

GEN Z AND SOCIAL MEDIA

# WHAT YOUR **SOCIAL** **TEAM** NEEDS TO KNOW

2,000 Gen Zers.

1 Research Report.

5 Crucial Things Brands Need To Know.



## Forget what you've heard...

We all think we know how Gen Z behave on social media, what they want from brand content, what they think of influencers, and what drives them to buy.

## But now we've asked them directly.

*So what did we discover?*



## Methodology

In Autumn 2022, we commissioned our own research of over **2,000 16-24 year olds** to find out what they really think of the social media platforms they're using, as well as the tips for brands wanting to reach them. Using nationally representative samples, our data has been broken down by age, gender, region and education.

## Platforms

**1** Where are they really spending the most time?

## Purpose

**2** What are the platforms for? And what does this mean for brands?

## Behaviour

**3** How do they buy?

## Emotions

**4** What do they feel after using these platforms, and why does it matter?

## Expectations

**5** What's coming next and what should brands be doing to help?

“When the topic of social media is discussed, it's usually in the context of young people. The image is that of a teenager with their eyes glued to a smartphone or filming a TikTok, despite many platforms now reporting higher millennial and boomer usage.

It's a fact though that younger generations tend to be the drivers behind social media's evolution. The trends they start and the platforms they adopt trickle outwards, and for marketers, they're one of the best sources of information and inspiration for our future advertising strategies.

With this research, we wanted to explore Gen Z's current attitudes to social media platforms, in particular TikTok and Instagram, as well as start to uncover what impact these attitudes will have in the future of how we reach them.”

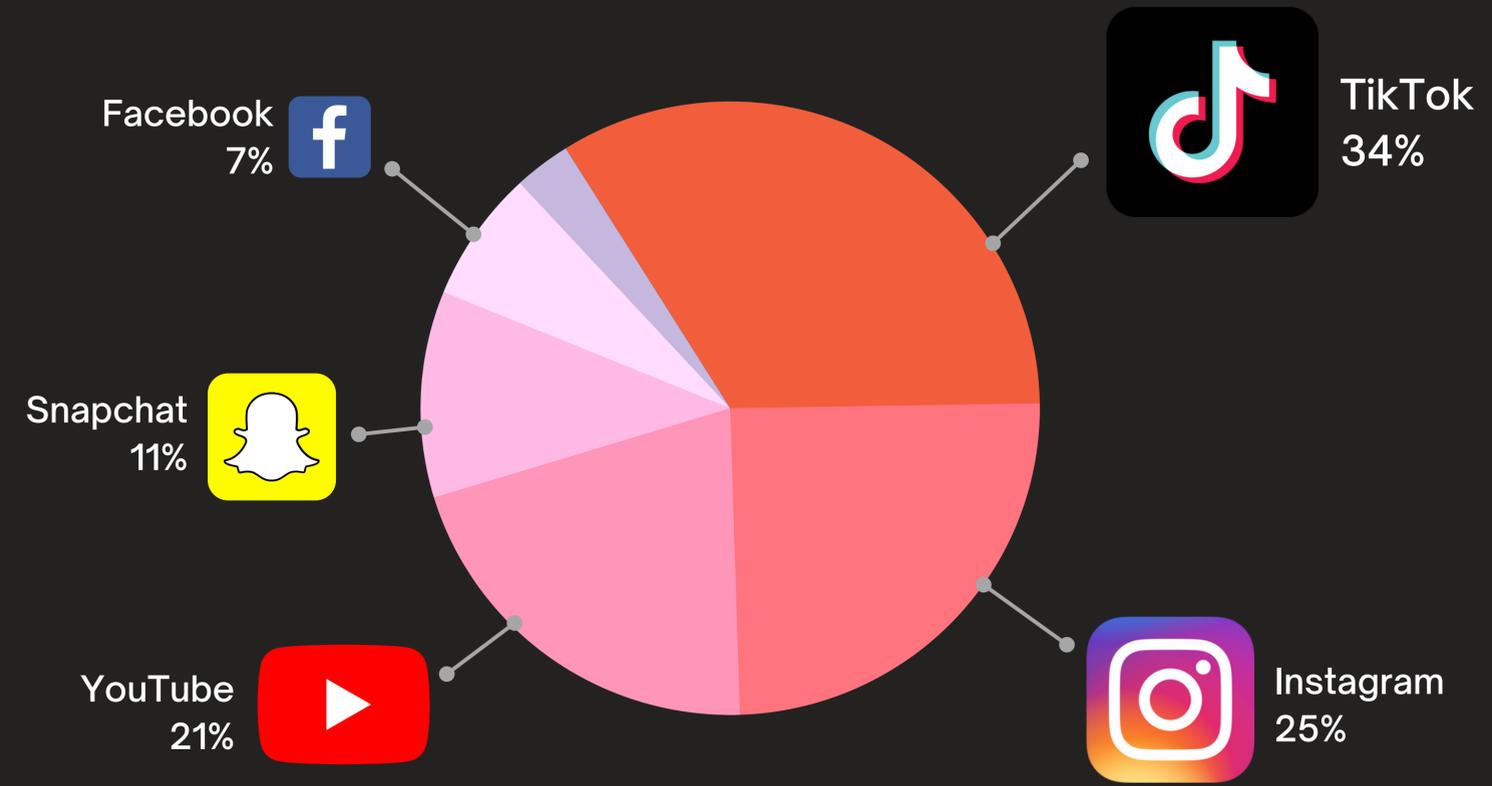
Joanna Hughston, Head of Marketing,  
Fanbytes by Brainlabs



# 1 PLATFORMS

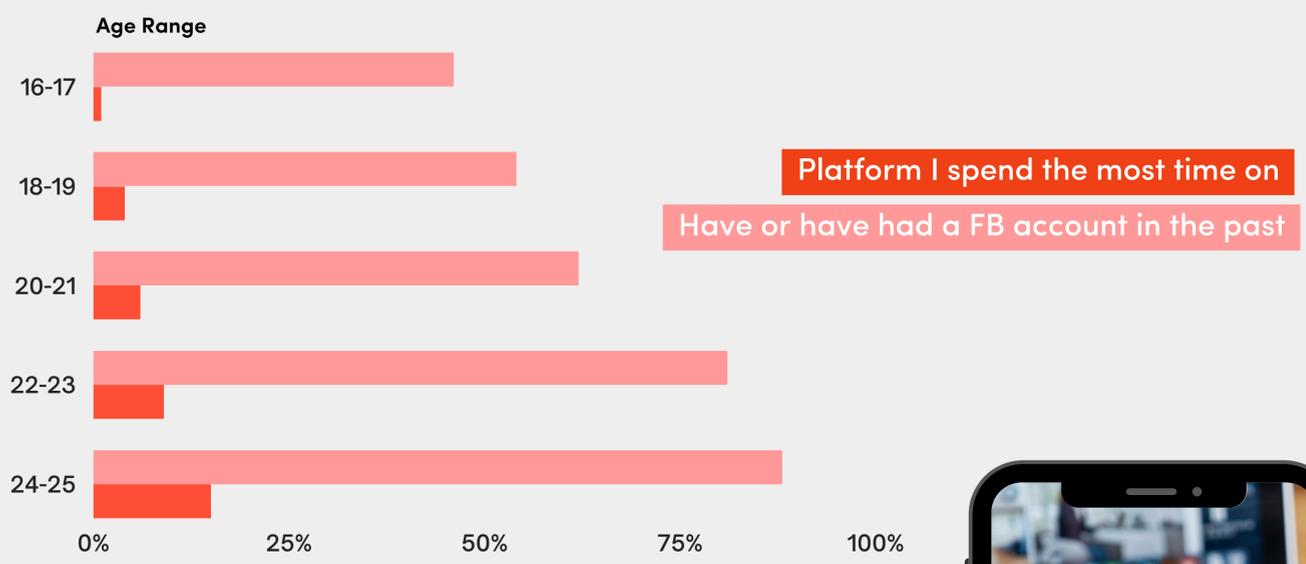
Is Facebook relevant to Gen Z? And where are Gen Z spending most of their time?

Platform you spend the most time on	Overall	Male	Female
Facebook	7%	8%	7%
Instagram	25%	16%	33%
Snapchat	11%	12%	10%
TikTok	34%	37%	32%
YouTube	21%	25%	16%
Other	3%	2%	3%



Which social media platform do you spend the most time on?

## facebook



### THE RESULTS ARE IN...

...and there's a clear trend when it comes to Facebook.

