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How to Drive Better Performance on TikTok

The Apps Playbook

Performance fundamentals for setting up and scaling with App Ads



Are you set up to acquire users who stay?

Getting an install is only the first step. Long-term growth comes from acquiring users who stay engaged, keep coming back and deliver more value over time.

TikTok helps brands acquire users who are more likely to do exactly that.

TikTok-acquired users are

1.5x

more likely to stay engaged than users acquired on other platforms.[1]

TikTok-acquired users show a

22%

higher retention rate than users acquired on other platforms.[1]

Acquiring users who stay starts with the fundamentals: better signals, smarter automation, stronger creative and measurement that proves what's working.

So the question is:

How can app marketers acquire higher-value users?

1. Beyond Installs: Proving TikTok's Full-Funnel Impact on Retention & Engagement, Sensor Tower, US, 2024.

Introducing the Performance Fundamentals for Apps behind stronger performance

Data signals. Automation. Creative. Measurement. Individually they're powerful. Together they're the App Ads Fundamentals: four connected building blocks that help campaigns perform, scale and prove impact.

1 Build the foundation

Better performance starts with better inputs. Build the foundation with TikTok-first setup and high-quality data connections.

2 Automate execution

Automation scales what works. Drive results more efficiently with AI-powered solutions like Smart+, which automate optimization.

3 Fuel with creative

Creative is the fuel for performance on TikTok. Use built-in solutions to scale your creatives and fully drive performance.

4 Optimise with confidence

Measurement turns performance into confidence. Drive impact with measurement that helps you understand the full impact of your campaigns.



FUNDAMENTAL 1

Build the foundation

Build the foundation to unlock accurate measurement and better optimization. TikTok's ad system learns from the information you share. The more complete, accurate and timely those data connections are, the faster the system learns.

In short:

Better information in = Better performance out.

24%

lower CPA for advertisers that meet all criteria of a high-quality setup vs those with low-quality setups[1].

1. TikTok internal data analysis.

1

Set up your data connection for full-funnel postback

Integrate TikTok with your mobile measurement partner (MMP) and App Events SDK/API to provide reliable attribution and share full-funnel app events, from install and registration to purchase and retention.

Together, they create a stronger signal foundation for measurement, optimization and long-term performance.



SDK

- Implement device-to-server connection through TikTok SDK to share activities with TikTok

