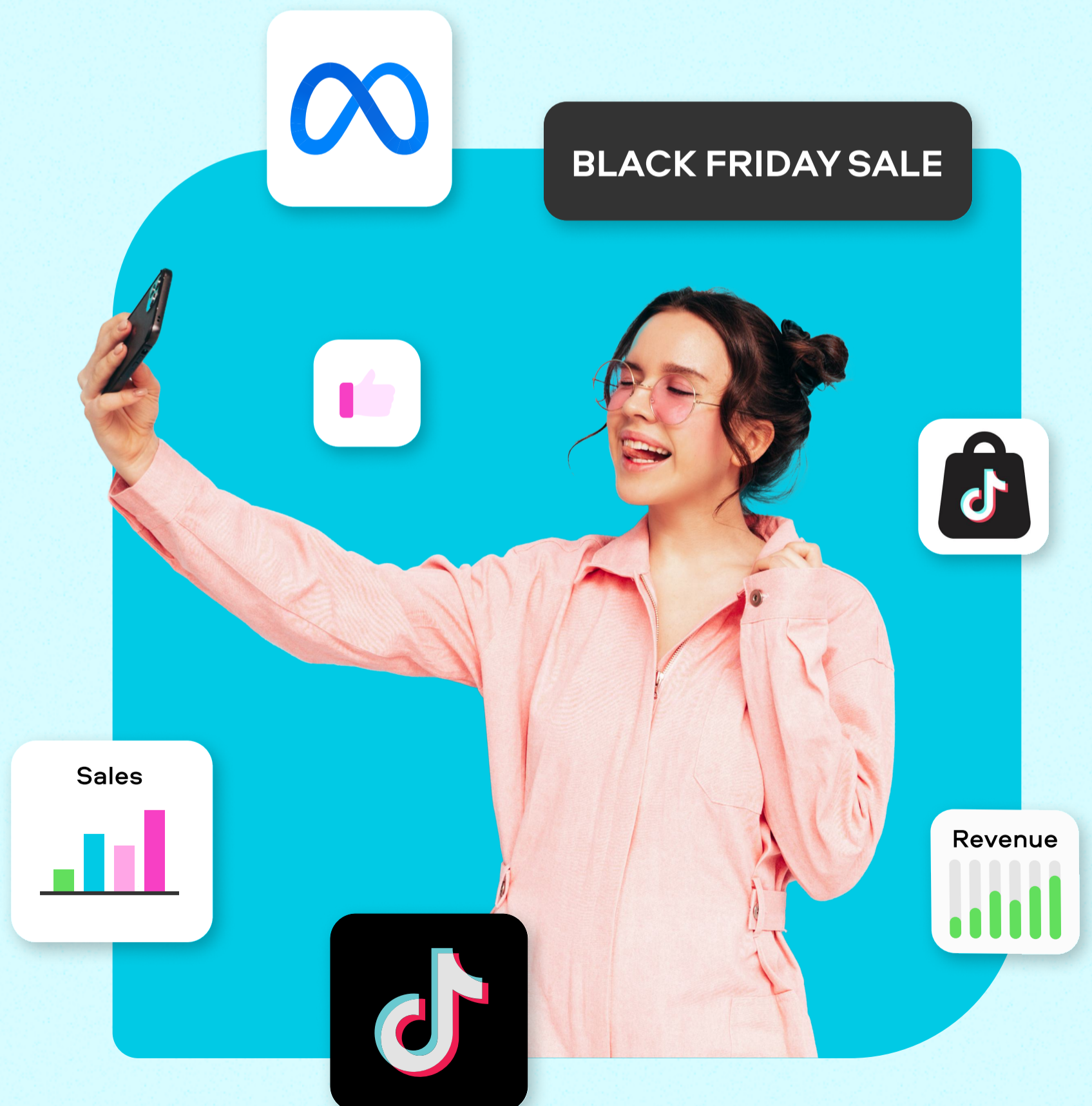
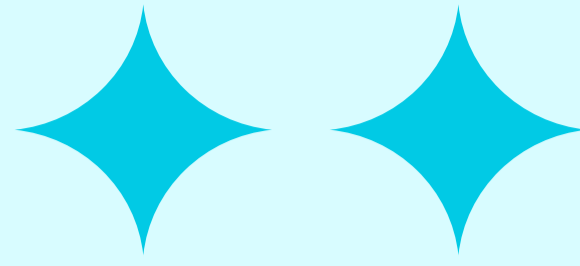


# eBook

## Q4 2024: The Ultimate Roadmap to Success

Marketing trends and best practices for DTC brands





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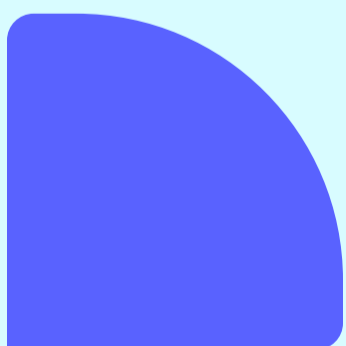
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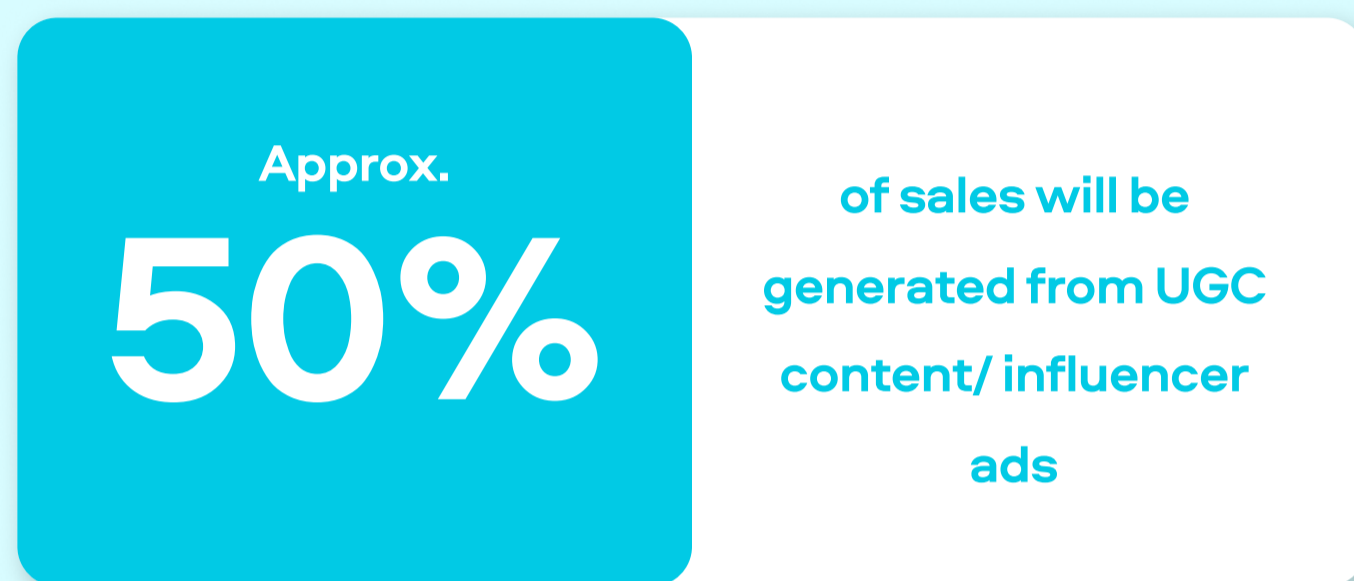
6 strategies to boost your TikTok Shop sales



# Introduction to Q4 2024: the economy, iOS, and bottom line

It's that time of year.

