

The Winning Play

Driving Engagement &
Equity for High
Consideration
Verticals During
TikTok Sports
Moments



Introduction



In a world where sports moments transcend the stadium and unfold across screens, **TikTok has emerged as a defining arena for modern fandom; one that blends entertainment, connection, and community in real time.** For telecommunications (TelCo) and financial services (FinServ) brands, two high-consideration categories where trust, relevance, and timing matter; this presents a powerful and timely opportunity. Sports moments offer more than mass reach; they are passionately charged, culturally unifying, and behaviorally primed for engagement. **TikTok amplifies these dynamics, allowing brands to show up in the right moment, with the right message, and to the right audience.**

This paper explores how and why sports moments on TikTok create uniquely fertile ground for high-consideration categories to drive brand equity and consumer action. Drawing on new research and behavioral insights, we examine how fans engage with sports content on TikTok, what makes the platform distinct from other channels, and which creative strategies help to drive measurable results. From casual scrollers to all-in superfans, TikTok turns fleeting sports highlights into lasting brand connections.

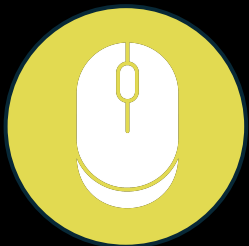
Methodology



US, Total n=700



**TikTok Users & Non-Users
ages 18-49**



**15-minute, online device
agnostic survey**



**Surveyed
March 2025**

This research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, surveyed 700 individuals in US aged 18-49, including 500 TikTok users. Conducted from March 21, 2025, to March 31, 2025. The 15-minute online survey required participants to have switched or signed up with a new telecommunications (TelCo) or financial service (FinServ) provider within the last 12 months or are planning to switch TelCo or FinServ providers in the next 12 months and have watched live sports via TV/live streaming in the past 12 months.

Foreword: The Ipsos Perspective

Like many other facets of the media ecosystem, sports is being disrupted.

From on-screen viewing to courtside seats, fans have more ways than ever before to engage with sports. But that's not all. Of the many disruptions in this space, one renaissance is happening off the court – via second screen viral halo effects that fans are leaning into more than ever before.

What this yields, is **an opportunity for brand advertisers to capitalize on moments.**

Moments in the form of last night's highlights package. Moments of commentary from our favorite podcaster or personality. Moments from pre-game "tunnel fit" walk-in's. And moments behind the scenes, as athletes – who are now creators – document their everyday lives.

Fans can't get enough of viral moments in sports. Which in turn, allows brand advertisers to weave their messaging into these moments, powered and enabled by leading platforms such as TikTok. When we hone in further, this dynamic shines even brighter when it comes to sports as a catalyst for categories such as telecommunications and financial services – where consumer consideration can run as long-term and deeply rooted as an avid fan's favorite team or player.

Our Ipsos research in collaboration with TikTok is clear: **social drives moments in sports, and platforms such as TikTok is part of the very fabric of sports fandom today.** For marketers in TelCo and FinServ, attaching to moments in sports is a power play, creating a unique halo that matters to avid and casual fans alike.

**Jamie Stenziano, EVP,
Head of Tech, Media, TelCo @ Ipsos**



**The Premier Arena:
Why Sports Moments on
TikTok are Uniquely
Powerful**

Where the Game Lives Beyond the Screen

In an era where the boundaries between in-person and digital experience are increasingly fluid, TikTok has emerged as the premier arena for sports moments to unfold. It's where the game lives beyond the screen, transforming passive spectatorship into participatory fandom.

TikTok users surveyed are

1.5x

more likely compared to non-users surveyed to actively comment and share reactions on social and video platforms during a sports event¹, highlighting how the platform fuels live, communal experiences

90%

of sports viewers surveyed **use social/video platforms to watch or engage with sports moments,** which is on par with streaming services and surpassing cable TV

TikTok stands as a powerful force shaping how fans connect, react, and celebrate.

Interactions on TikTok aren't fleeting either. **Sports content on TikTok is scroll-stopping, comment-generating, and share-worthy.** Compared to other platforms, TikTok users are more likely to share branded content with friends and family, sign up for updates from the brand, and are less likely to skip ads.

