

**'Helpful**

**TikTok: it's time to  
make it part of your  
crisis response**



# Why have we written this guide?

At Helpful, vertical video and TikTok-style content is already an important part of our Social Simulator and training content. As users of TikTok, we're also noticing the number of potential crises brewing on the channel. We want to make sure you are aware, prepared and confident to handle any crisis on any channel, including TikTok.

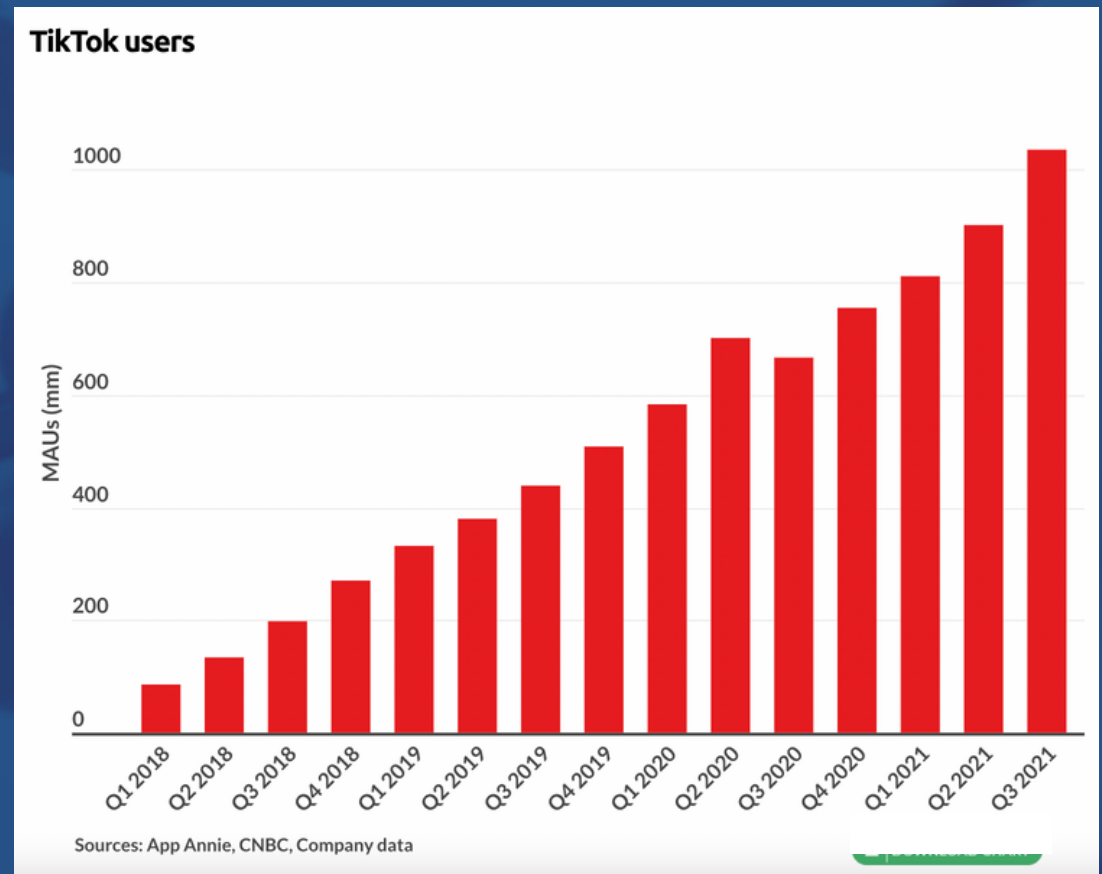
## TikTok is here to stay

- In 2021, Tikok reached 1 billion monthly users, (achieved in half the time of Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.)
- The app has been downloaded 2.6 billion times
- Overtook Google as the most visited domain, ahead of Facebook, Apple, Microsoft and Netflix.

Why does this matter?

Because TikTok has quickly reached the same level as the big social media channels.

Don't dismiss it in your social media strategy. This is a potentially dangerous decision to make when it comes to your brand's reputation.



# How a crisis can spread on TikTok

## It's so easy to make a video

Yes, there are all sorts of sound clips, filters and effects you can put on your TikTok videos, but 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 send videos on. 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 have given users plenty of ways to respond to and interact with a video. Another user might use the original video as a jumping-off point. They may have a similar story to tell, be able to add more context, or disagree with it completely, allowing the original story to escalate very easily.

# The worst-case scenario:



- A video complaining about your brand is filmed and uploaded in a matter of minutes.



- The user might be new to the platform but they've used the right hashtags.



- It garners attention and TikTok puts it into hundreds of thousands of people's feeds.



- People share the story with their friends through Whatsapp and Instagram Messenger as well as internally through the app.