EVENTS API

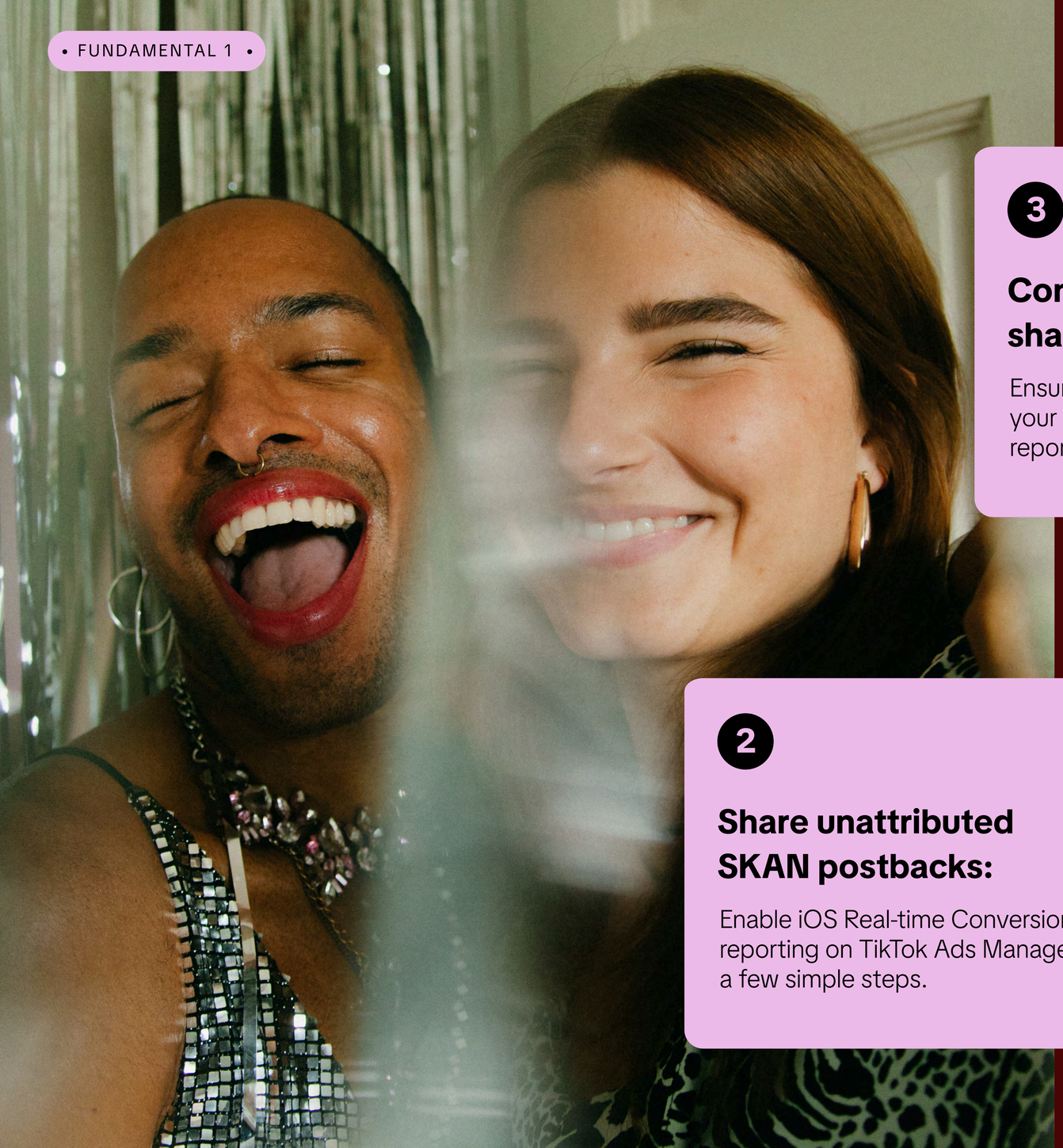
- Implement server-to-server connection through Events API to share activities with TikTok

MMP

- Configure MMP tracking correctly to ensure successful event postback to TikTok.

Featured mobile measurement partners

Airbridge · singular · KOCHAVA · branch · tenjin · ADJUST · AppsFlyer



2

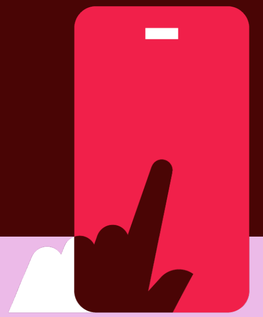
Share unattributed SKAN postbacks:

Enable iOS Real-time Conversion reporting on TikTok Ads Manager in a few simple steps.

3

Configure MMP data sharing settings:

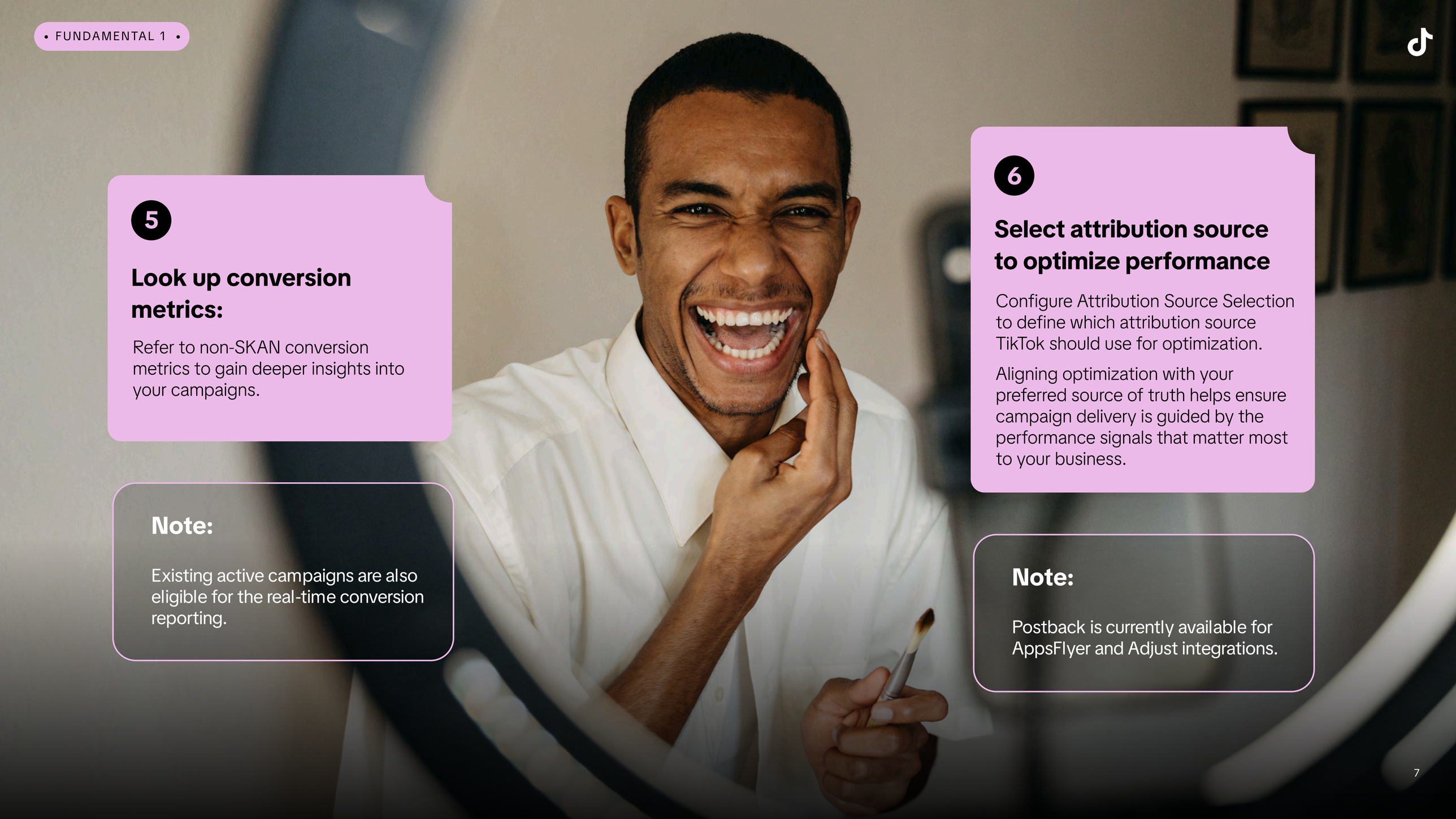
Ensure proper configuration with your MMP to enable iOS real-time reporting



4

Set up eligible iOS campaigns:

Once your app is eligible, iOS real-time conversion reporting supports iOS ADC/DC campaign types.



5

Look up conversion metrics:

Refer to non-SKAN conversion metrics to gain deeper insights into your campaigns.

Note:

Existing active campaigns are also eligible for the real-time conversion reporting.

6

Select attribution source to optimize performance

Configure Attribution Source Selection to define which attribution source TikTok should use for optimization.

Aligning optimization with your preferred source of truth helps ensure campaign delivery is guided by the performance signals that matter most to your business.

Note:

Postback is currently available for AppsFlyer and Adjust integrations.





BUILD THE FOUNDATION

Ready to Scale?

Use this checklist to make sure your setup is good to go.

- Integrate TikTok with your **MMP** and **App Events SDK/API** for reliable attribution
- Share **full-funnel events** (install -> registration -> purchase -> retention)
- **Share unattributed postbacks** to maximize iOS measurement coverage
- Enable **iOS Real-time Conversion reporting** for eligible iOS campaigns
- Configure **Attribution Source Selection** based on your source of truth





With your foundations in place, the next step is putting automation to work.



FUNDAMENTAL 2

Automate execution

Align controllable automation with your growth objectives to maximize performance at scale.

Choose the App Promotion campaign objective. Enable Smart+ solutions throughout the campaign setup to maximize your performance results while keeping control in your hands.