Every eCommerce brand knows that Q4 is the biggest opportunity of the year for revenue. In fact, many brands see an increase of around 30-50% in quarterly sales; and we can expect that around 50% of those sales will be generated from UGC content/ influencer ads.



Last year, Thanksgiving and Cyber Week saw a surge in mobile shopping as consumers seamlessly integrated online browsing and purchasing into their holiday celebrations - basically shopping at the Thanksgiving dinner table.

According to Adobe Analytics, mobile devices accounted for a record 55% of online sales on Thanksgiving and surpassed desktops for the first time during Cyber Week.

Retailers witnessed significant growth in purchases on mobile devices, with 63% higher conversion rates and 82% more revenue per session compared to their desktop websites. Meanwhile, desktop shoppers demonstrated a higher willingness to pay full price, relying less on discounts.

Given the record-breaking holiday season spending and the 9.6% year-over-year growth in Cyber Monday sales (reaching \$12.4 billion), it's anticipated that this trend will continue this year.

Faced with the challenging economic climate and the upcoming elections, DTC businesses face a unique set of hurdles this year. The shorter holiday season, combined with rising costs and increased customer touchpoints, will intensify competition.

To navigate these challenges successfully, let's explore proven strategies and best practices that can help your business thrive. By understanding the current landscape and implementing effective tactics, we can position your DTC brand for long-term success.



## Beyond discounts: elevating the customer experience

It's no secret that consumers crave discounts. A recent [Adobe report](#) revealed that discount peaks reached an astounding 31% last year, underscoring the power of price incentives.

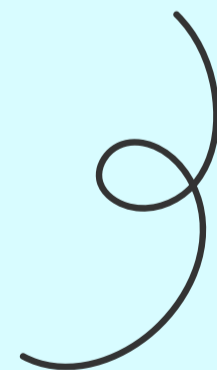
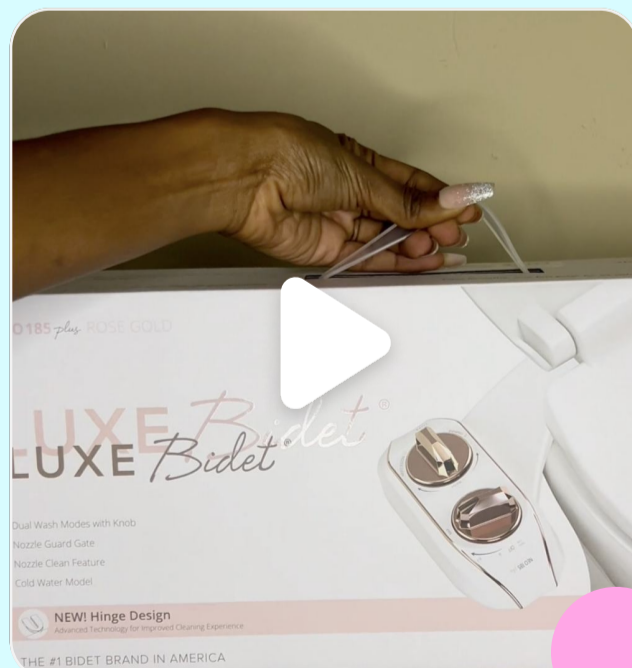
However, relying solely on discounts can be a risky strategy.

Cultivating strong customer relationships is the cornerstone of long-term business success. Instead of simply offering discounts, consider going the extra mile to create personalized experiences. For example, apparel brands can invite customers to in-person styling sessions, while cosmetic brands can offer complimentary makeup consultations. These interactions help customers feel valued and confident in their purchases.

In today's fast-paced world, convenience is paramount. Offer a variety of fulfillment options, such as same-day and next-day delivery, click-and-collect, local delivery services, and outsourced fulfillment. The goal is to simplify the shopping experience and make it a comfortable, timely one.

Pop-up shops and click-and-collect options offer a unique and convenient shopping experience. Allow customers to place orders online and pick up their items at a nearby location, giving them flexibility and control over their purchases.

While discounts are a powerful tool, they should not be the sole focus of your marketing strategy. To truly captivate customers, offer exclusive kits, bundles, limited editions, and holiday-themed products. These special offerings can create a sense of urgency and exclusivity, making your brand more appealing.





## The limitations of iOS17

Apple's commitment to user privacy has been a cornerstone of its iOS updates. Following the significant impact of iOS 14.5's "Ask app not to track" prompt, iOS 17 introduces further restrictions on link tracking.

Key changes in iOS17:

- **Link tracking limitations:** When users browse in private mode on Safari or click links from Apple Mail or Messages, user-identifiable parameters will be removed from URLs. While UTMs will remain intact, other tracking parameters often used for targeted advertising, such as lookalike modeling and retargeting, will be limited.
- **Impact on advertisers:** While the overall effect on advertisers may be less dramatic than iOS 14.5, brands should anticipate some challenges in specific targeting capabilities.

Strategies for advertisers:

- **Data-driven marketing:** Invest in collecting zero-party and first-party data directly from customers to build more robust audience segments and personalize marketing efforts.
- **Content is King:** Prioritize creating high-quality, engaging content that resonates with your target audience. Utilize platforms like Meta and TikTok, which leverage algorithms to deliver relevant content to users.
- **Adaptability:** Stay agile and be prepared to adjust marketing strategies as privacy regulations evolve. Experiment with different approaches to reach your audience effectively.

By understanding the implications of iOS 17 and implementing proactive strategies, advertisers can navigate the changing privacy landscape and continue to connect with their target audience.