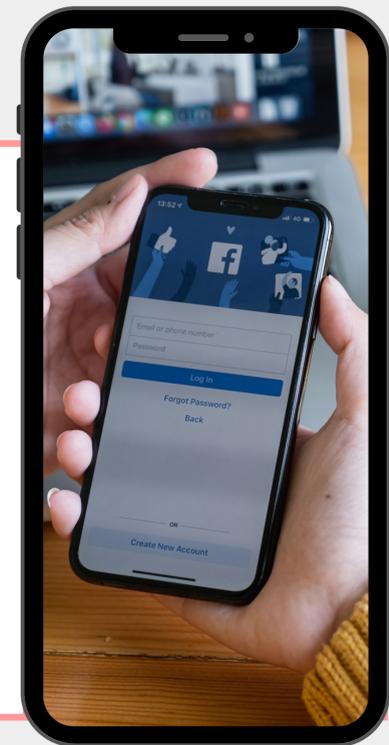
Only 7% of those we surveyed claimed to spend the most time on Facebook, and this decreases with every age group.

General Facebook usage is also rapidly deteriorating with

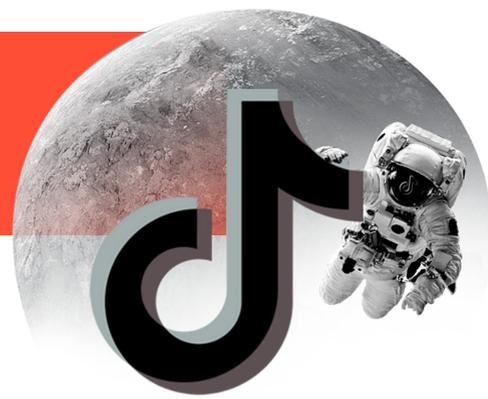
every new year of social media users. Nearly half of 16-17 year olds have never even had an account!

So if you're a brand wanting to target Gen Z audiences, Facebook isn't necessarily the place to be.

*TikTok on the other hand..*



# THE POWER OF TIKTOK



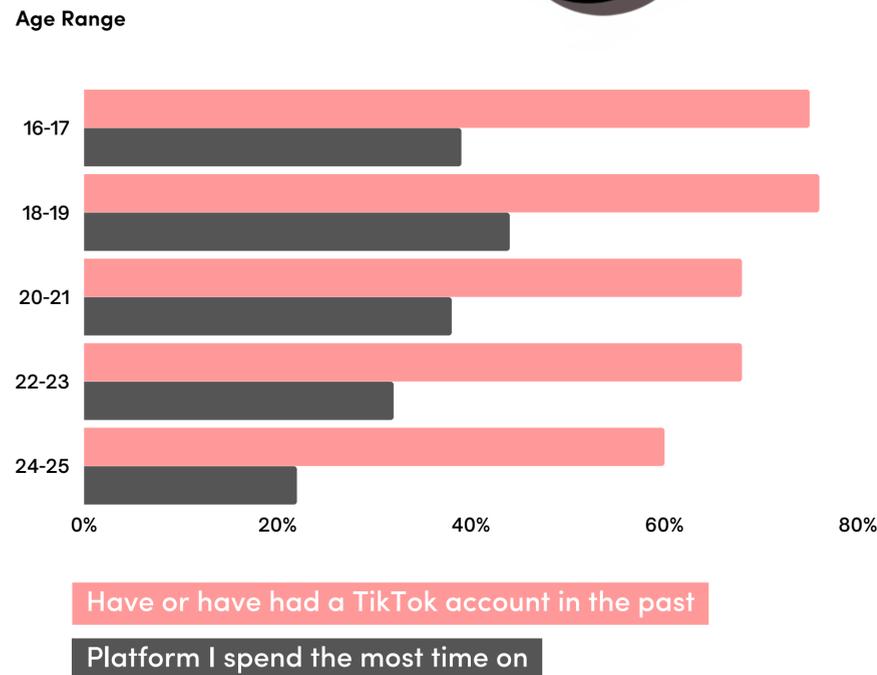
TikTok is clearly the platform of choice for younger people with **69% of those surveyed saying they've had an account**, and 34% claiming it's the 'platform they spend the most time on'.

Unsurprisingly, TikTok usage decreases as age increases, with **75% of under 18s having had an account** and 67% of over 18s.

What's interesting though is that despite only 69% of people saying they have or have had a TikTok account (the lowest of all platforms), it has already become the platform that people spend the most time on.

Even the **24-25 year age group listed TikTok as their third most active platform** behind Instagram and (by a fraction) YouTube.

This demonstrates the immense impact TikTok has had in such a short space of time, and its growth only seems to be continuing.



## LONDONERS LOVE TIKTOK

41% of Londoners said it's the platform they spend the most time on, followed closely by the Eastern (35%) and Yorkshire (33%) regions.

On the other hand, they were one of the least likely regions to choose Instagram.

Could it be that Londoners are quicker to adopt new technologies and platforms, meaning that TikTok (as the newest kid on the block) has had a more swift uptake?

Or perhaps Londoners are just more jaded, meaning they're less likely to prefer the aspirational, glamorous style content that Instagram tends to lean towards?

# 75% OF UNDER 18S HAVE OR HAVE HAD A TIKTOK ACCOUNT



## MALE VS FEMALE

Instagram is still the platform of choice for girls/women on average, with 91% having an account currently or in the past (vs 76% of men).

Female respondents also spend **more time** on Instagram than on TikTok - only just though at 33% vs 32%, while males are more likely to say TikTok (37%) and YouTube (25%). Only 16% of male respondents said they spent the most time on Instagram.

# 1 PLATFORMS

## *Our Top Takeouts and Tips for Social Media Managers:*

### FAIL FAST

If you want to reach Gen Z, embrace the newer platforms, and do it quickly. Those brands that were early adopters of TikTok had an advantage, so don't be slow to try the next one. Better to fail fast and learn than miss the boat entirely.

### USE INFLUENCERS AS A GATEWAY

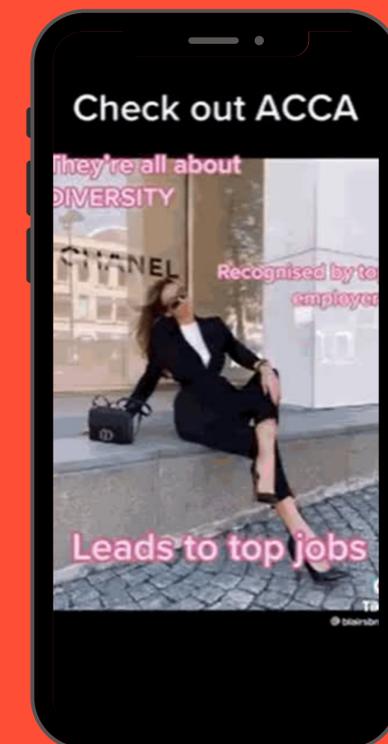
It can be daunting to create a presence on a new platform, and many accounts haven't found their feet on TikTok yet. We recommend working with influencers on your first few campaigns as a way to get your brand message out there and find out which type of content resonates best with audiences.

## IN ACTION

In our ongoing partnership with **ACCA**, a professional accountancy qualification body, we helped them reach a younger Gen Z audience on TikTok through influencers and ambassadors.

Nervous about what kind of content this very traditional legacy brand could create, the influencer campaigns allowed them to see that the three most impactful types of video tended to be **Comedic**, **Informative** or **Personal Storytelling**.

This empowered them to craft their creative strategy on social going forward, as well as providing **much-needed evidence to senior stakeholders** with limited knowledge of TikTok.



# 2 PURPOSE

What does Gen Z really want to see on each platform? And what does that mean for brands and their marketing strategy?

## Instagram vs. TikTok



**OUR RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF PLATFORMS MAINTAINING AND INNOVATING THEIR CORE OFFERINGS.**

There has been a lot of discussion around Instagram this year, with many wondering whether the platform has lost its way.

Many users have complained about the **algorithm no longer serving them the type of content they want to see**, as well as never seeing content from their closest friends and family. The move to video-first content was even called out by ‘Queens’ of Instagram, Kylie Jenner and Kim Kardashian, who begged them to **“Make Instagram Instagram again.”**

Our research demonstrates the importance of platforms maintaining and innovating their core offerings, with most Gen Zers believing that Instagram is mainly for “Keeping up to date with friends and family”, “Engaging with your favourite influencers” or for “Lifestyle inspiration”.