- Meanwhile, people are commenting on the video with their own negative encounters. People are angry and demand answers.



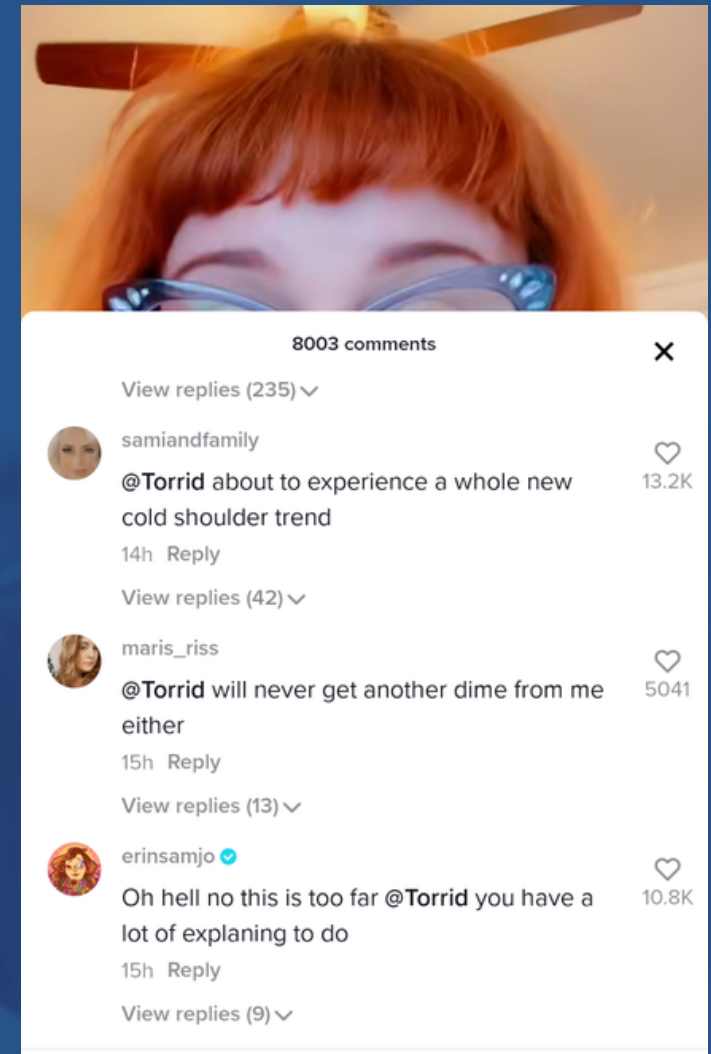
- The video gains millions of views, thousands of comments and people are vowing never to trust your organisation again.



- 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.



1.7 Million views  
11.5k Comments  
300.5k Likes

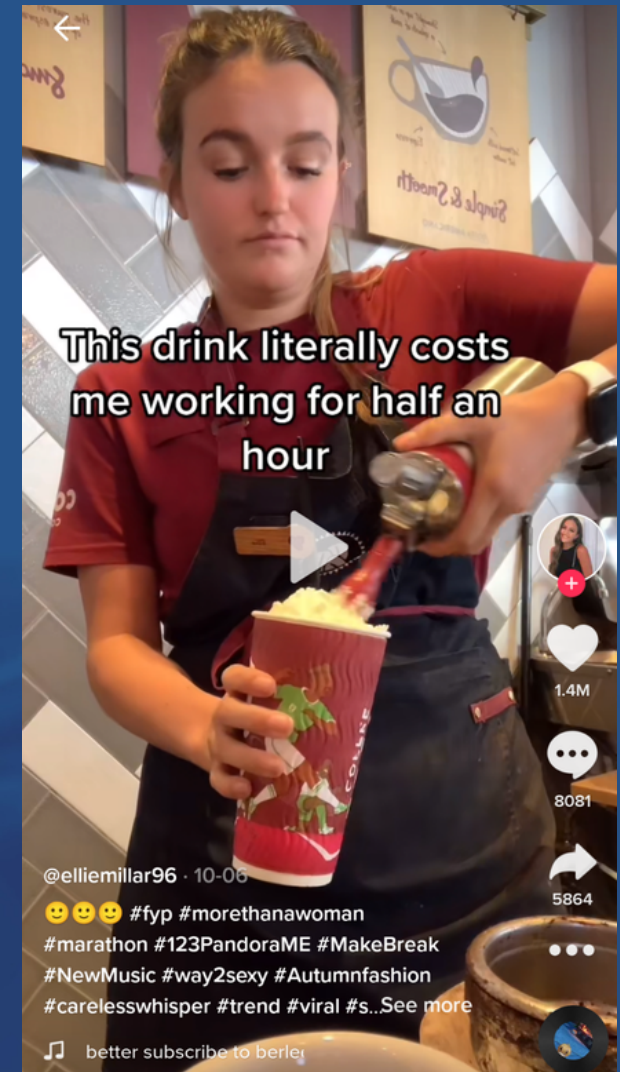
# So what should you do?

