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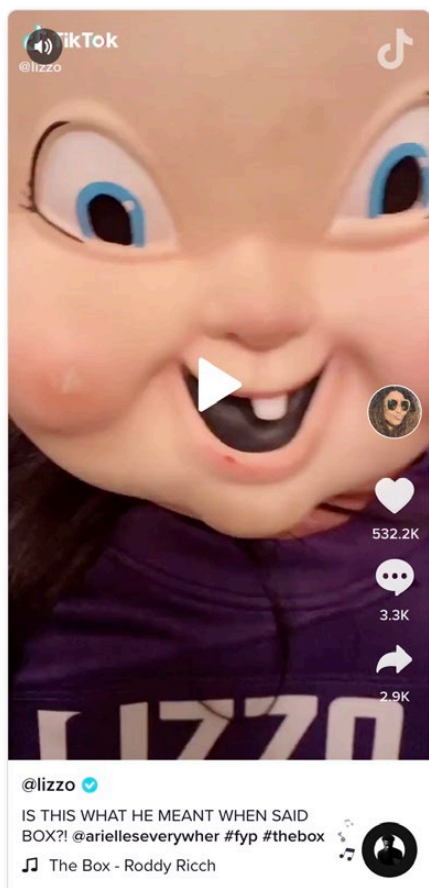
THE TIKTOK GUIDE FOR MUSICIANS

How to promote your music on the popular short-form video platform

The TikTok Guide for Musicians:

How to Promote Your Music on the Popular Short-Form Video Platform.

You're wondering how to best promote your music and grow your audience on TikTok. Of course you are: [TikTok](#) is one of the fastest growing social apps and **MUSIC is what drives the platform.**



Over half a billion active users around the world share their favorite songs on TikTok through things like **dance challenges and lip-sync videos**, or by simply putting the track in the background of a funny skit, how-to video, or emotional moment caught on camera.

Not only is TikTok a great platform for music promotion, sharing songs, and finding new listeners, **it's also a place to earn revenue when people use your music.** In the case of artists like Lil Nas X, Ava Max, Joji, and ZaeHD, music promotion on TikTok has also led to huge boosts on other platforms like Spotify and YouTube.

[Get your music on TikTok](#)

What Makes TikTok Unique for Music Promotion?

If you've never used TikTok, imagine a social video app that combines Snapchat, Instagram Stories, and the now-defunct Vine:

- **Videos are short**, usually around 15 seconds (but can go up to 60 seconds)
- There's an **emphasis on “authentic”** versus “perfect”
- Video is **vertical**, displayed in **1080×1920 pixels**
- It's more about **participation** than one-to-many broadcasting
- Because you can record in increments, even short videos feel narrative
- Bad lighting? One person acting as multiple characters? Talking in a mirror? All good.

The For You Page & “Viral” Songs

TikTok algorithmically generates a feed of content for each user, which is displayed on the #FYP (or “For You Page”). The more a user engages with content, the smarter TikTok gets at guessing what kind of videos the viewer wants to watch.

Imagine your song is used in a video that appears on someone's For You Page. That video inspires the viewer and they want to make a similar video. Well, there's a simple way in TikTok to use that same audio clip when creating a new video. THIS is what drives the viral success of music on TikTok and makes music promotion on the platform so interesting. **If a dance challenge or crazy lip-sync inspires one person, there's a good chance it'll inspire many people to make their own videos.** Suddenly the algorithm is reinforcing that musical hook, surfacing your song to more and more viewers in more and more contexts (via user-generated content).

Because a song can go viral in this way, there are quite a few instances of artists who have meager followings on other social platforms gaining huge exposure on TikTok. In this guide, you'll learn how TikTok music promotion can help you grow your audience and get people sharing your songs.

TikTok's Functions At a Glance

Shoot video in increments – Yes, you could do a single-take video if you want, but TikTok lets you shoot video in bits and pieces, almost like real-time editing. Capture a little bit of video, stop, and then pick up the next shot when you're ready. This way you can change scenes, characters, costumes, etc.

Shoot video to the song – All these lip-syncs and dance videos would be a lot harder to create if you couldn't record video TO the song. In TikTok, you can start by finding a song, swiping to the snippet you want, and then shooting the video. If you do cuts, the audio will stop at the appropriate part and then play from where you left off when you hit record again.

Produce in TikTok, or upload from elsewhere – You can use the above process to capture and post videos within the TikTok app, or create vertical videos using other tools (such as Adobe Premiere Pro) and then upload to TikTok.