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

Beyond the Broadcast: TikTok as a Sports Gateway



3 in 4

sports fans surveyed state they scroll or watch social/video content while watching sports¹, **underscoring how second-screen behavior is now standard.**

Engagement isn't limited to multitasking. TikTok is increasingly becoming an early touchpoint for fans.

TikTok users surveyed are **1.6x** more likely to first hear about tentpole events on TikTok than on other platforms, and it reaches 41% of both light TV streamers and non-TV streamers, audiences that traditional sports media often fail to capture.²

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

2. TikTok Marketing Science Global, The TikTok Blueprint for Tentpole Success 2024, conducted by Magna

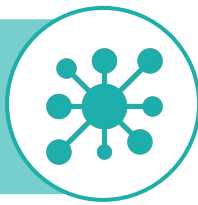
More than a Game: How TikTok Fuels Fandom and Shared Cultural Moments

TikTok doesn't just reflect sports culture—it helps foster, shape, and create it.



65%

of TikTok users surveyed say it helps them **feel part of something bigger** than themselves¹



64%

of TikTok users surveyed watch sports **to connect with others**¹



63%

of TikTok users surveyed say they **enjoy the sense of community and camaraderie** sports provides¹



52%

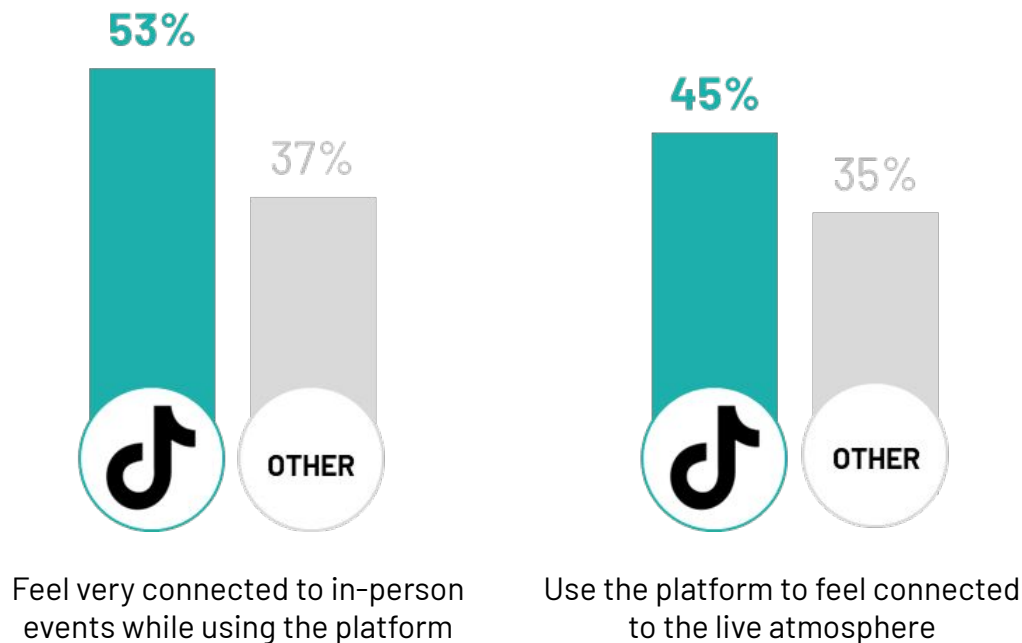
of TikTok users surveyed **enjoy posting, commenting, and actively participating** in sports conversations online¹

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

From Highlight to Hot Take: Fans Stay Updated, Engaged, and in the Action on TikTok

The vibrant TikTok community doesn't just engage with sports, it elevates the experience. Fans truly feel embedded in the moment as it unfolds.

Among Sports Fans Surveyed on Platform¹



Fueling the fire of fandom, TikTok brings fans in on the action in fun, interactive ways that foster a more immersive experience. Compared to other platforms, TikTok users are more likely to use platform tools during sports moments, including on-platform shopping, AR filters, and live streaming¹. These interactive layers not only boost engagement but also create new touchpoints for brands to enter the conversation in ways that feel organic and value-adding.



**TikTok isn't just media—it's a virtual stadium,
where participation is communal,
real-time, and intensely resonant.**

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025



**Understanding the
Winning Audience:
Where Fan Diversity
Meets Vertical
Opportunity**

TikTok Sports Fans' Ties Run Deep

TikTok's sports community is not only vast, but also richly diverse, representing a range of fandom behaviors, motivations, and mindsets. This spectrum of sports involvement creates a compelling opportunity for TelCo and FinServ brands to tailor their messaging to connect more deeply with distinct audience segments.