53%

of advertisers achieved their D0 ROAS goals with their Android Smart+ Target ROAS campaigns[1].

75%

of advertisers achieved their D0 ROAS goals with their Android Smart+ Target ROAS campaigns (IAP)[1].

1. Internal product alpha and beta test results.

1 Choose the "App Promotion" campaign objective and activate Smart+

Activate Smart+ automation to simplify campaign management while maintaining control over key campaign settings. Tip: keep asset groups as unique as possible and driving to different URLs.

2 Set Up

Adjust targeting, budget and campaign structure to align automation with your business objectives.

3 Apply the right bidding strategy

Apply the right bidding strategy to maximize scale, efficiency or value based on your growth goals.



3.1 **Spend-Based Bid Strategy** — Delivers the highest volume of conversions possible while maximizing your budget. **(Flexible Bid, Stable Spend)**

Who is it for	Ideal if you want to scale fast and have a flexible KPI.
Goal	Primary KPI: Maximize volume and spend. Secondary KPI: Controlling cost per result is secondary.
What to use	MAI/AEO: Maximum Delivery. VBO: Highest Value.
Budget settings	Input your target spending (i.e., the budget that you plan to spend).
Bid settings	No need to provide bid.
Delivery expectations	• Daily spend is stable • Daily cost per result may fluctuate in response to changes in the competitive environment

Pro tip:

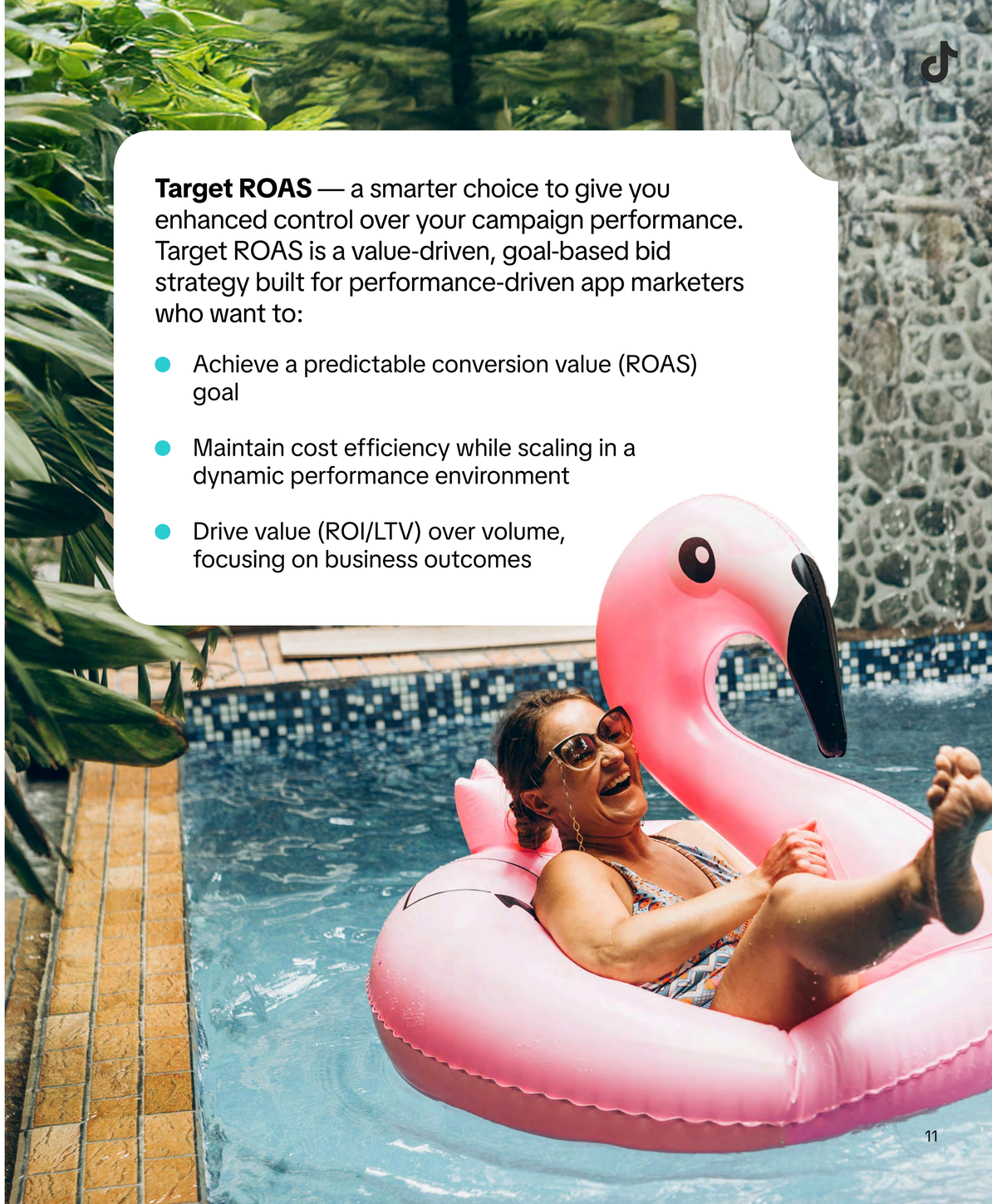
Increasing your budget can lead to CPA fluctuation as the system aims to spend your budget. We recommend a gradual budget increase of 20%-50% each time.