This fits with Instagram’s **original purpose** which was very much around photo-sharing amongst friends and followers, as well as embracing a more aspirational, filtered content. Think beautifully edited, aesthetically-pleasing content based around food, travel, fashion and home decor.

**For marketers and creators, it seems that Gen Z wants us to lean into this rather than trying to emulate the same style of content that works on TikTok** which, as our research shows, is overwhelmingly comedy and humour.

# TAKEOUTS



## TikTok

# 87%

of TikTok users under 18 think TikTok is for Comedy and Humour

- A massive **87% of under 18s** said that **TikTok is mainly for 'Comedy & Humour'** while over 18s gradually start to look more at 'Keeping up with news', 'Engaging with favourite influencers' and 'Learning new things'.
- More males see TikTok as a platform for **'Keeping up to date with news'** than females, whereas females are more likely to see it as a platform for **"Learning new things"**.
- Interestingly, males are more likely to say **'Engaging with your favourite influencers'** vs females.

# 50%

follow and engage with influencers that create comedy and skits

- 50% of people say they mostly follow and engage with influencers that create **Comedy & Skits** style content, followed by **Fashion & Style** which trails behind at 8%.
- **Male respondents are more trusting of TikTok influencers with 24%** of them saying that they trust the influencers they follow on TikTok 'a lot' vs only 7% of females. 6% of those we surveyed said they don't trust them at all.

# 8%

follow for fashion and style inspo

# 24%

of males claim to trust the TikTok influencers they follow 'a lot'.

# 6%

do not trust TikTok influencers at all

## Instagram



# 12%

of Instagram users who engage in Education and Finance are males

- Male respondents generally just want comedy & humour whatever the platform (23% follow these types of creators on Instagram vs 8% of females).
- 12% of males also said they engaged mostly with **Education & Finance** influencers on Instagram.
- Females on the other hand are most likely to follow **Fashion & Style** (22%) or **Beauty & Skincare** (15%), while 6% of females chose **Mental Health** and 4% chose **LGBTQ+** influencers.
- 12% of those surveyed said they don't follow any creators on the platform.
- **Males are more trusting** - 17% say they trust Instagram influencers they follow 'a lot' vs only 4% of females. 35% of females say they 'don't trust them very much' and another 8% say they 'don't trust them at all.'

# 22%

of female Instagram users follow Fashion and Style

# 17%

of male Instagram users say they trust influencers they follow

# 35%

of female Instagram users say they don't trust influencers they follow very much

# 15%

of female Instagram users follow Beauty and Skincare

# WHAT ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT FROM BRANDS?

It's an uncomfortable question; Do Gen Z even want brands on TikTok in the first place?

After all, once advertising becomes very present on a social media platform, thus making it more difficult for users to enjoy its original purpose, we then inevitably start to see younger users moving away from it (enter apps like BeReal).

But our research found that Gen Z DO welcome brands on TikTok. In fact 28% believed that "All brands should be on TikTok", and another 46% believe "Only some" should be.

12% thought that brands should stay off TikTok all together, while another 13% "Weren't sure".

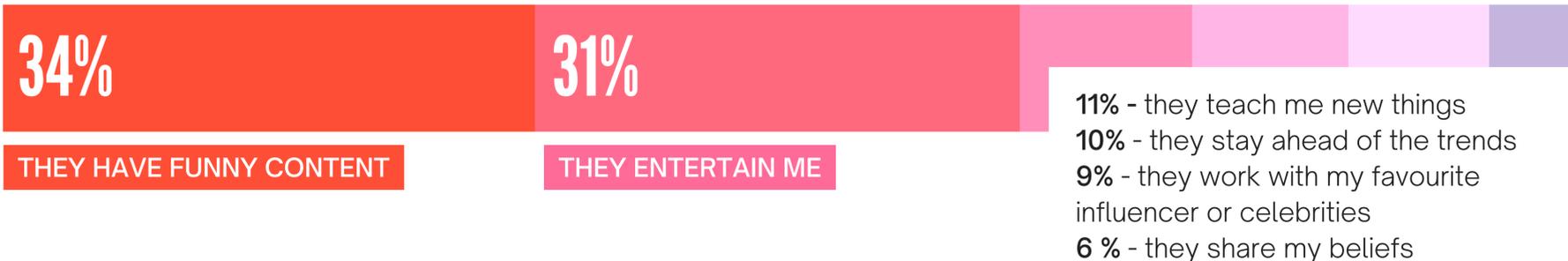
Fanbytes by Brainlabs' SEO & Content Manager, **Jem Leslie**, says "This points to a desire for relevance. Gen Zers are not interested in brand social media output that doesn't provide value. Understanding what young people want from brands on TikTok can help you get this right."

Interestingly, **female respondents tend to have a more negative attitude towards brands being on TikTok** (less than 20% believe all brands should be on the platform and 15% believe NO brands should be on there). Could it be that girls/women tend to be more protective over their social media spaces given they are more likely to be served advertising which could impact their self esteem? More on this later.

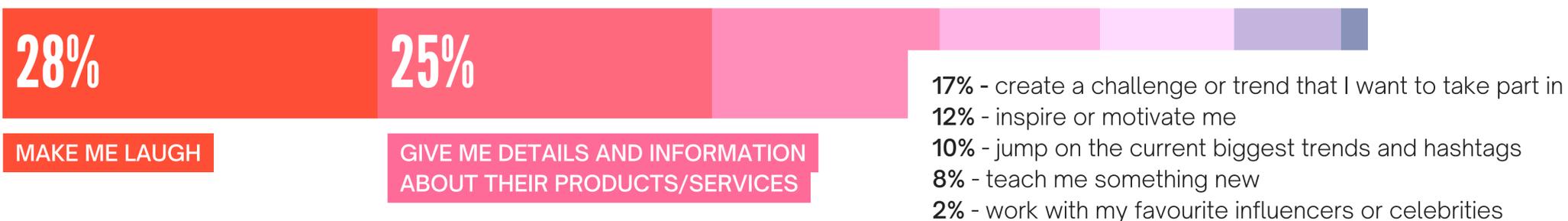
JEM LESLIE

"GEN ZERS AREN'T INTERESTED IN BRAND SOCIAL MEDIA OUTPUT THAT DOESN'T PROVIDE VALUE."

## What do you like most about the brands you're following on TikTok?



## What is the best way for brands to engage you on TikTok?



# There is a clear recipe for success when it comes to brand advertising on TikTok.

Crucially, brands need to relax their guidelines and embrace the ‘chaos’ with funny, comedic content.

Yet, at the same time Gen Z are clearly still craving information and details about the products or services we’re selling. They’re a discerning, socially aware generation and they don’t want to be underestimated.

At Fanbytes, we have consistently found that the best performing content for our clients tends to be funny and lighthearted, but with an easy to understand message behind it (take the example to the right from our campaign for second-hand tech brand, Back Market). Alternatively, its TikToks with an element of surprise and great entertainment value (like this viral video from our campaign with Cineworld). If you can link it to an up and coming trend, even better!



# 39%

of Gen Zers said they find that ads ‘feel false or inauthentic’



LOLA RANDES

## *And what is it that brands are getting wrong right now?*

39% of our Gen Zers said they find that ads ‘feel false or inauthentic’ while another 20% stated they are ‘too perfect and edited’. A high proportion of males (18%) also thought that ‘ads are not entertaining or funny enough’.

Fanbytes’ Senior Brand Partnerships Manager, Lola Randles, commented, “If you’re

working with influencers to promote your brand, don’t underestimate their knowledge and understanding of their own platform and target audience. **Give them the opportunity to direct the creative.** In my experience, most of the time this will result in an authentic creative which genuinely interests and engages your audience.”

## 2 PURPOSE

# *Our Top Takeouts and Tips for Social Media Managers:*

### EMBRACE IT

Gen Z actively want brands on TikTok - they just want them to embrace it authentically. We get it, not all brands can create the silly, jokey videos we tend to associate with TikTok (we're unlikely to see Chanel or Dior embracing 'It's Corn' anytime soon...). But where possible, try to push the boundaries of what you think your brand can and should be doing. The likes of Porsche and Burberry have done this very well, showing that you can be a luxury or legacy brand while still having a sense of humour on TikTok.