Sports fans on TikTok aren't just casual observers, they're vehemently invested.

Compared to TikTok non-users surveyed, **TikTok users surveyed¹**:

- View and follow more sports, averaging **6** different leagues
- Are **1.5x** more likely to view sports as a key part of their identity
- **7 in 10** feel personally invested in their team's or players' success
- Are **1.6x** more likely to go so far as to wear certain items for good luck



TikTok offers brands a unique ability to meet consumers in these moments with messages that feel personal, timely, and relevant. In fact, 7 in 10 say they're more likely to pay attention to ads that feel personally relevant³. On TikTok, where content is algorithmically tailored and culturally contextualized, relevance and resonance is significantly more achievable. As a result, brands that advertise on TikTok stand out as being trendy, personally relevant, authentic, and community-oriented compared to ads on other platforms—an essential brand equity advantage, particularly in competitive, high-consideration verticals like TelCo and FinServ¹.

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

3. TikTok Marketing Science, Business Impact through Relevance [US, UK, AU] conducted by WARC, August 2024.

Sports Fans of All Calibers are on TikTok

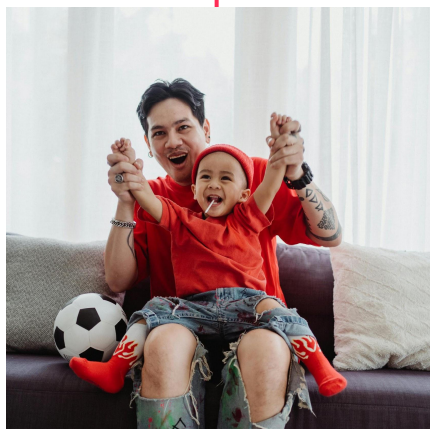
TikTok is a daily touchpoint across the fan spectrum. Each group brings distinct motivations to the platform, and effective brand engagement starts with understanding how and why they watch.



Casual Fans

Watched less than 5 sports moments in the last year

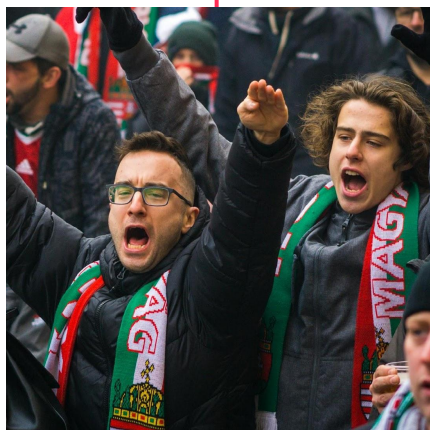
27% of daily TikTok users surveyed are casual fans¹



Moderate Fans

Watched 6-10 sports moments in the last year

33% of daily TikTok users surveyed are moderate fans¹



Super Fans

Watched more than 10 sports moments in the last year

40% of daily TikTok users surveyed are super fans¹

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

TikTok as an On-Ramp to Fandom

For casual fans, sports are less about stats and standings, and more about **discovery, shared moments, and cultural connection**. They're more likely to approach sports viewing with spontaneity and social intention:

- Casual fans surveyed are **20 percentage points** more likely than super fans to say they just enjoy watching whatever is on¹
- and **16 percentage points** more likely to say they watch because others want to, not necessarily because of personal interest¹

For these viewers, sports is a social conduit.

TikTok enhances this experience by offering a place to stay current with trending sports conversations and see how peers and influencers are reacting to big moments.

This cohort skews younger (ages 18–24) and more female, making them an especially valuable segment for brands looking to build long-term relationships¹.

What makes TikTok especially powerful is its ability to meet casual fans at the start of their sports journey. Through tailored content, creator storytelling, and real-time reactions, the platform helps lower the barrier to entry and make sports feel approachable, relatable, and fun—even for rookie fans. Casual fans may not have decades of team loyalty, but they do have curiosity, openness, and social motivation. TikTok fuels this energy and channels it into deeper engagement, helping casual viewers transition into more informed, connected fans over time.