3.2 **Goal-based Bid Strategy** — Delivers results at your targeted CPA/ROAS by balancing cost and volume. (**Flexible Spend, Stable Bid)**

Who is it for	Ideal for advertisers with strict and clear KPIs.
Goal	Primary KPI: Strictly control Cost per Result or target a specific ROAS goal. Secondary KPI: Spending your entire budget is secondary.
What to use	MAI/AEO: Cost Cap. VBO: Target ROAS.
Budget settings	• Cost Cap: Set a budget that is at least 10x of your Target CPA • Target ROAS: Set a budget that is at least 5x of TikTok CPP (Once) in the last 7 days
Bid settings	Input your target Cost Per Result/ROAS. We recommend starting with a target based on your TikTok performance in the last 7 days.
Delivery expectations	• Daily spend may fluctuate • Actual cost per result or ROAS will be controlled around or lower than the bid provided

Pro tip:

Your target bid will affect conversion volume and campaign spending. Monitor campaign performance and adjust your bid accordingly.



Target ROAS — a smarter choice to give you enhanced control over your campaign performance. Target ROAS is a value-driven, goal-based bid strategy built for performance-driven app marketers who want to:

- Achieve a predictable conversion value (ROAS) goal
- Maintain cost efficiency while scaling in a dynamic performance environment
- Drive value (ROI/LTV) over volume, focusing on business outcomes





AUTOMATE EXECUTION

Ready to Scale?

Use this checklist to make sure your campaign setup is good to go. →





- **Select the App Promotion campaign objective**
- **Adjust targeting, budget and structure to your objectives**
- **Choose the bid strategy that matches your goal (spend-based vs goal-based)**
- **Use Target ROAS when value/LTV matters more than volume**

Now your campaign execution strategy is set and ready to go, the next ingredient is creative. →

FUNDAMENTAL 3

Fuel with creative

Creative is the fuel for performance on TikTok. Build a continuous creative engine that drives engagement, conversion and sustained performance. In the age of content, great creative fuels performance on TikTok.

Here's how to increase creative supply, reduce fatigue and give your campaigns more opportunities to perform.

64%

of users buy a product after watching creator advertising[1].