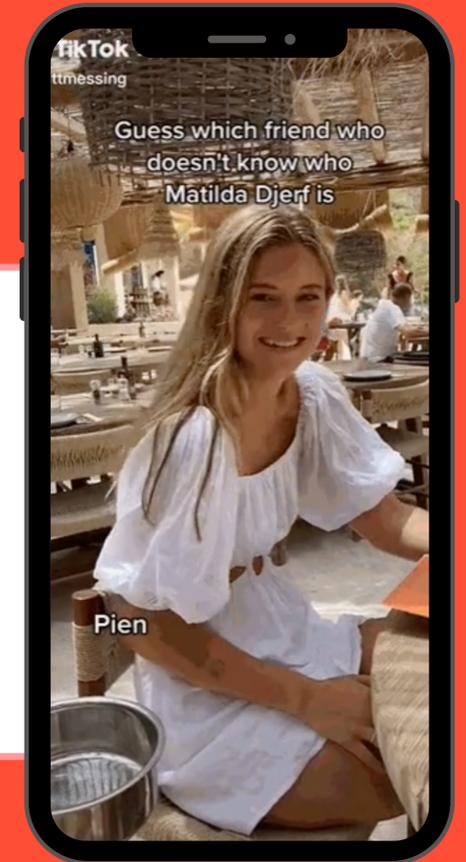
### TAKE A STEP BACK

Before creating any content for TikTok or Instagram, ask yourself is this something you would engage with? Does it feel native to the platform? Does it have something to give its viewers? Or is it just going to stick out as a clear piece of traditional 'ads' (and likely be skipped)?



### IF YOUR AUDIENCE IS FEMALE...

They are more likely to want to learn something (and are often less trusting). Can your brand share genuinely useful tips and hacks that will get them excited to learn more?



### 3 DO ONE OF THESE THREE THINGS

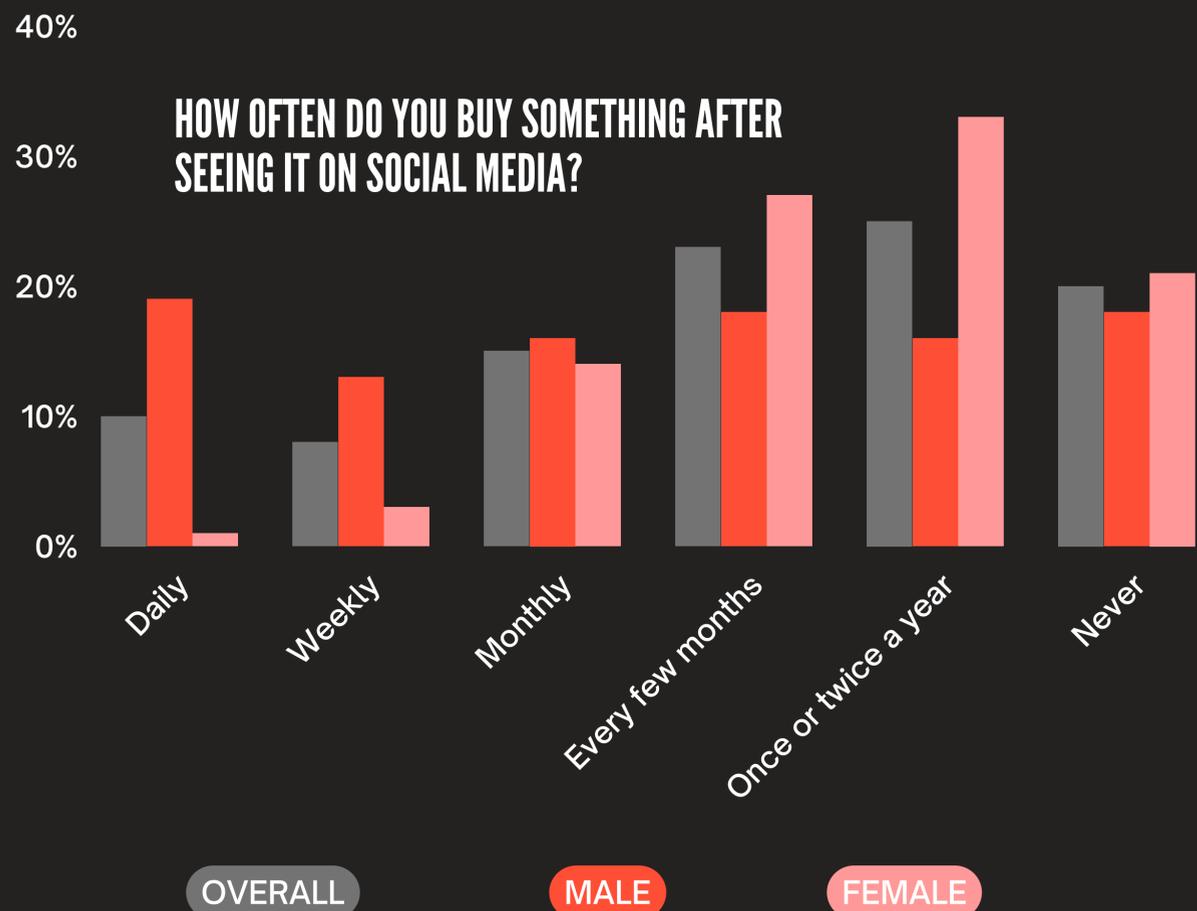
Make sure your ad or content does one of these three things: **Educate/Inspire** (teach someone something new), **Entertain**, or **Make them Laugh**. Then if it's about your products, make sure you've shared actual details and information that will help inform purchase.

### LEAN IN

Above all, lean into the differences between TikTok and Instagram. Both are fantastic platforms for reaching Gen Z, but they go there for different things and that needs to be respected.

# 3 BEHAVIOUR

How do they buy from TikTok? And what can drive that behaviour?



We can talk about brand awareness and engagement all day long, but ultimately, every marketer and business has an underlying objective; conversions and revenue.

Social media is notoriously difficult to track effectively - it's very hard to deduce whether someone saw your post on Instagram and then went on to buy in-store. So as part of our research, we wanted to uncover 1. What makes Gen Z want to buy? and 2. How do they then go about doing it?

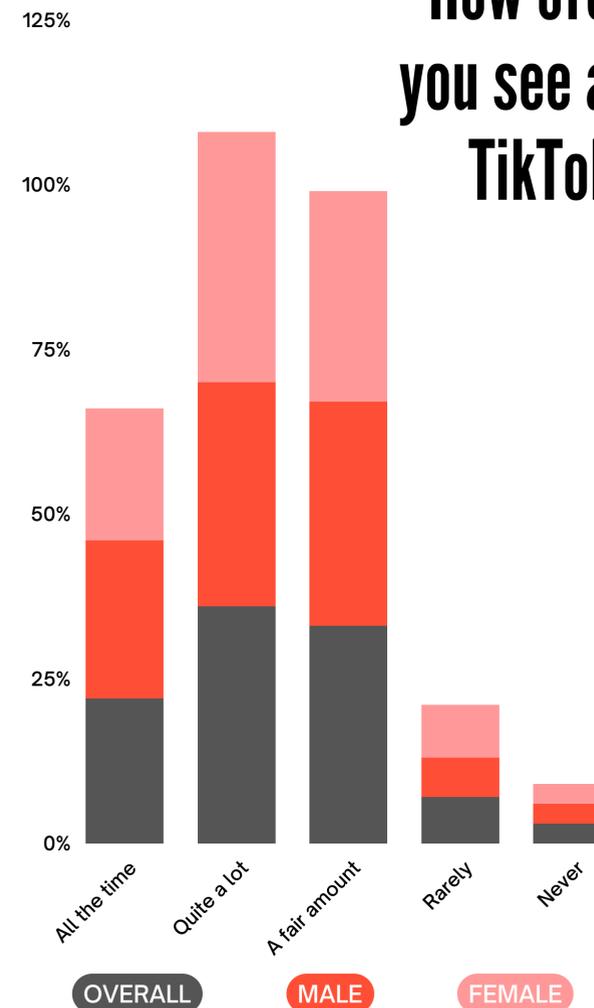
Encouragingly, TikTok isn't seen to be over-saturated with brand advertising, with 69% of Gen Z saying they see ads "Quite a lot" or "A fair amount".

Less than a quarter are noticing that they see ads 'All the time' which is perhaps indicative of the fact that many brands are making sure their TikTok marketing is integrated and cohesive with the platform's content - thus meaning the ads don't stand out too much.



