



Making TikTok part of your crisis response

01 Why have we written this guide?



As users of TikTok, we're aware of how quickly and widely crises are spreading on the channel. Vertical video and TikTok-style content is already an important part of our crisis response training and we want to make sure you are aware, prepared and confident to handle any crisis on any channel, including TikTok.

02 TikTok is here to stay



In 2023, Tikok reached 1.5 billion monthly users and is expected to have 2 billion in 2024 (TikTok achieved 1 billion in half the time of Facebook, Instagram and YouTube).

TikTok has been downloaded over three billion times.

Overtook Google as the most visited domain, ahead of Facebook, Apple, Microsoft and Netflix.

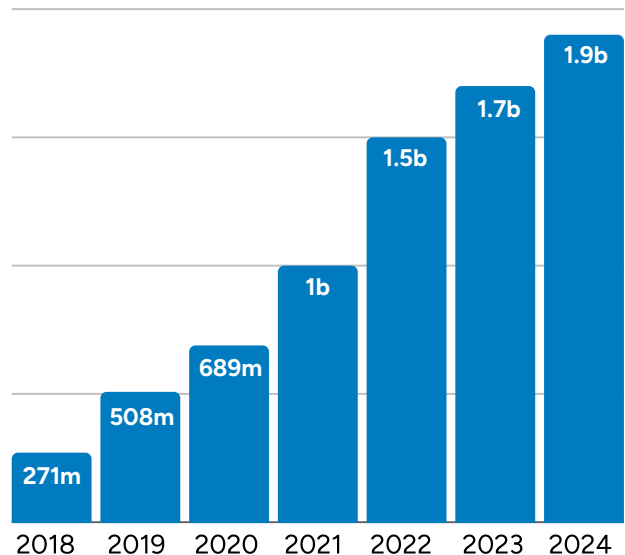
03 Why does this matter?



Because TikTok has a massive reach, as big as Facebook in terms of monthly active users.

Ignoring TikTok in your social strategy and crisis plan is a potentially dangerous decision to make when it comes to your brand's reputation.

TikTok monthly active users



04 How does a crisis spread on TikTok?



It's so easy to make a video

There are plenty of audio and filter options on TikTok. You can also just point, shoot and post. It takes a matter of moments to post and then it's live for the world to watch.



Anyone can go viral

TikTok uses a content-based algorithm rather than people-based. It's more interested in what content you interact with than the people you follow. It is much easier for people with small follower counts to go viral.



It's easy to share videos to wider networks.

TikTok makes it really easy to share videos outside the platform. With a couple of taps a video can be shared with another user or to another channel entirely, speeding up the distribution of a viral video.



It's easy to contribute to the conversation

Duets, stitches, comments: TikTok has many ways to respond to and interact with videos. Another user might use the original video as a jumping-off point with a similar story to tell, be able to add more context or disagree with it completely, allowing the original story to escalate.

05 The worst-case scenario



- A video complaining about your brand is filmed and uploaded to TikTok. The user might be new to the platform but they've used the right hashtags.
- It gains attention and TikTok puts it into thousands of people's feeds. People share the story with their contacts, on the app and externally.
- The video gains millions of views and people comment on the video with similar negative encounters. People are angry and trust in your brand drops significantly.
- Without a presence on TikTok to monitor potential issues and intervene, this is all happening without your knowledge.
- By the time the video spreads to other channels and you're made aware of it, the reputational damage has been done.

06 So what should you do?



TikTok is still relatively new and jumping onto a platform just because it's new isn't recommended. But when you have a platform as popular as TikTok with the potential for rapidly developing crises, it's important to monitor the channel and know how to respond effectively.



Get Verified

Set up an official brand account to monitor and respond from. Ideally, get the account verified, but if that's not possible, put out some video content to prove you are who you say you are. You should also set up your profile as a business account and add a link to your website.



