CourseMints

GUIDE

TikTok Ad Frameworks

Conversion Blueprint

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How to Use This Guide

TikTok ads live or die on creative. The same product, budget and audience can produce an ad people skip in half a second or one they watch to the end and tap. This guide teaches the creative side: how to stop the scroll honestly, make ads that look like they belong in the feed, script user-generated-style videos, structure problem-solution and demo ads, test one variable at a time, read the numbers, and stay inside the ad policies and advertising law.

It is written for small business owners, e-commerce and app founders, freelancers and marketers who run TikTok ads or brief the people who make them. You do not need a studio. Almost everything here can be shot on a phone.

What this guide is, and is not

- **It is** a set of creative frameworks: structures, formulas and checklists that work across products, plus a method for finding out which ones work for yours.
- **It is not** a media-buying manual. Targeting, bidding and campaign settings are covered only where they affect creative decisions.
- **It does not promise results.** Ad performance depends on your product, offer, price, landing page, market, season and budget. A good framework improves your odds and your learning speed; it cannot guarantee a sale.

> ⚠ CAUTION
>
> **Platform details change**
>
> TikTok updates Ads Manager, ad formats, metric names and policies often, and rules differ by country. This guide was written in 2026. Where it names a specific feature, setting or metric, it says “at the time of writing”. Check TikTok’s current Business Help Center and Advertising Policies for your region before you launch. CourseMints is not affiliated with TikTok.

How to get the most from it

1. **Pick one real product or offer** to use as your case study from start to finish.
2. **Read Chapters 1 to 3 in order.** They set up everything else: how people watch, what your message is, and how to win the first seconds.
3. **Use the exercises.** Each chapter ends with one. Together they produce a message map, a hook bank, a creator brief, two scripts, a test plan and a 30-day workflow.
4. **Keep the swipe file open.** Your companion *TikTok Ad Swipe File* holds the hook formulas, script templates and testing log in printable form.

TIP

About the examples

The businesses and people in the example boxes are fictional composites created to show the frameworks in action. Their numbers are illustrations, not benchmarks or typical results.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Creative is the lever you control most directly on TikTok, and it can be learned.
- ✓ This guide covers creative frameworks, testing and compliance, not detailed media buying.
- ✓ Features and policies change: confirm specifics in TikTok's current documentation for your country.

CHAPTER 1

01

How People Watch TikTok, and Why Most Ads Get Skipped

Before you write a single hook, understand the setting your ad appears in. Everything else in this guide follows from it.

The viewing environment

TikTok's main feed is a full-screen, vertical stream of short videos that people move through with a flick of the thumb. A few things make it different from most places ads run:

- **The skip costs nothing.** Leaving your ad takes one swipe and no decision. You are not interrupting a show the viewer is waiting for; you are competing with the next video.
- **Ads sit between entertainment.** Your ad is judged against creators who are funny, useful or fascinating. It does not get a pass for being an ad.
- **Sound matters.** TikTok describes itself as a sound-on platform, and voice, music and sound effects carry much of the meaning. Plenty of people still watch muted at times, so you design for both.
- **Recognition is instant.** People learn what ads look like. A polished studio shot, a logo in the first second or a stock-music voiceover signals "advertisement" before a word is spoken.

TikTok's own advertiser guidance has long summed this up with the line "Don't make ads. Make TikToks." The practical meaning: your ad should look, sound and move like the content around it, while still selling clearly.

The three jobs of every ad

Every TikTok ad has three jobs, in order. If it fails at one, the later ones never happen.

1. **Stop:** earn the first one or two seconds (the hook).
2. **Hold:** keep the right viewer watching long enough to understand the value (the body: story, demonstration, proof).
3. **Move:** give a clear, believable next step and a landing page that keeps the promise (the call to action and click path).

Most failed ads fail at the first job. The rest fail mostly at the second: they hook well, then drag, or the body does not deliver what the hook promised.