MARKUS RYTKONEN

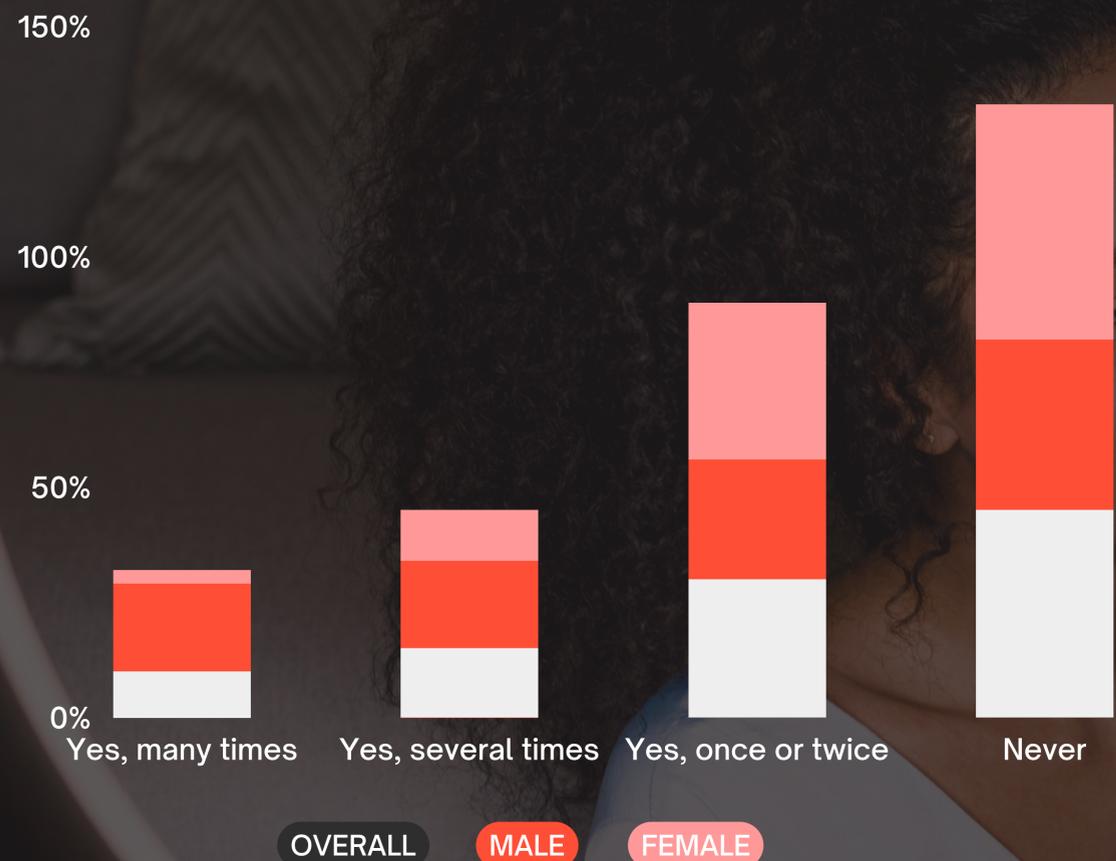
## "How often do you see ads on TikTok?"



## AWARENESS OF ADS ON TIKTOK

Fanbytes' Brand Partnerships Manager, Markus Rytkonen, commented, "The best performing ads on TikTok are those that feel authentic and native to the platform, with the viewer only realising it was an ad at the end! Using Influencers to create UGC for ads means that you can embed your brand's ad into viewers' everyday feeds, without it feeling out of place and interrupting their experience. An example is the "Day in the Life" trend - this short, engaging content format is snappy, attention-grabbing, and can easily include branded messaging without feeling forced."

# HAVE YOU EVER BOUGHT SOMETHING AFTER SEEING IT ON TIKTOK?



Interestingly, we saw a vast difference in responses around frequency of buying something after seeing it on social media.

The largest proportion (19%) of male respondents say they buy something daily after seeing it on social, compared to a tiny 1% of females. In fact females were most likely to say 'once or twice a year' (33%) or 'every few months' (27%).

This was also reflected in the results when specifically asked about TikTok, with 37% of males saying they have bought something after seeing it on the platform 'many times' or 'several times' vs only 14% of females.

## Are females more considered buyers on social...?

In the first section of the report, we saw that female Gen Zers are more likely to use Instagram and to use it for lifestyle inspiration, so it could be that TikTok is not their platform of choice.

However, we would also suggest it could be that females are more cautious and considered buyers, particularly if it's for more high-priced items. This is interesting given that the narrative around sustainability tends to focus on 'fast fashion' and women's buying behaviour, when, according to this research, it's boys and men that are more likely to make instinctive purchases and could even be more influenced by advertising.

**19% OF MALES SAY THEY BUY SOMETHING DAILY AFTER SEEING IT ON SOCIAL.**



## HENRYs

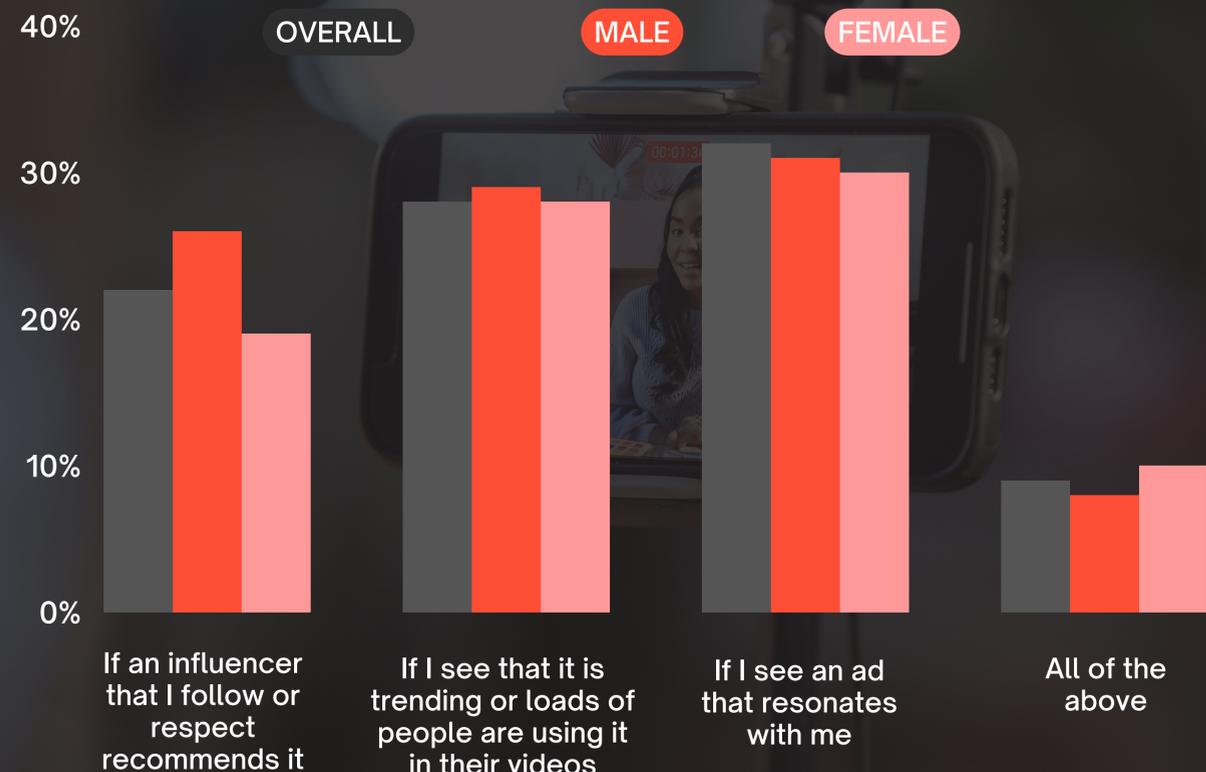
Over-18s were more likely to have bought from TikTok frequently vs the under-18s (likely due to disposable income).

However, it's important to note that many of those from younger age groups have high future earning potential, so it's essential that brands start to build their support now.

Often referred to as HENRYs (High Earners, Not Rich Yet), it's these students and graduates on low-income wages right now who in 5 years' time could be earning substantial incomes. Brands need to think long term about how to engage them at every stage of their lives.

# PURCHASE DECISION-MAKING

What will make you want to buy something after seeing it on TikTok?



