The economic impact of TikTok in New Zealand

July 2026

Infometrics

Economics put simply

Authorship

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Key Findings

- TikTok generates substantial economic value for New Zealand, contributing an estimated $1.2b in annual GDP through off-platform consumer spending, supporting 9,722 FTE jobs.
- TikTok is increasingly a discovery and purchasing platform, with 25% of regular users visiting restaurants or cafés monthly after seeing these businesses on TikTok. Scaling this result up to a total population of just under 1.3 million TikTok users aged 18+ in New Zealand suggests that 368,000 consumers are likely to do the same each month.
- Half of surveyed businesses (50%) report using TikTok for promotion at least monthly – equivalent to an estimated 309,000 New Zealand businesses.
- TikTok is a low-cost marketing platform, with 15% of businesses spending nothing on TikTok and relying solely on organic content.
- Businesses report strong commercial benefits, with the median self-reported sales uplift of 20-30% from TikTok promotional activity, and an average uplift of 24%.
- TikTok users and businesses are highly diverse, with users represented across every region of New Zealand, while 54% of TikTok-using business decision makers identify as Māori, Pacific Peoples or Asian, indicating particularly strong engagement among these communities.
- Overall, 53% of regular TikTok users reported spending on products or services as a result of viewing content on TikTok, equivalent to 671,000 New Zealanders, with the median level of monthly spending being $300 across the economically relevant spending categories.
- Most regular TikTok users (66%) access the platform several times a day. Regular TikTok users skew younger, with 35% of weekly users aged 18-24, 27% aged 25-34, and 38% aged 35 years or older, demonstrating broad appeal.
- Users' top reasons for visiting TikTok were entertainment, relaxation, and discovery. Nearly 9 in 10 regular users (86%) say they use TikTok as a source of entertainment, 77% said they use TikTok to relax, 67% use TikTok to learn about topics of interest, and 61% use TikTok to find information.
- TikTok has become an important platform for the creator economy, with 32% of users identifying as content creators. Around half of these creators (51%) reported earning income through brand partnerships, in-app gifting, or both.
- For content creators who reported receiving income from TikTok-exclusive brand and business partnerships, just over a quarter (26%) received between $400 and $1,000 per month, and around one in six (around 17%) received more than $1,000 per month.
- Business adoption is strongest among newer businesses, with 63% of firms established within the last five years using TikTok monthly, compared with 21% of businesses operating for more than 16 years.

Introduction and summary

TikTok is a global entertainment platform for watching, creating and sharing short-form video personalised to the viewer's interests, with an emphasis on authentic, "raw" content. In February 2026, TikTok announced that almost two million New Zealanders were using the platform in a diverse community of small business owners, large corporations, and content creators including foodies, comedians and musicians.

With TikTok enabling businesses to reach over one-third of New Zealanders, as well as more than 1 billion people globally, with little more than a mobile phone and some authentic content, TikTok's potential for growing businesses' revenue from promotional activity that costs little to nothing is unparalleled. To better understand this potential, and the benefits TikTok brings both to businesses and users, TikTok commissioned Infometrics to quantify the contribution that TikTok makes to New Zealand businesses and the economy as a whole.

What we did

Our research into the economic impacts of TikTok on New Zealand follows similar research carried out by Oxford Economics Australia on the economic impacts of TikTok on the Australian economy. We largely followed the same format as the Australian research, particularly in the methodology of the user and business surveys, and only made changes where we thought we could make an improvement or they were necessary for the New Zealand context.

In collaboration with Nielsen, we carried out a survey of 700 business decision makers across all sectors of the economy. The survey included questions about whether the business used TikTok to promote their business, how frequently they used TikTok, the amount of promotional spend on TikTok, and the return on TikTok promotional activity spend in terms of additional sales revenue.

In collaboration with Nielsen, we also carried out a survey of 1,000 TikTok users aged 18 years or older who used TikTok at least once per week. The survey included questions about user demographics, their reasons for using TikTok, usage frequency, content engagement, perceived benefits, monetisation of content, and off-platform spending undertaken because of content that was viewed on TikTok.

We used input-output (IO) multiplier analysis to measure the economic impact of businesses generating additional sales revenue from promotional activity on TikTok, and users' off-platform spending undertaken because of content viewed on TikTok.

Case studies

Infometrics also conducted a number of interviews with several business owners and content creators to better understand how they use TikTok and how TikTok has benefitted their business. We spoke to small and large businesses, creators, and iconic Kiwi brands from all over New Zealand. These interviews were designed to add richer context to the economic analysis undertaken, and to profile some of the more subjective, and therefore harder to model, outcomes arising from using TikTok.

The economic impact of TikTok

How we estimated TikTok's economic impact

We have taken two approaches to measuring the economic impact of TikTok.

1. **Measuring the economic impact of users spending money off-platform on products and services they have viewed on TikTok.**

Nielsen asked adult users who use TikTok at least weekly whether they spent money off-platform after viewing products or services on TikTok, how much they spent, and what they bought. We then scaled the survey results to the estimated population of adult weekly TikTok users in New Zealand, to better understand the broader spending impacts.

Spending was examined across a range of categories, which included:

- Fast food/restaurants/cafes
- Food/drinks from a supermarket
- Clothing/footwear/personal accessories
- Accommodation
- Artistic/cultural activity (e.g. concert, gallery, museum) or music purchase
- Toiletries/cosmetics
- Furniture or hardware
- Electrical items (e.g. phones, TVs, earphones)

2. **Measuring the economic impact of increases in sales revenue reported by businesses resulting from their promotional activity on TikTok.**

For comparative purposes, we constrained the industries in this part of the analysis to those used in the Oxford Economics Australia study. The industries were as follows:

- Food and beverages
- Health, beauty, and fitness
- Culture and entertainment
- Other consumer goods (e.g. electronics, homeware, and jewellery retailing)
- Other consumer services (e.g. tradespeople, decorators and real estate services)
- Business services (e.g. accountancy, training, marketing and advertising)

Nielsen asked businesses what their total annual revenue was, and how much of a lift in revenue (in percentage terms) they received due to their promotional activity on TikTok. Nielsen calculated the uplift in dollar terms then scaled the results up to be reflective of the estimates of all businesses in New Zealand that use TikTok, in each of the in-scope industries, based on reported proportions of businesses using TikTok and the national total of businesses. Further details on the approach and scaling are provided in an appendix.

We have used the Infometrics national economic multiplier model to estimate TikTok's impact on the New Zealand economy. Estimates of GDP are expressed in 2025 prices. Our methodology is outlined in more detail in *Appendix: Methodology* on page 54.

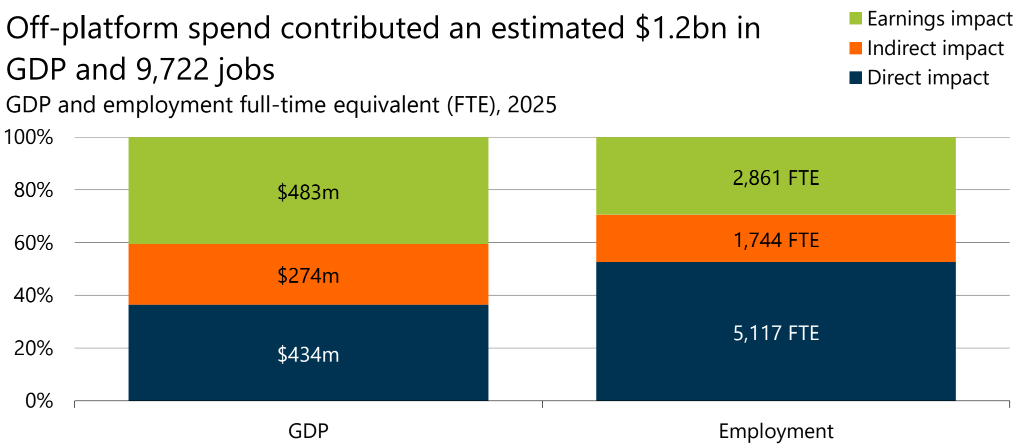
Given the different approaches to estimating the economic impact of TikTok, and to ensure our estimates are conservative and robust, we report the two measures of economic impact – based on off-platform activity, and promotional activity by businesses – separately rather than combining them. There is overlap between both estimates, with spending off-platform overlapping with the benefits businesses see from higher sales driven by promotional activity. Additionally, some off-platform spending will occur at businesses that also promote themselves on TikTok, and so adding the figures together would risk overstating the total.

Off-platform spending contributes an estimated $1.2b in GDP

The economic impact of TikTok users' off-platform spending is considerable, contributing an estimated $1.2b in annual GDP (0.27% of total New Zealand GDP) and sustaining an estimated 9,722 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs (0.46% of total New Zealand FTEs – see Chart 1).

- An estimated 36% ($434m) of the modelled GDP impact contributed is at the businesses where the spending occurs.
- An estimated 23% ($274m) of the modelled GDP impact is contributed indirectly through the broader supply chain of businesses who supply to the business where the spending occurs.
- An estimated 41% ($483m) of the modelled GDP impact is contributed by staff at the above businesses spending their earnings.

Chart 1



Source: Infometrics analysis, based on Nielsen survey of TikTok users

To account for survey respondents likely over-estimating their monthly spend, we have made a conservative estimate that reported monthly spending is equivalent to annual average spending.

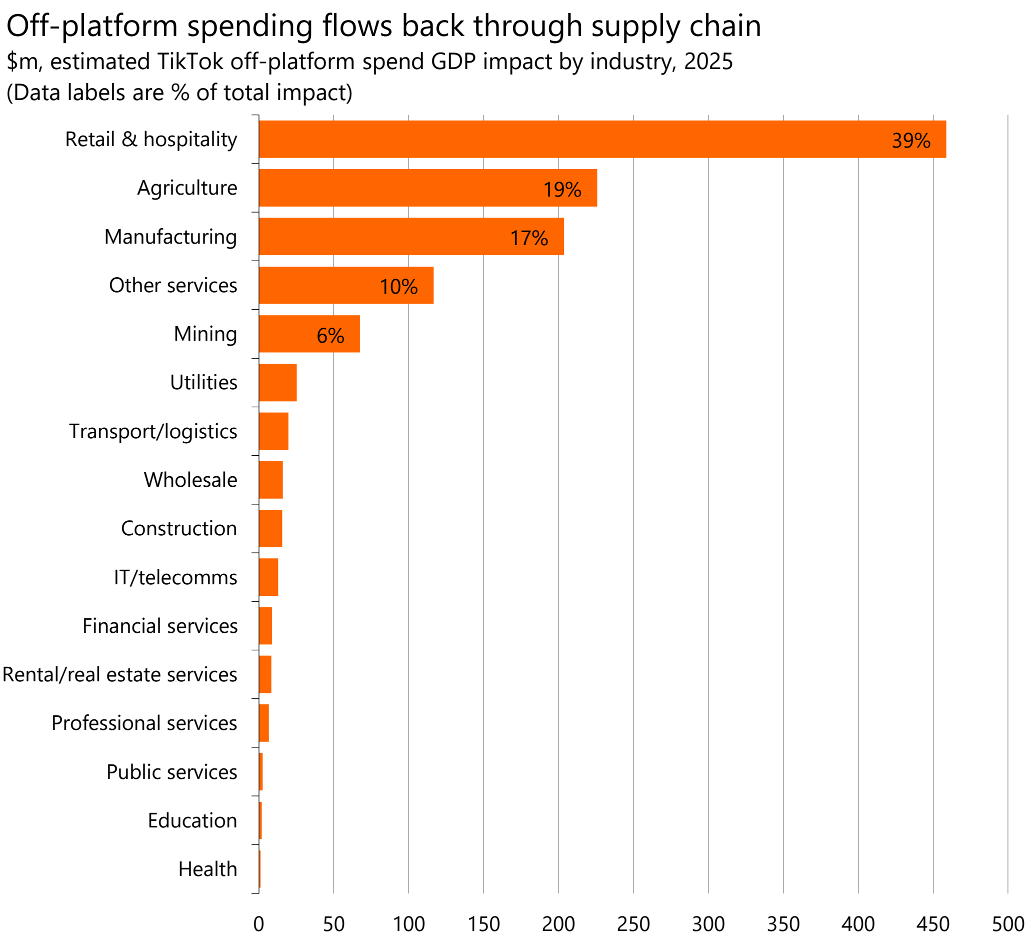
Compared with GDP, the modelled employment impact is skewed more towards the businesses where direct spending occurs. The reported spending was occurring mostly at retail businesses. Retail tends to be a more labour-intensive industry compared with the businesses that supply goods to retail, so retail requires more labour to create a given amount of GDP.

- An estimated 53% (5,117 FTE) of the modelled employment impact is at the businesses where the direct spending occurs.
- An estimated 18% (1,744 FTE) of the modelled employment impact is sustained indirectly through the broader supply chain of businesses that supply the business where the spending occurs.
- An estimated 29% (2,861 FTE) of the modelled employment impact is sustained by staff at the above businesses spending their earnings.

Off-platform spending benefits flow back through the supply chain

The model attributes 39% of the GDP impact from off-platform spending to retail and hospitality, 19% to agriculture, and 17% to manufacturing (Chart 2). This industry focus reflects the way consumer spending flows through domestic manufacturing supply chains, and requires raw materials from the primary sector, rather than indicating that the initial spending occurs strongly in agriculture and manufacturing.

Chart 2



Source: Infometrics analysis, based on Nielsen survey of TikTok users

Agriculture and manufacturing receive relatively larger shares of the modelled GDP impact because some consumer spending flows upstream through domestic supply chains before goods reach consumers. Locally produced goods may involve processing raw inputs, producing components or packaging, and assembling or finishing final products. Each domestic production stage adds value and contributes to GDP. By contrast, the GDP contribution of retail is measured mainly through the margin retailers add when goods are sold, rather than the full shelf price of the product. This supply chain effect means some spending that occurs at the point of sale is attributed, through the input-output model, to upstream industries such as manufacturing.

Alongside retail and hospitality, agriculture, and manufacturing, some 10% of GDP contributed by off-platform spending is in the 'other services' industry, which includes cleaning services for hospitality businesses, as well as fitness services, and sporting, artistic or cultural activities where some of the reported off-platform spending occurs directly.

The estimated distribution of employment impacts of off-platform spending across industries is similar to the GDP impacts shown in Chart 2, with an estimated 50% of the impact (4,814 FTEs) occurring in retail and hospitality, an estimated 14% (1,320 FTEs) in 'other services', and an estimated 12% (1,196 FTEs) in manufacturing. Together, these three industries accounted for three quarters (75%) of the employment impact.

TikTok promotional activity contributes $515m in GDP

There are multiple ways businesses can promote themselves on TikTok, including paid advertising, uploading organic content, and use of creator marketing – grouped together to be termed "promotional activity" in this report. Based on self-reported results in the business survey, the economic impact of businesses getting an uplift in sales as a result of their promotional activity on TikTok is significant, contributing an estimated $515m in GDP annually (0.12% of total New Zealand GDP) and sustaining an estimated 3,831 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs (0.18% of total New Zealand FTE jobs – see Chart 3).