## The bottom line

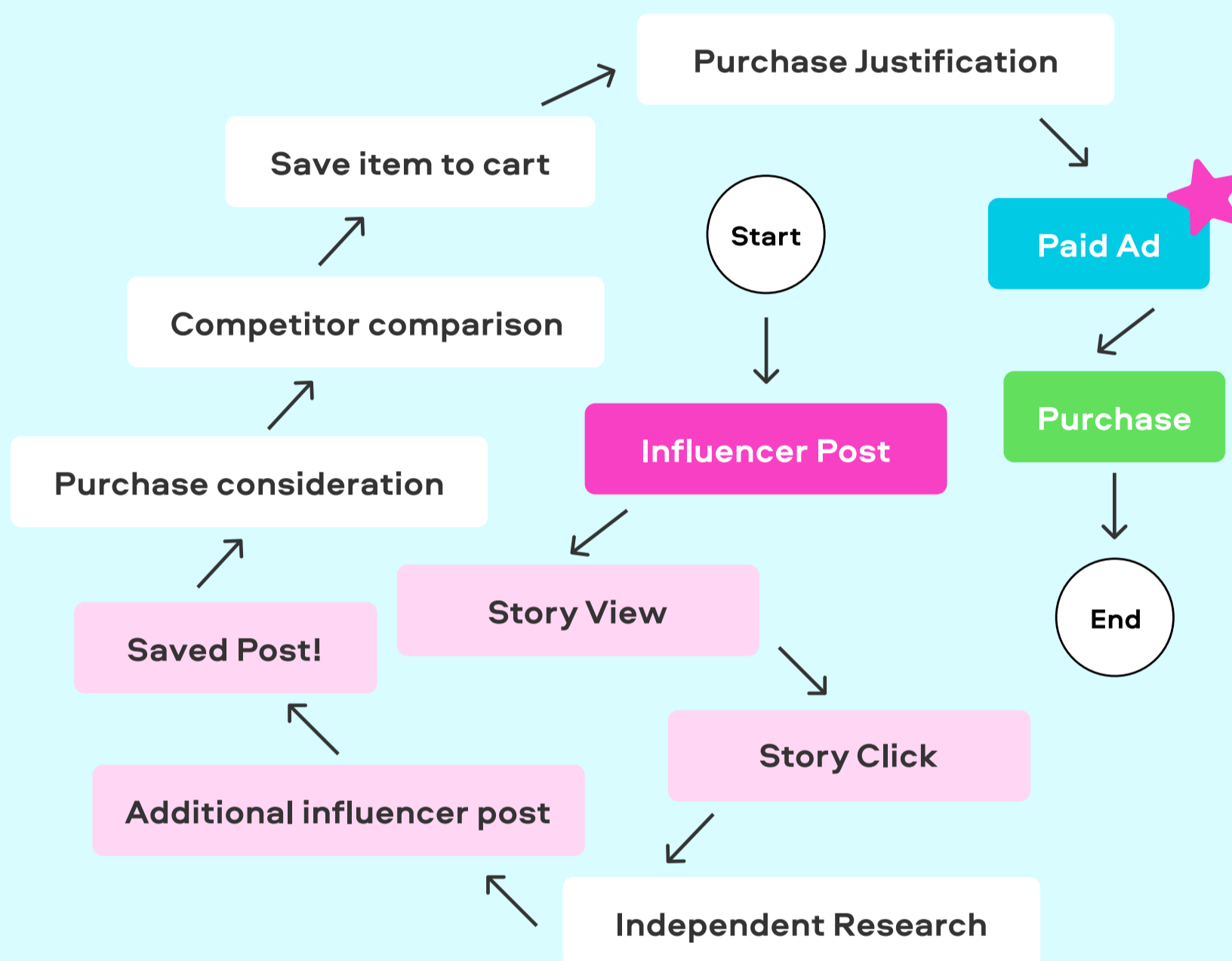
Given the current political climate, intensifying competition, and the anticipated need for increased customer touchpoints, marketers must proactively prepare for a shorter BFCM-Holiday season. As consumer expectations evolve, combining paid and organic social strategies becomes increasingly crucial to provide the necessary social proof.

Now, let's explore the tactical response you can use to ensure you're prepared for an epic Q4!

## The power of organic and paid synergy this Q4

In today's competitive landscape, social proof is a cornerstone of successful marketing. As consumers increasingly rely on multiple touchpoints before making a purchase, a winning strategy requires a synergistic approach.

If customers currently need 7-10 touchpoints before making a decision, they will need even more in the future.



By prioritizing organic social media in the lead-up to Q4 (ideally from August to October), you can effectively initiate your ad conversion funnel. By cultivating trust and building a loyal audience through organic content, you pave the way for more effective paid advertising campaigns when you launch your paid ads in Q4.



**To maximize your Q4 marketing results, your social media customer acquisition strategy should seamlessly integrate both organic and paid elements to guide potential customers through their purchasing journey.**

Start by using organic content in August, September, and October, such as influencer posts, to ignite initial interest. When potential customers consistently encounter valuable content, their curiosity grows. They begin to click through to learn more, explore related posts, and transition from passive viewers to actively engaged prospects. This is where well-placed paid ads for your Q4 promotions become crucial.

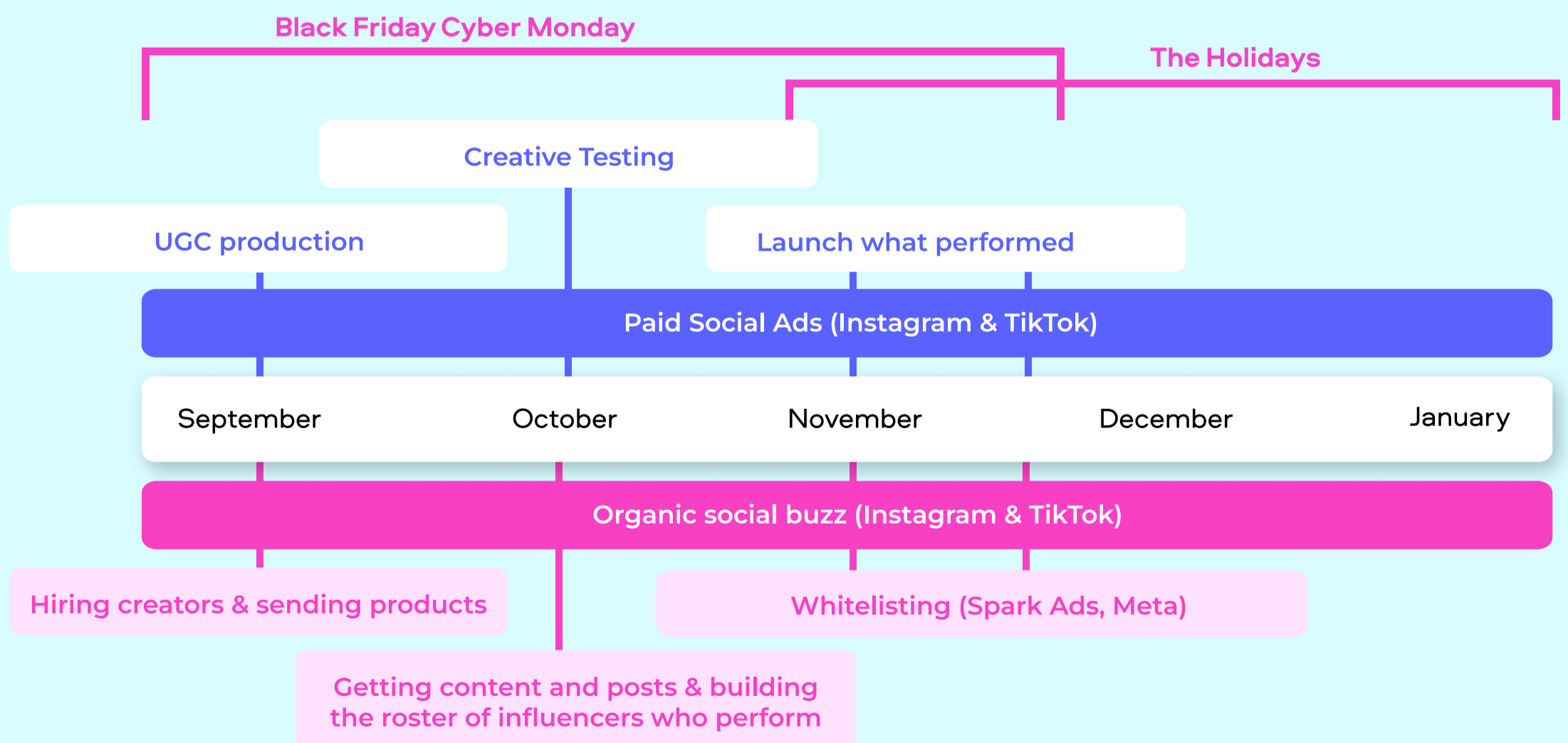
A carefully timed ad showcasing your product, paired with a compelling BFCM - Holiday offer reinforces the influencer's message and gently pushes the customer toward making a purchase.