Asked what will make them want to buy something after seeing it on TikTok, 32% said “If I see an ad that resonates with me”. We understand from the previous section that **funny and comedic ads are more likely to resonate with Gen Z**, especially if you can strike the perfect balance with useful information or inspirational/informative content.

We also know that **Gen Z are most put off by ads that feel inauthentic, highly edited or not native to TikTok.**

What’s also good to see is that **creators do still command a significant amount of influence over Gen Z’s purchasing decisions** (when they are trusted, that is).

**22%** of those said “If an influencer or creator that I respect recommends it”, while **28%** said ‘If they see it is trending in lots of people’s videos’, showing how ‘social currency’ is still an important factor.

## INFLUENCERS (SWAPPING THE NORM FOR THE NICHE)

TikTok has had a huge impact on popular culture and social media marketing. But perhaps **one of the biggest differentiators between TikTok and its predecessors is the ability for anybody and anything to go truly viral.**

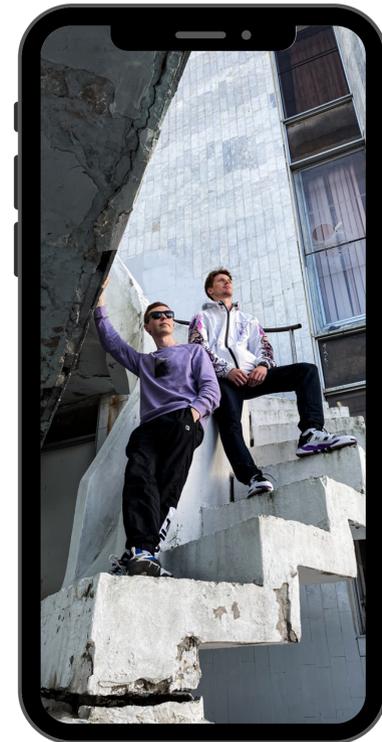
Rather than identifying macro influencers with giant followings, we’ve found that **tapping into niche communities and trends has often been more effective** - that is, when it truly aligns with the audience you’re trying to reach.

**We’ve partnered with:**

- The female roller-skating community for luxury fashion brand, **Ganni**;
  - BMX and extreme sports communities for watch brand, **Casio**;
  - History buffs for a **worldwide gaming release**;
  - The ASMR community for skincare brand, **Origins**;
- and many more!

So when looking for those influencers and creators that your audience would ‘respect’, **think outside of your usual type.** Fashion brands can work with foodies and vice versa. As long as the message is clear, the link to your brand feels genuine, and the creatives are entertaining and fit with TikTok, you’ll see more success than going generic.

**Read this article from Adweek**, written following our **Fanbytes LIVE** event, for more info on niche influencer communities.



# PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

When you buy something after seeing it on TikTok, do you most commonly?



Despite TikTok shopping being a relatively new integration, it's already seeing a fairly strong takeup, with **16% of Gen Zers saying they most commonly buy from TikTok directly.**

This is primarily driven by male Gen Zers (25%), while female TikTokers are still much more likely to visit the brand website directly.

Forbes reported that **Gen Zers have "moved beyond the ecommerce favoured by millennials and have become at home with social commerce"**, and yet our research points to it really being Gen Z males that are driving this trend. In fact, across the board, Gen Z are still

most likely to visit a brand's website to buy something they've seen on TikTok, rather than buy it directly from social media or at a store. **Ensuring you have a slick, mobile-responsive website is key to driving conversions** - and if you're directing people to the website from social, think about how the landing pages look and feel (can you make the journey feel reflective of the platform?).

This is a useful indication for demonstrating to stakeholders the behaviours that Gen Z may follow after seeing your campaign on TikTok. If you can track your sales from TikTok or via your website directly, you can then use that to guesstimate the sales from in-store and reseller sites.

# IN ACTION

## MAC COSMETICS

We worked with MAC Cosmetics on a campaign for the new MAC Stack Mascara in summer 2022.

Sourcing over 100 influencers on TikTok, we generated a huge amount of buzz (the hashtag has over 200 million views!), carefully tracking the best performing creatives to then use as paid ads.

While we could track direct conversions, we were also able to provide evidence that it had contributed to an uplift in website and in-store sales. It helped that it became the best-selling mascara in the UK for the month of the campaign!



## 3 BEHAVIOUR

# *Our Top Takeouts and Tips for Social Media Managers:*

### WHERE WILL THEY LAND?

To drive more conversions from TikTok, make sure the landing pages on your website also feel TikTok native. For example, when working with sexual wellness brand, LELO, they created a dedicated TikTok landing page that was filled with videos and helpful educational content. This meant the transition from platform to website felt very natural and really aided conversions.

### INFLUENCERS STILL HOLD INFLUENCE

In order to make ads that will resonate with Gen Z, lean into them for creative ideas - they will know their audience better than you.

### BUILD AUTHORITY

Female respondents tended to be more cautious about buying from social media, so make sure your campaign consists of entertaining content, but also content that reassures them around your brand and product. We worked with Paula's Choice on a campaign called #BeautyBeginsWithTruth in which we identified skinfluencers and dermatologists to build authority, before then widening out the campaign to general lifestyle influencers. This helped to build trust in the legitimacy of their products.



# 4 EMOTIONS

What do Gen Z feel after using TikTok and Instagram?  
And why does it matter?

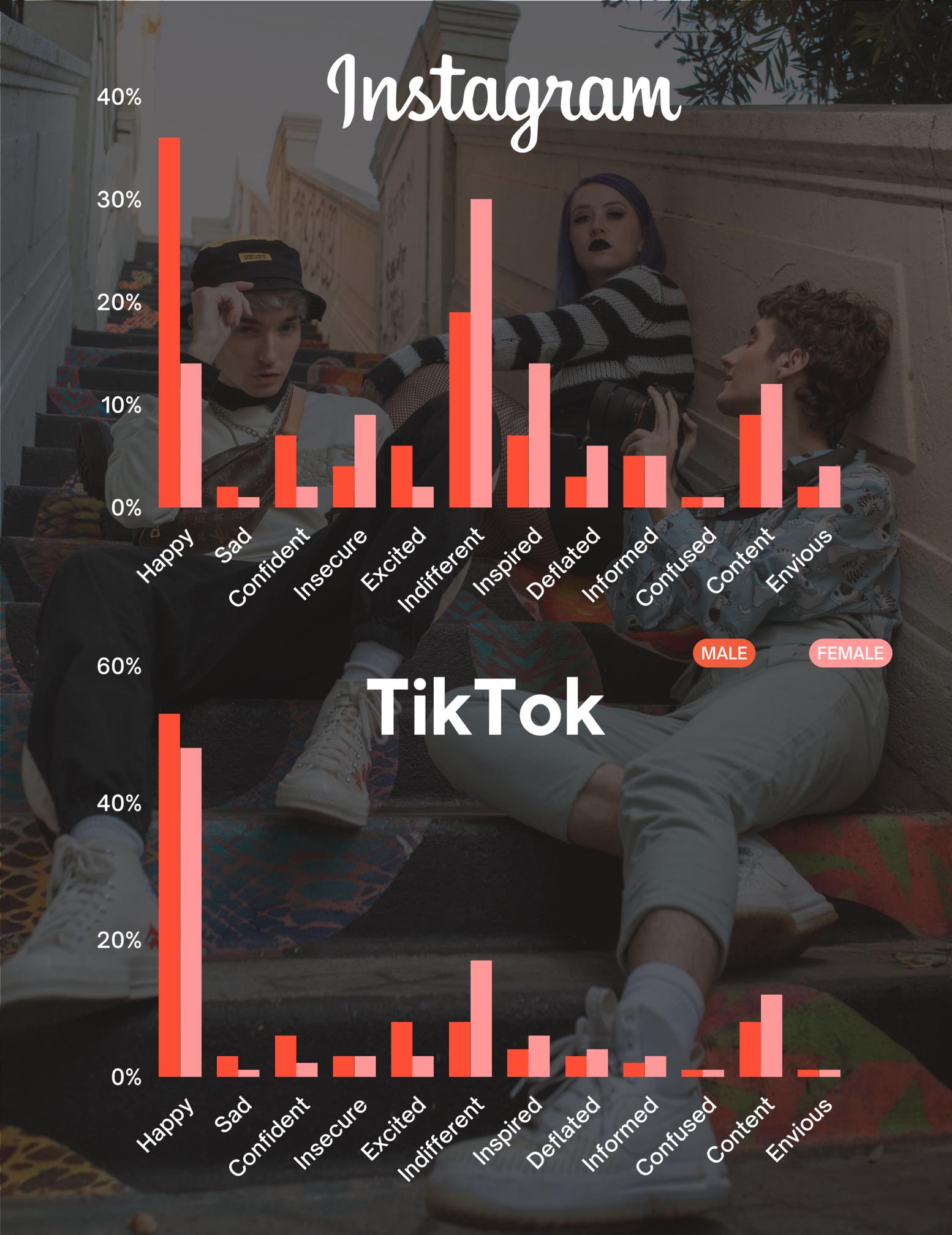
Which of these emotions best describes how you **feel directly after using** this platform?