Auto-Selection delivers

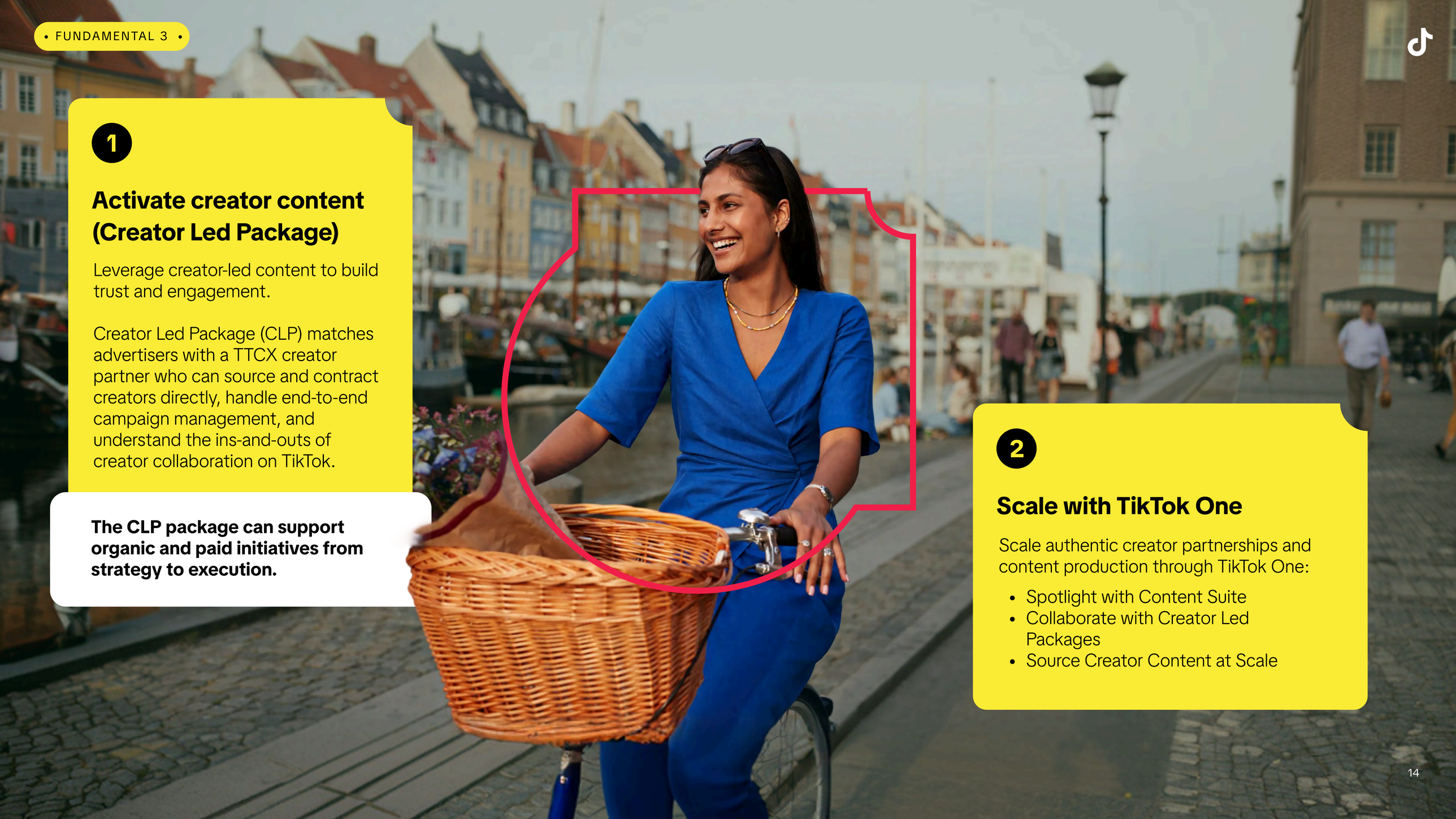
2.1x

higher ROAS and

64%

lower CPI[2].

1. TikTok Marketing Science Global Creators Drive Commerce Study, 2022, conducted by Material.
2. Selected campaigns of Supremacy Games and Gryphon Games in 2025.



1

Activate creator content (Creator Led Package)

Leverage creator-led content to build trust and engagement.

Creator Led Package (CLP) matches advertisers with a TTCX creator partner who can source and contract creators directly, handle end-to-end campaign management, and understand the ins-and-outs of creator collaboration on TikTok.

The CLP package can support organic and paid initiatives from strategy to execution.

2

Scale with TikTok One

Scale authentic creator partnerships and content production through TikTok One:

- Spotlight with Content Suite
- Collaborate with Creator Led Packages
- Source Creator Content at Scale



3

Enable Auto-Selection

Enable Auto-Selection for dynamic creative-to-audience matching and performance optimization. Auto-select is recommended since it dynamically pairs the right creative assets with the right audience, based on your app, country and language, to maximize performance.