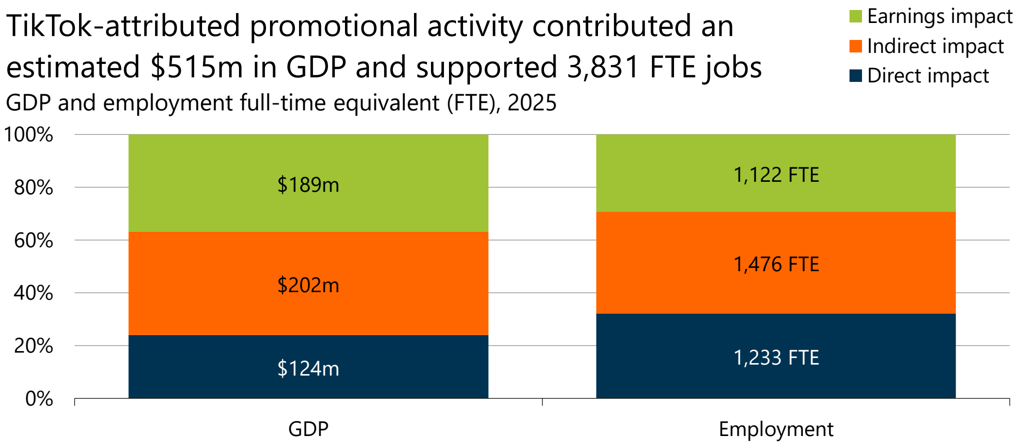
- An estimated 24% ($124m) of the modelled GDP impact contributed is in the industries of businesses that are promoting themselves and any immediate organic content or creator marketing (the direct impact).
- An estimated 39% ($202m) of the modelled GDP impact is contributed indirectly through the broader supply chain of businesses who supply to the businesses that are promoting themselves and any immediate organic content or creator marketing.
- An estimated 37% ($189m) of the modelled GDP impact is contributed by staff at the above businesses spending their earnings.

Compared with GDP, the estimated employment impact is skewed more towards the industries where TikTok-attributed sales uplift is reported (the direct impact).

- An estimated 32%, (1,233 FTE) of the modelled employment impact is sustained in the industries of businesses that are promoting themselves and any immediate organic content or creator marketing.
- An estimated 39% (1,476 FTE) of the modelled employment impact is sustained indirectly through the broader supply chain of businesses who supply to the businesses that are promoting themselves and any immediate organic content or creator marketing.

- An estimated 29% (1,122 FTE) of the modelled employment impact is sustained by staff at the above businesses spending their earnings.

Chart 3



Source: Infometrics analysis, based on Nielsen survey of businesses

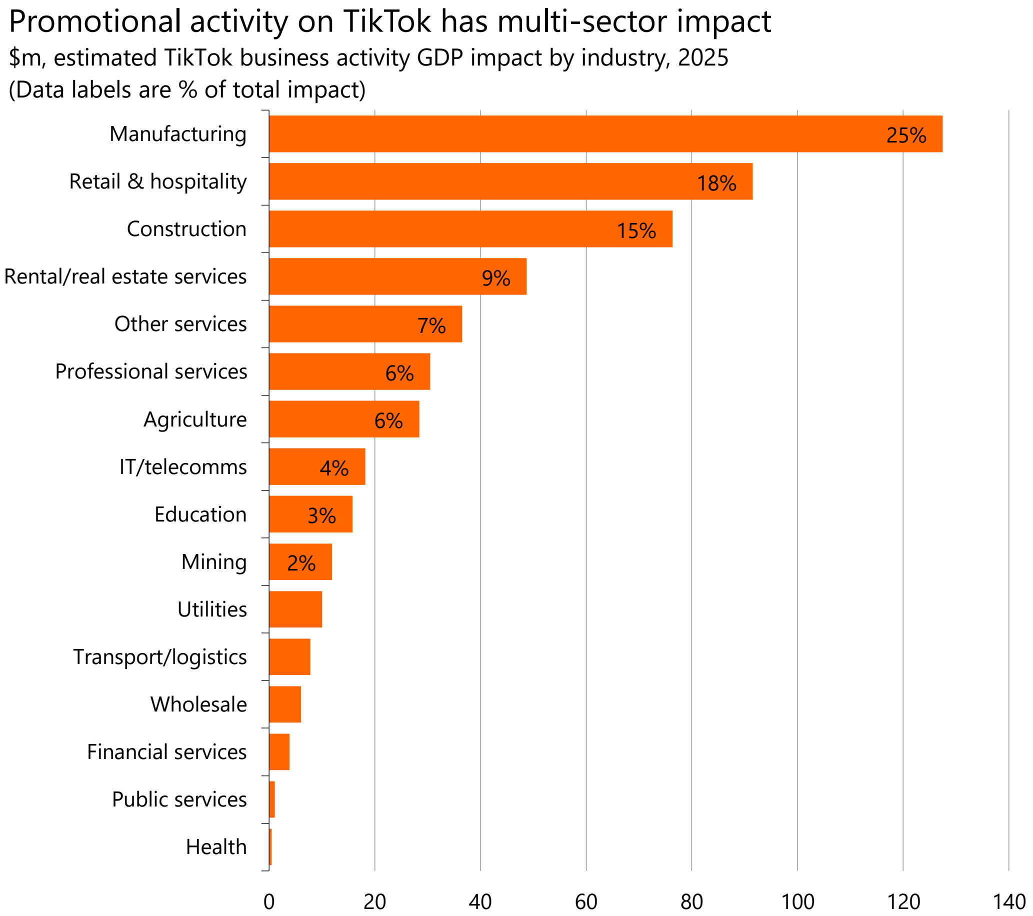
TikTok promotional activity benefits the whole supply chain

The model attributes 25% of the estimated GDP impact from self-reported TikTok-attributed business sales uplift to manufacturing (see Chart 4). This attribution reflects the role of manufacturing in the domestic supply chains that support consumer-facing businesses, rather than indicating that the initial sales uplift occurs mainly in manufacturing.

For example, higher sales by retailers, hospitality businesses, and consumer-goods businesses will require an increase in demand for food production, packaging, equipment, building materials, and other manufactured inputs.

Some 18% of estimated GDP contributed by TikTok promotional activity is in the retail and hospitality industry, and 15% occurs in construction. Together, these three industries accounted for an estimated 57% of the GDP impact. The remaining impacts were spread across most other industries.

Chart 4



Source: Infometrics analysis, based on Nielsen survey of businesses

The modelled employment impacts of TikTok promotional activity across industries are similar to the GDP impacts shown in Chart 4 with an estimated 23% (887 FTEs) occurring in manufacturing, an estimated 18% (692 FTEs) in retail and hospitality, and an estimated 18% (680 FTEs) in construction. Together, these three industries accounted for an estimated 59% of the employment impact.

TikTok users and off-platform spend

Who uses TikTok in New Zealand?

The user survey aimed to understand TikTok user demographics, reasons for using the platform, content engagement, perceived benefits, monetisation of content, and off-platform spending undertaken as a result of content viewed on TikTok. The survey ran from 30th January 2026 to 16th February 2026.

The user survey largely followed the same methodology as the Australian research carried out by Oxford Economics Australia. We only made changes where they were necessary for the New Zealand context.

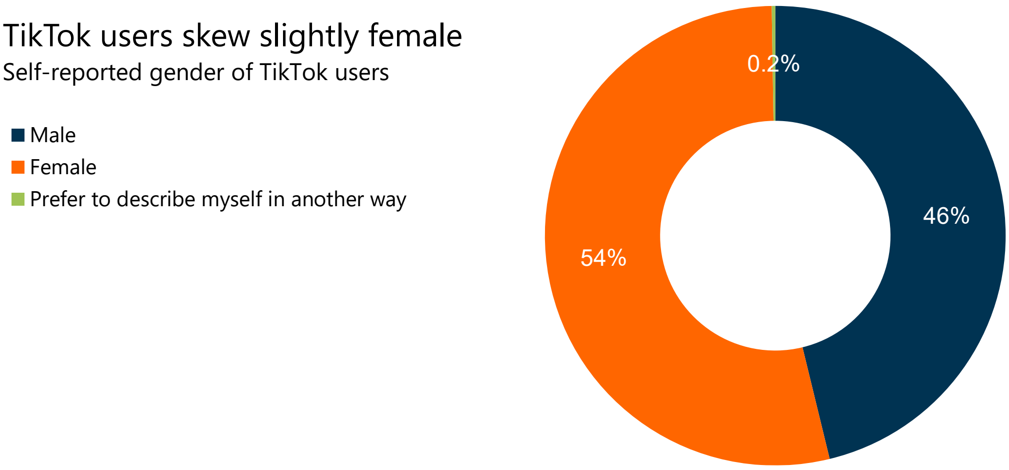
The survey sample was 1,000 New Zealand TikTok users aged 18 and older who used TikTok at least once per week. A survey of 1,000 users results in a margin of error of ±3.1% at the 95% confidence interval. The survey was carried out online, took roughly ten minutes to complete, and applied quotas for age, gender, and region of residence to ensure the sample was representative of all adult weekly TikTok users in New Zealand.

TikTok users skew slightly female

TikTok respondents skew slightly female: 54% of respondents are female, 46% are male, and 0.2% prefer to describe themselves another way. By comparison, New Zealand's adult population is 51% female and 49% male, according to Stats NZ data for the resident population aged 18+ in the March 2026 quarter.

Chart 5

TikTok users skew slightly female
Self-reported gender of TikTok users



Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users; base n=1,000 people aged 18+ using TikTok at least weekly

Case study 1: Betsy Coffee Truck, Porirua

@betsycoffeetruckk

Growing up working in her parents' cafes, it's fair to say that coffee is in Evie Bunce's blood. She loves the freedom of owning her own business and wanted to do something a little different to her parents, so when the opportunity to revive the Betsy Coffee Truck came along, she grabbed it with both hands. "I got shown a photo of it and I had a vision of what it could be and the sort of a brand I wanted to follow," she says.

"I always felt in New Zealand there's a lack of aesthetic drinks. Every time you see something on TikTok it's either in Australia or New York or London. I really wanted to be able to recreate those aesthetic drinks and bring them to my local town," she said.

As a TikTok user herself, Evie understands the importance of aesthetics to marketing on the platform. "When I first started the Betsy Coffee Truck, it began making coffees and matcha. Then I introduced a Biscoff-inspired iced latte, which was my first 'out there' special drink. It gets a lot of attention on TikTok".

Evie's first ever TikTok video showed her making a strawberry matcha. "I posted the video, didn't think much of it. And when I woke up the next day, thousands and thousands of people had seen it, which is incredible, really. I had such a fast pace of success after that first TikTok video. I felt like I was reaching a much bigger audience."

The drinks are front and centre, but Evie also knows the importance of humanising her brand. "Putting my face in the video, viewers get a better sense of the business because, at the end of the day, I created it. So being able to see me, it's building trust."

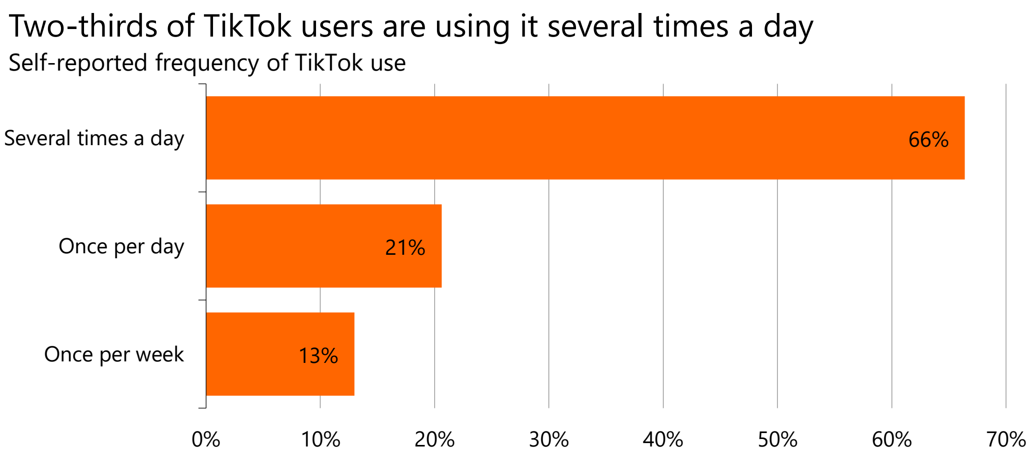
"It was very cool when it first started taking off. People would come from Auckland or Christchurch and say, 'I'm here from TikTok'".

And with her customers also posting videos and photos of their own, that authentic, organic marketing has quickly enabled Evie to reach a much bigger audience, strengthen her brand, and broaden the spread of her customer base well beyond her base in Porirua. "It was very cool when it first started taking off. People would come from Auckland or Christchurch and say, 'I'm here from TikTok'".

Most TikTok users report using it at least daily

The survey covered people who use TikTok at least weekly. Of these, two-thirds (66%) of respondents said they use TikTok several times daily, which indicates a high level of engagement (Chart 6).

Chart 6



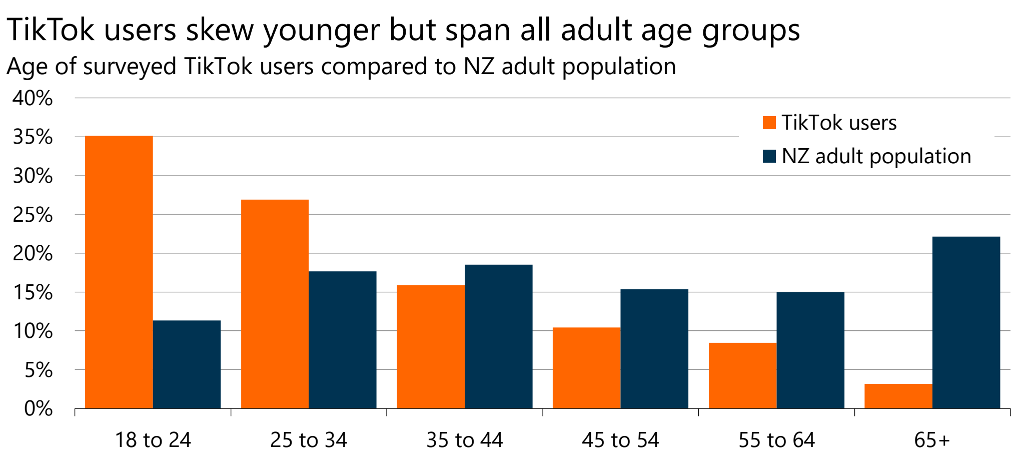
Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users; base n=1,000 people aged 18+ using TikTok at least weekly

Younger respondents tend to be more engaged, reporting using the app more frequently. Some 81% of 18–24-year-old respondents report using it several times daily compared with 71% of 25–34-year-old respondents, and around half of respondents aged 35+.