The good news is that across both TikTok and Instagram, the highest proportion of Gen Zers report feeling 'Happy' directly after using the platform. However, it's significantly higher for TikTok than Instagram.

This is particularly the case in female respondents, of which only 14% said they feel 'Happy' after using Instagram vs 48% on TikTok. This is likely due to TikTok serving up more comedic, lighthearted content, leaving people with a positive feeling post-use.

We also found that **female respondents were more likely than male to report negative feelings after using Instagram** - with higher proportions choosing emotions such as 'Insecure', 'Deflated' and 'Envious'.

So why is this and what can brands do to help?



# SELF IMPROVEMENT AND SELF-IMAGE

While social media has given young people many positive things, its negative effects, particularly on young girls, has also been widely reported.

Some of the reported contributing factors include unrealistic body expectations, 'FOMO' and comparison with others, and of course, at the more extreme end of the scale, hate speech and 'trolling'.

It goes without saying that brand marketers should be doing all they can to counteract these with better representation, responsible advertising, and monitoring of online abuse, and we have seen major leaps forward in recent years.

Aside from these well-documented factors, we also noticed an interesting trend appearing time and time again within our research.

Across the board, female respondents were more likely to express their desire to 'Learn

something new' or receive 'Lifestyle Inspiration' than males.

For example, double the amount of female respondents as male said that the thing they like most about the brands they follow on TikTok is that they **"Teach me new things"**. More than double also said that the best way for brands to engage them is to **'Teach me something new'**.

We also saw that 18% of female respondents claimed to see Instagram as mainly for 'Lifestyle Inspiration'; third behind 'Keeping up with friends and family' and 'Engaging with your favourite influencers'.

In comparison, male respondents were much more likely to choose things with 'short-term' gratification.

They want brands to entertain them or make them laugh, and they're not too bothered about what they themselves get from this entertainment (apart from the enjoyment of course).



JOANNA HUGHSTON

JEM LESLIE

## WHAT'S THE LINK?

Fanbytes' Head of Marketing, Joanna Hughston, says, "It's great that young women are using social media platforms like TikTok to expand their skill-sets, but it does raise some interesting questions. Is it that boys/men feel more able to just 'enjoy' things for what they are (in this case, entertainment) while women experience pressure to be in constant 'self-improvement' mode?"

There has been a lot of discourse around the unfair behavioural expectations placed on girls from a young age, and perhaps this trickles into our ability to have a pastime simply for the sake of passing the time. Like 'hustle culture', do we feel

our time is being wasted if we're not inching closer to some self-determined goal?"

On the other hand, Fanbytes' SEO & Content Manager, Jem Leslie added, "TikTok has a history of making more progressive steps into education. The #LearnOnTikTok initiative in 2020 is a particular highlight. Users have come to know TikTok as a place where they can actively seek out content to help them learn. Providing the platform for social media creators to enable this has meant that this natural bent - especially seen in young women - can in fact be a positive thing, leading to feelings of enrichment."

# 4 EMOTIONS

## *Our Top Takeouts and Tips for Social Media Managers:*

### UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS

Gen Z are most likely to say they feel 'Happy' after using Instagram and TikTok - great news for social media teams! **Happiness is more common though after using TikTok while 'Inspired' is more linked to Instagram** (backing up the idea that Instagram is better for aspirational style content).

### MALE VS FEMALE

Female respondents are more likely to choose negative words such as 'Insecure' or 'Deflated' when it comes to how they feel after using Instagram. Brand marketers need to be very conscious of how their advertising is being received, in order to ensure they're not contributing to these reactions.

Female respondents were also more likely to say they want to 'learn something' or for brands to 'teach them something new' on TikTok and Instagram. **Brands need to find the right balance for this by delivering actual value**, as opposed to contributing to societal pressures.

### DON'T BE PART OF THE PROBLEM

If your campaign has an educational aspect or involves 'teaching something new', whether that's a simple trend, hack or something more complicated, **think about whether you're actually adding value to your audience's experience on the platform?** This could be genuinely useful information or simply for enjoyment!

However, if your version of 'teaching something new' is actually just creating something else for young people to feel insecure or inadequate around, then that will likely not be well received and will ultimately cause longer term brand damage.



### IN ACTION

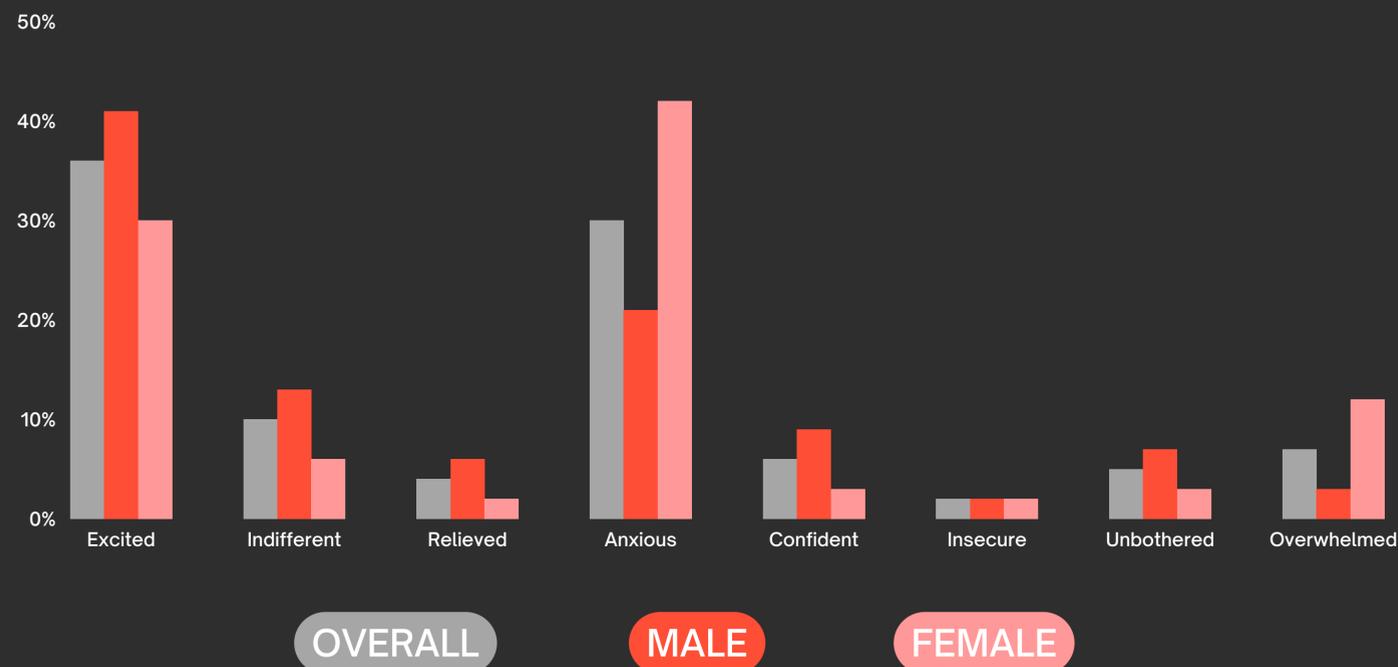
We worked on an awareness driving campaign for tech reseller platform **Back Market**. We wanted to get the message out there that you can be more sustainable with your tech choices by buying it second-hand, and to dispel any concerns that this may not be safe/secure.

We worked with multiple influencers to produce TikTok content that successfully imparted this message in an informative and humorous way, without it being judgmental or pressurising.

# 5 EXPECTATIONS

What's coming next and what should brands be doing to help?

## Which of these emotions best describes how you feel about going back to school/university?



The Covid-19 pandemic has been incredibly disruptive to Gen Z's education, and the knock-on effects will likely be felt for years to come.