## 6 organic and paid social strategies you need this season

The seamless blend of organic social influence and targeted paid social reinforcement effectively guides the customer from casual interest to final checkout.

Below you'll see a timeline to structure your BFCM organic and paid social campaigns for maximum impact:






# #1 Product seeding

Product seeding is where brands strategically send free products to a targeted group of influencers. The goal is to encourage these influencers to organically use, discuss, and recommend the products to their social media audience, sparking authentic buzz and endorsements.

By leveraging the credibility and reach of influencers, brands can effectively promote their products to a wider audience. Additionally, product seeding can help identify influencers who genuinely love and appreciate your products - who you can build long-term collabs with. Their passion and enthusiasm will shine through in their content, creating a strong connection with the target market.

SHIPMENT INFORMATION 

Full name: Jon Tompson  
Phone number: +1 (510) 555-55-55  
Address: NY, New Yourk City, 445 w 27th, 345

Download shipment info   
Only hired creators


12:42  
Creator send content for your review




  
Download


Mar 18, 2023

11:42  
The creator accepted your offer  
Offer price — \$500


 I would be happy to do an in-feed post and story that alings with the content guidelines! 18:02

Sierra, hello! Thank you for your response. We are satisfied with the price. We are planning to send you our product today. 18:02 ✓

 typing... 18:02



**Product seeding**  
Find creators who genuinely love your brand by sending them your product in exchange for an honest review on their social media account, if they liked it.



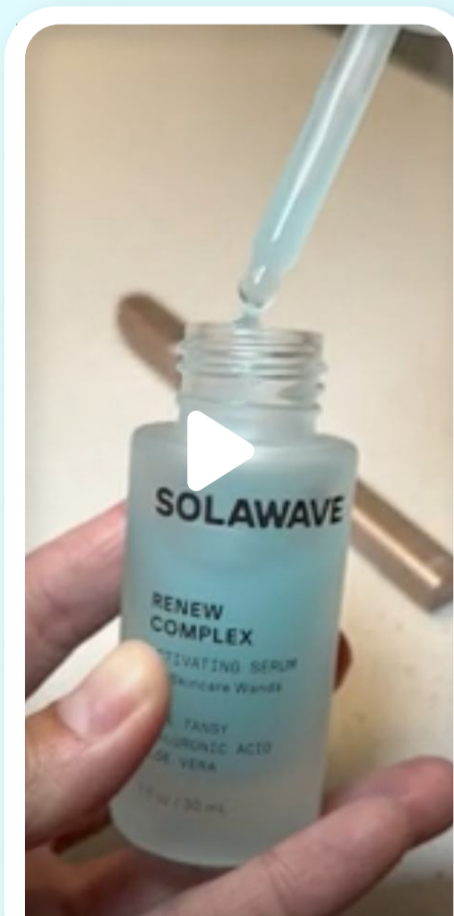
**Launch** a product seeding campaign on Insense.

It's important to note that product seeding involves a degree of unpredictability. Not all influencers will post about the product, even if they like it. This is because the campaign relies on a "like it, share it" mentality.

Industry benchmarks suggest a 15-20% post rate. However, platforms like Insense can significantly increase this percentage, with **some influencers exceeding a 50% post rate**.

## The benefits of product seeding at a glance

- **Genuine influencer content:** Product seeding serves as a genuine avenue to engage influencers who resonate with your brand, fostering organic buzz and discussions about your products.
- **Source a high volume of UGC for your ads:** To boost your social media acquisition strategy, you need to use both your evergreen ads and fresh creatives. Product seeding campaigns are one of the best ways to source loads of authentic content for your new ad creatives.
- **Affordable way to get started with influencer marketing:** Since the costs are typically just the shipping and the cost of the product itself, the benefits greatly outweigh the costs.



### How Solawave discovered 200+ influencers who love their products in just 1 month

Solawave sought authentic creators for product-exchange content. Using Insense, one marketer managed all the campaigns to fill their content library with fresh creatives for use across all their marketing channels.

✓ **244 applicants**

Received 244 applications from micro-influencers interested in working with the brand.

✓ **85% activation rate**

Discovered 200+ UGC creators and received content back from at least 85% of the creators they hired.

✓ **180 UGC assets at \$0**

The brand built a content library that they could repurpose across their social media and other marketing channels.



## #2 Source UGC in a modular format

Modular UGC refers to a strategic approach to content creation where individual components or "modules" of content are produced and sourced. Instead of obtaining a singular, fixed piece of content, you can gather a set of versatile elements that can be rearranged, combined, or repurposed across various campaigns and platforms.

Essentially, it's like having building blocks of content that can be assembled in numerous ways to suit different needs and contexts.

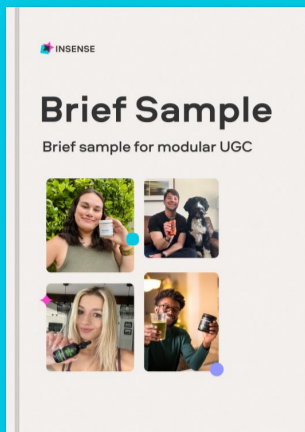


By collaborating with creators and adopting modular content, you can optimize production costs, fuel your creative testing process, and discover winning creatives that boost revenue and brand success.

To source modular UGC, you need to request the following from each creator for a minimum 60-second video:

- Hooks: Request 2–5 hooks per video clip
- B-rolls: Specify the shots you need for later editing, like product arrivals, close-ups, textures, and more
- CTAs: Ask for 2-3 compelling CTAs for each video clip





[Click here to view an example of a creative brief requesting modular UGC](#)

### #3 Influencer posts

Paid influencer collaborations are partnerships between brands and social media influencers where the influencer is compensated for promoting the brand's products or services.

These collaborations can take various forms, such as sponsored posts, product reviews, unboxings, or even long-term brand ambassadorships. The influencer creates content that features the brand in a way that resonates with their audience, leveraging their reach and influence to drive brand awareness & engagement.