TikTok users skew younger but span all adult age groups

TikTok's reputation as a draw for young people is well earned, but the platform extends across all age groups. The survey results suggest that TikTok users have a younger age profile than the broader New Zealand adult population (see Chart 7). Just over one-third (35%) of respondents are aged 18-24 years, a little over one-quarter (27%) are aged 25-34 years, and just over one-third (38%) are aged 35 years or older.

Chart 7



Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users; base n=1,000 people aged 18+ using TikTok at least weekly, Stats NZ Estimated Resident Population

Surveyed TikTok users live across New Zealand

Surveyed TikTok users live in every region of New Zealand. Auckland accounts for the largest share, with 38% of respondents, followed by Canterbury at 12%, Wellington at 11%, and Waikato at 10%. These shares broadly reflect the concentration of New Zealand's adult population in major urban regions.

Case study 2: Kiwi Water Park, Cromwell

@kiwiwaterpark

In 2020, Emily Rutherford set up Kiwi Water Park, New Zealand's largest inflatable water park, on Lake Dunstan in Cromwell, Central Otago and now has over 14 million likes and almost a quarter of a million followers as proof.

Seeing inflatable water parks overseas, Emily realised there was nothing like that in New Zealand, despite it being a country of lakes. However, attracting tourists to make the journey from Queenstown to Cromwell was going to be no small feat, given that Cromwell has traditionally been outshone by Queenstown - New Zealand's undisputed tourism capital. Emily says, "people couldn't understand why I was putting the park in Cromwell, when everything for tourists was in Queenstown and Wanaka." Emily knew the social media marketing needed to be exciting and enticing.

Emily started posting on TikTok in October 2020, a couple of months before Kiwi Water Park was due to open, to let people know the park was in the works. "In 2020, I'd seen that TikTok was starting to explode, but no New Zealand businesses were using it to advertise," she says. The turning point came when she began sharing short videos of the inflatables in action - showing the slides, jumps, wipeouts, and reactions that captured the fun of a day at the park. As Emily puts it, "From the get-go those authentic, organic videos just popped off - straight away it was one viral video after another."

> "On other platforms you need to be already well known for your video to go viral. TikTok has that organic reach, a level playing field where anyone can go viral."

TikTok was the first platform on which Emily's videos went viral. Emily explains, "On other platforms you need to be already well known for your video to go viral. TikTok has that organic reach, a level playing field where anyone can go viral. It's also a good platform to test new ideas because you get feedback within a few hours."

Now every summer, fun-loving tourists come to Cromwell from all over the world to be in her TikTok videos. With almost a quarter of a million followers and 78 million views in the past three months alone, it's fair to say that TikTok has been instrumental not only in the success of the Kiwi Water Park, but in putting the small town of Cromwell on the map.

Emily says New Zealanders are her key market, especially those from Dunedin and young people. However, the water park also attracts many international visitors, which Emily believes is testament to TikTok's reach.

How TikTok is used in New Zealand

TikTok is a source of entertainment, relaxation, and information

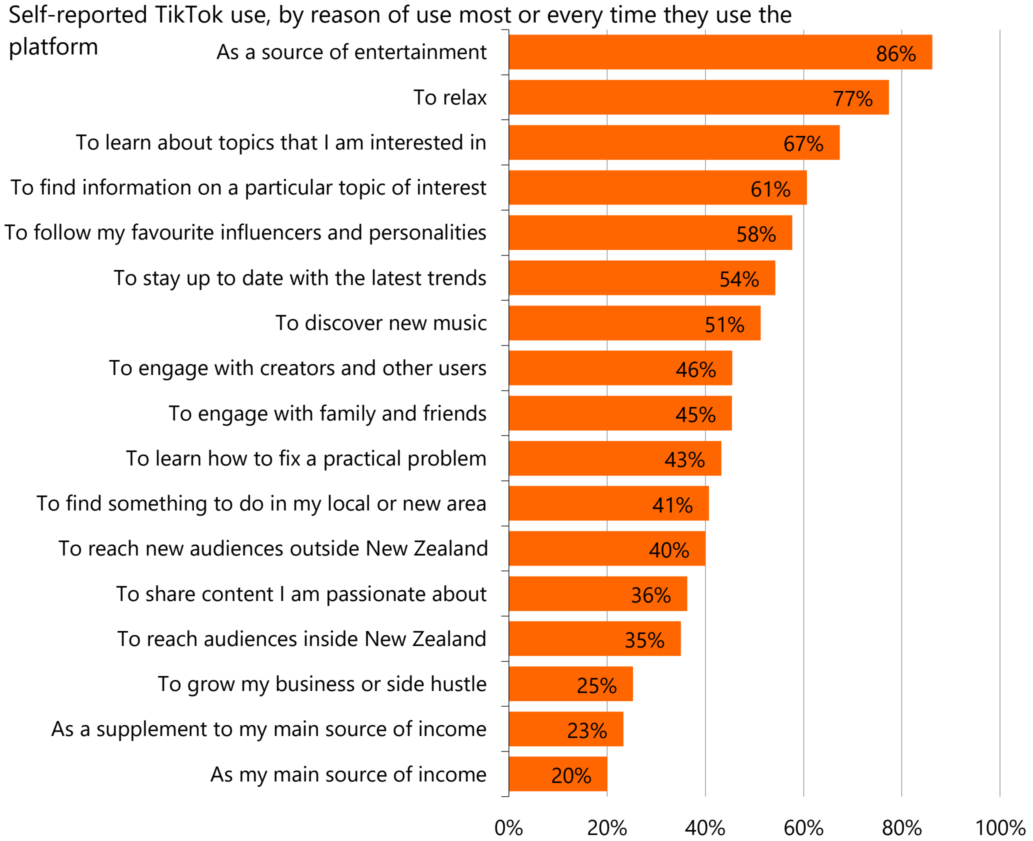
User survey respondents were given a list of reasons for using TikTok and were asked how often they used TikTok for each reason. For each reason, respondents could select they used the app for that reason either 'every time', 'most of the time', 'occasionally' or 'never'. Chart 8 shows the proportion of respondents who chose every time or most times they use the platform for each reason.

Users' top reasons for using TikTok were entertainment, relaxation, and discovery. Some 86% of respondents say they use TikTok as a source of entertainment most times or every time they use the app, and more than three-quarters (77%) say they use TikTok to relax.

Chart 8

Self-reported reasons for using TikTok

Self-reported TikTok use, by reason of use most or every time they use the platform



Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users; base n=1,000 people aged 18+ using TikTok at least weekly

Around two-thirds of users use TikTok to learn about topics of interest (67%) or find information (61%), and over half follow creators or personalities (58%), stay up to date with trends (54%), or discover new music (51%). Several of the reasons for using TikTok relate to creating content and receiving an income. Content creators are examined in more detail later on (p27).

Case study 3: The Morning Shift

@themorningshiftshow

The Morning Shift is a popular New Zealand podcast hosted by Jordan Vaha'akolo, Brook Ruscoe, and Producer/Presenter 'Matua' Marc Peard. Known for its high energy and relatable content, it covers a wide range of New Zealand and international culture, sports, and life with a mix of deep discussion and humour. Having just celebrated The Morning Shift's third anniversary, and with 1.6m followers and over 55 million likes, Marc explains how TikTok has helped broaden their audience.

"We started using TikTok from the get-go. The podcast is the finished product. Bite-sized clips from the podcast are uploaded to TikTok to engage people and encourage them to listen to the full podcast. Our focus on TikTok is authentic, high energy, humorous, often music-centric, content for younger people because that's where the next generation of listeners is going to come from."

"We don't put advertising spend behind our content or do anything to increase visibility. We keep it organic and focus on content that is good enough that people will want to view, share, comment on, and like. The TikTok recommendation system can do the rest." For Marc, TikTok is a conscious departure from legacy media where executives, award ceremonies, and ranking systems decide whether your content is good or not. On TikTok, The Morning Shift community decides.

"It's about building a community - an extended family. TikTok is a way into that community and is currently the biggest and fastest growing of our social media communities."

For Marc, "It's about building a community - an extended family. TikTok is a way into that community and is currently the biggest and fastest growing of our social media communities, reaching not just New Zealanders but overseas as well. Our biggest audience is in Australia, and our fastest-growing audience is in the US."

Through TikTok and the podcast, their listeners get to know the guys, get to laugh along with them, hear their stories, message them, and check in with them every morning. As Marc puts it, "We're just three dads navigating this world as best we possibly can and trying not to step on spiders and ants along the way."

Marc says the next generation of audiences will expect live streams of The Morning Shift podcast on TikTok LIVE. "They'll want to interact with us while the show is live and hear their comments read out in real time," he says. "There will always be a space for great storytellers, but the space changes as technology changes. That's where The Morning Shift are headed next."

A broad range of content can have an economic impact

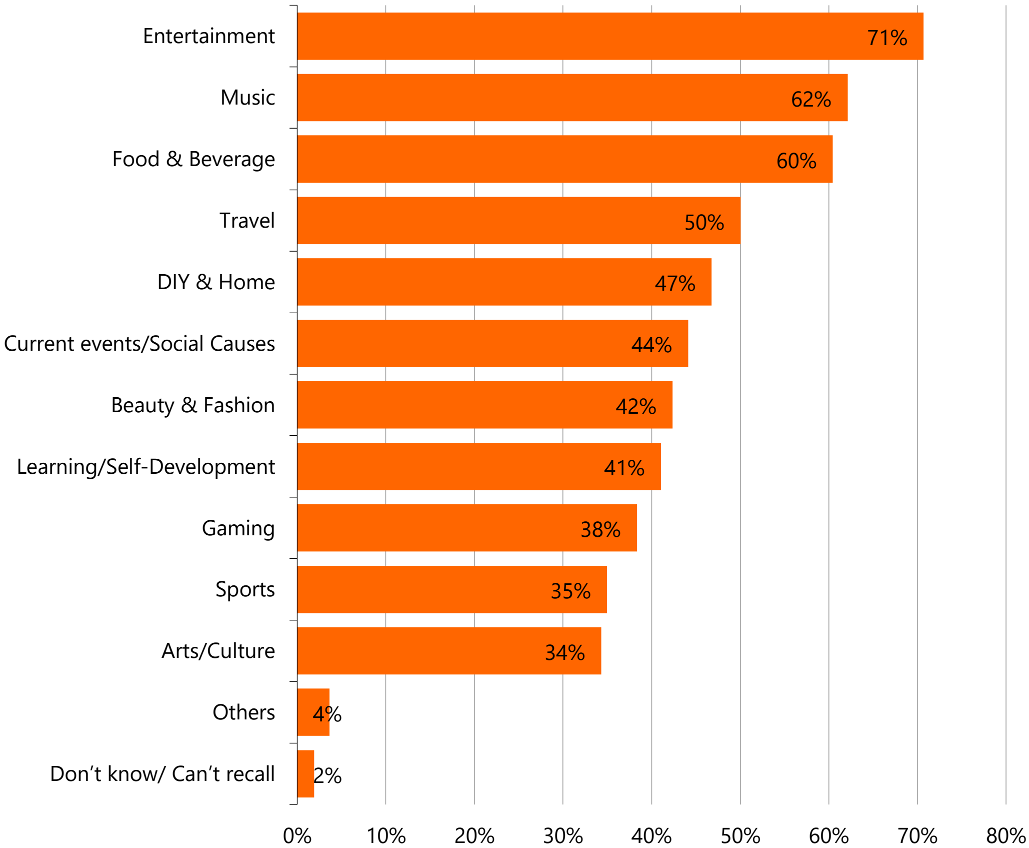
New Zealanders engage with a broad range of content categories, many of which have potential commercial or economic relevance. Entertainment content can support ticket sales or streaming subscriptions, music content can support concert attendance or streaming, and food, travel, beauty, fashion, DIY, and home content can influence product discovery and off-platform spending.

User survey respondents were given a list of content categories and were asked which ones they engaged with when using TikTok. Respondents could choose multiple categories. As Chart 9 shows, most respondents were engaging with entertainment generally (71%), music (62%), food and beverage (60%), and travel (50%).

Chart 9

TikTok users engage with a range of content categories

Content categories TikTok user respondents report engaging with on TikTok



Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users; base n=1,000 people aged 18+ using TikTok at least weekly

The section entitled *Significant levels of off-platform spending* (p31) examines where users report spending money after seeing related content on TikTok.

Case study 4: ZORB Rotorua

@zorb.rotorua

Imagine rolling downhill in a giant inflatable ball on purpose-built tracks. ZORB Rotorua is one of New Zealand's most iconic adventure activities and an original invention of Andrew Akers and Dwane van der Sluis back in 1994. Melissa Craig, ZORB Rotorua's Head of Sales and Marketing explains how TikTok enhances the ZORB experience.

"We need to be talking to young people where they are, and they are on TikTok."

Stemming from those innovative roots, the ZORB team prides itself for being tech-savvy, early adopters of whatever is new in the tourism industry, including TikTok. "We jumped on board in the early months of the pandemic when TikTok was exploding in New Zealand with the aim of widening our reach, particularly among younger people. We need to be talking to young people where they are, and they are on TikTok."

For ZORB, TikTok is not only a booking channel. It is also a way to show visitors what the experience feels like before they arrive. Even before visitors arrive in Rotorua, Melissa wants them to get to know the ZORB team as much as the ZORB experience itself. "We want to ignite people's inner child and tease the promise of the unique, totally bonkers, edgy, but completely safe fun they are going to have when they arrive and roll down the hill."

So, the ZORB crew are trusted with free rein to create TikTok content in their own style. They have taken that freedom and run with it, posting short, funny, informative, organic, authentic videos on a weekly basis.

Aside from the marketing benefits, creating TikTok content is fun. It gives the team opportunities for self-expression, and a sense of ownership in the business, being able to see the results of their work in the marketplace creates workplace pride. ZORB also collaborates with creators and brands looking for a unique experience to engage their audiences.