It is fully customizable: click the pencil icon to review, add your own content or exclude content based on the rules you define.

64%

lower CPI and **2.1x higher ROAS** are driven by Auto-Selection[1].

1. Selected campaigns of Supremacy Games and Gryphon Games in 2025.

Auto-Selection activates all creative automation capabilities — automating localisation, anti-fatigue creative delivery recommendation, and carousel format generation:

MULTILINGUAL TOOL

Configure MMP tracking correctly to ensure successful event postback to TikTok.

RECOMMENDED CREATIVES

Automatically suggests top-performing creatives.

APP2CAROUSEL

Automatically generates carousels with your own app store page materials.



FUEL WITH CREATIVE

Ready to Scale?



Pro tip: Always-on testing and scaling

Continuously test and iterate creatives. Accelerate learning and scale performance in real time by automatically allocating spend to winning assets.





Use this checklist to make sure your creative engine is good to go.

- **Activate creator-led content (Creator Led Package)**
- **Scale production through TikTok One**
- **Enable Auto-Selection for creative-to-audience matching**
- **Turn on creative automation (Multilingual tool, Recommended creatives, App2Carousel)**
- **Run always-on testing and let the system scale winning assets**

With a steady stream of creative fuelling performance, the final step is measuring what really works. →

FUNDAMENTAL 4

Optimize with confidence





Validate performance, quantify incremental impact, and make smarter growth decisions.

The better you understand what's driving results, the easier it becomes to optimize campaigns, identify opportunities and prove business impact.

1 Enable iOS Real-Time Reporting

Activate iOS real-time conversion reporting to improve signal visibility and optimization, giving you visibility into your iOS campaigns like never before.

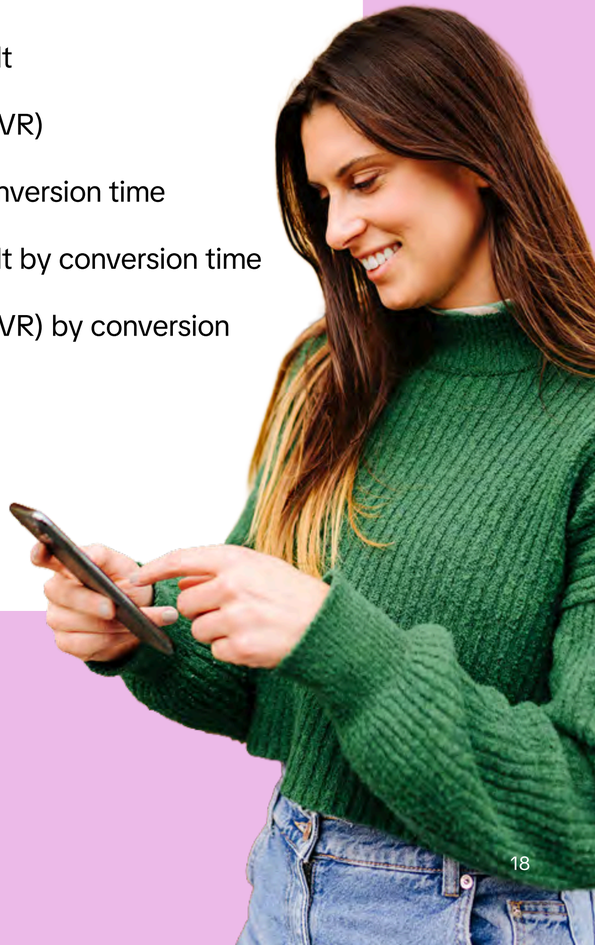


Metrics under Conversions > App section

- Conversions (SKAN): conversions attributed by SKAdNetwork
- Conversions: real-time conversions
- Cost per conversion
- Conversion rate (CVR)
- Conversions by conversion time
- Cost per conversion by conversion time
- Conversion rate (CVR) by conversion time

Metrics under Conversions > Attributions section

- Results
- Cost per result
- Result rate (CVR)
- Results by conversion time
- Cost per result by conversion time
- Result rate (CVR) by conversion time