[*10 ways to grow your audience on TikTok*](#)

21 Quick Tips for Success With Your Music Promotion on TikTok

1. Put your music on TikTok

[CD Baby can deliver your music to TikTok](#) for usage in short-form videos on the platform. Your songs will be available in TikTok's music library, where any user can pull it into one of their own videos. When one of your tracks gets used, you earn money.

[Getting your music on TikTok is included with all CD Baby distribution.](#)

2. Follow other musicians on TikTok

The best way to learn about TikTok is to get on there and start using it. Be sure to follow at least a few active musicians on the platform, too. Even if you don't love their music or genre, you'll learn what works for musicians who are willing to be creative on TikTok.

To get you started, check out the [Jonas Brothers...](#)

and [Lizzo...](#)

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3. Keep it light

TikTok is a fun platform. If you're an artist who takes yourself super seriously, you might have a hard time creating content that connects with TikTok users.

There was a video (it has since been removed) of megastar Camila Cabello in the studio. Her mom stops by to say hi. Camila is psyched... to see that her mom has brought pizza. She runs right past her mom and starts eating a slice right up close to the camera.

If giant popstars can be silly and endearing, so can you. Lighten up!

4. Don't stress about being perfect

TikTok isn't about polish.

Flaws, quiriness, awkwardness, sometimes even things that are offensive get the most traction on the platform. So don't be afraid to be you, and don't feel the pressure to look 100% before you hit record. Get silly. Be weird. Stay true.

5. TikTok skews young... but not forever

Almost half of TikTok's active users are between 16-24, so it's become the go-to app for younger audiences who are breaking ground and shaping new trends in music, comedy, and culture. If you're in that age range, you're probably not wondering if you need to be there. You already are.

If you're older, you probably **ARE** asking if you need to be on TikTok. The answer (for any social media platform) is **NO**. You need to be wherever you can communicate with your fans most effectively.

But if you're in that "older" demographic, don't discount the platform outright; just as the 35+ crowd has widely embraced Instagram, the same could be true of TikTok in a few years. By getting in there now, you can shape how your generation's interests and music are featured on TikTok.

6. It's not about your song; it's about a musical moment

Familiarity. It's what makes a radio hit, a playlist hit, and a TikTok hit.

TikTok gives you a chance to share a **HOOK**, over and over again.

7. Think visual: become a meme!

You may have seen videos where questions are posed in text while the people on screen lip-sync along to a track, saying “Nope” and “Yup.”

That song is “[Choices \(Yup\)](#)” by E-40, and it’s a great example of how one song can be used in numerous contexts to bring the personality of the creators to the forefront. The song is basically an audio meme.

Lizzo’s song “[Truth Hurts](#)” inspired a ton of videos where the person swabs the inside of their mouth during the lyric “I just took a DNA test...” (tagging the video #TruthHurts).

Of course it’s tough to make a musical meme on purpose. But what makes for good viral audio on TikTok? Something with an instantly quotable lyric, something that suggests a visual stunt, or just a hook so undeniable that total strangers will want to drop everything and dance.

Speaking of...

8. Dance!

Choreograph something. [Come up with a fun dance to one of your songs](#). If it’s a LITTLE bit challenging, but still realistic enough for your fans to imitate the moves with minimal effort, post it!

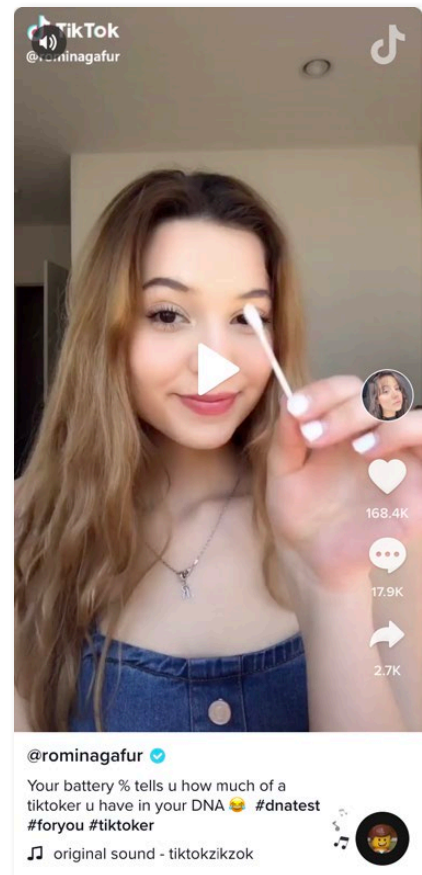
Then post the tutorial. Dare your audience to make their own videos.

Do you dance on stage? Preview the moves ahead of time on TikTok so fans can dance along at the show.

