



TikTok Marketing

Introduction and Market Context

Evan explained that TikTok has evolved far beyond its origins as "Music.ly," an app primarily for teenagers. It is now the **fastest-growing mainstream app**, reaching a billion users two years faster than Instagram. To put this growth in perspective, **Evan** noted that LinkedIn took over 20 years to reach the same milestone that TikTok achieved in a fraction of that time. He pointed out that TikTok's success forced Meta (Facebook and Instagram) to "copy" the format by introducing **Reels**, which is essentially a duplicate of the TikTok experience. Consequently, **Evan** said that if participants already understand how to use Instagram Reels, they essentially already understand TikTok.

Platform Navigation and User Experience

Evan provided a walkthrough of the app's interface to acclimatise those who might be new to the platform. He described the three primary feeds:

- **The "For You" Feed:** This is the default, **AI-driven feed**. **Evan** explained that this feed predominantly shows content from accounts the user is *not* following, based on what the AI thinks they will find interesting.
- **The Following Feed:** This shows content exclusively from accounts the user has chosen to follow.
- **The Friends Feed:** This feed focuses on content from people in the user's phone contacts or Facebook friends list.

Evan also highlighted the **Search** function, which he described as a vital tool for business research. He suggested that participants should search for similar businesses to see what kind of content is performing well in their industry. He noted that TikTok search results now include a **"STEM" feed** (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) and a dedicated area for **TikTok Shop** products.

The Spectrum of Content Strategy

A core part of **Evan's** delivery was the "**Spectrum of Visual Interest**," which dictates how a business should approach its content.

- **Visually Interesting Products:** Businesses like boutiques, florists, and artists can afford to be "salesy" about 90% of the time because their products are inherently interesting to look at.
- **Service-Based Businesses:** Businesses like accountants, solicitors, and coaches must follow an **80/20 rule**. **Evan** said these businesses should provide **helpful, educational, or interesting content 80% of the time** and limit direct selling to just 20%. This builds authority and trust, as the "person" is often the product.

Evan identified **three main types of videos** for marketing:

1. **Clips Set to Music:** Short snippets of video edited together to a trending or appropriate track.
2. **Voiceover Videos:** Clips where the creator adds their own voice afterwards to explain a product or service.
3. **Talking to the Camera:** **Evan** emphasized that while this is optional for product businesses, it is almost essential for service providers to build authenticity.

Understanding the Algorithm

Evan explained that the TikTok algorithm is extremely sophisticated at "watching" how users interact with videos. It monitors **dwell time** (how long you stay on a post), whether you watch a video to the end, and engagement metrics like likes, comments, shares, and saves.

A major advantage of TikTok over Facebook and Instagram is that **you do not need a large following to go viral**. **Evan** said that TikTok "finds your audience" for you. When a video is posted, the AI shows it to a small "tranche" of people (often based on location and interests). If those people engage with it, the AI shows it to a larger group, and the video can "snowball" regardless of the creator's follower count. However, **Evan** warned that the first **3 seconds are critical**. If a user swipes away immediately, the AI deems the content "dull" and stops showing it to others.

Account Setup and Privacy Settings

Evan walked the participants through the process of creating an account, advising them to use a **mobile number for their primary marketing account**. This allows TikTok to notify their existing contacts that they have joined the platform, which is a powerful initial marketing boost.

Regarding **Privacy**, **Evan** noted that TikTok accounts are public by default. For marketing purposes, he said participants should **leave the account public** so their videos can appear in search and the "For You" feeds of non-followers. He also discussed the choice between

Personal and Business accounts. While Business accounts offer better analytics and the ability to link a website, **Evan** noted that they lose access to the "Brilliant Music Library" (popular hits) due to licensing restrictions. Many businesses choose to stay on a Personal account to keep access to trending music.

TikTok Shop and Affiliate Marketing

Evan described **TikTok Shop** as a revolutionary e-commerce tool where users can buy products without ever leaving the app. For businesses with physical products, this removes "friction" from the buying process. He also explained **Affiliate Marketing**, where "Creators" can promote a business's products in exchange for a commission (e.g., 8–12%). **Evan** showed an example of a creator whose video reviewing teeth whitening strips received 1.9 million views, driving massive sales for the vendor.

Leveraging AI for Content Creation

Evan demonstrated how to use **ChatGPT** to assist with marketing. He suggested giving the AI the business's website "About" and "Home" pages to provide context, then asking it to act as a "**TikTok Marketing Expert**". He showed how ChatGPT can brainstorm **10 video ideas** and, more importantly, create "**hooks**" for those vital first 3 seconds of a video.

Technical Equipment and Video Editing

For those looking to produce higher-quality content, **Evan** recommended specific equipment:

- **Microphones:** He suggested the **Hollyland Lark M2** (approx. €115) for high-quality audio, or the **Ulanzi** (approx. €60) as a budget-friendly indoor option.
- **Lighting and Tripods:** He recommended using a tripod for stability and a ring light or similar for clear visuals.

Evan concluded by demonstrating the **in-app editor**, showing how to "split" and "delete" unwanted parts of clips to keep the video punchy and fast-paced. He reminded participants that they should aim to post around **4 times a week** when starting out to build credibility with the algorithm.

Action Point List for Participants

1. **Audit Your Position on the Spectrum:** Determine if you are a "Visual" business (can sell 90% of the time) or a "Service" business (must follow the 80/20 rule).
2. **Optimize Your Profile:** Ensure your **Username** looks good – you could use your web address, and use **Keywords** in your **Bio** to help with TikTok's search functionality.
3. **Use Your Mobile Number for Signup:** Register your business account with your mobile number to allow TikTok to sync your contacts and give you an initial follower boost.
4. **Research Your Niche:** Use the search bar to find similar Irish businesses and observe what "Hooks" and video styles are getting high engagement.
5. **Develop Your "Hooks":** Use ChatGPT to brainstorm the first 3 seconds of your videos. These moments determine if a user stays or swipes.
6. **Decide on Account Type:** Choose between a **Personal account** (for access to all trending music) or a **Business account** (for web links and TikTok Shop).
7. **Invest in Audio:** If you plan on doing "Talking to Camera" or "Voiceover" videos, consider purchasing a **wireless microphone** like the Hollyland or Ulanzi to ensure professional sound quality.
8. **Commit to Consistency:** Aim to post at least **4 times per week** initially to train the AI on what your account is about and to build "authority" in your niche.
9. **Explore TikTok Shop:** If you sell physical products, research the application process for **TikTok Shop** to allow for frictionless in-app purchasing.
10. **Practice Editing:** Use the in-app "Split" and "Delete" tools to ensure your videos are fast-moving and the scene changes frequently to keep viewers engaged.

This was created with the help of one of our AI colleagues 😊