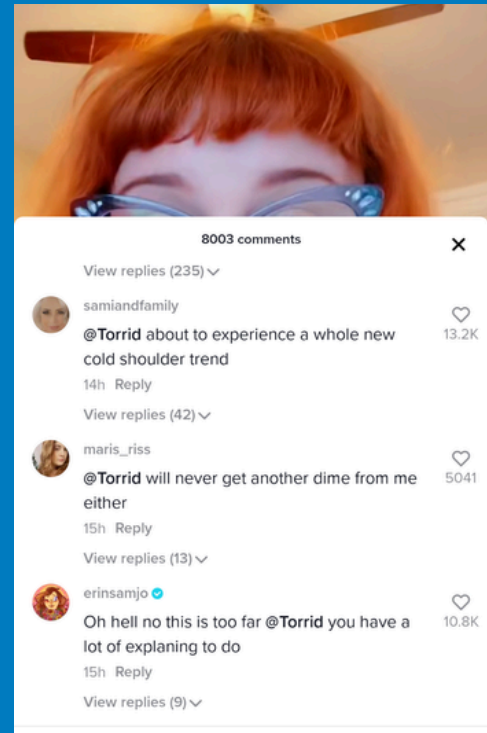
Monitor regularly

There are several online tools e.g. Mention, Brand24, Sprinklr and Pulsar that can monitor mentions and keywords. Check the results regularly to know what 'normal' looks like to help you know what unusual looks like.

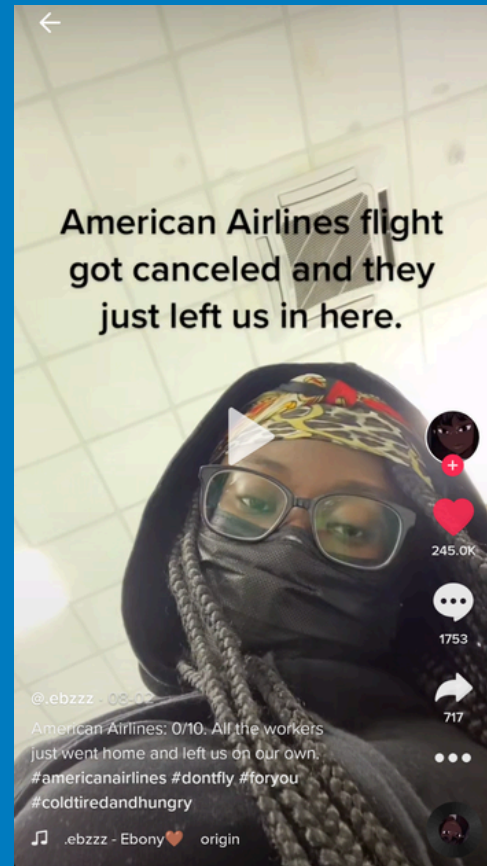
You can also monitor using TikTok's search function. There are useful search filters and you can also save hashtags.

Research the keywords and hashtags that your audiences are using and keep an eye on those too. Don't forget to also monitor acronyms and misspellings.

Remember: Investing time in monitoring helps to prevent crises from escalating and costing you even more time and resources to respond.



1.7 Million views
11.5k Comments
300.5k Likes



1.1 Million views
1.7k Comments
245.5K Likes

07 Responding to a crisis on TikTok



Even without all the information, some kind of response is important. Alongside the original poster, you'll often find many people tagging in the brand in the comments and demanding an answer.

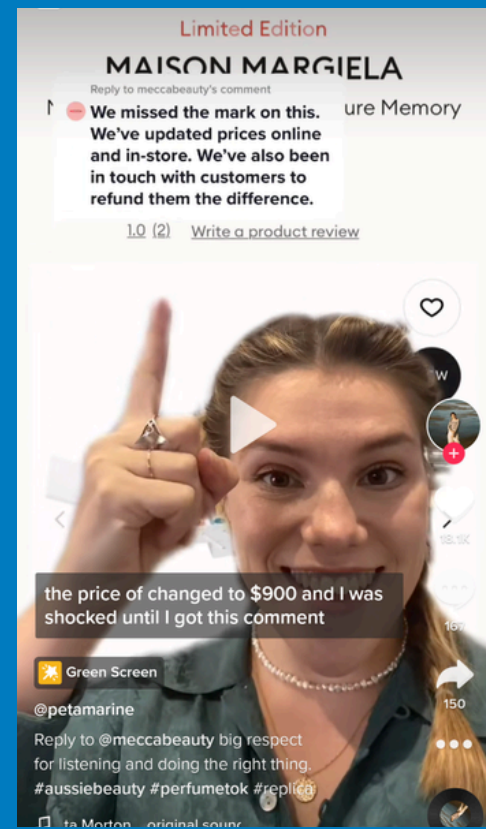
A follow-up response should include:

- Care and concern for the user
- The action you are taking
- The wider perspective or context:

TikTok limits comments to no more than 150 characters so you may have to respond over a series of messages. You could always reply with a video too to help show you're taking the issue seriously.