9. Don’t ignore your back catalog

The perfect 15-second snippet might not be in your latest single; it could be from a song you put out years ago (this happened with Lizzo, and her career skyrocketed).

So be sure you’re thinking about your whole catalog in terms of what song contains the most catchy, viral audio snippet.



User [@rominagafur](#) contributing to the “Truth Hurts” meme.

10. It's not about you, it's about them

TikTok is a platform that thrives on community engagement.

This isn't a place where you put yourself on a pedestal and everyone bows to your brilliance. It's about what your music can inspire in others, getting them to shape moments of their own.

11. Use TikTok as much or as little as you like

Because you can hit big on TikTok with one video or audio craze, you don't necessarily have to "feed the beast" the way you might with other social platforms. No need to keep up a frenzied pace of content creation in order to build a following.

Some popular artists on the platform only have a handful of videos they've posted themselves, but their music has inspired hundreds or thousands of other people to create their own videos using the artist's song.

12. Explore TikTok's built-in collaboration tools

TikTok gives you a number of ways to either encourage your fans to make videos, or to create your own videos based on existing TikTok content, such as:

- **Duets** – A [duet](#) is a TikTok video that lives alongside another video; they both get played simultaneously. You can either create a video and then encourage fans to #duet with you, or create your own duet with any video that's already on TikTok (unless the duet function has been disabled for that video or account).
- **Reactions/Responses** – You know those reaction videos on YouTube? This is similar, only shorter.
- **Run your own challenge/contest** – Want people to create their own videos on TikTok using your music? Prompt them with a fun contest:
 - best original dance
 - best lip-sync
 - most creative location
 - best costumes
 - funniest video
 - or something like the "ice bucket challenge"

Be sure to offer a cool reward for the winners (signed vinyl, free concert tickets, etc.). Also, create a unique hashtag for the contest so you can easily track engagement and spread the word.

Keep in mind that contests on TikTok **CAN** play out as duets or reactions as well, but they don't need to be limited to those formats.

13. It's all about hashtags

Just like Twitter and Instagram, TikTok runs on hashtags. Share a mix of hashtags specific to you (your music, your contests, etc.) and general ones that will appeal to strangers.

14. Treat TikTok like a community

Follow other users. Thank people who engage with your contests. Respond to comments. Don't be a hermit.

15. Share TikTok videos on other platforms

TikTok makes this easy. For instance, with just a couple clicks your TikTok videos can be posted to Instagram Stories. And you should, especially when you're just starting on TikTok and your followers elsewhere don't know you're on the platform yet.

16. Exaggerate!!!

TikTok is a platform where larger-than-life, in-your-face content grabs attention and keeps viewers captivated. So supersize your personality.

One artist that does this really well while still seeming "authentic" is [Austin Giorgio](#) (who also makes great use of text to give people a deeper look at his songs).

17. Collaborate with other artists

Duets and reactions don't have to just be between you and your fans (or haters). You can use these same tools with other artists too, and create short video content together that helps each of you reach the other artist's followers.

18. Go hyper-local

Once you start using the app for a while, you might notice that content related to

your region populates your feed. TikTok loves localized content. That gives you a great way to reach new listeners – and no town is too small.

Go for local humor, show the landmarks, and be sure to post location information on your videos. When you're touring through a city, tag that town! If you have trash to talk about your hometown or some tour stop you can't stand, go for it. Viewers will agree or argue, but either way you've started a conversation.

19. Worried about getting verified?

Like other platforms, TikTok grants verified badges to accounts that it confirms are authentic (if the account holder warrants verification).

Do you qualify? You can answer that question [HERE](#). But don't stress yourself out trying to get verified early on. Put your energy into making good videos.

20. Be prolific (if you want)

Because TikTok videos are short, unpolished, and focus on a hook and not a whole song, you can produce TikTok content quicker. When you take chances with your content AND produce videos more often, you'll improve every time you post something on TikTok.

21. Promote your music from multiple angles

On TikTok there's no need to create professional, long-form music videos. Use that time instead to explore multiple ways you could pair your hook with video concepts.

In the age of short-form video, there's no such thing as too much content. The more you share your hook, the more familiar that music becomes – which can lead to more activity both on and off the TikTok platform.

It's Easy to Get Your Music on TikTok

TikTok is a place where songs, videos, and personality collide in really strange and interesting ways. CD Baby is excited to deliver your songs to TikTok, Spotify, Instagram, Apple Music, Deezer, Facebook, Pandora, Amazon Music, Oculus, YouTube Music, and more. We want to help you connect with listeners all around the world.

Release music today!

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