

Being brave on TikTok with Amy & Dustin, TikTok PT 2

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

Amy and Dustin, welcome back to The Fast Traack. When you speak to marketers, who do you point to in TikTok that has done amazing, that could be a blueprint for others? We can stay with beauty brands as an example of beauty and CPG brands. Who would be a good example that might be a few months or years ahead of others today?

Amy Oelkers:

I mean, I'll take this one. Within beauty, I do feel like beauty within CPG or across all categories has really been an early adopter, regardless of where you are in the digital space. I think L'Oreal has certainly done an amazing job of embracing TikTok as an entertainment platform. They really come in and understand the platform, the communities, those sub-communities, and really our products to make it work for them.

But I'm going to go back to what we talked about earlier, releasing control. Releasing that creative control. So I really feel like L'Oreal is probably at the top, and also Estee Lauder. Even within the food and bev space, there's been Pepsi, which has done a great job, and Goldfish - go reach for a handful. I mean, who doesn't love Goldfish, I snack on it 24/7.

Just them being on the platform and using well-known creators to move the needle even more with their own challenge reinvigorated the brand. And I mean who knew that they really needed to reinvigorate. Again, I eat Goldfish all day long, but penetrating culture is what these brands understand that they need to continuously do. And I think those are great examples of the clients who constantly are trying to be part of that conversation and be part of the culture. Dustin, I don't know if there are any other examples.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

Before you chime in Dustin, just to follow up, do some brands, have it easier than others on the basis of who they are? I'll use a specific example. You mentioned Dove. Dove has had brand values imprinted to their core for the past 20 years. It's all about real beauty. They made a statement about not using models going a few years back. So for them leaping into authenticity should not be a stretch because this is the brand. I'm wondering if your advice might be more accessible to some brands than others? Or is it just different tactics and strategies, so really anybody can start embracing a new way of thinking about your marketing and your branding?

Amy Oelkers:

I actually think if I asked my daughter in full transparency, who's almost 17 years old, what Dove stood for, I don't think as a consumer, she would be able to say to me, "oh, they're about



body inclusivity representation." I don't think she would. And I think the majority of Gen Zers don't know that about some of these brands who have been around for a pretty long time. So to answer your question from my perspective, I think it's an even playing field, whether you are an older, traditional CPG brand, or if what I consider, you're a challenger brand and just coming into the space, you have to make your mark.

You have to constantly communicate to consumers today what you stand for, right? Because they may not know, but it actually means something to them. And I would say it means more to Gen Zers than anybody else. You [as a brand] know what you're offering, what you stand for, what you represent, how you talk, what you put in your creative, and all of that matters to them.

The beauty of TikTok is that these creators are diverse. They are all showing up with their own perspective, their own story. And they're really able to, again, tell that real, authentic story that resonates and makes an emotional connection. Dustin, I know you're going to jump in as well.

Dustin Goot:

Yeah, completely. Open playing field is the best way to put it because a good story is a good story. Of course, if you're a brand with legacy and you have brand equity, you should leverage that in how you show up to TikTok. You should use that to your advantage. There's also nostalgia and vintage culture that are big trends on TikTok. So peering back into your marketing treasure chest, a number of brands have had success bringing back old jingles and reinvigorating them through new interpretations on TikTok. Rice-A-Roni did a really fun campaign like that. Be smart about how you can use your brand traditions and equity.

If you don't have that, it's a great opportunity to tell your story in whatever way you want.

I did a small business panel with this creator called Tassel Amor, and she sells tassels from Mexican artisans. I've done a panel with her, and seen her channel, but despite that, I don't even know what you use tassels for. But she's told the story of these artists that she's met and how she sells her tassels. And she's selling out from TikTok.

She's told me that almost every new shipment of tassels she gets from a new artist sells out within days. She made tassels interesting on TikTok. She had zero brand equity, she had nothing. So we try and build a platform where it's not follower-based, it's not a contest to build the most friends, but it's built to have the best content win. That's true as a creator, as a brand, as a celebrity, whomever. There's meant to be equality in that competition. As a brand, you should relish that challenge - "Let me make the best kind and win."

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

Excellent. Let me take the other side of that question and not ask about the brands that have



succeeded, but I'll impersonate the brand that has not, or missed the mark on TikTok the first time around. I was too skittish, wasn't sure about what was going on, but now I'm realizing that so far behind my competition, I come to both of you, and ask, how do I get to catch up?

Dustin Goot:

I wouldn't even frame it in those terms because you know, TikTok moves so fast and I don't think anyone even thinks of it in terms of failure. Everyone puts out content on TikTok every day that doesn't work for whatever reason. A lot of it can even be good content, but it's part of the learning experience. So, just look forward.

On TikTok, if a trend started like a month ago, it's ancient history. The TikTok community is always looking for that next interesting video that they want to do their own take on or send to their friends.

Going back to Amy's point, just be brave, show up, try some things, if whatever didn't work, who cares. I mean, don't do the same thing, right? Learn from it. The TikTok community is totally accepting and just wants to see you keep trying.

Amy Oelkers:

A plus one to that, keep trying. Keep the effort, keep the progression.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

Look ahead. One last question. Before I get to my little quiz at the very end of the podcast. What's in the tank that gets you really excited at TikTok today? You can share things that you're allowed to really share or not, just kidding. This is going to our audience.

