish their place as an expert in dog welfare. On TikTok, however, AKC has a different goal: to engage audiences with cute dog videos. It’s critical to approach TikTok like a regular human, not a formalized brand, and remember that expensive equipment and cameras aren’t necessary to produce highly engaging content.

Keep it concise. It’s crucial that you get to the point. More than one in three viral videos features a person speaking within the first three seconds, according to a recent analysis of over 600 viral TikTok videos by Semrush (semrush.com).

Show your followers the lesson or purpose of the video within the first three seconds: That’s all the time you get before the average user swipes. You can easily achieve a captivating introduction by using narration or text on the screen or by front-loading the video with the most salient information.

Videos should have a story arc – a concise beginning, middle, and end. Consider mapping out key story fundamentals such as a hook, introduction, interesting turn, and final pay-off before executing a TikTok.



Inspire audience engagement. When crafting a content strategy, you don’t need to start from scratch. Leverage in-app tools to promote conversation and engagement with existing audiences that overlap with your own: This can be through TikTok’s duet, react, reply-with-video, and stitch features. Inspire your audience to have a dialogue with your organization through the use of polls or Q&As. Also, community management is key on TikTok, so be sure to answer any questions you receive in your comments (or in the comment section of other viral TikToks).

Ultimately TikTok is here to stay and provides an opportunity for nonprofits to connect with an audience they might otherwise not reach. Once you’ve determined if TikTok is a good fit for your organization, remember that content should be entertainment-focused, concise, attention-grabbing, engaging, and should tell a good story. Compelling TikTok content can help you build brand awareness and support on the platform while helping drive traffic to other platforms and fueling donations. 

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In Greater Detail

For more tips on using TikTok and other social media, take a quick look at these articles (NonprofitWorld.org):

How to Make Social-Media Fundraising Work for You (Vol. 27, No. 2)

The Best Way to Tell Your Organization’s Story? Capture It on Video (Vol. 35, No. 4)

Using Social Media to Advance Your Goals (Vol. 27, No. 1)
Get to the Point Fast (Vol. 37, No. 1)

Accelerating Fundraising through Social Media (Vol. 28, No. 3)

How to Engage the Next Generation of Donors Now (Vol. 20, No. 1)

Yes, You CAN Make Powerful, Affordable Videos (Vol. 14, No. 2)

Don’t Take Risks with Social Media (Vol. 29, No. 1)