

Why marketers are on the hunt for the next TikTok

Article

Marketers are on the prowl for the next big social media platform. **BeReal** was one of the **biggest apps** last year, but has since lost buzz. ByteDance's Instagram rival **Lemon8** has **picked up steam**, but it's still a long way off from reaching TikTok's popularity. Supposedly "healthy" platform **Zigazoo** has **hit headlines** as well.

"Understanding why certain apps surge and why some ultimately fizzle is vital to keep up with changing social user trends and behaviors," said our analyst Jasmine Enberg.

Here's a closer look at what marketers are watching.

1. Marketers prepare for a TikTok-shaped absence

Last week, Montana became the **first US state to pass legislation completely banning TikTok**, and other states (as well as the federal government) could follow suit.

“We are obviously concerned,” said **Kendra Scott CMO Michelle Peterson**. “A lot of our connection with consumers comes through TikTok. It’s why we’re watching whatever app consumers would move to next.”

The average US TikTok user spends nearly an hour on the platform each day. If banned, that time will likely shift to another app.

- Some **26% of US TikTok users** say they’d move to Instagram Reels, while another 21% say they’d switch to YouTube shorts, according to a Cowen survey.
- Instagram looks like the most likely replacement, considering **73.0% of US TikTok users** are already on the platform, according to our data.

But a TikTok ban doesn’t automatically mean an Instagram explosion. There’s space for a new player to draw these users.

2. No one wants to miss the next TikTok

US TikTok use nearly tripled between 2019 and 2023. Marketers who built a presence on the platform in its infancy had a home field advantage as TikTok’s growth exploded in 2020. Now marketers want a presence in every new platform, in case one of them becomes the next TikTok.

“TikTok wasn’t just new, it was entirely different and it was sticky,” said Enberg. “The pandemic helped because people were stuck at home and wanted entertainment and connection, but it was also a distinctly different experience from legacy social apps.”

That’s exactly what marketers are after now: The platform that can provide a distinct experience.

3. People are unimpressed with social media’s old guard

Users are spending less time with Facebook and Twitter or they're abandoning the sites completely, according to our forecast. Meanwhile, Snapchat's and Instagram's time spent figures are essentially stagnant.

Younger users in particular are moving away from **social networking and toward social entertainment**. TikTok has blown up for the entertainment factor and BeReal saw initial buzz because it lent itself toward authenticity.

Even without a TikTok ban, there's a white space in social media for connecting with friends in an authentic way; BeReal sought to fill this void but hasn't been able to maintain a consistent user base.

4. BeReal hasn't sustained its success

BeReal was the **seventh most downloaded social media app** in the US last year, according to Apptopia. But the platform hasn't found an effective way to monetize, and users don't want to interact with brands on the one-photo-a-day platform. The **number of daily users has dropped 61%** since October 2022, according to Sensor Tower data reported by The New York Times.

"The novelty wore off and there weren't enough new features to keep users coming back," said Enberg.

Marketers should learn from BeReal's blunders. "If you want to know where social media is heading, look at Gen Z and its behaviors," said our analyst Debra Aho Williamson. "BeReal caught a wave for a reason. It gave Gen Zers what they crave: An easy and fun way to connect with the people and communities that matter to them."

And those desires haven't changed. "In fact, this social media trend is probably accelerating. Platforms that emphasize interests and fandoms such as Discord, Reddit, and TikTok have seen a boost in usage in the past year, especially among Gen Z," said Williamson.

This was originally featured in the eMarketer Daily newsletter. For more marketing insights, statistics, and trends, subscribe [here](#).