THE SCIENCE

How attention is earned

Two well-established ideas explain why some openings work. First, relevance: people filter constantly and pay attention to what seems to concern them, which is why a hook that names a specific situation (“If your dog pulls on every walk…”) works better than a general one. Second, curiosity: psychologist George Loewenstein’s information-gap theory describes curiosity as the feeling we get when we notice a gap between what we know and what we want to know. A hook that opens a small, specific gap gives the viewer a reason to stay. Neither idea is a trick: if the ad does not close the gap honestly, viewers leave and remember why.

Your creative is part of your targeting

On TikTok, as on most modern ad platforms, delivery is driven by algorithms that look for people likely to respond. Many advertisers now run broad targeting and let the creative do much of the work: an ad that opens with “For nurses on night shift” tends to find nurses on night shift, because they are the ones who stop and engage. This is a widely shared practitioner view rather than a published rule, but it has a clear practical consequence: **who your ad speaks to in its first seconds shapes who it reaches.** Vague creative reaches vague audiences.

What “native” really means

Native does not mean sloppy. It means the ad uses the visual language of the feed:

- Vertical, full-screen framing with a person, hands or product filling the frame.
- A human voice speaking directly to the viewer, or text on screen that reads like a creator’s caption.
- Fast, purposeful editing, with a cut or visual change every few seconds.
- Real settings: a kitchen, a car, a desk, a shop floor.
- A clear point in the first seconds, not a slow brand introduction.

Production quality still matters where viewers notice it: clear audio, good light, a steady frame and readable text. Lo-fi is a style, not an excuse for bad sound.

> EXAMPLE
>
> **Same product, two openings**
>
> A small coffee roaster tested two ads for a subscription. Version one opened on a slow pan across bags of coffee with the logo and music. Version two opened with the owner holding a bag to the camera: “If your supermarket coffee tastes burnt, this is why.” In the roaster’s account, the second version kept far more viewers past the first two seconds and produced cheaper clicks. Nothing about the product changed; only the first seconds did.

Common mistakes

- Opening with the logo, a brand name or a slow establishing shot.
- Repurposing a horizontal TV or YouTube ad with black bars.
- Making the ad for “everyone”, so it speaks to no one in particular.
- Treating native as permission for muddy audio and dark footage.

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LIBRARY

TikTok Ad Swipe File

Hook Formulas, Ad Script Templates and Creative Testing Log

COMPANION TO TIKTOK AD FRAMEWORKS

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No.	Formula	Template
17	Myth	“[Common belief] is wrong. Here’s what actually works.”
18	Myth	“Everyone says [advice]. Here’s why I don’t.”
19	Myth	“You don’t need [expensive thing] to [outcome].”
20	Question	“Why does nobody talk about [overlooked problem]?”
21	Question	“What would you do with an extra [time or money] every [period]?”
22	Question	“Is [common practice] actually worth it?”
23	POV	“POV: you just [relatable moment].”
24	POV	“Me at [time] when [situation].”
25	POV	“When you [situation] and remember you have [product].”
26	Number	“3 things I wish I knew before buying [category].”
27	Number	“[Number] ways to [outcome] without [pain].”
28	Number	“I tested [number] [category] products. Only one stayed.”
29	Honest skeptic	“I didn’t believe [claim] until I tried it.” (only if true)
30	Honest skeptic	“I bought this expecting to return it.” (only if true)
31	Honest skeptic	“Honest review after [time] of using [product].”
32	Comparison	“[Cheap option] vs [your product]: is it worth the difference?”
33	Comparison	“[Old way] vs [new way]. Same [task], same [time].”
34	Comparison	“Why I stopped buying [usual alternative].”
35	Offer first	“[Product] is [genuine offer] until [real date].”
36	Offer first	“[Product] is back in stock.” (only if true)
37	Offer first	“You asked for [variant]. It’s here.”
38	Pattern breaker	Start mid-sentence: “…and that’s why I never [do X] anymore.”
39	Pattern breaker	A silent visual surprise tied to the product (poured on, dropped, stretched).
40	Pattern breaker	“Don’t buy [category] until you’ve seen this.” (only before real advice)