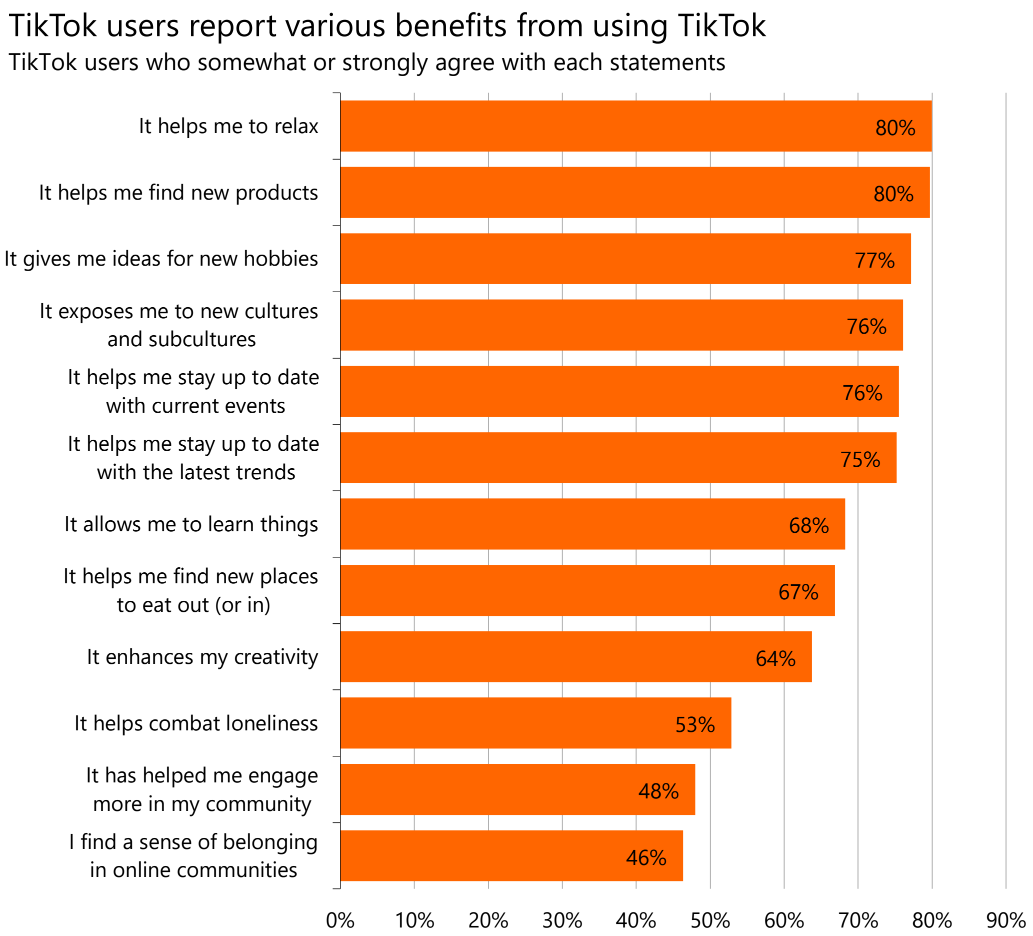
How New Zealand users benefit from TikTok

Users report a wide range of benefits

User survey respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a list of statements about the impact TikTok has on their life. For each statement, they were asked to choose from: strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. For each statement, the proportion of respondents choosing strongly agree or somewhat agree is shown in Chart 10.

Survey respondents gave strong positive responses to many of the benefits of using TikTok, all of which tie to the reasons they use TikTok (see p20). Some 80% of respondents say TikTok helps them relax, the same proportion who say TikTok helps them find new products, 77% say it gives them ideas for new hobbies, 76% say it exposes them to new cultures and subcultures – the same proportion who say it helps them stay up to date with current events – and 75% say it helps them stay up to date with the latest trends.

Chart 10



Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users; base n=1,000 people aged 18+ using TikTok at least weekly

Some benefits have clear commercial or economic relevance, such as finding new products and places to eat. Others point to broader social and personal value, including relaxation, creativity, and community engagement.

A third of users are content creators

Around a third (32%) of user survey respondents say they are content creators, equivalent to around 411,000 New Zealanders. Respondents who live in the North Island are more likely than respondents living in the South Island to say they are content creators. Male respondents who say they are content creators are more likely than female content creators to say they are receiving income from their content.

This result broadly reflects the responses to an earlier question about why users use the TikTok platform (Chart 8, p20). Notably, a greater proportion of respondents say they are using TikTok to reach audiences outside New Zealand (40%) than are using it to reach audiences inside New Zealand (35%).

A sizeable minority of respondents also say they use TikTok most times or every time they use the app to receive income. Popular income-related reported usage includes:

- To grow their business or side hustle (25%)
- As a supplement to their main source of income (23%)
- As their main source of income (20%)

Around half of user survey respondents who say they are content creators reported receiving income from either TikTok-exclusive brand and business partnerships, in-app gifting payments, or both. Some creators generate income from both sources, some from a single source.

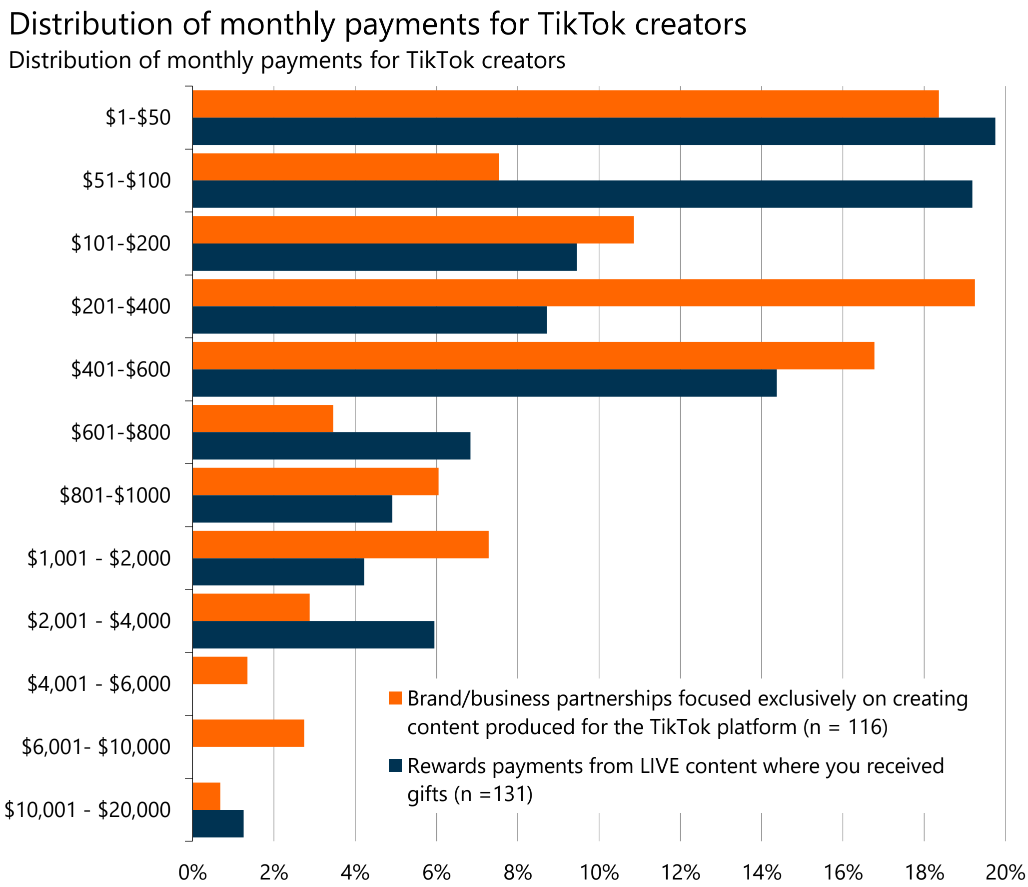
- Just over a third (37%) of content creators reported receiving in-app gifting payments. Around 19% of content creators reported generating income solely from this source.
- Almost a third (32%) reported receiving income from TikTok-exclusive brand and business partnerships. Around 15% of content creators reported generating income solely from this source.
- Nearly one in five (18%) reported receiving payment through both sources.

Variety of payments possible for content creators

In the user survey, content creators who were receiving an income from TikTok-exclusive brand and business partnerships, or from in-app gifting payments, were asked how much they received monthly from the two sources of income (Chart 11).

For content creators receiving income from TikTok-exclusive brand and business partnerships, just over a quarter (26%) received between $400 and $1,000 per month, and around one in six (around 17%) received more than $1,000 per month.

Chart 11



Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users. Base: TikTok users reporting receiving payment, or withdrawn funds, directly through TikTok in the last year = population denoted in legend. Excludes a small number of respondents that responded with "other" or "don't know".

The proportions were similar among content creators receiving solely in-app gifting payments.

Case study 5: Hannah Hart (née Koumakis)

@hannahkoumakis

As the founder of brands including Dear Community and Dear The Series, not to mention several acting credits, Hannah Hart (née Koumakis) has built a wide-ranging creative and business portfolio as a full-time content creator. "My initial content was centred on stories from my time working as a nanny with a billionaire family in London - something I felt was uniquely different to the other content I was seeing on TikTok at that time, and which quickly garnered 20,000 followers".

Hannah then shifted to personal budgeting advice, talking about her various side hustles and, more recently, property searching and property investment advice, all of which drove further rapid growth to 50,000 followers in 2021, an offer from a talent management agency to manage her, and her first brand deals. "I also post content with my dad, which has proven very popular."

Hannah says she wants to help and empower people to face the struggles of daily life. "I'm passionate about helping people with their mental health. With every video my aim is to teach my audience something from my own experiences, successes, and mistakes." For example, having grown frustrated with the taboo around discussing money, she decided to talk openly about her own personal finances on TikTok. She is transparent about her own budgeting and encourages her audience to achieve transparency in their own finances.

"Representing numerous brands I love and trust such as DoorDash, The Warehouse, McDonald's, Disney, and Apple on TikTok has become my full-time source of income."

"Representing numerous brands I love and trust such as DoorDash, The Warehouse, McDonald's, Disney, and Apple on TikTok has become my full-time source of income." Hannah's personal brand, which underpins all her businesses, is entirely built on TikTok and the platform has been central to growing several of her businesses, particularly Dear Community. "TikTok will forever have a huge place in my heart. It's brought me amazing opportunities; I love helping people and advocating for other content creators".

Even as a successful full-time content creator, Hannah concedes she never knows whether a video will do well or not, and that keeping up with evolving audience preferences means she is constantly learning.

Hannah has numerous distinct brands and businesses, some of which she promotes on TikTok.

- **Hannah's personal channel** (@hannahkoumakis) has 177,000 followers and 8.9 million likes
- **Dear The Series** (@deartheseries): A collection of guided prompt journals focused on self-discovery, mental wellbeing, and personal growth has 18,500 followers and 88,800 likes
- **Dear Community** (@dearcommunitynz): a non-profit organisation launched in 2022 aimed at bringing women aged 18-35 together through monthly events held across New Zealand and overseas has 4,605 followers and 13,300 likes
- **Dear Brides** (@dearbridesnz): A wedding content creation service that captures raw, candid, behind-the-scenes moments specifically tailored for short-form social media reels has 3,322 followers and 334,500 likes
- **Seven Content Studio**: A digital marketing and content creation agency offering social media growth and strategy services.
- **Hannah Koumakis Clothes**: A personal brand clothing/wardrobe-sharing venture.

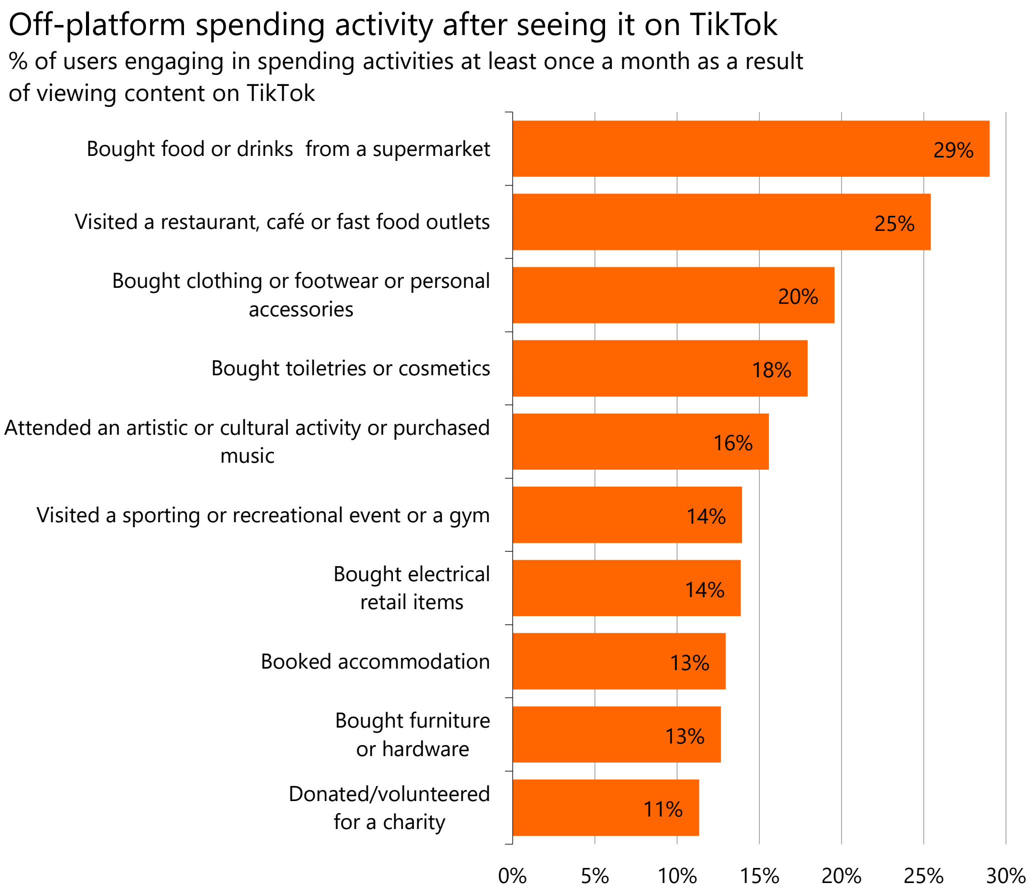
Significant levels of off-platform spending

One of the important ways TikTok contributes economic activity is if users spend money off-platform after seeing products, services, places, or experiences on the platform. We gave user survey respondents a list of off-platform spending activities and asked them how often they had done each activity in the past year as a result of viewing content on TikTok.

Overall, 53% of regular TikTok users reported spending on products or services as a result of viewing content on TikTok, equivalent to 671,000 New Zealanders, with the median level of monthly spending being $300 across the economically relevant spending categories.

Where a user indicated they had done an activity at least once a month, we asked them how much money they had spent in the past month on that activity. Chart 12 shows the proportion of respondents saying they had engaged in each spending activity at least once per month. Chart 13 shows how much they reported spending monthly. The results speak to the influence that TikTok has over users' spending behaviour and therefore the opportunities it presents for businesses.

