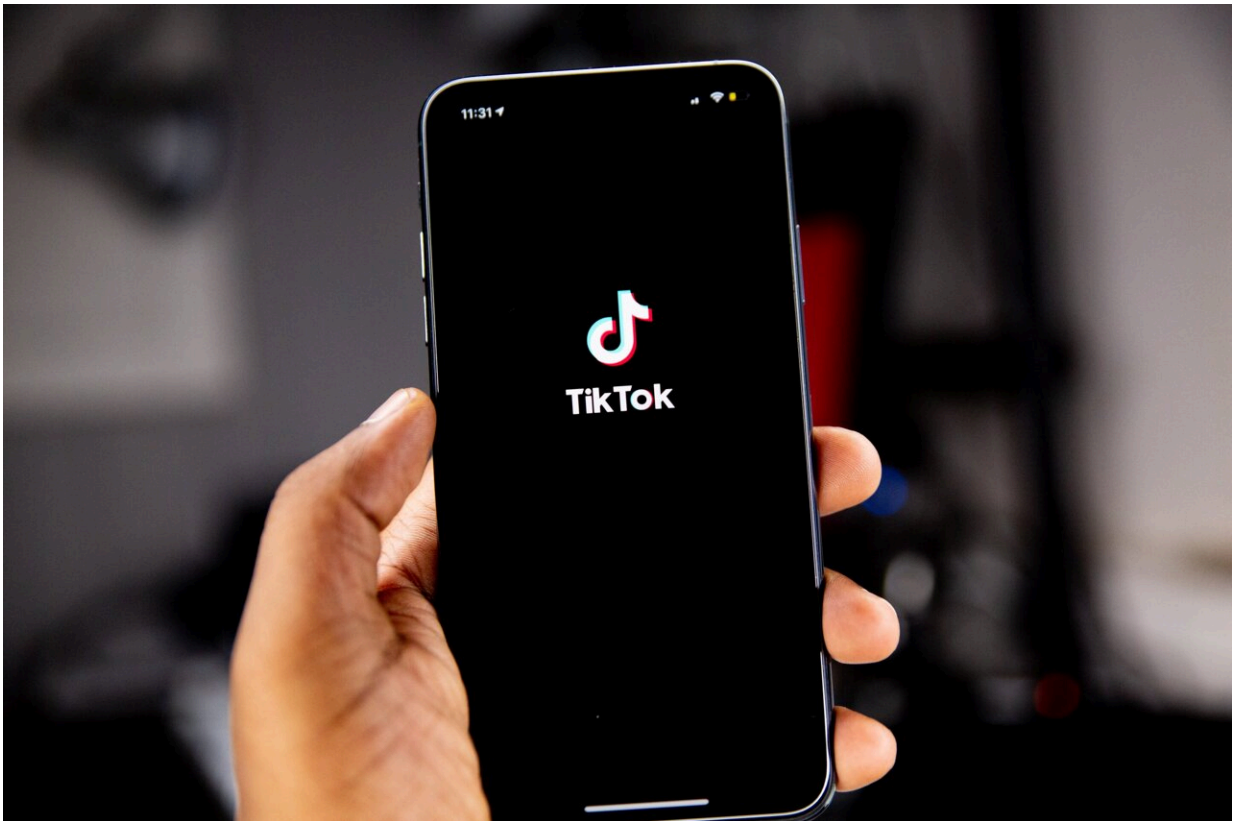


How to make money on TikTok and Instagram

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For most companies and small-business owners, social media is a tool used to raise awareness and build a following around a certain product or service. The companies create content that informs consumers and

redirects them to websites or apps where they can buy those items.

But what if the content is the product?

As people increasingly consume media on social and streaming platforms like Spotify, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram, entrepreneurs and artists are using the applications as a means to earn a living, profiting from sponsors that want to attach their brand to an individual's massive following. They also are finding ways to sell their music or [video content](#) directly to consumers.

Twin Cities [content creators](#) have learned how to monetize content and are creating platforms that help creators keep the majority of revenue earned from their content. They also are more than willing to share their strategies with others.

Monetizing your appeal

Sheletta Brundidge, a former broadcaster in Minneapolis, in 2020 launched her own podcast platform with shows that cater to African American culture. The 10 podcasts on the site are all hosted by local Black-subject experts, with conversations touching mental health, fitness and financial literacy.

The venture took off, allowing Brundidge to triple her broadcasting income.

Brundidge wasn't experienced in managing a podcasting platform. She launched ShelettaMakesMeLaugh.com using her experiences in broadcasting and engaging crowds as a comedian. Those skills enabled her to build an audience using authentic messaging and content that appeal to Black people, a demographic marketers want to reach.

Not only did brands attach themselves to the many podcasts being aired on Brundidge's platform, they hired Brundidge to produce commercials that would air on the podcast channel and appeal to a predominantly Black audience.