A great response also includes:

- Responses to other comments
- A follow-up message with more information when you have it.



An example of a brand putting out a good response which was well received



315.5K Views
1k Comments
28.4K Likes

08 Handling Mis and Disinformation

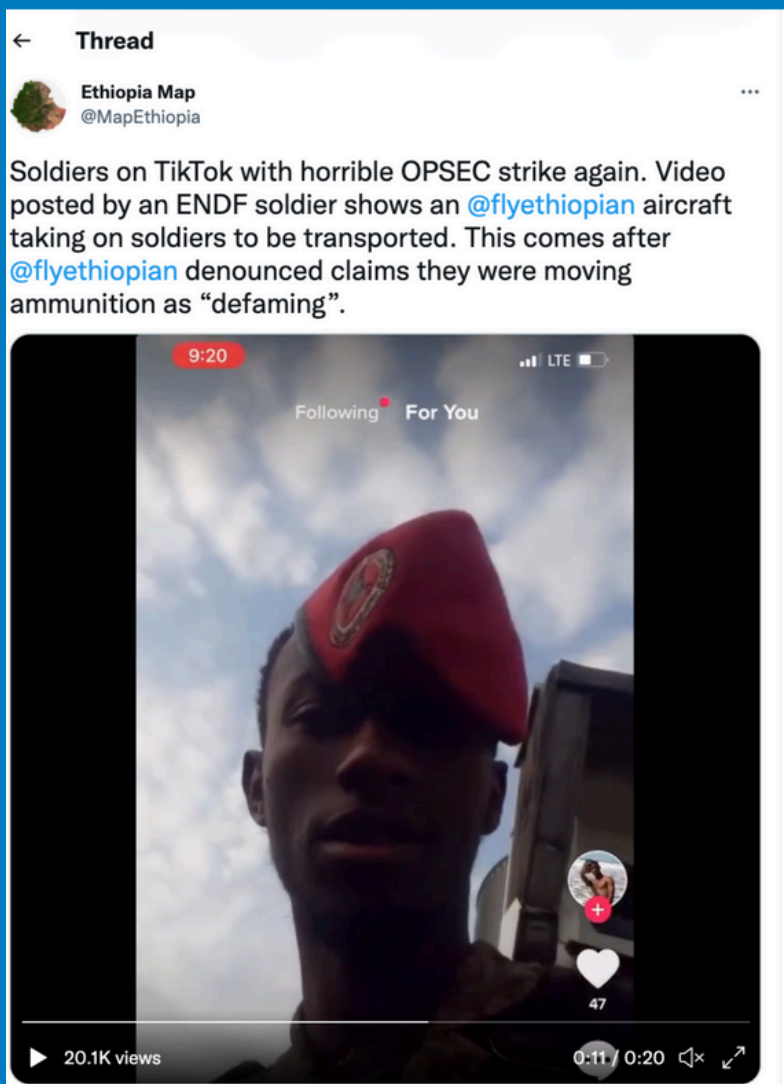


Mis and disinformation is a big issue for social media channels and TikTok has not escaped this.

In a recent study, nearly 20% of the videos presented as search results on TikTok contained misinformation (source:mashable.com).

Because the platform is set up to encourage viral videos, it is a breeding ground for the spread of mis and disinformation. If you encounter one of these videos about your brand, it can be dealt with in a few easy steps:

1. Report the video. Press and hold on the video to find the report option.
2. Check the comments of the original video and respond to any comments and concerns there.
3. For videos spreading dangerous misinformation, you should stitch or duet the video to put out a clear rebuttal.



A video from TikTok was shared on Twitter. The contents contradicted a statement from Ethiopian Airlines denying they transported weapons for the army.

Looking for help incorporating TikTok into your crisis plan? Get in touch:

 hello@helpfuldigital.com

More useful resources:

 socialsimulator.com/resources

 [@socialsimulator](https://www.linkedin.com/company/socialsimulator)



Social media

Training, channel audits, employee advocacy, webinars, and guidance.

Crisis preparedness

Toolkits and training on digital crisis communications, and crisis management.

Crisis response

Social Simulator delivers realistic, secure simulations of a crisis.