Read the following articles on how to find the best influencers and how much to pay them:

[Choosing the right Influencers for my campaigns](#)

[How to compensate creators](#)

## #4 Run creative testing for optimal performance

The BFCM season is the best time of year to maximize sales, but brands also face the challenge of standing out amongst the competition. Effective creative testing is essential to identify high-performing ads and ensure your message resonates with your target audience above the rest.

To optimize creative performance, pull up your five best-performing ads over the last 30 days in both your Meta and TikTok accounts. Make a note of the following:

- 'Hook and hold' rate (video watch percentage)
- Message copy
- Overlays
- Graphics/thumbnails

Make tallies of what individual ad components are working to grab attention and use this to get a sense of what components you know will work with your BFCM ads.

### **Bonus tips for idea generation:**

- Conduct a competitive analysis: Browse through your competitors' ad libraries and make note of any trends. Pay close attention to ads that have been running for an extended period of time, as these are likely working well for them.
- Source ad inspiration from product reviews on Amazon and Trustpilot: You can mimic the exact terminology and phrasing that your customers use to describe their problems and how your product solves them.

### **How to effectively test your ads:**

- Run 3-5 ads within each Ad Set
- Allow at least 7 days before shutting down underperforming creatives
- Tailor the testing period (ranging from 7 to 30 days) in line with your marketing budget
- When a creative works, improve and iterate

### **How to ensure your ads reach your target audience:**

1. Ensure that your chosen demographic is visibly featured in the creative, considering age, ethnicity, location, and overall ambiance to guarantee that your message resonates with the right individuals.
2. To effectively connect with these specific groups, directly address your target audience in the hook, e.g., 'Hey College Students' or 'Curly Hair Care Tips Just For You!'
3. Leverage your customers' language. Dive into their expressions, acknowledging their challenges, triggers, and aspirations for an improved life. A valuable tip is to incorporate phrases taken from their testimonials to authentically capture their sentiments.

## #5 Don't turn off your evergreen ads

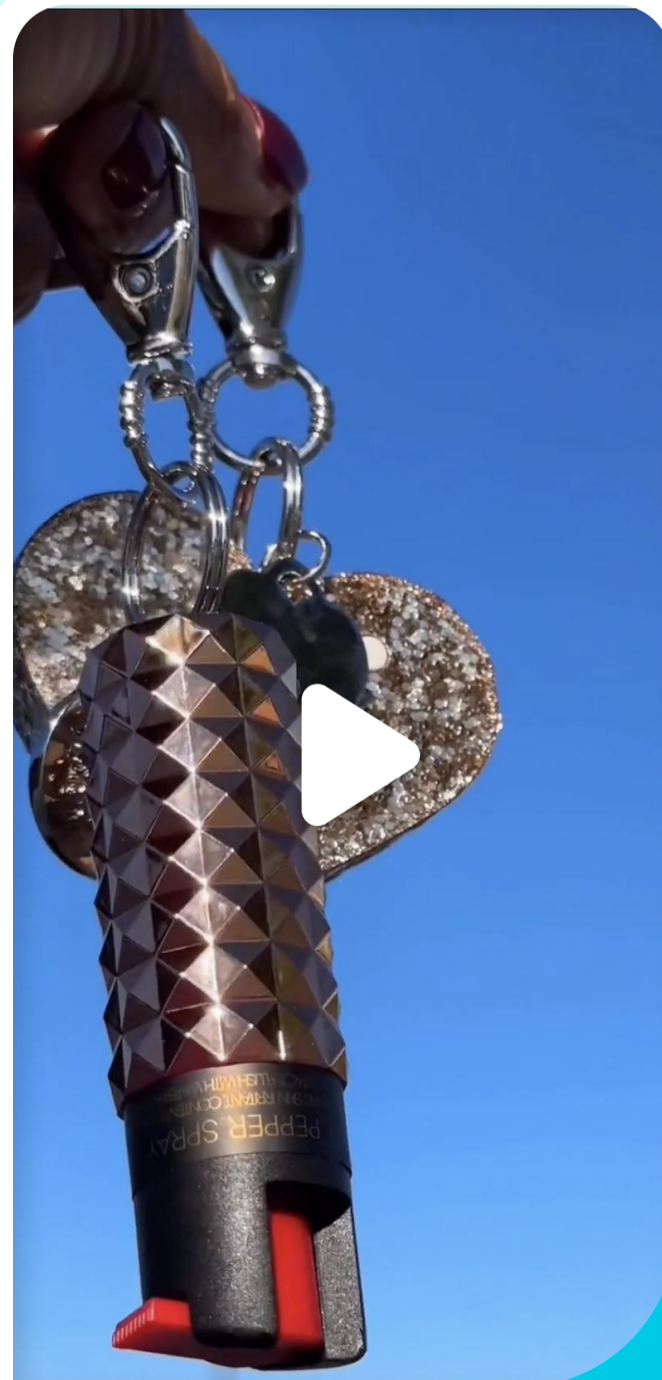
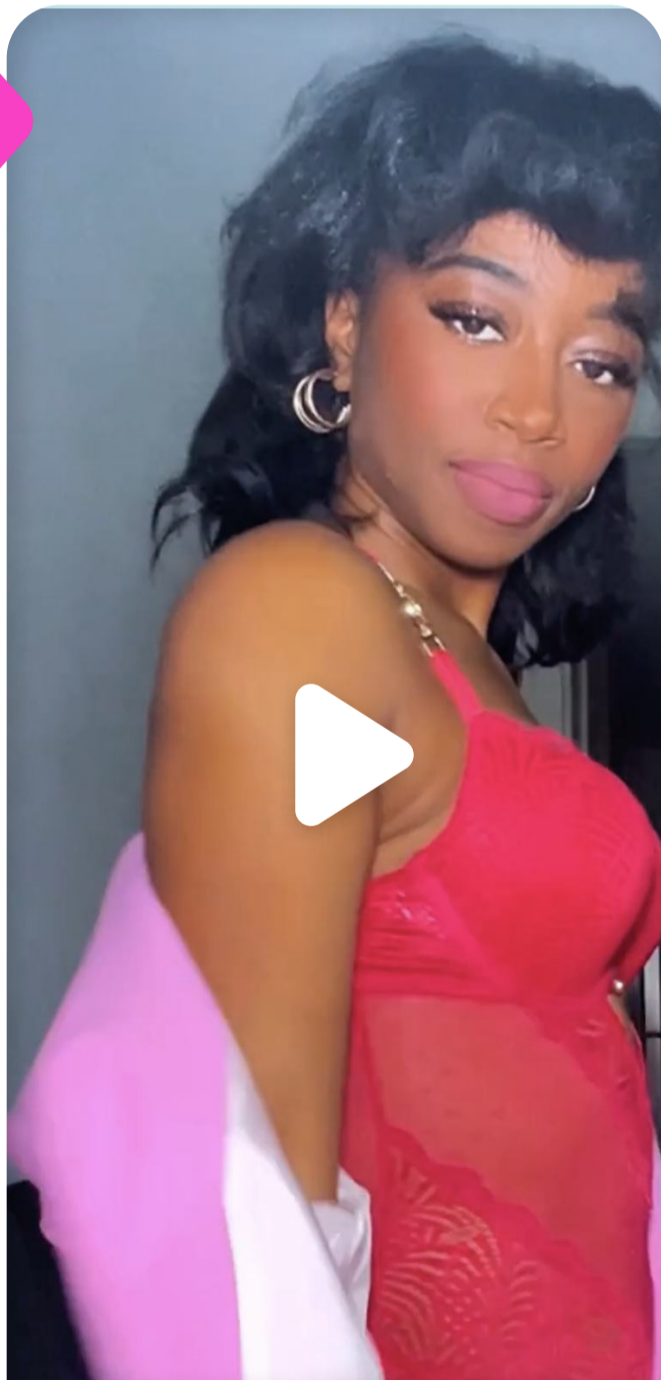
Anyone who's run paid social campaigns before knows that there is a big difference between what should work in theory vs. what works in practice.