Chart 12



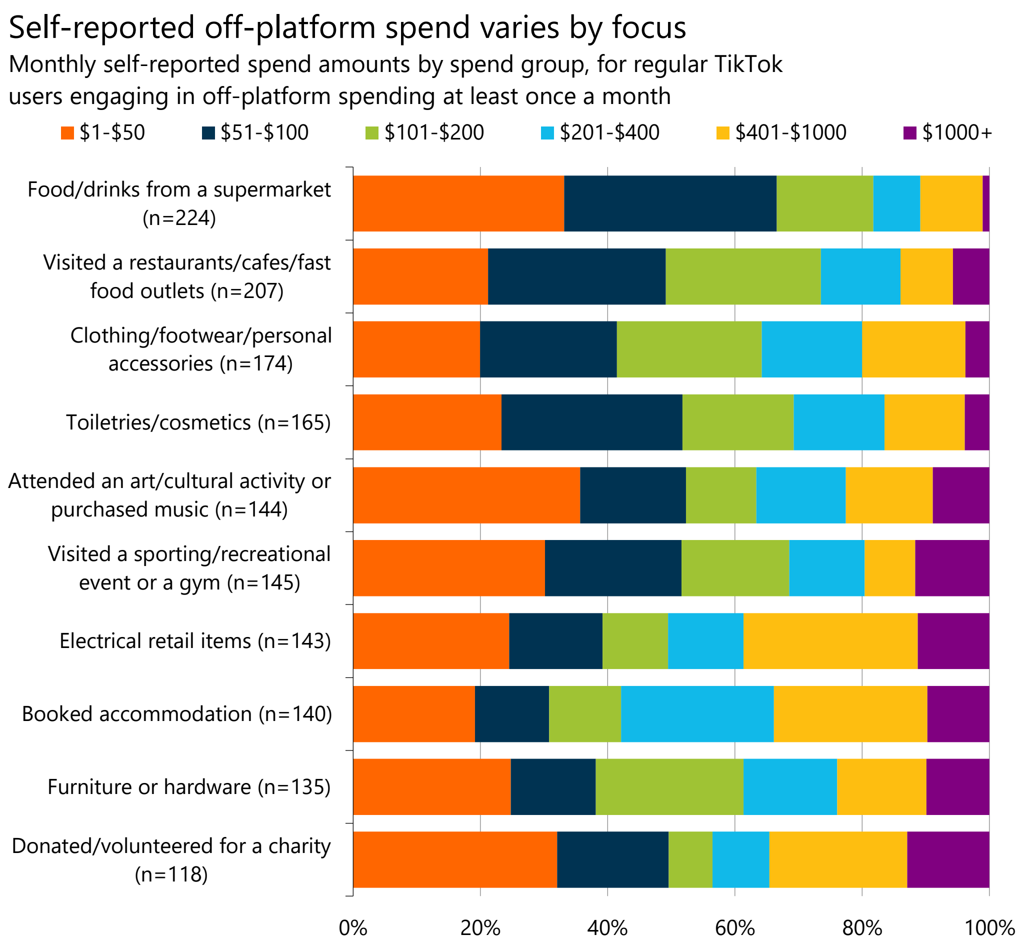
Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users; base n=1,000 people aged 18+ using TikTok at least weekly

Our analysis finds that nearly 30% of regular TikTok users bought food or drink at a supermarket once a month, after seeing the product on TikTok. And 1 in 4 respondents

(25% of adults that use TikTok at least weekly) say they visit restaurants or cafes at least once a month after seeing them on TikTok. Scaling this result up to a total population of just under 1.3 million TikTok users aged 18+ in New Zealand suggests that 368,000 consumers are likely to do the same each month.

The level of spending undertaken by TikTok users does vary considerably depending on the type of spending group in focus. Around a third (33%) of TikTok users who reported spending on food and drink at a supermarket or attended an art/cultural event or purchased music spent $1-50 per month on these groups, underscoring a focus on smaller spending values for these categories. There were higher proportions of spending concentrated on mid-level spending for TikTok users who visited a restaurant, café, or fast food outlet, or purchased toiletries or cosmetics, with 28% of spending in both groups occurring in the $51-100 range.

Chart 13



Source: Nielsen survey of TikTok users. Base sample size denoted in brackets for each spend group, based on users reporting using TikTok at least weekly and spending off-platform at least once a month.

A number of spending categories saw high self-reported spending by TikTok users. Nearly 70% of TikTok users who engage in off-platform spending on accommodation reported spending $100 or more on accommodation each month, and 59% of those who purchased clothing, footwear, or personal accessories also spent over $100+ a month. Around 61% who spent on furniture and hardware, or electrical retail items, also spent more than $100 a month on these categories – 52% and 50% respectively.

Case study 6: Trade Me

@trademe_nz

Trade Me, New Zealand's biggest online marketplace, started using TikTok in 2025, and it has changed the way Trade Me markets itself. As Dean Napier, Trade Me's Head of Marketing and Customer Engagement, explains, "originally, we used TikTok mainly for campaign activation. When Trade Me wanted to promote a new product feature, such as removing success fees for listers or focus on a particular brand, TikTok was where we would begin the campaign. That strategy has evolved over time so that now Trade Me has a more continuous presence on TikTok with a mix of paid-for ads and organic content, the aim being to keep the website top of mind for New Zealand's younger TikTok demographic."

Dean continues, "Trade Me was launched in 1999. So, if you are a New Zealander in your thirties, you most likely grew up with Trade Me. You might have bought your first car on it, rented your first house, or got a job. That's not necessarily the case for people in their twenties. TikTok's user demographic has enabled Trade Me to focus its marketing on younger people, initially raising awareness of the marketplace, then encouraging TikTok users to click through to the Trade Me website after watching a video on TikTok."

Early on, Trade Me realised that the traditional, static advertising they had used on other social media platforms didn't resonate with TikTok users. User-generated content (UGC) received a lot more engagement in terms of views, likes, and shares. Social media has always been a big part of Trade Me's marketing strategy, but TikTok's focus on authentic, organic content has changed how Trade Me does things. "It's been a learning curve, for sure." The Trade Me marketing team found that creating slightly different versions of the same video was a useful way to quickly learn what works and what doesn't.

"It's been quite refreshing, finding out that video marketing content doesn't need to be really hard or costly to generate."

Polished marketing videos or static images of the listings and some text are yesterday's news. As Dean observes, "It's been quite refreshing, finding out that video marketing content doesn't need to be really hard or costly to generate. We've also become adept at using keywords and captions in our videos that align with the TikTok recommendation system, as well as TikTok's TopView feature."

Trade Me monitors the effectiveness of its TikTok promotions by tracking click-throughs to its website and the resulting spend on Trade Me. Revenue from advertising is compared with the cost of the ads. The low cost of uploading content to TikTok, combined with its effectiveness in driving engagement and sales, has made the platform a useful part of Trade Me's marketing mix.

Businesses using TikTok for promotional activities

Which New Zealand businesses use TikTok

The business survey aimed to understand the characteristics of businesses using TikTok for organic and paid advertising, the demographics of business owners and/or key decision makers, how the businesses used TikTok, budget allocation for TikTok activity, and perceived impacts. The business survey ran from 29th January 2026 to 9th February 2026.

The business survey largely followed the same methodology as the Australian research carried out by Oxford Economics Australia. We only made changes where they were necessary for the New Zealand context.

The survey sample was 700 New Zealand businesses across all industries other than public administration. Public administration was excluded because the analysis focuses on commercial returns to businesses, placing these organisations outside the scope of the modelling. A survey of 700 businesses results in a margin of error of ±3.7% at the 95% confidence interval.

The survey targeted respondents aged 18 or older who had participated in business decisions around marketing, advertising, research services, public relations or social media, or any digital marketing services such as website development & hosting, and electronic direct mail campaigns. This relatively broad scope for identifying respondents was necessary to achieve the sample of 700 businesses.

The survey was carried out online and applied quotas for business size, industry, and ethnicity of the respondent. Where appropriate, businesses that use TikTok at least monthly are compared with the entire sample of businesses to determine how TikTok-using businesses differ from the New Zealand business population as a whole.

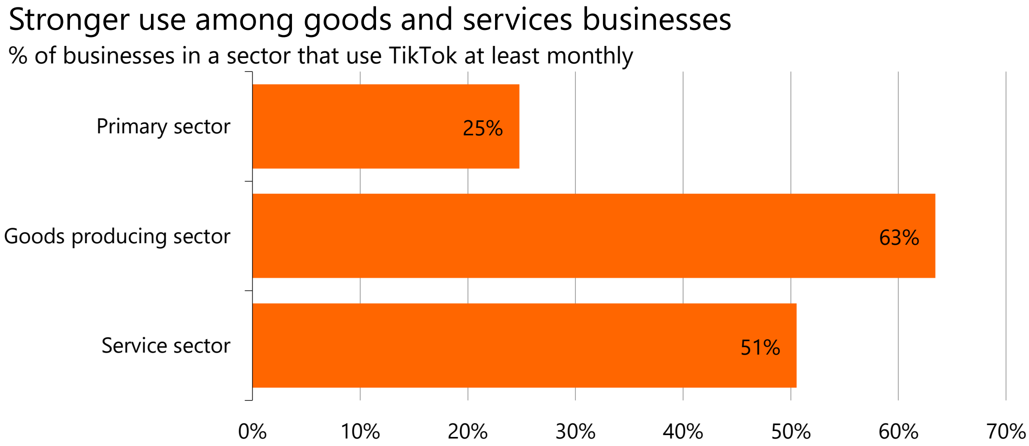
Half of business respondents use TikTok at least monthly

The survey found that 50% of business respondents were using TikTok for promotional purposes at least monthly. Scaled to the New Zealand business population, this result suggests that up to 309,000 businesses across New Zealand could be using TikTok at least monthly.

Surveyed businesses across all sectors use TikTok

Chart 14 shows that respondents across all industry sectors reported using TikTok to varying degrees, but to a greater extent in the service and goods producing sectors. Nearly two thirds (63%) of the goods producing businesses surveyed said they used TikTok at least monthly, followed by services businesses, where 51% of businesses surveyed said they used TikTok monthly. Within the services sector, reported usage is highest in the retail, wholesale, and arts and recreation industries.

Chart 14



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses. Base: n=700 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers

Surveyed businesses that use TikTok skewed towards Auckland

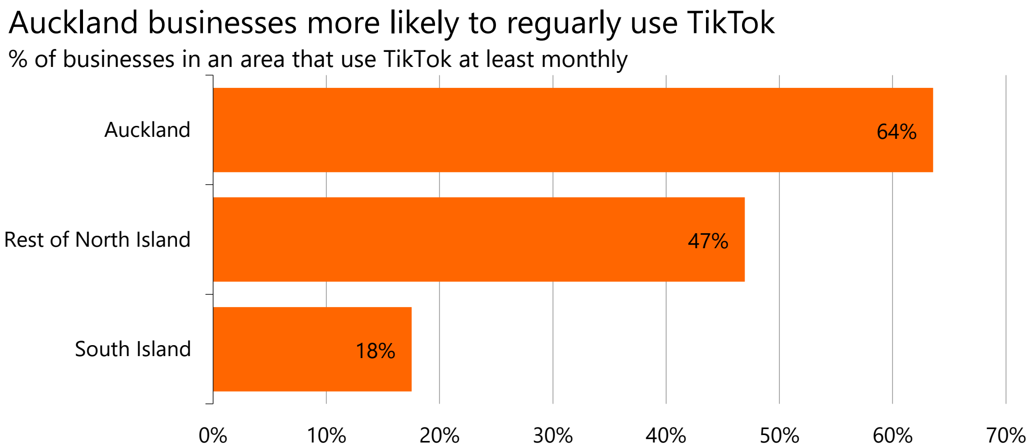
We asked all the marketing decision makers that completed the business survey where their region of residence was, as a proxy for the location of their business. Although some businesses can of course have several premises spanning several regions, the location of the marketing decision maker in a business is a reasonable location proxy for most sole traders, and small and medium enterprises. For large corporates, the location of the marketing decision maker is likely to broadly reflect the head office, or an office location, for that corporate. To avoid over-complicating the survey, we did not seek to precisely define the operating location(s) of every business.

In the business survey, around half (50%) of marketing decision maker business respondents resided in Auckland, an oversized share of businesses relative to total business units nationally. Auckland's oversized share of responding businesses is likely driven by a combination of the types of businesses in scope for the survey, and the marketing decision maker requirement of the survey.

By taking the number of business respondents that report using TikTok at least monthly, as a proportion of all business respondents for each broad region, Chart 15 shows that business survey respondents residing in Auckland are most likely to use TikTok at least monthly, followed by business survey respondents residing in the rest of the North Island, with business survey respondents residing in the South Island least likely.

Auckland business respondents' higher reported use of TikTok might reflect Auckland's larger consumer market, higher business density, and stronger competition for customer attention, although the survey does not establish the cause of the regional difference. In other regions, reasons for using TikTok might be different. Business respondents in tourism hotspots such as Otago, for example, might be trying to reach an overseas audience – the *Wanaka Horse Trekking* case study, p37, is an example of this. Business respondents in sparsely populated regions might be trying to reach a more disparate customer base or engage a broader customer base outside their region and abroad.

Chart 15



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses. Base: n=700 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers

Case study 7: Pik n Mix Lollies

@piknmixnz

Merritt Watson is the Managing Director of Pik n Mix Lollies, a confectionery business based in Pukekohe, South Auckland. They sell two tonnes of lollies a week directly to customers all over the world, largely through online sales.

"The appeal of TikTok in those early days was that the next video could go viral, so it felt like the potential was through the roof."

The business was established in 2020 and started marketing on TikTok early on. With his background in social media and marketing, Merritt had seen TikTok take off in New Zealand and immediately saw the opportunity. "The appeal of TikTok in those early days was that the next video could go viral, so it felt like the potential was through the roof," he says.

One early video in 2021 showed Pik n Mix how far TikTok could carry its content. Merritt says the team could see the video reaching audiences overseas as comments and orders began coming in from different countries, including the United States, France and Norway. "We could see it was shared around a small coastal town in Norway, for example, because we got five orders from that place."

"From the get-go I said: 'We're not selling lollies on TikTok, we're entertaining. If we get orders on the back of that, great'," says Merritt. "We made sure that people got invested emotionally with our team, because people back the team, back the owner, the founder, not necessarily the product. And I think that's been a key part of our success.

"We've done behind the scenes videos featuring our staff, we lean into humour, internet pop culture, memes, we lean into fun controversies … We've got a thousand products, there's all sorts of things we can do."

Pik n Mix has also benefitted from content creators discovering the business independently. Merritt says some creators have bought the company's lollies themselves, without any approach from the business, and then posted about them on TikTok. When those videos take off, viewers often ask where the products came from, driving traffic back to the Pik n Mix website. "Their videos would go viral and it would feed a lot of traffic to our website."

That direct connection matters because Pik n Mix is not always competing on price. Merritt says many of its lollies sit at the higher end of the market, and similar products can often be bought more cheaply elsewhere. "So why do people buy from us? It's because they are emotionally invested in us. They've supported us from the get-go, and we've built that following with TikTok."