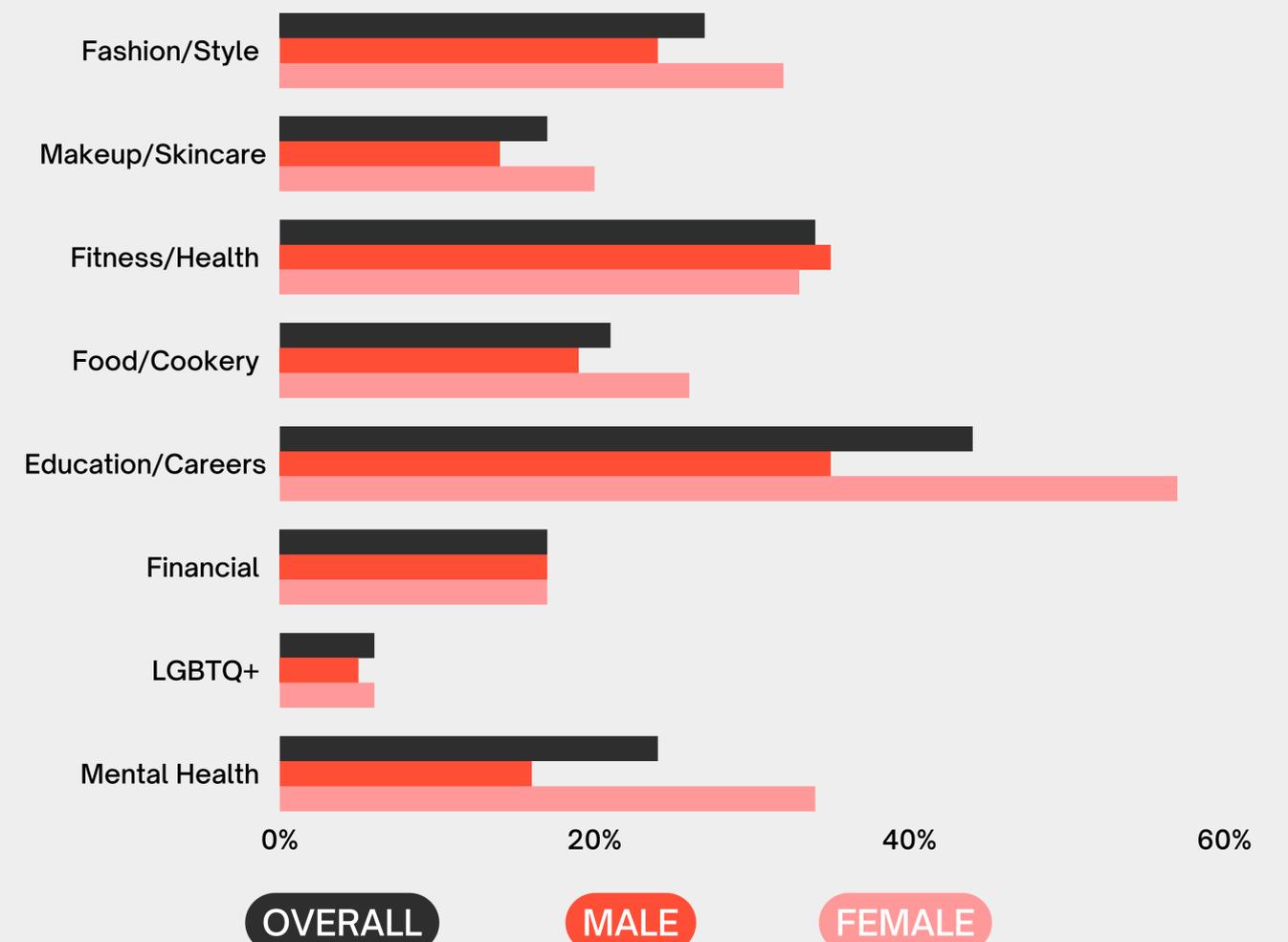
While there are positive signs that Gen Zers are excited to get back to school or university, it is concerning that nearly a third

chose 'Anxious' as the word that best reflects their feelings towards a return.

Again, this is most apparent amongst female students, with 42% claiming to feel 'Anxious' and another 12% 'Overwhelmed' at the prospect of a new academic year.



## What type of content are you engaging with online to prepare in the lead up?



Our research shows **the diverse** content that Gen Z are engaging with online to help them feel **prepared and confident** for the new academic year.

Unsurprisingly, Education & Careers themed content is most popular, and it's likely that many Gen Zers are feeling anxious about their future career prospects following Covid-19 and a possible impending recession.

Female respondents were more than double as likely to say they're engaging with Mental Health content; an interesting result given the focus on mental health in men over the past few years.

It's also worth noting that 14% of our male respondents are engaging with makeup & skincare content in the lead up. Male-focused and gender-neutral beauty brands have been on the rise in recent years, and it's important for brands in this sector to see that Gen Z men are also conscious of and interested in their beauty regimes.



17%

of Gen Zers are engaging with financial wellbeing content on social.



HELEN CLOW

## TikTok content is expanding

Fanbytes' Brand Partnerships Manager, Helen Clow, commented, "When we consider that TikTok is the fastest growing search platform amongst Gen Z, it's no surprise that the type of content they're engaging with is expanding. We've seen a huge shift with the **#learnontiktok** phenomenon from the classic dance and beauty trends, to longer-form informational content around finance, careers and education.

This has led to a shift in the type of brands we find on the platform - we've seen this even within our own work with ACCA for accountancy, Hired Inc. for software engineers, and Reed.co.uk with tips & tricks on how to love Mondays.

But don't mistake this for Gen Z wanting dry content - you still have to engage in a native, entertaining, and raw TikTok way. **Ultimately this is still an entertainment platform**, so working with the right content creators and tapping into the right trends is critical."

## 4 EXPECTATIONS

# *Our Top Takeouts and Tips for Social Media Managers:*



### UNDERSTAND GEN Z'S WORRIES AND CONCERNS

This is a generation facing a huge amount of uncertainty, from climate change and covid-19, to global recessions and political crises. It's no wonder that many are feeling anxious about their return to education. Take this into account when planning your social media and influencer campaigns. Check out our article 'TikTok and Mental Health: What Brands Need to Know' for more info.



### ALLEVIATE THEIR ANXIETIES

Think about how your campaigns can be genuinely helpful to your Gen Z audiences? If you're a beauty brand, what are the things they will most likely be thinking about going back to school and university? Similarly for food & drink brands, this is a great opportunity to talk about recipes and health advice, linking it to affordable meal-planning and cost of living. Speak directly to your audiences to find out what could be helpful to them, then use this to inform your content.

### ★ PLAY INTO THEIR EXCITEMENT

Remember that over a third of Gen Zers said they were mostly 'excited' about returning to school or university. As marketers, we should aim for our campaigns to fuel excitement at every new stage of our audiences' lives.



# GET THE MOST OUT OF OUR RESEARCH

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**Fanbytes**  
by brainlabs

You've seen our results and topline tips, but now how do you put them in action?

We're offering a number of complimentary sessions for marketers looking for a more in-depth overview of the research, with tailored insights and takeouts for your brand.

You'll have access to:

- A member of our **Creative Strategy** team (the brains behind our most creative campaigns)
- A **Brand Partnerships Manager** (they provide the bridge between you and our Creative team, ensuring we build the best proposals and concepts to meet your brief)
- One of our world class **Campaign Managers**, each of whom have specific expertise in key verticals, including food & drink, fashion & beauty, and entertainment & gaming.

In the session, you'll be able to ask us about your biggest challenges for reaching Gen Z on social, and we'll provide tips, insights and examples that will get you closer to solving them.

To find out more, make an enquiry at [www.fanbytes.co.uk](http://www.fanbytes.co.uk).

# WHO IS FANBYTES BY BRAINLABS?

Fanbytes is a **social media and influencer marketing agency**, specialising in **helping forward thinking brands win the hearts and minds of Gen Z**. Now part of global media agency, **Brainlabs**, we activate campaigns in territories all over the world and in 2022 were named Best Large Influencer Marketing Agency in the UK.

We've worked with the likes of **Adidas, John Lewis, LELO, Ubisoft, Back Market, ACCA, Ocado, Estee Lauder, Riot Games** and **Public Health England**. We've also built a significant reputation as thought leaders in Gen Z and influencer marketing through our widely anticipated industry events, whitepapers and reports.

Get in touch with us at  
[WWW.FANBYTES.COM](http://WWW.FANBYTES.COM)



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