In theory, it would make sense to pause your evergreen ad campaigns while you're running your BFCM promotion. After all, the ad creative is specifically promoting the discount.

In practice, however, leaving your evergreen ad campaigns on during your BFCM deal actually increases their conversion rates. With a boost in your evergreen campaigns paired with the surge in your BFCM campaigns, your overall ad account will be more efficient.



**Pro tip:** If you're looking to add some extra juice to your evergreen campaigns, you can add a sticker with your BFCM offer to your already-running ad creative.





## #6 Meta Whitelisted Ads and TikTok Spark Ads

Whitelisting is essentially running paid ads behind an Influencer account. Influencers will grant you access to their page and you can use their identity to run paid ads.

While using their handle, you can upload edited videos and target them as you wish. Typically, brands agree with the creators on a timeline to use their pages.

It's recommended to whitelist content from influencers you've already worked with and know what will resonate with their audience. Pricing depends on the creator's expertise; on average, we can expect to pay around \$100 per month for access.

Click here to learn more about [Meta Whitelisted Ads](#) and [TikTok Spark Ads](#).

### Why are Whitelisted Ads essential for Q4?

- **Audience Insights:** Discover if your audience resonates more with whitelisted ads or brand-owned ads, allowing you to fine-tune your marketing strategy.
- **Cost Savings:** Our clients have consistently reported lowering CPAs by 20%, 25%, and up to 35% with Whitelisted Ads, making it a cost-effective choice.
- **Enhanced Engagement:** Make your ads more engaging by blending them seamlessly into your audience's feed, just like regular posts, and leverage social proof for greater impact.
- **A/B Testing:** Easily conduct A/B testing to optimize your ad performance and identify what works best for your target audience.
- **Retargeting Power:** Re-engage leads who have interacted with your brand in the last 6 months with personalized content that can nudge them towards conversion.

### Best practices for whitelisting success

- **The Brief:** Ensure your content appears authentic and provides enough footage for an effective ad. Collaborate with the creator to create a final edited version independently and test multiple variations for A/B testing.
- **The Creators:** Choose creators whose Instagram feeds resonate with your target consumers and align with your product. Look for creators who have a persona related to your offering, making the content feel natural.
- **The Whitelisted Ads:** Run at least 3-5 ads in ad-sets to compare the performance of whitelisted ads against non-whitelisted ones. Experiment with different ad copies and CTAs to find the winning formula. Don't forget to actively manage comments on whitelisted ads to address client questions and concerns.

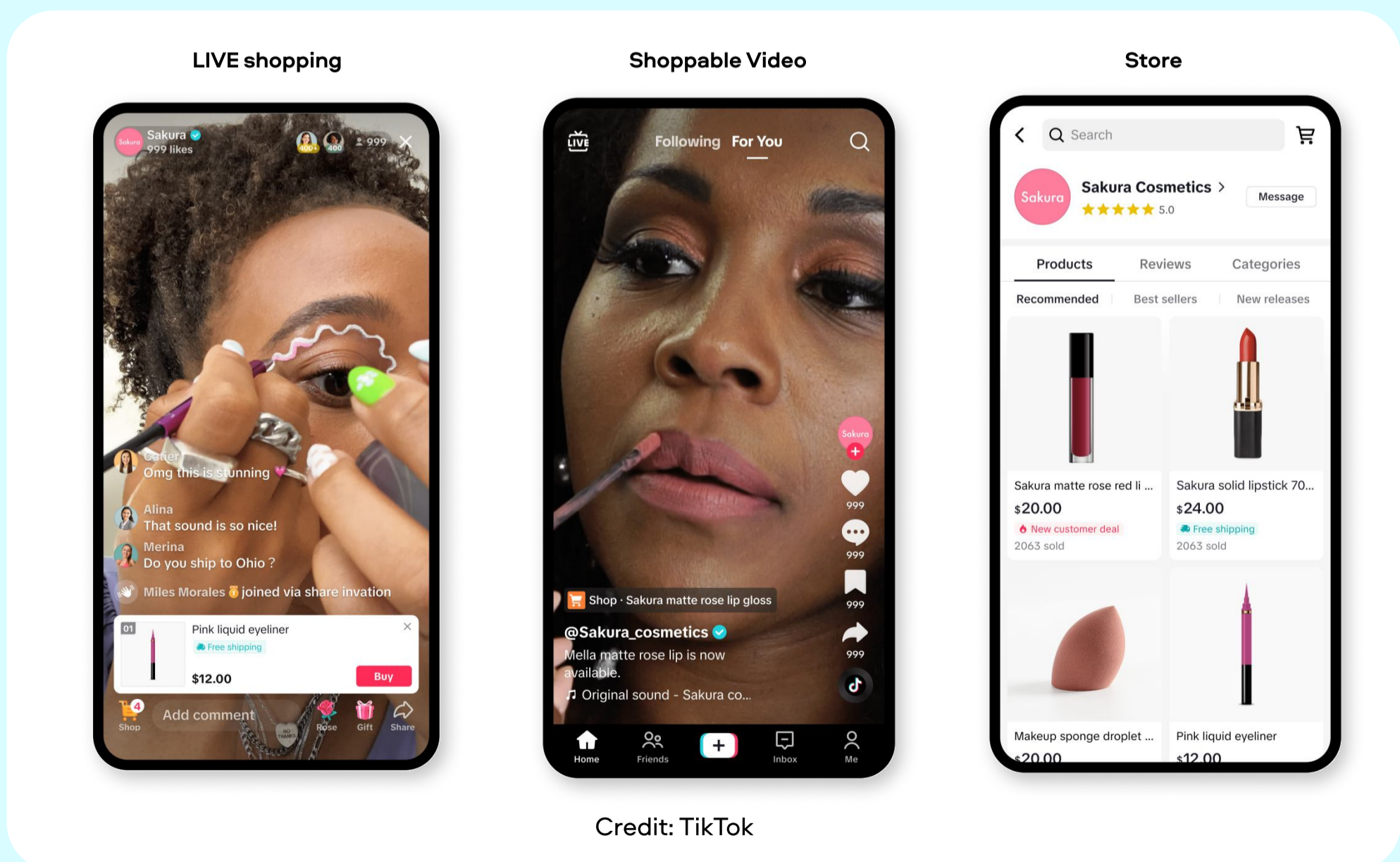
## Bonus chapter: a 6-step strategy for TikTok Shop success

TikTok Shop is an eCommerce storefront that allows merchants, brands and creators to showcase and actually sell products directly on TikTok through in-feed videos, LIVEs, and product showcase tab.