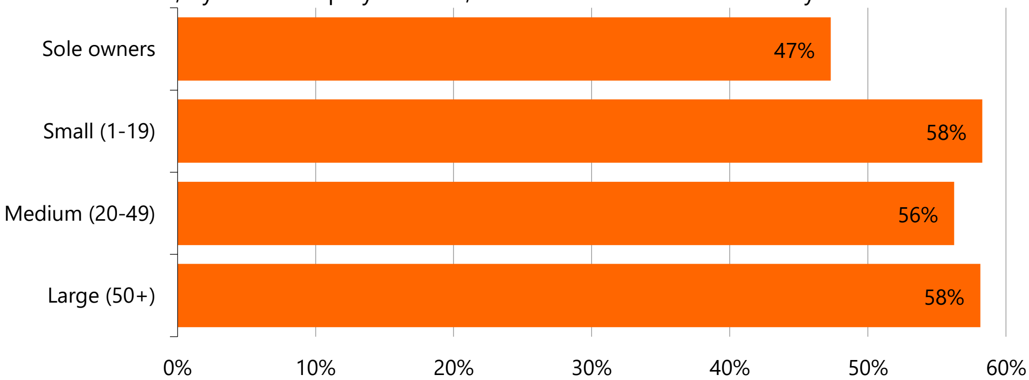
Surveyed businesses of all sizes use TikTok

Chart 16 shows the proportion of business respondents who report using TikTok at least monthly, by business size (number of employees). The results show that businesses of all sizes use TikTok, but that there is less use by sole traders. Small and large businesses have the highest proportions reporting regular TikTok use, with 58% of businesses in both business sizes reporting monthly TikTok use, compared with 47% of sole owners.

Chart 16

Businesses of all sizes use TikTok

% of businesses, by size of employee count, that use TikTok at least monthly



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses. Base: n=700 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers

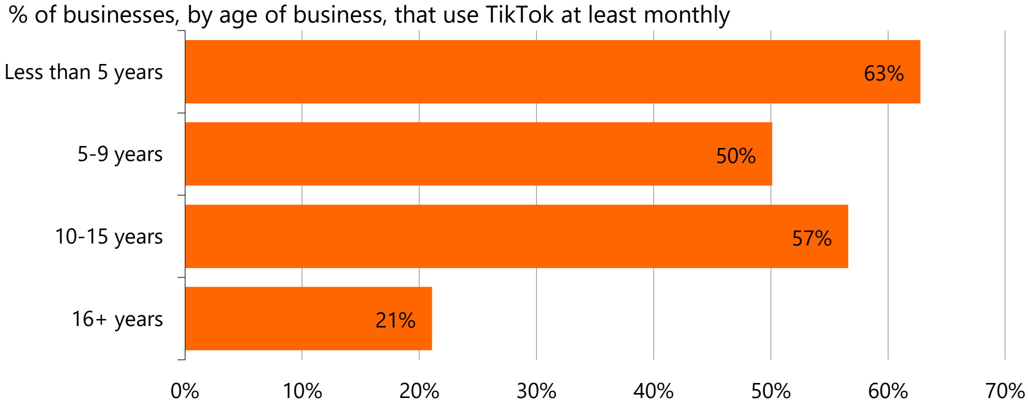
Newly established businesses surveyed are more likely to report using TikTok

Chart 17 shows the proportion of business respondents who report using TikTok at least monthly, by age of the business. Newly established businesses are more likely to be using TikTok – almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents from businesses established less than five years ago reported using TikTok at least monthly, compared with 21% of respondents from businesses established 16 or more years ago.

Chart 17

Stronger TikTok use among newer businesses

% of businesses, by age of business, that use TikTok at least monthly



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses. Base: n=700 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers.

Newly established businesses may be more willing to test newer platforms as they build brand awareness and customer reach. Several case study participants noted that TikTok's rapid growth influenced their decision to invest time in the platform.

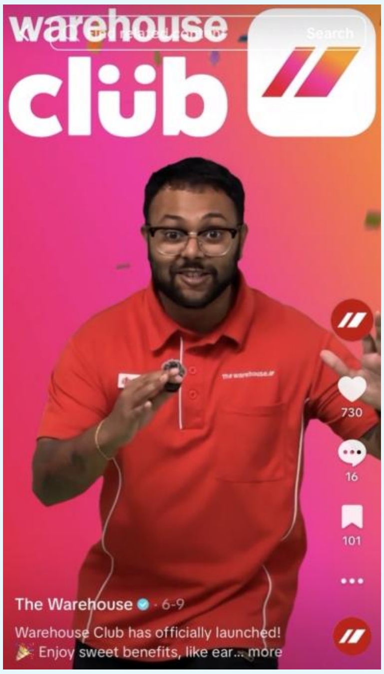
By contrast, established businesses might embrace the platform to reach new audiences. The Warehouse, which was established in 1982, has a strong culture of innovation and engaging with the latest trends, which led to it being one of the first established major businesses in New Zealand to start using TikTok. See *The Warehouse* case study, p42.

Case study 8: The Warehouse

@thewarehousenz

The Warehouse is one of the largest retail brands in New Zealand with 84 retail stores, as well as online stores, and distribution centres throughout New Zealand offering a wide range of products. It markets itself as a one-stop-shop offering everyday low prices with specific campaigns around events such as Christmas, Easter, Red Hot Bargain sales and Black Friday sales.

“Being on TikTok put us ahead of the game.”



The Warehouse’s Social Strategy Lead, Nathan D’Mello, says the iconic retailer got started on the platform in early 2020, when it was relatively new in New Zealand. “We saw the opportunity to raise awareness of our brand with a younger demographic on a platform that we expected to grow exponentially in New Zealand.” Reflecting the company’s culture of early adoption, Nathan says “being on TikTok put us ahead of the game”

The Warehouse uses TikTok to maximise views and reach - upper-funnel marketing in industry parlance. Not the kind of marketing that translates directly to sales, but a crucial means of broadening the customer base, raising brand awareness, and improving customer sentiment.

“With support from TikTok, it’s been a learning process based on analysing views, view-through rates and impressions,” says Nathan. “We have found that organic, vertical video, with a good hook and a person (or people) speaking on camera works best for us. Staff members wearing the iconic red shirts are often used in our videos, which creates a connection between our customers and their local store.”

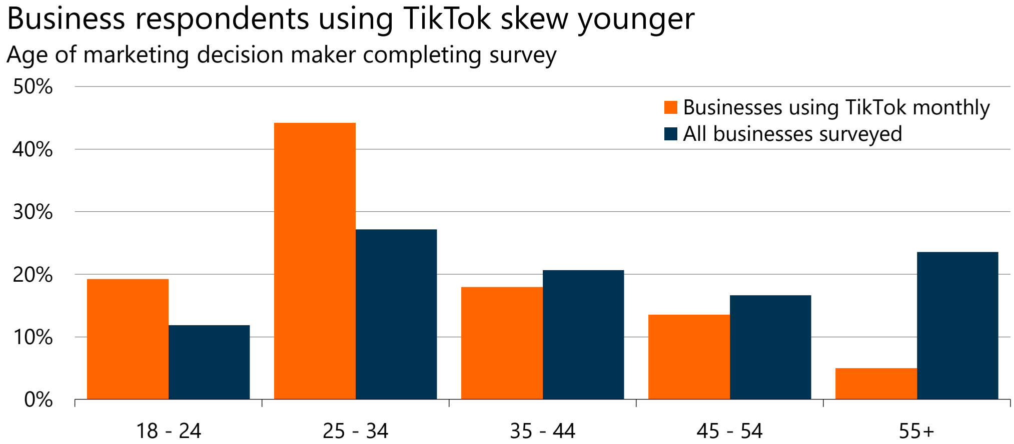
Collaborations with creators such as 2025 New Zealand TikTok Creator of the Year Louis Davis (@louisdavis_) have been used on specific campaigns. User-generated content created by customers either instore or at home talking about products they bought from The Warehouse lean into authenticity, which Nathan believes “is a powerful influence on customer sentiment and aligns with our brand as being part of Kiwis’ everyday lives.”

Looking ahead, The Warehouse is looking forward to live shopping videos as another way to connect with customers on TikTok. That reflects the same early-adopter mindset that has shaped its use of the platform so far: testing new formats, learning from audience response, and finding more immediate ways to bring products, people and brand personality together.

Respondents from TikTok-using businesses skew younger

Respondents from businesses using TikTok at least monthly skew younger than the broader business-survey sample. Over one-third (39%) of all marketing decision maker business respondents are aged between 18 and 34 years, compared with almost two-thirds (63%) of business respondents who are using TikTok at least monthly (Chart 18). This younger skew may reflect higher TikTok engagement among younger people, but it may also reflect the fact that larger businesses often assign social media responsibilities to younger staff. This age factor was the case with several of our case studies, such as *The Warehouse* (p42) and *The One New Zealand Warriors* (p47).

Chart 18

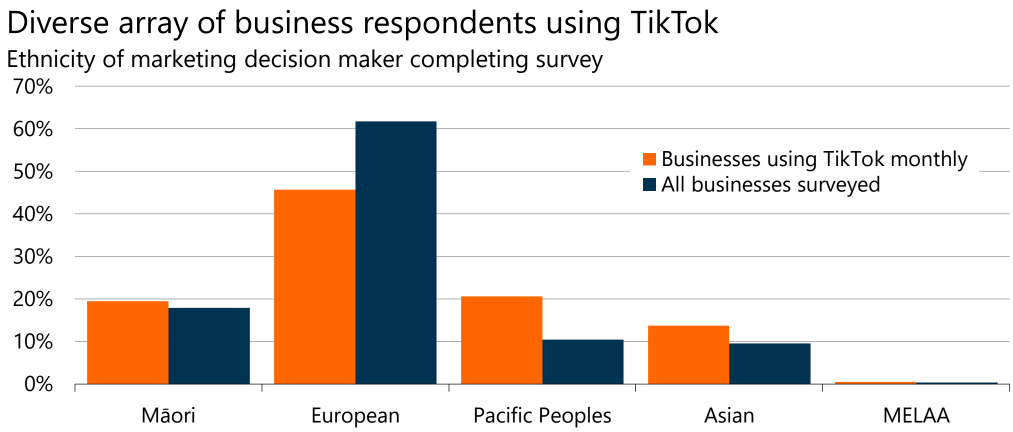


Source: Nielsen survey of businesses. Base: n=700 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers, and n=351 respondents using TikTok at least monthly

Ethnically diverse backgrounds strongly represented among TikTok-using businesses

Respondents from TikTok-using businesses skew towards Pacific Peoples, Asian and Māori ethnic groups. Among respondents from businesses using TikTok at least monthly, 54% identify as Māori, Pacific Peoples, or Asian – made up of 21% Pacific Peoples, 19% Māori, and 14% Asian respondents.

Chart 19



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses. Base: n=700 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers, and n=351 respondents using TikTok at least monthly. MELAA = Middle Eastern, Latin American, or African

These groups are more strongly represented among TikTok-using business respondents than in the full business-survey sample. The combined proportion for these ethnicities across all business survey respondents was 38%. This finding suggests TikTok may be an important platform for businesses and creators from diverse communities, including those seeking to reach audiences beyond their immediate geographic area.

How New Zealand businesses use TikTok

Direct product promotion the most commonly reported use

Business respondents were asked about the ways their business had used TikTok in the past year, and were able to select multiple responses.

Of businesses that use TikTok at least monthly, the most commonly reported activity was using the platform to directly promote their products or services, with just over a third of businesses (37%) selecting this as one of their uses. If the business survey results are scaled up to a national level, this use would be equivalent to around 114,000 businesses using TikTok regularly to directly promote their products or services.

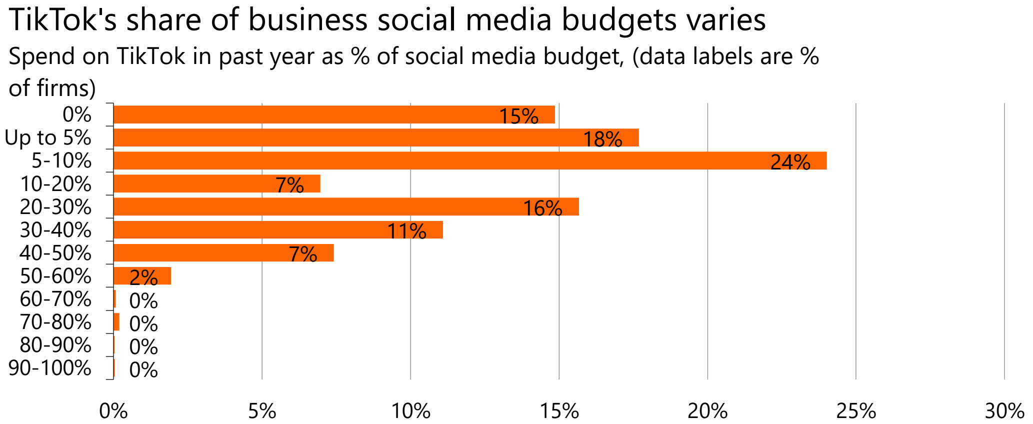
Around a quarter of businesses (24%) who use TikTok monthly report using TikTok for formal advertising campaigns, which would be equivalent to around 73,000 businesses at a national scale. Just over one-in-ten businesses who regularly use TikTok (13%) said they used paid influencer marketing on TikTok.

Some businesses use TikTok without paid media spend

Business respondents were also asked how much their business spent specifically on TikTok, as a proportion of total spend on all social media activity, over the past 12 months. Respondents were given a choice of percentage bands from which to select. Chart 20 shows that, among businesses using TikTok at least monthly, 15% (equivalent to 45,900 businesses) say they don't allocate any of their social media budget to TikTok, which indicates these businesses are uploading unpaid organic content rather than paid promotions – either direct advertising or creator-based content. Some 18% (equivalent to 54,600 businesses) allocated up to 5% of their social media budget to TikTok over the past 12 months, 24% (equivalent to 74,200 businesses) allocated 5-10%, 23% (equivalent to

69,900 businesses) allocated 10-30%, and a further 20% (equivalent to 63,100 businesses) allocated 30-60%. The scope of "social media budget" was not defined for respondents and will reflect everything from paid media only through to content production costs, creator/influencer partnerships, and agency fees, depending on the business.

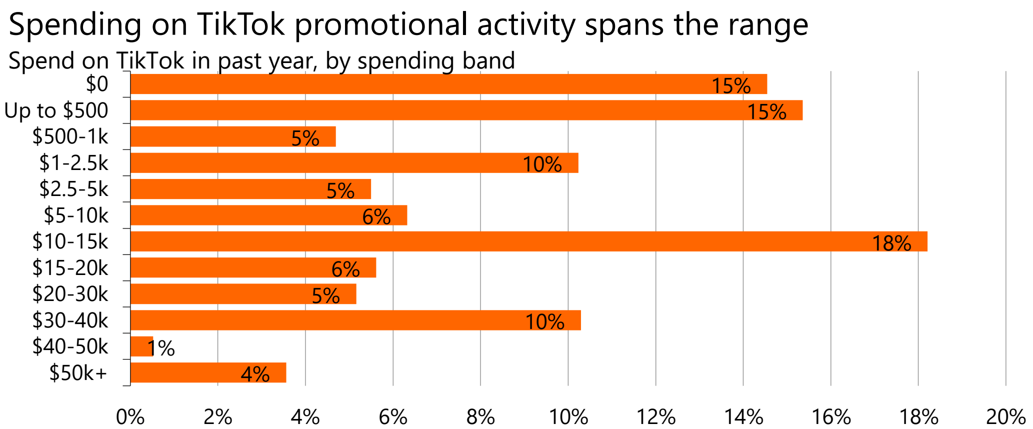
Chart 20



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses; base: n=351 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers and using TikTok for marketing purposes at least monthly

Business respondents were also asked how much they spent on TikTok in dollar terms. Respondents were given a list of spending bands from which to select one. In terms of dollar amounts spent on TikTok, the responses vary widely, from 15% of businesses that use TikTok at least monthly who do not spend anything (and rely on unpaid organic posts), through to 4% of businesses spending more than $50,000 (Chart 21).

