

# ***The Marketing Strategy of Popular Short Video Application -- Taking TikTok as an Example***

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**Abstract:** As technology rapidly developed, many entertainment applications occurred on the internet. Competition among various entertainment software is fierce, Chinese TikTok (also named Douyin) become the most popular entertainment application of its excellent marketing strategy in recent years. Meanwhile, TikTok also revealed many disadvantages which make the network society become chaotic. This passage combing some literature and the history of TikTok analyses the marketing strategies and existing problems of this product. The research found that some marketing strategies of TikTok are product strategy, price strategy, promotion strategy, and content strategy. This research also provides some advice on the development of the company.

**Keywords:** marketing strategy, entertainment application, TikTok

## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, in our common society, social media platforms are a major influential part of daily life. People use these apps everywhere they go, not only at home but also outside. It even cannot leave people's life. The update speed of entertainment software is fast, related enterprises are also developing constantly, more and more entertainment software into people's life. Since 2016 a user usage rate of more than 90%, TikTok (also named Douyin) has become an important communication platform affecting public life. TikTok has won the favor of most consumers with its new short video mode, effective publicity mode, and unique development concept. The reason why TikTok has become the best-selling entertainment software in China in recent years is not only the advantages of product features and performance but also the company's marketing strategy. Meanwhile, there are lots of problems occurring on TikTok. Therefore, it is of practical significance and value to study its marketing strategy. At the same time, the study also pays attention to the typical example of successful marketing strategies.

The research analyzes the marketing strategy of TikTok based on the existing literature. And more in-depth understanding of TikTok's marketing strategy and advantages which make TikTok become the most popular application in China and even spread to foreigners are also discussed. Also points out some problems and some advice to TikTok.

## **2. Development status of TikTok Company**

### **2.1. Development of TikTok**

TikTok is also named Douyin on the Chinese mainland. On September 26, 2016, TikTok version 1.0.0 went online, TikTok focused on improving the social networking and shooting functions of the software at the beginning period. A few people knew TikTok, because the short video was not popular, and another app that was earlier than TikTok called “Quick hand”. This application was the first short video in China, it occupied most of the users and almost monopolized the short video market. But it has many disadvantages. For example, the quality of the video was too vulgar and lacked novel ideas. What is more, Quick hand didn't label users or give preferential treatment to content creators. So some relatively so-called urban, educated, and trendy people despise this application.

Conversely, TikTok had strict requirements for videos published by users and it tried to mix music with the short video. Then people started in interested in the new model of entertainment applications. Starting from the subdivision direction of short music videos, TikTok integrates music elements into short videos to attract a group of young people from first - and second-tier cities who pay attention to fashion trends, love novelty, dare to try things, and have high requirements for video quality. In 2017, TikTok started to advertise by inviting some popular stars to endorse TikTok and sponsor some variety shows. In addition, TikTok launched a live broadcast function and entered the foreign software application market. This behavior brought a number of customers to TikTok. In the Spring Festival of 2018, TikTok became completely popular, with daily life reaching more than 60 million. Also launched a new slogan “Record a better life”. This slogan encourages more people to make video and send it to the public. Then TikTok started the TikTok Mall, where users can buy the goods they want in TikTok. The number of TikTok downloads in AppStore and Google Play reached a record high of 57 million. By the end of 2019, the total number of TikTok downloads in the whole year exceeded 508 million, an increase of 55% year on year, and the number of downloads in the world exceeded 700 million, surpassing Facebook.

### **2.2. TikTok's market environment**

Before TikTok came out, all the popular entertainment applications are the long video model. People only watched movies or Tv programs made by film and television companies. Short video entertainment apps had not come close to people's lives. In the early days of the emergence of the short video mode, only Quick Hand operated short video software. TikTok seized the vacancy in the short video market and join in it soon. There are not too many competitors to seize resources. TikTok's early operation was very stable with a few problems. Then TikTok defeated the only threatening competitor and monopolized the short video market by virtue of its operational advantages, diversified playing methods, and higher-quality content.

## **3. The Marketing Strategies of TikTok**

### **3.1. Product Strategy**

#### **3.1.1. New Trend, Easy to Use, Easy to Produce Video**

Compared with long videos, short videos have lower production costs, a wider production crowd, simpler editing tools, and more diverse video effects. Most short videos on TikTok are about 15 seconds long, and the playback time is short. Users can reach more users in a short time, which helps to expose and increase the followers of videos [1]. This new trend makes TikTok more popu-

lar which benefits video creators and users. Before the emergence of short videos, video shooting often required specialized equipment and technical literacy, and only professionals could produce videos. When taking short videos, only a smartphone is needed to complete self-expression, and record the most vivid and vivid appearance of ordinary people's lives, which greatly reduces the threshold of video production and greatly improves the diversity of online video content [2]. Short video time is short, will not be like the traditional long video drag, video highlights prominent features, and more firmly attract users. What is more, TikTok is easy to use. Unlike traditional video software, which requires searching for videos to watch, TikTok can automatically play videos and switch them by swiping up and down. This convenience allows users to watch videos where they go, attracting more customers.

