

Q&A with Pandia Health: Dealing with ‘censorship’ as a health company on TikTok

Article



Insider Intelligence spoke with Dr. Sophia Yen, co-founder and CEO of Pandia Health, a service that provides online access to birth control, about the unique challenges the telemedicine company has faced on TikTok.

II: What have you found as you work on content for TikTok?

Yen: We have found censorship. We have influencers that have 100,000 or half a million followers, and usually when they post they get a certain amount of expected engagement. I don't know what the Chinese regulations are regarding health content aimed at children, but our products are not targeting children. We've noticed that influencers have to say "segg education" in order to keep content up, even if they are talking about it from a medical perspective.

[Editor's note: TikTok uses an automated system that removes videos that violate community guidelines. However, sometimes videos that use adult language are incorrectly flagged. To prevent their videos from being banned, TikTok users have developed alternative words to get around the system (like using "segg" instead of "sex").]

When we had influencers talk about birth control or abortion, we saw low engagement. We have had issues getting Facebook ads approved, in addition to Google ads. If you are a health brand working on a "controversial" topic [like birth control], it is easy to target your current followers on TikTok, but picking up new people is hard on the platform. Usually our influencers see thousands of views and we're getting around 10. We tried paid TikTok ads but had ridiculously high customer acquisition costs, so we are planning to try another agency or TikTok ad specialist.

II: What marketing advice would you give a brand trying to fill a gap, specifically with traditionally underrepresented consumers?

Yen: Organic and PR are not reliable. If you can get somebody who is authentic, such as a physician, that's a better way to get your customer. Hitting people through community and influencers is very effective, as is Google Ads.

II: From a brand perspective, how have you stood out within the telemedicine field?

Yen: The future of telemedicine is about expertise and trust. We want consumers to realize that not all telemedicine companies are made the same, and have them ask about the qualifications of a company's CEO, founder, values, and more. At Pandia Health, we will always tell you what's best for your health, even if it doesn't benefit our bottom line.

What makes our company complicated is the fact that we are three companies for the price of one. You're getting a medical group/telemedicine, a pharmacy, and a brand/marketing vehicle. From both the pharmacy and doctor sides, there are rules and regulations that we have met and received licenses from in each state. For me, it's important that Pandia Health comes from a place of authority, and as a physician, we have that trust with the consumer.

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