Chart 21



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses; base: n=351 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers and using TikTok for marketing purposes at least monthly

Infometrics analysis suggests that median annual spending was between $2,500-$5,000 per business, with average spending of around $11,500 due to a number of higher spending responses. Spend is likely to vary by business size, campaign objective, and the balance between paid advertising and organic content.

Case study 9: Wanaka Horse Trekking

@wanakahorsetrekking

Samantha Goos has been passionate about horses since she was a girl growing up in her native Netherlands. “I got my first riding lesson at age 11 but didn’t own my own horse until I was 30 – the same year I came to New Zealand,” she explains. As it turned out, New Zealanders love horses as much as Samantha does. After working as a guide for a few years in Cardrona, and with a background in hospitality and business, setting up Wanaka Horse Trekking was the natural next step. Three years later, she has 17 horses and, in her own words, she gets to “live the ultimate horsey-girl dream life”.

“Straight away, I started using TikTok to promote the new business,” she says. In its first year, the business grew rapidly and Samantha started to notice that most of her visitors were saying they found out about her on TikTok.

What attracted her to TikTok was the ability to create a video at no cost, “Making a video is free, and if you make the right one you can reach millions of people straight away. The sky's the limit!”

Initially, bookings for her treks were made through agents, which took a 15% cut of the fees. TikTok gave Samantha a platform to reach her customers directly, meaning she could cut out the agents.

“With TikTok, you’re in full control of how you market yourself.”

TikTok enables Samantha to decide how she markets the business. “With TikTok, you’re in full control of how you market yourself,” says Samantha. Through the app, she can answer questions posed by people viewing her videos “and create a community of horse enthusiasts.” Visitors from New Zealand, Australia, the US and Europe arrive for her treks already knowing the horse they will be riding, the guides who will be leading them, and Pip – Samantha’s exuberant, tail-wagging dog (who loves a good tummy rub). Samantha also films her treks. “The beautiful Wanaka scenery sells itself, and I share photos and videos with the riders so they can repost them and share with their friends and family back home,” she says.

TikTok’s focus on authentic content suits Samantha personally. “I'm just super comfortable putting content out on TikTok versus other platforms. It doesn’t need to be polished,” she tells me. With 47,000 followers and 1.6 million likes, her TikTok audience demographic is 85% women, mostly aged between 20 and 65. She also attracts a lot of experienced riders, particularly for the more challenging rides.

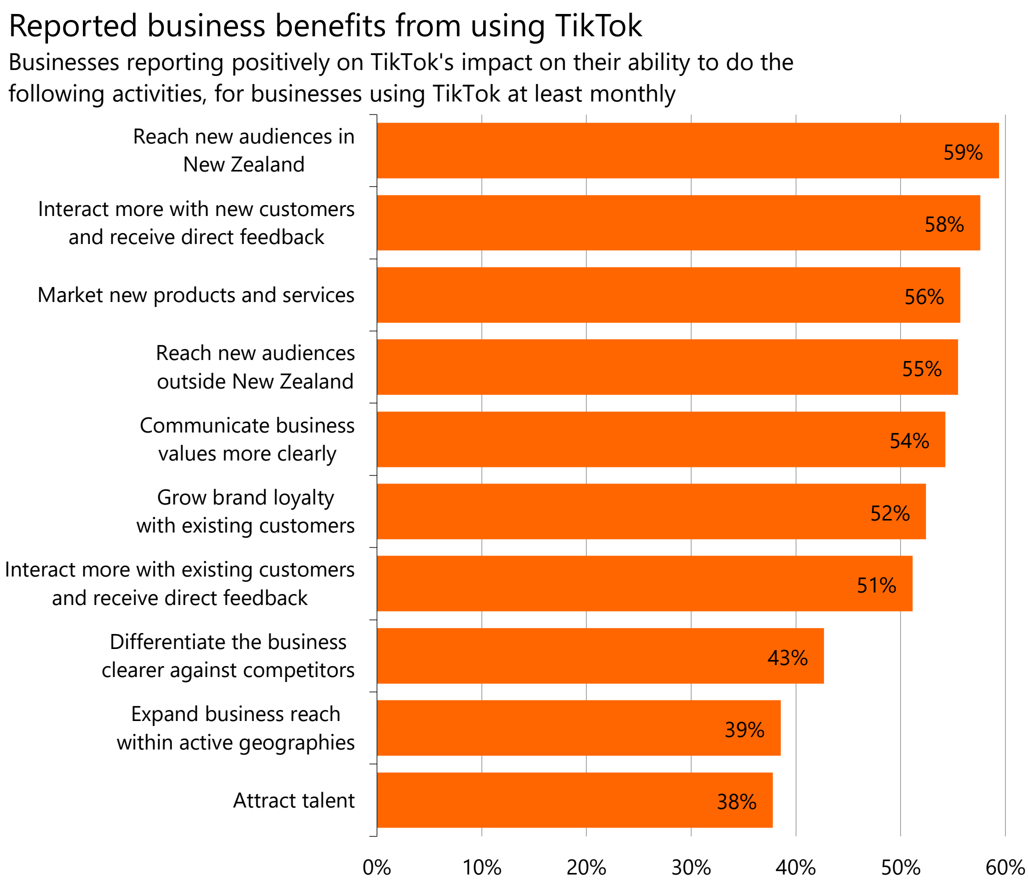
Looking forward, Samantha is keen to develop collaborations with horse-related brands, such as horse riding clothing. She also wants to broaden and strengthen her community by creating more ‘behind the scenes’ content, such as how much it costs to own and take care of a horse, how they get the horses ready for a trek, and how they choose which horse for which rider. She hopes this reaches people who want to understand horses better and perhaps become horse trek guides themselves.

How TikTok benefits New Zealand businesses

Decision makers report a wide range of benefits

Business survey respondents were generally positive about TikTok's benefits for their businesses. Respondents that use TikTok at least monthly were asked to what extent TikTok has a positive or negative impact on their business's ability to do a number of activities. For each activity, respondents were asked to choose between: positive impact, neutral, or negative impact. The activities, and the proportion that selected 'positive impact', are shown in Chart 22.

Chart 22



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses; base: n=351 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers and using TikTok for marketing purposes at least monthly

More than 50% of businesses that use TikTok monthly said TikTok has a positive impact on their ability to:

- reach new audiences both inside and outside of New Zealand,
- interact more with new customers and receive direct feedback,
- market new products and services,
- communicate business values more clearly,
- grow brand loyalty with existing customers, and
- interact more with existing customers and receive direct feedback.

Respondents to the business survey are most positive about TikTok's ability to reach new audiences in New Zealand and interact with new customers, which speaks to TikTok's utility as an engine of business growth. Several case study participants, such as the *Betsy Coffee Truck* (p14), spoke about the importance of TikTok in raising awareness of their business and increasing their customer base.

Businesses are also positive about TikTok enabling them to interact with and grow brand loyalty among their existing customers. The *One New Zealand Warriors* case study (p51) is a good example of how businesses and organisations can use TikTok as a reach and engagement platform, even where the objective is not immediate sales conversion.

Case study 10: One New Zealand Warriors

@nzwarriors

The One New Zealand Warriors represent New Zealand in the National Rugby League (NRL) competition from their home at Auckland's Go Media Stadium. In late 2022, the club decided to expand the social media team and lean into TikTok to promote their club. Bodie Friend, the Warriors' Brand Manager says that the COVID-19 pandemic was a key driver. "The team had to base themselves in Australia for the majority of the 2020, 2021 and 2022 seasons because returning home between matches was near impossible. Social media, and TikTok in particular, was a way to stay connected with our New Zealand fanbase."

Garnering over 400,000 followers in the past three years – more in Australia than in New Zealand – and more than 26 million likes – TikTok is also the fastest growing platform for the Warriors and is expected to become their biggest platform in the next two years.

"TikTok content revolves around game days. In the days leading up to a game, our focus is on behind-the-scenes activities, training sessions, players returning from injury, team sheets, and the club's co-captains: Mitchell Barnett and James Fisher-Harris," says Bodie. "Game day content is all about energising fans and maximising engagement. During the game, the social media team is busy posting memes, game highlights, trending audio, and the popular Pūkana-cam."

"We also use TikTok to tell a broader storyline over the course of a season in terms of where the club is heading as a professional football organisation. For example, our successes in building a pipeline of young talent, and support structures being put in place for the men's first team to produce more consistent performances on the field."

"TikTok is the platform we use to gain the widest reach."

The club uses a range of social media, but they use TikTok differently. TikTok is used to build fandom, deepen engagement, showcase personalities, and reach audiences who might not already follow the Warriors on other channels. "TikTok is the platform we use to gain the widest reach, where people might come across the Warriors for the first time, like our content, and become engaged with the club," Bodie says.

"It's about entertainment rather than information," Bodie says. The club also collaborates with creators such as Theo Shakes (@theoshakes) and Louis Davis (@louisdavis_).

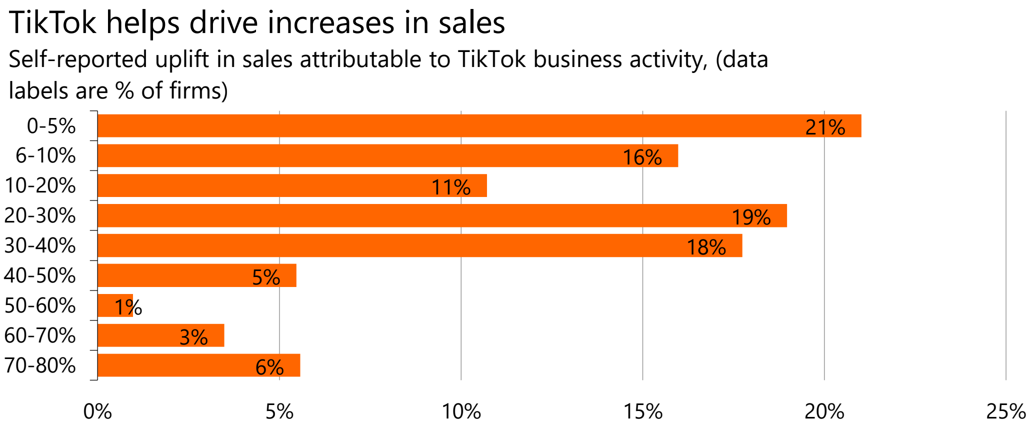
And it's working. The Warriors won the inaugural TikTok NRL Ladder competition for the 2025 NRL season in which teams going head-to-head on the field each week also competed on TikTok for the highest number of video views. The club's success on the TikTok NRL Ladder reflected its commitment to the platform and the team's passionate fanbase – online and in the real world.

Self-reported increase in sales resulting from TikTok promotional activity

Business survey respondents were asked what percentage uplift in overall sales they attribute to their TikTok promotional activity. They were given a choice of percentage bands from which to select. The self-reported sales uplift result was a key input into our economic impact analysis.

Self-reported uplifts varied from 0-5% to 70-80% (see Chart 23), suggesting the platform's impact varies considerably depending on a range of factors, including the type of business, what products and services they sell, their value and purchase frequency, how many resources they put into TikTok promotional activity, and their objectives in using the platform such as broadening their customer base, or driving sales from existing customers.

Chart 23



Source: Nielsen survey of businesses; base: n=351 respondents identifying as marketing decision makers and using TikTok for marketing purposes at least monthly

The median self-reported increase in sales was a 20-30% increase, with the unweighted average increase being 23.8% (using mid-point estimates for each uplift band).

The Warehouse case study (p42) shows that TikTok's business value is not limited to immediate sales conversion. For larger retailers, TikTok can act as an upper-funnel channel that builds reach and brand relevance.

Appendix: Methodology

How we surveyed businesses and users

Sample Size and fieldwork dates

New Zealand TikTok user survey

A total achieved sample of 1,000 users aged 18 years or older was completed and verified interviews of people who used TikTok weekly were achieved. Fieldwork was conducted between 30 January 2026 and 16 February 2026.

New Zealand business survey

A total achieved sample of 700 businesses was completed and verified interviews were achieved of people aged 18 or older who had participated in business decisions around marketing, advertising, research services, public relations or social media, or any digital marketing services such as website development & hosting, and electronic direct mail campaigns. Fieldwork was conducted from 29 January 2026 to 9 February 2026.

Sampling Frame

The research utilised online sampling methodology to engage target cohorts. Survey respondents completed the survey via an online portal, with respondents drawn from people who had opted in to verified third-party panel providers who manage panel sourcing via multi-source recruitment pipelines. Respondents are filtered dynamically through targeted demographic profiling metrics and explicit front-end screener logic to guarantee that participants meet the specified age and behavioural eligibility targets.

Questionnaire Framework

New Zealand TikTok user questionnaire

The TikTok user questionnaire for the New Zealand TikTok study focused on the following key areas:

- **Demographics**: Age (mapped to demographic cohorts), gender identity, and region of residence (across 16 New Zealand regions).
- **Platform Usage**: Frequency of use across various social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, X, LinkedIn, Pinterest, WhatsApp and TikTok) and motivations for using TikTok (e.g., entertainment, learning, business growth).
- **Content Engagement & Creation**: Categories of content engaged with on the platform, and binary identification of whether the user creates their own content.

- **Monetisation & Income**: Sources of income received directly through TikTok (e.g., brand partnerships, live content rewards) and estimated monthly income amounts from these streams.

- **Psychographic Impact**: Agreement/disagreement ratings on statements regarding TikTok's influence on life aspects such as relaxation, finding products, and combating loneliness.

- **Purchasing Behaviour**: Frequency of real-world actions or purchases (e.g., visiting cafes, buying food, donating to charities) triggered by TikTok content, and estimated monthly spend on these activities.

New Zealand business questionnaire

The business questionnaire for the New Zealand TikTok study focused on the following key areas:

- **Demographics**: Participant age, gender, ethnicity, and geographic location.

- **Business Profile**: Industry sector, sub-industry, business size (employee count), ownership status, business age, and annual turnover.

- **Decision Making**: Participation in business purchasing and decision making for marketing, advertising, and digital services.