For brands, this means there's a unique window to show up early, creating approachable, inclusive messaging that invites participation and exploration, particularly during tentpole events when interest peaks. When done right, these moments can become meaningful entry points into fandom, with TikTok serving as both the on-ramp and the rallying space.



1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

Super Fans on TikTok are Intentional, Immersive, and All-in



At the other end of the spectrum, super fans represent TikTok's most committed and passionate sports audience. Sports goes beyond just entertainment, serving as an immersive experience space and part of their identity.

These fans don't just watch—they feel the moment deeply.

Compared to casual fans, **super fans** surveyed are:

- **1.2x** more likely say watching sports provides them a **moment to do something they enjoy**¹
- **1.4x** more likely to say they **lose themselves in the sports experience**¹
- **1.4x** more likely to say sports **helps them to de-stress**¹
- **1.6x** more likely to say **their passion for sports defines them**¹

Super fans don't stumble into sports content, they seek it out with purpose. They're **1.3x** more likely to watch sports because they genuinely want to, as opposed to casual fans, who more motivated by social circumstances¹.

They're also discerning: **4 in 5** say they choose which sports to watch based on personal interest and **2 in 5** say they explicitly 'search' for sports-related highlights, tags, keywords, and teams on TikTok¹. But it's not a solitary pursuit—community matters. Super fans are **1.5x** more likely to cite a sense of belonging as a key reason for engaging in sports moments¹.

For brands, this presents a high-value audience that is strongly invested, communally motivated, and more likely to be open to relevant, well-aligned messaging.



1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025



Passion for Sports Mirrors Passion for High Consideration Brands

What makes super fans on TikTok even more powerful for advertisers is that their deep engagement with sports mirrors their behavior in other high-consideration categories like TelCo and FinServ.

Compared to TikTok non-users surveyed, TikTok users surveyed are not only more likely to be super sports fans, but their appetite for new information, technology, and tools makes them highly receptive to TelCo and financial brand messaging.

These super fans are constantly plugged into the latest, whether that's financial insights or TelCo upgrades.



TikTok is Where the TelCo-savvy Audiences and Sports Fans Collide

TikTok's user base sits at the intersection of fandom and future-forward thinking. TikTok users surveyed are notably more technologically savvy than TikTok non-users surveyed:



1.6x

more likely to update their phones at least every two years¹. This habit is even more common among male TikTok users and increases with fandom intensity

1.5x

more likely to have signed up for a different cell phone or internet provider in the last year¹

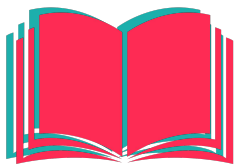
TikTok users are also more hands-on when it comes to internet infrastructure at home: **7 in 10** say they're highly involved in setting up and maintaining their network. This active role also varies by gender and fandom.¹

TikTok users aren't just along for the ride when it comes to tech—they're driving the innovation, often ahead of the curve. **These behaviors suggest that TelCo brands have an aligned audience already primed to explore new innovations, devices, and services—especially when framed within the context of real-time sports experiences.**

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

Financial Fluency, Amplified by Sports Moments

Beyond TelCo, TikTok users surveyed are also notably more financially informed and engaged than their non-user counterparts, making the platform a strategic environment for FinServ brands. These users aren't just passively consuming content, they're actively seeking knowledge.



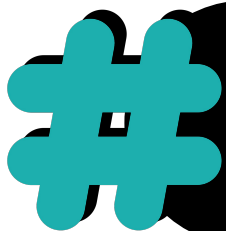
TikTok users are **2x more likely to frequently read about financial trends and investment opportunities**, compared to TikTok non-users surveyed¹



TikTok users are **more likely to identify as highly knowledgeable or experts in key areas of personal finance**: retirement planning, tax optimization, and estate planning¹



When it comes to investable assets, **3 in 10** TikTok users **consider themselves experts**—more than double that of TikTok non-users surveyed¹



Notably, engagement with #finance videos is 2.8x higher when combined with #sports content, highlighting the power of this intersection to drive both interaction and relevance⁴

Elevated financial literacy, combined with strong engagement during resonant sports moments, positions TikTok's audience as uniquely open to FinServ messaging—particularly when delivered in a context that feels native, credible, and connected to their passions.