Brundidge initially obsessed over impressions, downloads and analytics concerning her content. She realized her monetized value rested in how she and her other hosts build bridges for engagement between Black people and brands.

"That's because people in the community trust us," Brundidge said.

Entrepreneur Michael Jackson created a podcast focusing on diversity and inclusion strategy and the perspectives of Black technologists while building his job-posting platform, Black Tech Talent, an online community that also matches tech professionals with companies looking for diverse talent.

The podcast not only appealed to other Black technologists, but those working in human resources or other management roles at companies recruiting diverse talent.

Soon, people who worked at companies like Disney and Target were tuning in, Jackson said. Eventually, Lifetime and Sunrise Bank became corporate sponsors of the podcast.

"It gave the opportunity to be a fly on the wall in discussions about the Black experience," Jackson said.

Jackson and his team have also created a superhero character, Black Circuit. The purpose of the character is to influence interest in technology among Black youths. Future content may include a digital comic book, Jackson said, and filming the costumed character making

visits with kids or places of businesses, which will be edited into episodes that can be monetized.

Have a direct-to-consumer strategy

Posting content to a multitude of apps, hoping to reach consumers and fan bases amid a downpour of thousands of other—and competing—videos and audio files is not a viable strategy that leads to strong financial returns, said Ricky Collins, founder of Packed House Live, a Minneapolis-based streaming platform.

Because most creators get the short end of the stick when it comes to profit sharing, Packed House Live was designed to be a platform where creators can stream their content directly to their supporters. Collins is going to put courses online to show creators how to do this.

Music creators, for example, make less than one cent per stream, Collins said, meaning artists would need over 1 million views per stream just to make between \$2,000 and \$5,000.

A musician and events promoter, Collins started Packed House Live in December 2020 as a platform where creators can sell directly to their fan bases, but also keep ownership of their work.

The idea with a platform like Packed House Live is creators choose their own price. The consumer who wants to listen or watch the content pays that cost. Consumers can also pay to pre-order an album, an advanced screening of an independent film or an exclusive interview with a well-known celebrity.

It may not equate to millions of streams on Apple Music or Netflix, but if 1,000 people pay \$10 each to access the content, it's a considerable win, Collins said, considering the creator keeps most of the profit.

Creators can also negotiate advertising placements around their online event or content, set up in-stream commercials or have a corporate sponsor, Collins added.

"We want creators to think about it differently," Collins said, adding creators should always consider exclusive releases first, as well as sponsorships and merchandise sales.

Consider multiple revenue plays

Implementing a pay wall or subscription fee is an option for some organizations or creatives, depending on their audience or product. Exclusive interviews with celebrities or people of power, behind-the-scenes footage and education programming to help advance one's career or skill set are the kinds of content consumers would pay for.

Otherwise, the expectation is the content will be free, said Annie Scott Riley, chief marketing officer of Eagan-based e-sports company Version1 owned by the Wilf family, who also own the Minnesota Vikings, and entrepreneur and investor Gary Vaynerchuk.

With an industry like sports or gaming, fans have several options for free content consumption, so creators must find a differentiator for paid content, Riley said. Building an audience is more challenging if content is only available to those willing to pay a fee.

One way to add value for those customers, however, is offering exclusive content or experiences as part of a package for season-ticket holders, she said.

Creators can also monetize backgrounds in livestreams, with products or images placed near the speaker.

The experts still recommend using the major platforms to share content, but remember to redirect viewers to your own domain, giving them the option to see more content or purchase products directly from you.

Know the rules, trends

Most platforms, like Facebook and YouTube, pay creators for ads that play either before, during or at the conclusion of their streams, assuming the creative or brand's [social media](#) page meets certain requirements. It's important to understand the stipulation of each platform before agreeing to profit-sharing terms from streams. One mistake some creators make is copying trendy content from other pages and sharing it on their channels to build views, hoping it will result in ad revenue, Jackson said.

Most platforms use artificial intelligence or detection technology to determine if a page is copying audio or video that is owned by others.

To build Version1's online presence, director of content and former gamer Ashley Glassel worked to produce content that displayed the Version1 brand in ways that resonated with the gaming community, which required pushing content to platforms gamers visit often in YouTube, Twitch, Twitter and TikTok.

Glassel also stressed the importance of keeping up with trends within each [platform](#), like style of videos, how they are edited, titled and use of thumbnails. Some viewers are preferring high-quality videos that may post only once a week to channels, instead of rushed, unedited videos that creators use to make their accounts seem busy.

Using analytics provided by platforms like YouTube or LinkedIn to monitor views and engagement activity helps creators determine best times for posting, or which topics receive the most attention, Jackson said. With this knowledge, creators can focus on content that generates

visibility sponsors desire, or that fans are more willing to pay for.

"If you don't know your audience, you don't know what works," he said.

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