TikTok ads quick-start guide

Start TikTok ads the right way: a business account, the TikTok Pixel with Events API, short videos made for the platform, and how to judge results.

TikTok is built around short, full-screen videos chosen by an algorithm rather than by who you follow. That means a small business can reach a large audience with the right video. It also means ads that look like ads get scrolled past in a second. Here's how to start.

Before you start

- **Create a TikTok Ads Manager account** for your business, and a TikTok Business account if you'll post organic videos too.
- **Turn on two-step sign-in** for everyone with access.
- **Pick one goal:** website sales, leads or app installs.
- **Plan your videos.** You'll need several short, vertical videos. They don't need big budgets. Phone footage of a real person explaining or using your product often does better than a polished ad.

Step 1: set up tracking

1. **Install the TikTok Pixel** on your website. Shopify, WooCommerce and other platforms have official integrations.
2. **Add the Events API.** TikTok's help centre recommends setting up Events API "as a second channel together with your TikTok Pixel". It sends results from your server or shop platform, so they're recorded even when a browser blocks the Pixel.
3. **Choose your events,** such as Complete Payment or Submit Form, and send order values.
4. **Test it.** Place a test order and check it appears once, with the right value, in TikTok's events tools.

Step 2: make videos for TikTok

- **Hook people in the first two seconds.** Start with the problem, the result or something surprising.
- **Show the product in use,** with a real person talking to the camera where you can.
- **Add captions.** Many people watch without sound.
- **Keep it short** and end with a clear next step.
- **Make several versions.** Different openings and different people can perform very differently.

Step 3: build a first campaign

- **Choose the objective that matches your goal.**
- **Start with broad targeting** in the areas you serve and let the videos find the audience. Narrow targeting tends to limit TikTok's ability to learn.
- **Put several videos in each ad group** so you can see which ones work.
- **Set a test budget** and run it for long enough to learn before judging.

Step 4: check in after a week

- **Compare TikTok's reported results with your real sales.** Like other platforms, TikTok can count sales from people who only watched an ad. Check your attribution settings.
- **Look at which videos people watch to the end.** Use the winning hooks and formats in your next round.
- **Plan fresh videos regularly.** Results usually drop as the same people see the same video.

Common mistakes

- Reusing TV ads or landscape videos made for other platforms.
- Running only one video.
- Narrow targeting that stops the algorithm from learning.
- Relying on the Pixel alone, without the Events API.
- Judging results by views and likes instead of sales.

Where Blend can help

If you're running TikTok alongside Google and Meta, each will claim credit for some of the same sales. Our Ads & Analytics Audit lines up what every platform claims with what you actually sold.

This guide is general information, not professional advice for your situation. Read it online and find more free guides at www.blend-datastrategy.com/tools.