- **TikTok Usage**: Frequency of platform usage for marketing and advertising, specific ways the business utilises TikTok (e.g., organic posts, paid ads, influencer marketing), and TikTok's perceived impact on operational objectives like brand loyalty and audience reach.

- **Financial Investment**: Budget allocation for TikTok as a proportion of total social media spend and the total annual dollar amount spent on TikTok.

- **Performance Metrics**: Percentage of overall sales uplift attributed to TikTok advertising activity.

Questionnaire Logic and Integrity

The following structural integrity of the fielded instrument and the measures were used to minimise respondent bias and cognitive fatigue.

- **Questionnaire Version**: The data reflects the final approved versions of the questionnaire.

- **Bias Mitigation (Randomisation)**: To mitigate "order bias" and "priming," randomisation was applied to all relevant response lists and statement batteries. This ensures that the position of an item did not disproportionately influence selection.

- **Logic and Routing (Skip Logic)**: Advanced skip logic and routing were programmed to ensure survey relevance. Respondents were only shown questions applicable to their previous answers, reducing respondent burden and ensuring data accuracy.

Quotas

To ensure the sample was representative of the targeted population and allowed for robust analysis of key segments, a structured quota and booster plan was implemented based on Stats NZ official statistics.

- Business survey: Applied to enterprise industry type and enterprise group.
- User survey: Applied on age, gender, and regions of New Zealand

Data Cleaning Procedures

To ensure data integrity and the removal of low-engagement or fraudulent respondents, a multi-stage data cleaning process was implemented.

- **Quality Control Oversight**: All primary data cleaning and fraud detection were managed by the panel provider with additional quality checks undertaken by Nielsen for the final data set.
- **Speeding Checks**: Respondents who completed the survey significantly faster than the median completion time - indicating a lack of thoughtful engagement - were identified and removed.
- **Straight-lining Detection**: The data was audited for pattern-based responding (e.g., selecting the same response across all items in a large grid). Participants exhibiting this behaviour were excluded.
- **Fraud and Bot Detection**: Standard panel security protocols were utilised, including IP address filtering to prevent duplicate entries and device fingerprinting to ensure unique respondents.
- **Trap Questions**: Trap questions serve as a quality control filter in surveys; by catching inattentive readers, speeders, and bots, they allow researchers to remove unreliable data before starting their analysis, ensuring the final results are accurate.

Weighting Approach

The final datasets were weighted to ensure the findings are representative of the target populations and to correct for any minor imbalances in the sample or intentional over-sampling of boosters.

To ensure the highest level of representativeness and analytical precision, the studies employed a rim weighting approach to data structuring: demographic calibration against national standards and granular geographic mapping.

To ensure that the study sample accurately reflects the broader New Zealand business and TikTok using populations, Consumer & Media Insights (CMI) and Stats NZ data were used to calibrate the final data sets.

New Zealand TikTok user survey

The data was weighted using age interlaced with gender, and region. These targets were filtered to represent the demographic profile of regular TikTok users. The weighting targets and benchmarks were derived from Nielsen's CMI dataset. The study utilised rim weighting to balance the sample across multiple variables simultaneously. This iterative proportional fitting ensures that the marginal totals for each weighting variable align with the CMI benchmarks.

New Zealand business survey

The business data was weighted using industry type and business size. The weighting targets and benchmarks were derived from Statistics New Zealand business demography statistics. The study utilised rim weighting to balance the sample across multiple variables simultaneously. This iterative proportional fitting ensures that the marginal totals for each weighting variable align with the Statistics New Zealand benchmarks.

Statistical Reliability and Margin of Error Guidance

New Zealand TikTok user survey

The total sample of 1,000 provides a maximum margin of error of approximately ± 3.1% at the 95% confidence level.

New Zealand business survey

The total sample of 700 businesses provides a maximum margin of error of approximately ± 3.7% at the 95% confidence level.

Ethics, Data Security Processes

The surveys were operated under a Privacy by Design model, leveraging verified panel consent, digital application tracking, and aggregated public metrics alongside clear opt-out choices for web measurement and panel resignation.

Data minimisation standards were enforced by stripping identifying labels. Security measures were employed such as firewalls, end-to-end encryption, malware blocks, strict internal need-to-know access barriers, and verified cross-border data privacy transfer protocols.

Operations were restricted to specific lawful processing bases, and clients were contractually barred from utilising generated indicators to execute individual-level credit, insurance, housing, or employment decisions.

How we generated economic impact inputs from the surveys

We have taken two approaches to measuring the economic impact of TikTok.

Economic impact of off-platform spending

The user survey asked adult users who use TikTok at least weekly how often they spent money off-platform after viewing products or services on TikTok, how much they spent, and what they bought. Spending was examined across nine categories:

- Restaurants/cafes/fast food outlets
- Food/drinks from a supermarket
- Clothing/footwear/personal accessories

- Accommodation
- Artistic/cultural activity (e.g. concert, gallery, museum) or music purchase
- Visited a sporting or recreational event or a gym
- Toiletries/cosmetics
- Furniture or hardware
- Electrical items (e.g. phones, TVs, earphones)

For each spending category, only respondents who said they bought products or services at least once a month were then asked how much they had spent in the last month on that spending category. For each spending category, spending amounts (in NZ$) were collected in bands.

For each spending category, a weighted average of the spend taken at the mid-points for each spend band was calculated. For example, someone selecting spending band $1-50 would be allocated a mid-point spend of $25. The weights ensure the sample represents the population of people aged 18 or older using TikTok at least weekly. The spend is multiplied by the weights to estimate nationwide spend from TikTok-motivated activity. Spending categories were mapped to Level 4 New Zealand Standard Industrial Output Categories (NZSIOC) for input into the Infometrics Input-Output model.

Economic impact of TikTok attributable increases in sales revenue

The business survey asked businesses that were using TikTok for marketing and advertising purposes at least monthly what their total annual revenue was, and what percentage uplift in overall sales they attributed to their TikTok advertising activity. For each business, annual turnover was multiplied by the estimated percentage uplift in sales attributable to TikTok advertising activity to provide a sales increase value (in NZ$). Both business turnover and percentage uplift responses were collected in bands, and the mid-point of the selected turnover and uplift bands were used. If a business indicated they "Never" use TikTok for marketing, their uplift was set to 0.

Businesses that had unusual combinations of answers were removed (outliers) and not included in the calculations. Self-reported business revenue in surveys is often subject to over-estimation. To ensure our final economic impact figures remained conservative and realistic, we applied an adjustment factor. The imputed revenue was weighted to verifiable macroeconomic baselines in New Zealand.

Survey weights were applied to each respondent to make the data representative of the broader business population. Because businesses that use TikTok might be more inclined to take a survey about social media (creating an over-representation or self-selection bias), an adjustment was applied to the weights. For each individual business, its adjusted weight was multiplied by its sales increase, and the individual results summed to determine the sales increase attributable to TikTok promotional activity across all businesses in New Zealand that are using TikTok at least monthly by industry.

Weighted results were aggregated to industries based on a survey question that asked businesses what industry they operated in. The industries used in the survey were Level 4 NZSIOC to align with the industries used in the Infometrics Input-Output model.

For comparative purposes, we constrained the industry scope in this part of the analysis to those used in the Oxford Economics Australia study. The industries used in the Australian study were as follows:

- Food and beverages

- Health, beauty, and fitness
- Culture and entertainment
- Other consumer goods (e.g. electronics, homeware, and jewellery retailing)
- Other consumer services (e.g. tradespeople, decorators, and real estate services)
- Business services (e.g. accountancy, training, marketing, and advertising)

These industries were mapped to Level 4 New Zealand Standard Industrial Output Categories (NZSIOC) for input into the Infometrics Input-Output model (Table 2 below).

Economic impact inputs

Table 1 shows the mapping of off-platform user spending categories used in the user survey to NZSIOC as well as the estimated total spend by all New Zealanders aged 18 or older using TikTok at least weekly.

Table 1

Mapping of user survey spending categories to NZSIOC industries and estimated total spend

New Zealand Standard Industrial Output Categories (NZSIOC), estimated total spend of all people aged 18 or older using TikTok at least weekly

Spend category	NZSIOC code	NZSIOC industry name	Total spend
Visited a sporting/recreational event or went to a gym after seeing it advertised or highlighted on TikTok	RS112	Sport and recreation services	$ 120,131,909
Visited a fast food/restaurants/cafes recommended on TikTok	GH212	Food and beverage services	$ 103,020,405
Bought food/drinks from a supermarket after seeing it advertised on TikTok	GH121	Supermarket and grocery stores	$ 49,183,485
Purchased clothing/footwear/personal accessories (either online or offline) recommended on TikTok	GH132	Recreational, clothing, footwear and personal accessory retailing	$ 59,689,267
Booked an accommodation after seeing it highlighted on TikTok	GH211	Accommodation	$ 84,151,745
Attended an artistic/cultural activity (eg concert, gallery, museum) or purchased music after seeing it on TikTok	RS111	Heritage and artistic activities	$ 83,023,017
Bought toiletries/cosmetics (either online or offline) recommended on TikTok	GH134	Pharmaceutical and other store based retailing	$ 84,582,663
Purchased furniture or hardwear (either online or offline) after seeing it on TikTok	GH131	Furniture, electrical and hardware retailing	$ 82,367,754
Purchased electrical items (eg phones, TVs, earphones) recommended on TikTok	GH131	Furniture, electrical and hardware retailing	$ 142,773,731

Source: Infometrics, Nielsen survey of TikTok users

Table 2 shows the industries in scope of the economic impact of sales increase attributable to promotional activity on TikTok and the estimated total sales increase by all New Zealand businesses using TikTok for marketing or advertising purposes at least monthly.

Table 2

Economic impact of sales uplift from TikTok promotional activity, industry scope and total sales uplift

New Zealand Standard Industrial Output Categories (NZSIOC), estimated total sales uplift of businesses using TikTok for marketing and advertising purposes at least monthly

NZSIOC code	NZSIOC industry name	Total sales uplift
EE112	Residential building construction	$ 255,409,376
GH121	Supermarket and grocery stores	$ 378,190
GH122	Specialised food retailing	$ 916,157
GH131	Furniture, electrical, and hardware retailing	$ 1,911,530
GH132	Recreational, clothing, footwear, and personal accessory retailing	$ 54,804,721
GH133	Department stores	$ 367,522
GH134	Pharmaceutical and other store based retailing	$ 81,748
GH135	Non-store and commission based retailing	$ 372,530
GH212	Food and beverage services	$ 8,093,395
JJ111	Publishing (except internet and music publishing)	$ 4,030
JJ112	Motion picture and sound recording activities	$ 8,041
JJ113	Broadcasting and internet publishing	$ 74,795
LL123	Real estate services	$ 53,161,112
MN112	Legal and accounting services	$ 1,483,059
MN113	Advertising, market research, and management services	$ 4,839,344
PP114	Adult, community, and other education	$ 3,639,833
RS111	Heritage and artistic activities	$ 2,755,991
RS112	Sport and recreation services	$ 1,681,080
RS212	Personal services; domestic household staff	$ 2,559,794

Source: Infometrics, Nielsen survey of TikTok users

Input-Output model

We used input-output multiplier analysis to examine the economic impact of businesses generating additional sales revenue from promotional activity on TikTok and users' off-platform spending. Our IO model is based on inter-industry relationships within the New Zealand economy, enabling us to quantify how economic activity in one industry flows through to other industries and ultimately households. Our multiplier analysis is based on the latest New Zealand Input-Output Table (NZIOT) released by Statistics New Zealand (SNZ), for the 2019/20 year.

Structure of the Input–Output table

In the NZIOT, four quadrants (or sub-matrices) are organised to show the flow of goods and services between industries, final demand, and value added of an economy. The table is essentially a rectangular matrix split into four main blocks that highlight different relationships in the economy. The four quadrants are as follows

Quadrant I – Inter-industry transactions (Intermediate demand)

- Located in the top right hand corner of an NZIOT
- Rows show sales or outputs of each industry
- Columns show intermediate inputs purchased by each industry from other industries
- Industries are the 109 industries used in the New Zealand Standard Industry Output Classification (NZSIOC)
- Thus, this quadrant shows how industries supply goods/services to each other
- Example: the agriculture industry sells to food manufacturing; electricity sector sells to all industries

Quadrant II – Final demand

- Located to the right of Quadrant I
- Includes household consumption, government expenditure, investment (including changes in stocks), and exports
- Shows how total output of each industry is absorbed by final users rather than other industries

Quadrant III – Primary inputs / Value added

- Located below Quadrant I
- Includes wages, profits, depreciation, and indirect taxes less subsidies paid by an industry. For each industry, the sum is value added at market prices. Leaving out the indirect taxes less subsidies represents value added at factor costs.
- Shows how the value of production is distributed to factors of production
- Imports are shown as part of this quadrant in a separate row

Quadrant IV – Balancing items (Total output)

- Bottom-right corner
- Ensures consistency: total value added = total final demand

In summary, rows of the NZIOT show how industries supply downstream to other industries or to final demand components. Columns show how industries and final demand components use goods and services. Every industry's output is either used as input by another industry (Quadrant I) or consumed as final demand (Quadrant II).

This organisation allows input–output tables to be used as a tool for economic modelling, impact analysis and tracing interdependencies across sectors.

Updating the model

To estimate the economic contribution of TikTok, we partially updated the NZIOT to the 2023/24 year (year ending March 2024) using publicly available data. This partial update allows for some, but not all, structural changes to the economy that have taken place between 2020 and 2024 to be accounted for. The data needed to update the NZIOT to the year to March 2025 was not available at the time of the analysis. Therefore, the 2024 tables were applied to 2025 spending figures to estimate economic impacts for the year to March 2025. Any structural changes to the economy that took place between the 2024 and 2025 March years are not accounted for in our results.

Direct, indirect, and earnings effects

The IO model enables us to simulate how the additional revenue created across different industries contributes direct, indirect, and earnings economic activity and employment.

Direct effect: This is the effect associated with the businesses that promote themselves on TikTok. So, when a business gets a lift in demand for their product or service from their TikTok promotion, they contribute economic activity to meet this demand. Additional jobs are also supported.

Indirect effect: The indirect effects are the further rounds of economic effects associated with the direct effect. For example, workers employed at businesses further upstream in the supply chain of businesses promoting themselves.

Earnings effect: The earnings effect arises when workers in directly and indirectly affected industries spend additional earnings in the wider economy. For example, if workers whose employment is supported by TikTok-attributed activity spend some of their earnings at local restaurants, the resulting activity is counted as an earnings effect.

Total effect: The total effect is the sum of direct, indirect, and earnings effects.

The direct, indirect and earnings effects outlined above are measured in terms of value added (or GDP) in 2025 prices and employment (full-time equivalents or FTE). GDP is the increase in the value added generated by sectors producing more goods and services in the New Zealand economy because they advertised on TikTok.