This means that more than 150 million TikTok users in the U.S will now be able to browse, shop, and buy without ever leaving the platform.

There are three ways for users to shop within TikTok:

- **LIVE Shopping:** Shop directly from a LIVE stream by tapping the pinned products or browsing the shopping basket icon. You can even find TikTok creators on Insense to carry out LIVEs with direct shoppable links.
- **Shoppable videos:** Shop directly from an in-feed video by tapping the product link and basket icon. You can hire creators and request videos as before, but now have the option of an embedded link to complete the purchase process within the app.
- **Product Showcase:** Shop directly from a brand or creator account and get access to products within the app. You can set up your own TikTok shop, source static images and videos from creators on Insense (or repurpose), and allow direct shopping and create product lists that creators can apply to promote and earn commissions..



## How to get started with TikTok Shop

1. Brands will need to enroll in the TikTok Shop Affiliate program and choose from one of three plans:
  - a. **Open Plan:** Merchants can make products available publicly to any creators. Creators must apply to promote products and be approved by the merchant. This plan is recommended.
  - b. **Shop Plan:** Merchants can include all products from the shop to the product selection marketplace with a universal commission rate.
  - c. **Target Plan:** Merchants select specific creators to participate in and feature their products. Only creators that merchants have selected will show products as available.
2. Once a brand has been enrolled in the affiliate program, creators (depending on the plan) can apply to add products to either live or short in-feed shoppable videos to earn commissions.

## 6 strategies to boost your TikTok Shop sales

TikTok's algorithm boosts shoppable videos that generate sales, increasing their visibility and engagement.

To leverage this, brands need to focus on key areas: working with the right influencers, creating quality content, and building a strong affiliate community.

TikTok Shop sales come from two main channels:

- aprox. 30% from brands' own TikTok Shops
- and 70% from influencer posts

Given this, brands need a lot of influencer content and influencers who can drive sales with engaging viral posts.

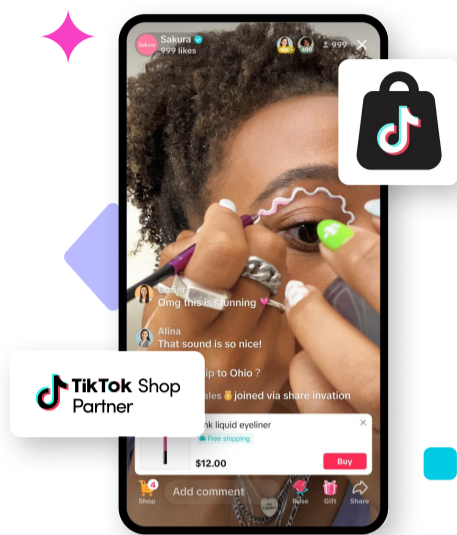
Let's explore the most effective strategies and tactics to help you succeed and boost your affiliate sales on TikTok Shop.

### Strategy 1: Content is (still) King

TikTok Shop videos should be snappy, authentic, entertaining, engaging, and on-trend.

At the same time, TikTok Shop is a platform for conversions, the content for your campaigns needs to appear authentic and organic while maintaining the elements of an effective UGC ad: strong hook + content body/story + CTA.





[See here for an example](#) of a TikTok Shop brief.

## Strategy 2: Flat fee + commission

When working with TikTok creators for TikTok Shop, there are two primary paths: commission campaigns and flat fee + commission campaigns. We recommend our clients to push for both types of campaigns equally:

### Commission campaigns

- Ensure volume and find product enthusiasts by hiring every possible creator interested in promoting your product. Note that this approach has low predictability, and some items may be counted as losses.
- TikTok suggests a starting commission rate of 15% for affiliates, but it's crucial to set the highest feasible commission based on profit margins. Offering an appealing commission rate not only activates more affiliates but also encourages their continued engagement. Experiment with different commission levels to observe the impact on affiliate activations and order volumes.

### Flat fee + commission

- Attract **higher-quality creators** and provide specific briefs to them. Ensure you hire creators in your product's niche who can create storytelling and personal recommendation videos, and clearly promote products on their TikTok accounts.
- **Control over creative direction and usage rights:** Align content with your brand's vision, repurpose it for broader marketing efforts, and maximize the value of each piece of content created.
- **Guaranteed posts:** Ensure your products get the visibility they need and reduce the risk of creators not delivering after receiving products.

## Strategy 3: Choosing affiliates to sell your products

As TikTok becomes a major platform for social commerce, brands need to adapt their approach to selecting creators.

- **Before:** Brands focused on traditional metrics like likes, comments, and follower counts.
- **Now:** Prioritize engagement rates based on **views, content virality, and product affinity**. These new KPIs more accurately measure an influencer's impact on direct sales and brand fit.

Using TikTok Shop's analytical tools, brands can identify and collaborate with creators who attract large audiences and drive actual sales.

When choosing creators:

- **Focus on their niche:** Ensure it aligns with your product category. See if your product fits naturally into their content.
- **Verify audience demographics:** Use viewer reports to ensure their followers match your target audience: location, age, gender.
- **Assess content skills:** Look for storytelling, personal recommendations, and use of TikTok's in-app editing tools to ensure they can produce high-quality, engaging content that drives conversions.

## Strategy 4: Volume is key

### Why volume matters

The more creators you send your products to, the more chances you have to convert!

- **Increases exposure:** more creators mean more visibility for your product.
- **Boosts virality:** higher chances of creating content that TikTok's algorithm will promote.
- **Drives sales:** collaborating with many creators maximizes sales opportunities.
- **Generates content with the low CPM:** provides a library of content that can be repurposed for both organic and paid.

### Volume recommendations

Work with as many creators as your margins and team capacity allow. According to our data:

- Small brands should aim for at least 50 affiliates per month
- While larger brands should strive for 100–150 affiliates

## Steps to achieve high volume

To maximize your chances of conversions and viral content:

- Use both outbound (massive email outreach via Affiliate Center) and inbound methods (via platforms like [Insense](#) with vetted influencers).
- Offer a combination of commissions and flat fees to attract and incentivize higher quality influencers.