TikTok is newer than other channels of the same size and jumping on a new platform just because it's new is never a good strategy. But when you have a platform as popular as TikTok with crises forming rapidly that could damage your reputation, it's important to be aware of how to monitor for those issues and know how to respond to them.

## Get verified

At the very least, you should have an official brand account. Ideally, you should be verified by the platform. If that's not possible for you, ensure you put out some video content to prove you are who you say you are. You should also set up a business account and add a link to your website.

Finally, start setting up your monitoring. Keep reading to find out how.



14.8 Million views  
8k Comments  
1.4 Million Likes

# Monitor regularly

There are some paid-for tools, including Mention and Pulsar, that will monitor TikTok for content relating to your organisation. If you have access to a monitoring tool which covers TikTok, make sure you have the searches set up effectively. Check the results regularly so that you know what is 'normal' and what is unusual for your search terms.

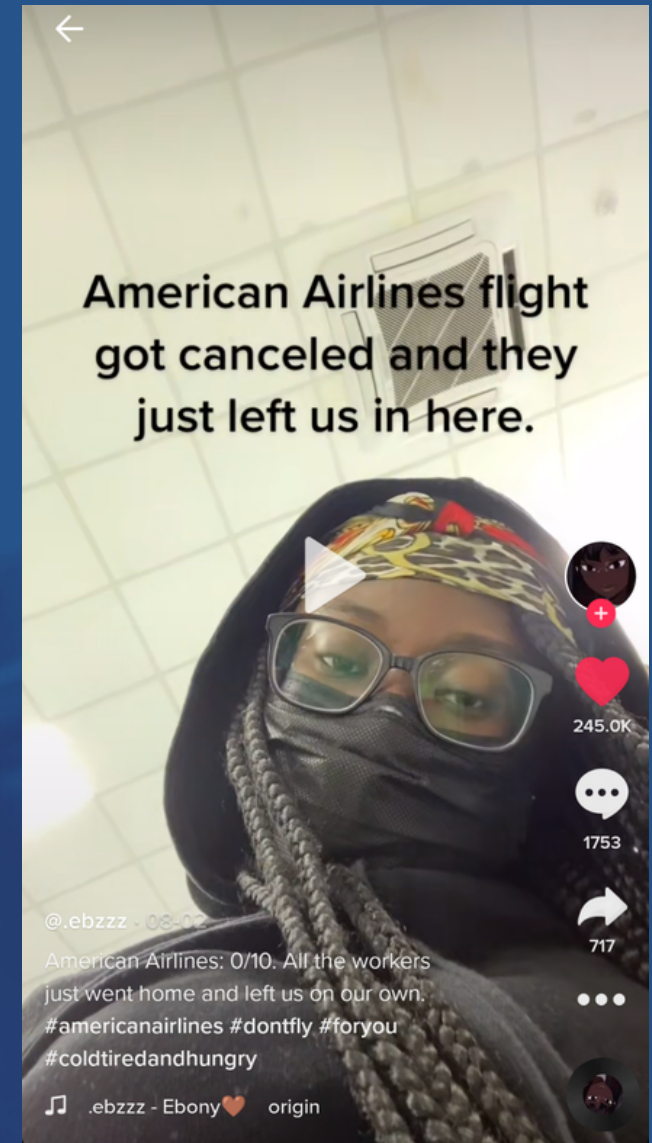
If you don't have a monitoring tool available to you, you can still monitor using the search function on the app. It's important to know the keywords and hashtags your audiences might be using and keep an eye on those.

Like most social media channels, you can search using different filters. You can also save 'favourite hashtags' to monitor key topics more easily.

You will get alerts if someone tags your username in a comment or video post so keep an eye on those too.

Make sure you check acronyms and for misspellings too.

Remember: Investing time in monitoring is well worth it to prevent crises escalating and costing you even more time and resources responding.