2 Validate incremental impact

Use measurement to validate performance and quantify incrementality. Your checklist:

- → **Understand conversion journey —** Check your click-through and view-through conversions in Attribution Analytics to understand the TikTok conversion journey and identify opportunities.
- → **Test -> validate -> iterate —** Use A/B testing techniques to assess Smart+ impact against baseline campaign activity. Continue testing new iterations to identify the optimal approaches to Smart+.
- → **Measure incremental impact —** Make sure you meet the signal prerequisites for Conversion Lift Study (CLS) measurement; start from a single-cell Conversion Lift Study (CLS) to form baseline learning; ensure required spend and audience reach in both cells for a multi-cell study setup; minimise changes in other variables to best isolate the impact of Smart+; uplevel to multi-cell studies to assess impact across multiple strategies; evaluate incremental growth compared to your attribution model results and calibrate accordingly.

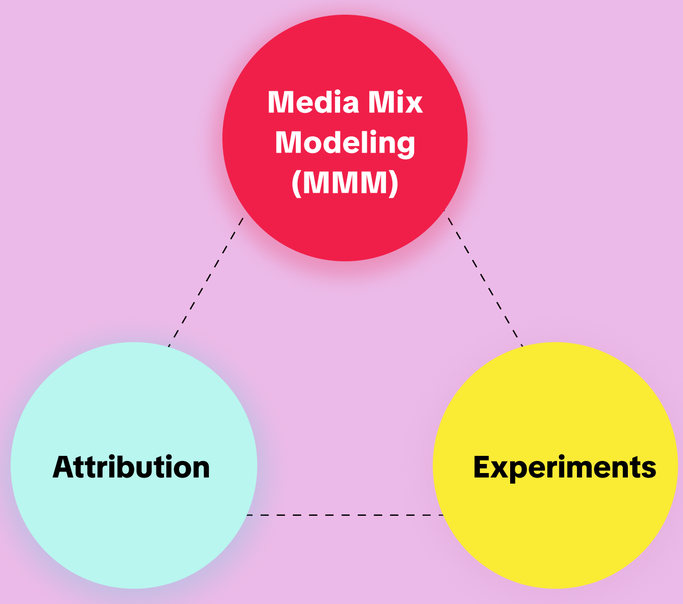


3 Use the holistic measurement approach

TikTok's full marketing ROI is not always visible through basic tracking or last-click attribution.

To understand the true value TikTok drives, use a holistic measurement approach. No single tool shows the full picture on its own, but together attribution, experiments and Media Mix Modeling (MMM) connect daily performance, incremental impact and long-term business outcomes.





Media Mix Modeling (MMM)

See the bigger picture.

Best for:
- Long-term ROI analysis
- Budget planning

Tools:
- TTAM end point
- API integrations
- TikTok-badged Media Mix Modeling (MMM) partners

Attribution

Track what's happening day to day.

Best for:
- Optimization
- Short-term reporting

Tools:
- TikTok Attribution Analytics
- Mobile Measurement Partners (MMPs) solution
- SKAN measurement

Experiments

Prove what actually drives results.

Best for:
- Incrementality
- Campaign validation

Tools:
- Split test
- Conversion Lift Study
- Unified Lift
- Third-party Sales Lift





OPTIMIZE WITH CONFIDENCE

Ready to Scale?





Use this checklist to make sure your measurement setup is giving you the visibility, diagnostics and proof you need to optimize with confidence.

- **Enable iOS real-time conversion reporting for eligible campaigns**
- **Use Attribution Analytics to understand the conversion journey**
- **Run A/B tests to assess Smart+ impact against baseline activity**
- **Measure incremental impact with CLS (single-cell -> multi-cell)**
- **Combine Attribution, Experiments and Media Mix Modeling (MMM) for the full picture**





Build it. Automate it. Fuel it. Optimize it.

This playbook has shown you how to put those fundamentals into action. Now it's time to build, test, and refine your setup so it's ready for whatever your customers do next.

Start building your setup

Strong performance comes from getting the fundamentals right – and keeping them working together.

When your data, automation, creative and measurement are all connected, your campaigns have everything they need to learn faster and scale with confidence.