### **3.1.2. Accurate Target Users, Distinctive Data Analyze**

From the very beginning, TikTok was targeted at young people in the new era, and its music, different rhythms of beats, interesting special effects, and filters are among the most popular elements among young people. TikTok's unique music and all kinds of "ghost animal" special effects are favored elements of these young groups. This huge group of young people has laid a user base for the future direction of TikTok [3]. At the same time, creativity, willingness to try new things, and love to do challenging things are all characteristics of young people. Doudou Musical notes fit in with the characteristics of "willing to socialize and share life" of this group, which just provides a platform to show themselves. No matter making short videos or watching short videos, it is extremely easy to mobilize the enthusiasm of young people to participate in them and meet their needs for entertainment and social interaction in daily life. In the age distribution of users released on September 3, 2018, 85% of TikTok users are under 24 years old, and they are mainly from first - and second-tier cities [4]. Many websites do not have targeted customers and cannot retain all customers resulting in large user attrition. What is more, TikTok can recommend videos to users by analyzing their preferences based on which videos they spend the most time on. Users can also bookmark recommended videos or indicate that they are not interested in them. This function can satisfy user interests and retain users to the greatest extent.

### **3.1.3. Effective Advertising**

TikTok uses ads in two main ways. The first is a full-screen AD that users can see when they turn on TikTok Users cannot ignore such ads and are forced to accept them. But TikTok has designed boring ads to be fun so that users don't get annoyed, but watch them through. TikTok makes the style of advertising videos the same as that of videos published by other users. The second way to insert ads is to insert ads appropriately after users watch a large number of videos. Users unconsciously accept advertisements, and the sudden change in video content can make users leave a deep impression on advertisements. This kind of advertising mode can make users pay more attention to advertisers, and enable more and more advertisers to sign contracts with TikTok.

## **3.2. Price Strategy**

### **3.2.1. Low User Cost**

In terms of pricing, TikTok can be downloaded for free, while there is no compulsory consumption on TikTok, all consumption is decided by the user. Compare to other video apps, Users do not need to buy TikTok VIP to activate certain video rights. Users can watch all videos released by other users by registering their accounts. If user is willing to pay money, they can choose to pay money to increase the video playback volume of their videos, the system will help the creator deliver the vid-

eo to more people. This low cost and can promote their own awareness of the consumption way has been praised by most users. In another area, all the videos are around 15 seconds. Users to do is select a favorite music and then post it with a simple movement or dance. This kind of production cost is very low, can arouse users' creative passion, increase the variety of videos, and ensure the user's stickiness

### **3.2.2. More Convenient for Profit**

The large number of users of TikTok not only helps TikTok itself but also attracts advertising from various advertisers to the creators of TikTok videos. Traffic represents revenue. The more people who post a video watch it, the more money the creator gets. Advertisers will choose video creators with a large number of fans for endorsement. Followers also trust the bloggers they follow to buy goods. Since then, short video advertising has become the most popular business model. Actually, short video delivery can reach the height mainly because of the following advantages. First of all, the promotion cost of a short video is much lower than that of traditional TV advertising. TV advertising is expensive and often pays per second, which is not affordable for most small companies. Therefore, it is much easier and more cost-effective for individuals to advertise on short videos based on their own image [5]. What is more, in order to avoid the degradation of video quality due to advertising, most video creators will integrate advertising commodities into interesting sitcoms, so that the advertising will not feel vulgar, which can increase brand awareness and bring high profits to video creators and TikTok. TikTok also has a live streaming function, where users can turn on the live streaming to become an anchor, and other users can send gifts to their favorite anchors. This easy way to make money has brought many users to TikTok.

## **3.3. Content Strategy**

### **3.3.1. Video Diversity and Quality**

TikTok encourages users to post original videos. As long as users post original videos of dances or funny performances, TikTok allows more users to see the videos and labels them as original. Creators will strive to make original videos for the superiority of original signatories and the high playback volume of videos. Such a policy enables more and more original video producers to appear in TikTok, ensuring the diversity of TikTok videos and preventing users from feeling that TikTok videos are the same. In addition, TikTok prioritizes video quality and will not increase video traffic just because a video is posted by a celebrity. Many videos posted by ordinary users have higher traffic than stars because of their high quality. Fair distribution of traffic makes video creators more passionate about creating high-quality videos.

### **3.3.2. Celebrity Effect**

Due to the high popularity of TikTok, many Internet celebrities will download TikTok release videos to promote their popularity. In TikTok, friendly interaction and content co-creation can be realized among stars, between stars and fans, and between stars and ordinary users. It is like a huge video friend circle without boundaries but can be connected at any time. It is established in the public domain, completely breaking the limitation of the original private traffic of the friend circle. The social interaction and life of stars are more truly and vividly displayed in the vision of fans and users. Fans and ordinary users have established a new relationship with stars, generating a sense of interaction with stars who have a circle of friends and can communicate with them at any time. So more and more people will download TikTok to see what videos are sent by their followers. In addition, a star's presence creates a special topic, and other video creators create new videos around

the topic the star brings. The entry of stars brings them higher visibility and brings a large number of users and videos to TikTok.