Understanding the distinct stages of sourcing and engaging influencers will help build an efficient process and give you an idea of how many creators you should work with to achieve results:

Stage	Via TikTok's Affiliate Center	Via Insense
Sourcing	<p>By having an open plan in your Seller Center, affiliates can see your products and request a sample. However, first you need to build a strong brand presence so that affiliates want to naturally work with you.</p> <p>You can also search for creators in the center and message them, but as they receive hundreds of messages every day, it's easy that your request may end up lost in their inbox. That is why emailing and sending DMs is also important.</p> <p>In terms of effectively emailing affiliates, generate a mass email outreach: send a large number of outreach emails to source influencers in the Affiliate Center. Out of these outreach emails, expect a 5% response rate</p>	<p>Receive inbound applications: <a href="#">launch a campaign</a>, and see affiliates applying to your campaign with no outreach within 2 days.</p> <p>Screen them using our creator profile features, incl. audience data and content portfolio</p>
Engagement	<p>From the responses, anticipate that 10% will opt in to enroll in the program; those are influencers who will agree to participate in your program, and you will send them your product.</p>	<p>Hire influencers who you liked and send them the product. There is an average of 70-80% hiring rate since creators who are applying match your profile;</p>
Activation	<p>Activation Rate: Of those who opt-in, expect 80% of affiliates to post the content and tag your product</p>	<p>Out of hired creators, expect 80-100% affiliates posting tagged content and sending you the video for repurposing with content usage rights.</p>
Conversion	<p>Out of the creators who post, approximately 2-10% will convert and generate sales.</p>	<p>Around 10-16% of affiliates you've hired via Insense, will convert and generate sales.</p>
Tips	<p><b>Build long term partnerships with the high converting creators for consistent results. Amplify top-performing content with TikTok Spark Ads.</b></p>	



## Strategy 5: Leveraging organic content on your brand's TikTok account

Customers can buy on TikTok Shop in two ways: through a clickable link on an influencer video, or directly from your TikTok Shop brand account. For this reason, it's essential to fill your TikTok account with organic content to push for sales.



**Pro tip** - Repurpose the videos that creators sent you through Insense on your own TikTok account.



**Pro tip** - Always get the raw files from the creators. Later, you can do post-production and create more videos for your TikTok page.


On Insense you can easily request both the raw files and the edited content within our interactive brief:

### Raw / Ready to use

Let the creators know if you need the final (ready-to-use) version of the video, only the raw footage, or maybe both!

Raw footage 

Ready to use Ad 

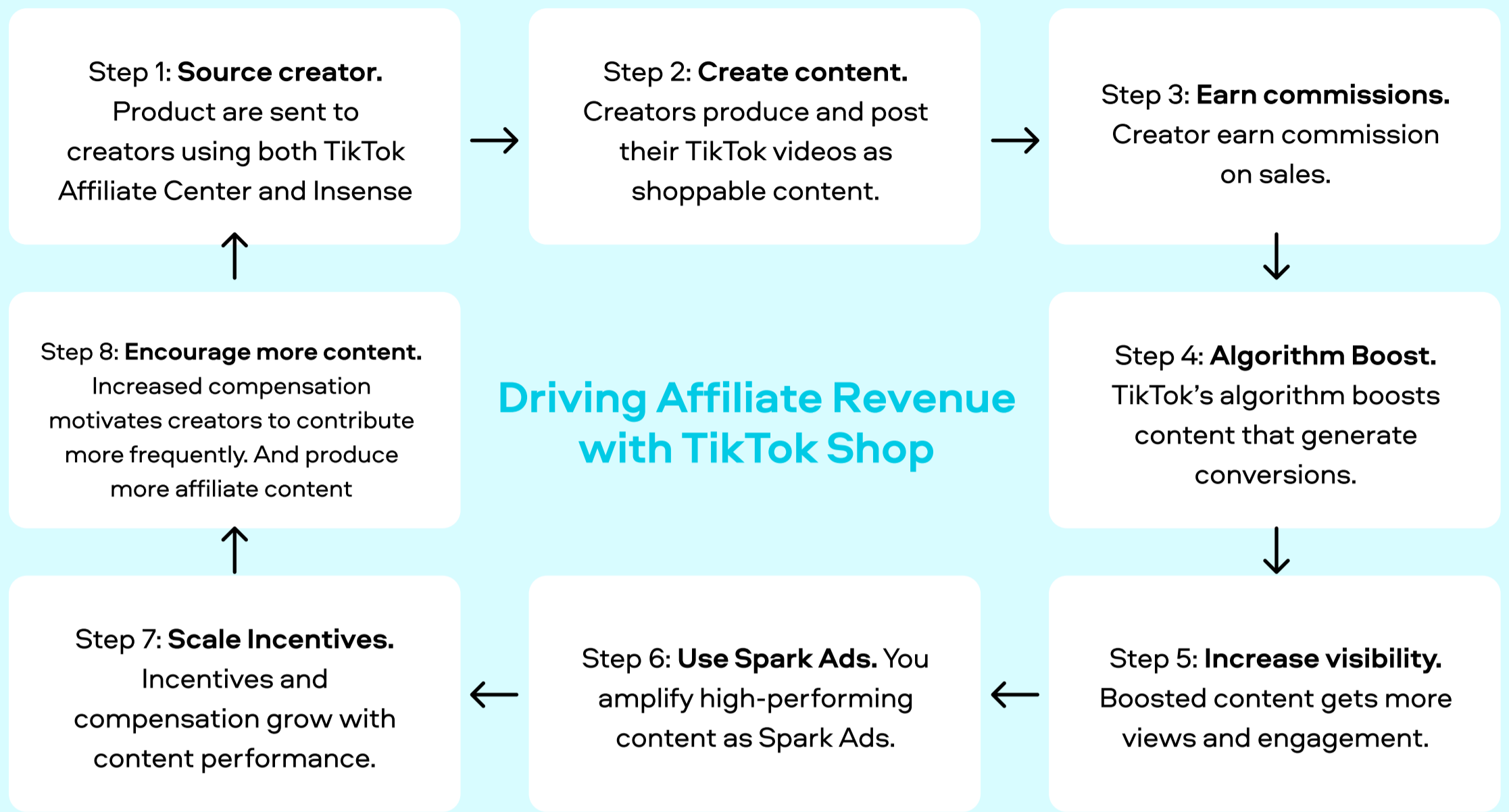
Ready to use Ad  
+ Raw footage 

## Strategy 6: Combining organic + paid with TikTok Spark Ads

Paid ads is a path to predictability, scalability and revenue growth on TikTok Shop. As soon as you spot TikTok Shop videos gathering a high number of views and/or generating sales, we strongly recommend you to leverage this content as Spark Ads.

Pushing the organic content as Spark Ads will allow your videos to reach more audiences and hence increase conversions.

## Continuous TikTok Shop success cycle





Insense is the end-to-end UGC and influencer marketing platform for small and large eCommerce brands.

Through Insense, marketers can find both UGC creators for just \$100 per video, and micro-influencers with an engaged audience to build an affiliate partnership.

Insense is making marketer's lives easier all year round - but especially for Q4 - for the following reasons:

- **No manual outreach;** creators that match your requirements apply directly to your campaigns in minutes.
- You can start collaborations immediately and **get UGC within 10 days.**
- You can run all types of collaborations with influencers to **amplify your brand across the entire marketing funnel**, including Affiliate, TikTok Shop, and Meta Whitelisted Ads, on top of UGC assets.
- Enjoy automated influencer contracts, automate payments, and **receive content in perpetuity.**

If you're looking to easily scale your UGC and influencer campaigns across your organic and paid social channels to win Q4... [book a Q4 strategy call with Insense now.](#)