1.1 Million views  
1.7k Comments  
245.5K Likes

# 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.

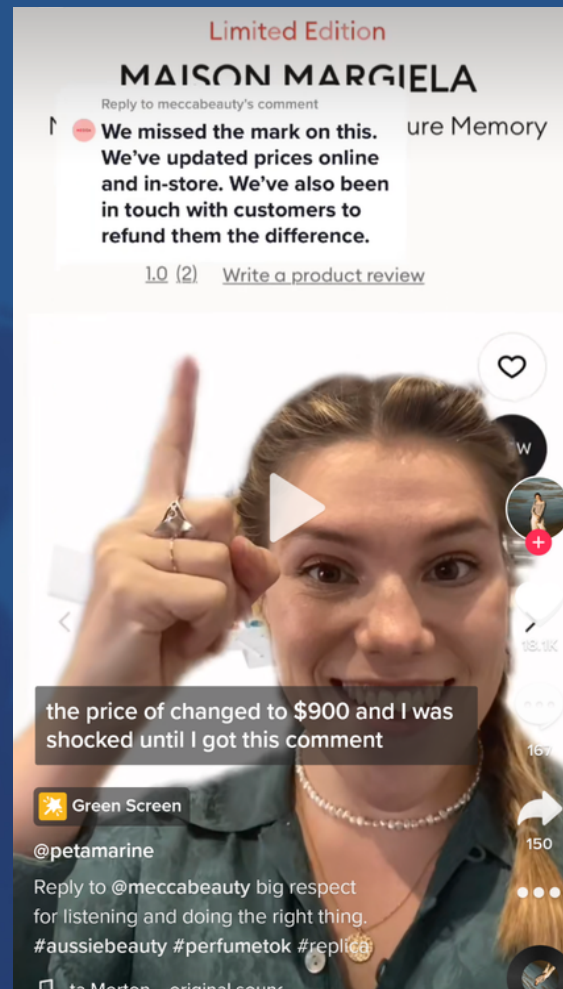
A follow up response should include:

- Care/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 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 recieved



315.5K views  
1k Comments  
28.4K Likes

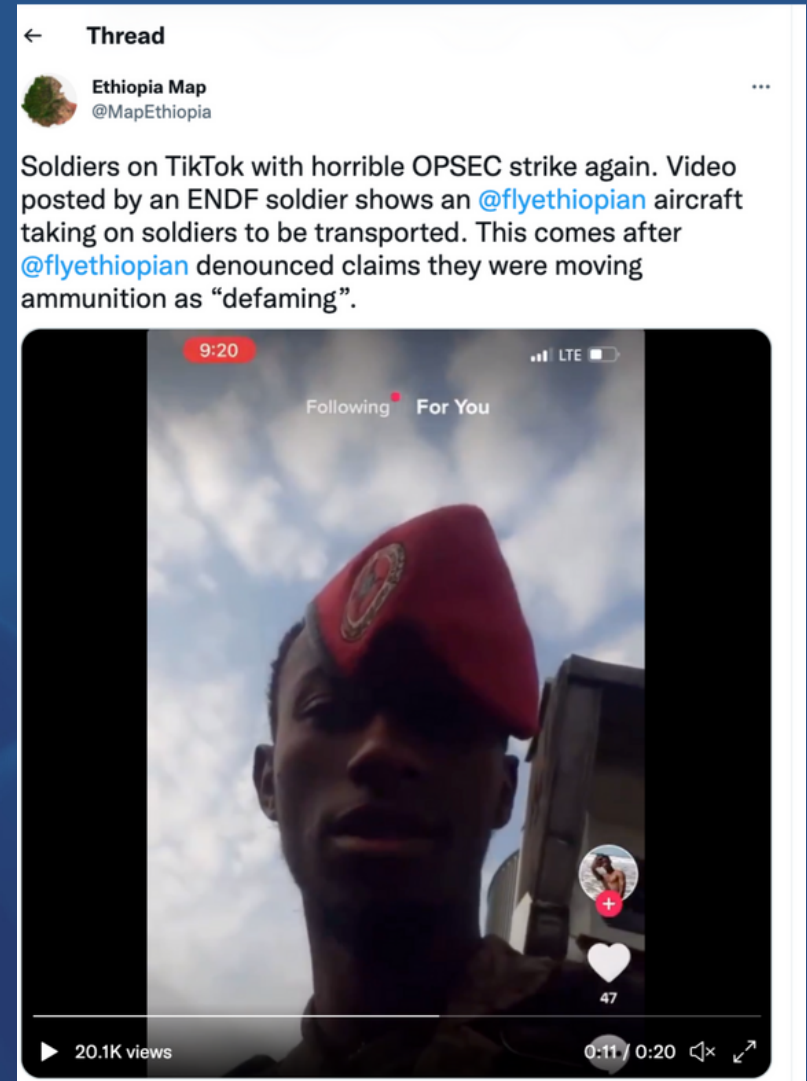
# Handling misinformation

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

In the first six months of 2020, 104,543,719 videos were removed globally for violating TikTok's Community Guidelines or Terms of Service (source: [firstdraftnews.org](https://www.firstdraftnews.org)). Some of this was related to false information being posted.

Because the channel is set up to allow videos to go viral quickly, it is a breeding ground for mis and disinformation to spread. These types of videos 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 rebuttal.



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



**Helpful**

**Looking for help incorporating TikTok  
into your crisis plan?**

**Get in touch: [hello@helpfuldigital.com](mailto:hello@helpfuldigital.com)**

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