### **3.3.3. Diversified Playing Methods**

Having variable playing methods is the most attractive thing about TikTok. First TikTok combines music and beauty effects with short videos. Short music videos allow everyone to be their own director. When users finish their own work, it is like the director finishing a film, which can give them a sense of satisfaction and achievement. If the works get a lot of likes, users will be encouraged to produce content again, which is also unique in the current short video market [6]. The beauty effects can make people more beautiful in the video. With good music, creating videos becomes fun. People's interest in creating videos was sparked. Users can also open live streaming to compete with other users, with the loser receiving punishment. Viewers love watching anchors do the punishment. This kind of play has also led to the birth of many PK anchors.

## **3.4. Promotion strategy**

### **3.4.1. Online Advertising**

In the initial stage, TikTok put a lot of online advertising to enhance its brand awareness. By sponsoring popular variety shows such as "The Rap of China", "Happy Camp" and "We Are Different", TikTok has brought attention to the audience watching variety shows. In addition, TikTok often works with other software, such as Weibo and QQ, which can be found in various places on the Internet. This heavy investment in advertising is one reason why TikTok has become one of the most popular short video apps. In addition, Douyin users also give Douyin a large number of ads. Users see interesting videos that are likely to be downloaded and spread to their friends around them. My friends know about TikTok, and when they see interesting videos, they send them to other people. As a result, more and more people will know about TikTok. Compared with the one-way linear transmission of traditional media, it greatly improves the transmission rate and enriches the video content and personalized aesthetic. At the same time, the TikTok platform's comment area, co-tap, private message, and other functions bring strong interactivity. Netizens show a strong desire and enthusiasm for the expression of hot topics, accelerate the split transmission, and realize the "acquaintances" circle transmission [7].

### **3.4.2. Below-the-line Advertising**

TikTok often holds offline events and invites various celebrity Internet celebrities to gain media popularity. Through activities, these online celebrities with various tricks gathered offline on such a large scale, taking advantage of the rare offline gathering opportunity to exchange experiences of shooting videos and playing TikTok, share creative tips, and have fun with people with different living environments and growing backgrounds but the same interests. These activities also attract attention due to a large number of Internet celebrities and celebrities, and the downloads of TikTok increase accordingly.

## **4. The Existing Problems of Tiktok**

### **4.1. Too Much Bad Information, Strengthen Information Control**

According to the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), there are a lot of bad information and behaviors on the TikTok APP that induce minors to participate in the rankings, spend large amounts of money, and incite young fans to fight and abuse each other [8]. Many TikTok users posted abu-



sive and mocking comments under the videos, and some called on other users to join in hurling abuse at the video creators. Rumors and false information are also rife in the comments section. The presence of such people makes the comments section of the TikTok video foul. In addition, more people in the broadcast room or video release false information, and abuse others. This kind of behavior pollutes the Internet environment and affects online teenagers and even the whole of society. In addition, TikTok has too much fake information which makes the app lack authenticity. Due to the huge number of TikTok users, everyone can publish news on the TikTok platform, and the threshold of this platform is very low, people only need to move a finger to publish short videos, but some people will publish some false information in order to attract attention, and some users do not timely distinguish the authenticity of the information and forward it, resulting in the spread of false information. Create rumors [9]. In order to ensure a good network environment and promote the progress of short video platforms, TikTok should strengthen management. Bear social and legal responsibilities, and strive to respond to the call of the state to create a beautiful network environment. By strengthening monitoring systems, installing human inspectors, or improving AI reviews, users can be deleted and banned if they are seen spreading bad information. Call on all users to join the fight against bad information, and build a better network environment camp. You can get rewards from the platform for reporting anything bad.

#### 4.2. Video Homogenization is Serious, Vulgar, and Focuses on Quality

As more and more memes appear, many creators take shortcuts in order to gain traffic by copying, imitating, etc., rather than bothering to create new videos. But those users do not realize that this behavior will bring serious homogenization consequences to TikTok. Over time, monotonous, low-quality videos lead to more and more viewer dissatisfaction. In 2017, the "Seagrass dance", which received great attention on the platform, attracted a large number of netizens to imitate and brush the screen on various video platforms. This kind of video finally causes the audience's aesthetic fatigue, and the "seaweed dance" is no longer spread, and the content accepted by the audience in the short video platform is gradually forgotten. When the content received by the audience on the short video platform tends to be more and more the same, it will eventually cause the audience's aesthetic psychological fatigue and be eliminated [10]. For video diversity and high quality, TikTok should focus on centralized development. Harshly provide traffic to users, imitate, copy videos that are much less than original videos, or provide rewards to original authors. This behavior can improve users' motivation to create a video instead of copying it.

#### 5. Conclusion

By analyzing the development history and market environment of TikTok, this study deeply analyzes its marketing strategy and problems. Its marketing strategies are product strategy, price strategy, content strategy, and promotion strategy. The problem is too much bad information and video homogenization. Therefore, TikTok company should correctly deal with the problems in marketing, take the initiative to assume market responsibility, and face them actively. The shortcoming of this study is that only a single enterprise is analyzed. More companies can be analyzed as research objects in the future.

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