Dustin Goot:

Well, I'll start. I thought, I thought we'd get to this before now, but we've had so much bracing conversation, we didn't come to it. We're investing a ton in our creator community in a bunch of different ways, but specifically with brand partnerships, we really see this as central to brands having success and for being the best home for creators.

Specifically, our TikTok creator marketplace is a platform that had launched in beta a couple of years ago. We just made an official announcement of its release recently, but there are tens of thousands of creators on there now. We're going to be growing that community significantly. We're investing in a bunch of different functionalities on the platform. Accessing creators and working with them is a new skill. It's a new muscle that brands are training themselves up on, and it's not easy.

I've been doing this for close to a decade and it's still challenging. These are human relationships. You're trying to navigate your brand values against a creator's personal branding and point of view. With our platform, we're trying to simplify that process. We're trying to offer prepackaged ways to partner with and engage with different types of creators. That's going to



continue to be a really important tool for brands going forward and one that we really want them to explore.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

I'm glad you called this out Dustin. How about you, Amy? What are you guys working on that gets you really excited?

Amy Oelkers:

I mean, honestly, TikTok blows me away on a daily basis. It's like, what are we not working on? And some of the stuff I don't even know, right. I'm on the sales side. They, they keep me in the dark until I need to know. I think the thing that I'm most excited about is what we spent a lot of time in the beginning on which is about - community commerce. The tightening of the funnel, the opportunity to use creators and their communities, their sub-communities to really make an impact for our brands. That to me is going to continue to evolve and shift, as it should.

But what really gets me excited, is where we go from here. How we really lean into discovery, entertainment, conversations, authentic conversations to really drive at the register. And then I'm excited about the unknown because I know TikTok is going to come out with something that is just going to blow us all away. I'm always excited and on the edge of my seat for that. So I can't share what it is because I don't know yet, but we'll cover that in the next follow-up.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

Nice, great answer. Let me conclude by asking you both, who do you look up to for inspiration on marketing, person or brand?

Amy Oelkers:

I'm going to give you Marc Pritchard at P&G. I mean hands down, one of the most brilliant marketers out there with what he continues to do at P&G legacy brand and the mark he makes in the marketplace with P&G and their brands. For me, he's at the top of my list, Dustin?

Dustin Goot:

Well, I'm going to take the easy answer. No offense to Marc, but it's really our creators that inspire me every day, and should inspire brands. That's the biggest advice I would give to brands. It takes so much bravery to put yourself out there as a creator. Talk about no brand equity, no legacy. They are starting from scratch and telling their stories, trying comedy skits, having no idea if it's going to work. They're putting out hundreds of videos to see what the audience likes. I love to see their ingenuity and their talent.

Specifically, I'm going to give the audience here a gift. I'm going to give three creators that specifically kind inspire you in beauty and CPG. Number one, yayayayoung. Go to him for joy! He is the most joyful presence you can find on the platform. Number two, Bondenavant. Bond-like the action hero. That's about to have his movie launch-



Amy Oelkers:

I was going to say, James Bond, is that where we're going?

Dustin Goot:

Yes, she's not like James Bond. I mean, she's cool, like James Bond. Go to her for relatability. I don't know if she coined it, but she's sort of a core member of hashtag every girl talk. She's just very open and talks about skincare along with other aspects and issues in her life. She's completely open, bears it all. And the last one, domenicaaq. Go to her for creativity and inventiveness. Visually, she's always testing the boundaries of the platform and how you can rethink production on TikTok, but also showcasing beauty routines and products. Those are three of hundreds that are amazing, but I want to give people some specific starting points to kind of train their TikTok feeds, and those are three great creators.

Amy Oelkers:

Those were good ones.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

Christmas came early for us! That's awesome Dustin, thank you. One last question. What's the next trend that you guys are each spending time on?

Dustin Goot:

Amy alluded to it. We want to serve our users in the best way possible and make their lives easier, making it more fun to use the platform. Looking at these TikTok Made Me Buy It moments and we are making it easier to participate as a consumer through social shopping and community-driven shopping.

For example, Amy may like to go with her friends to the mall, but I'm maybe more of the traditional male who doesn't like shopping - just feels like a chore to me. We're trying to make it less awful. If I see someone talking about a product in a fun way, now I can just click to get more information and purchase on the app. We are trying to compress that funnel and make a more enjoyable purchasing experience. We're going to do it in a way that doesn't take away from the entertainment and great content on the platform.

Amy Oelkers:

I took this question more like, trends that I'm seeing on TikTok and what I am really honing in on. So I'm going to answer it through that lens, which, please don't judge me.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

I love how you just pivoted my question. We'll let you have this one.

Amy Oelkers:



I'm a salesperson, I pivot. But this is how I'm going to answer it because I'm obsessed with it. I'm obsessed with cleantok on TikTok. Specifically, how to reorganize your refrigerator. And all of the little compartments that you need to then go and buy just to organize your refrigerator. So when you open up those beautiful doors, it is the most, aesthetically pleasing, highly visual experience to invite you in. That's the trend that I've been spending a lot of time with.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

Very good answer. I'm actually going to go check it out now.

Amy Oelkers:

You should.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

Guys, this is exciting. So it's been a long conversation. I'm glad we had it. And Dustin, as you mentioned, TikTok moves at a fast speed. You're welcome to this podcast anytime to give us more news so that we can keep looking forward and not back. I want to thank you both for participating. Until next time.

Amy Oelkers:

Thanks so much.

Dustin Goot:

Thank you.

Pierre-Loic Assayag:

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