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

4. TikTok Internal Data, US, Q1 2025

High Consideration Brands Score Big During Sports Moments

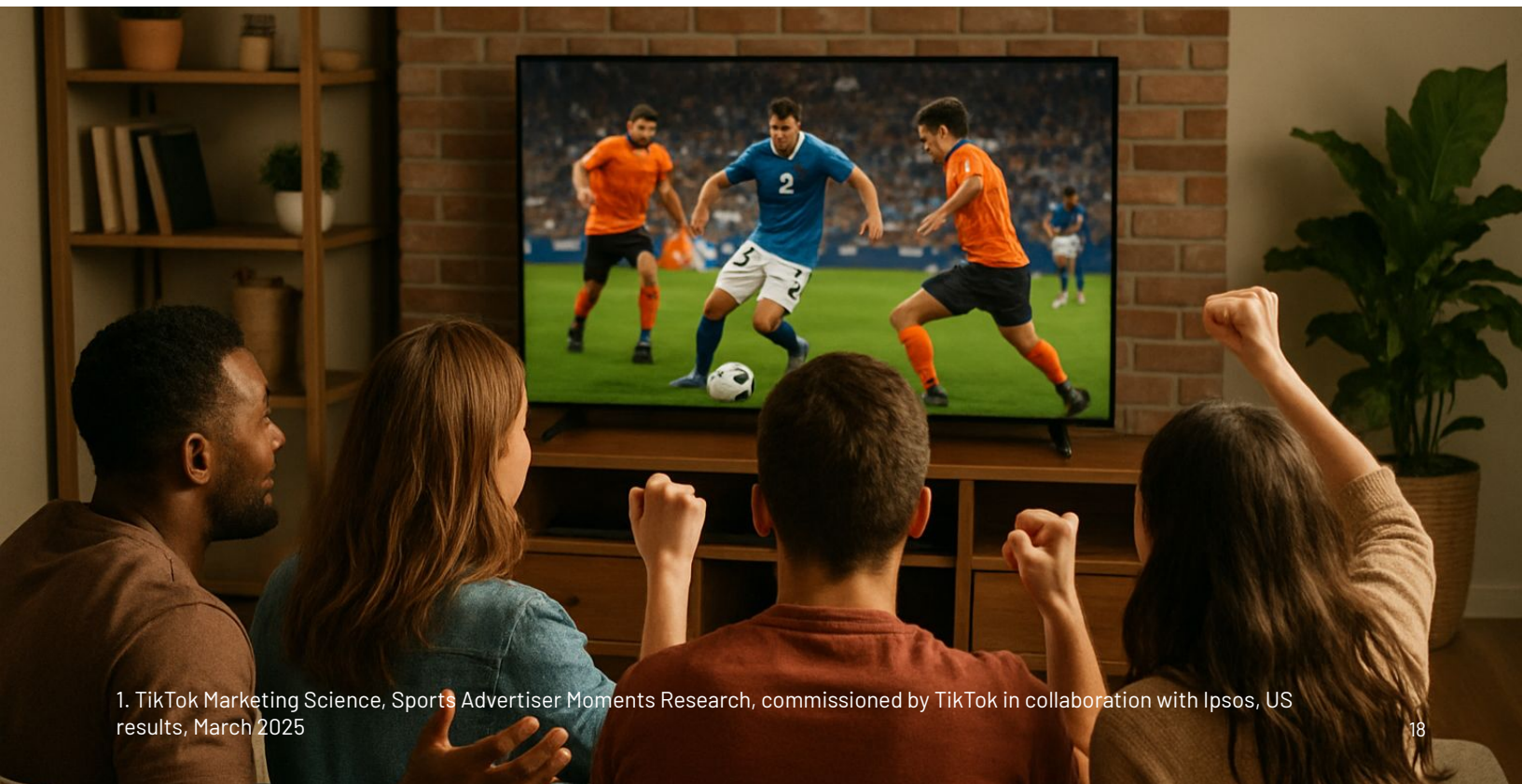
For TelCo and FinServ brands, the impact of showing up during these sports moments is both measurable and meaningful.



1 in 4 sports fan on TikTok surveyed successfully recalled TelCo or FinServ ads during sports moments on TikTok¹

Among those who recalled seeing TelCo and FinServ ads on TikTok, **7 in 10 expressed a willingness to either switch to or begin using the advertised brands¹**. Showcasing the compelling effectiveness of these ads in shaping consumer consideration.

What stands out most to users isn't just the product pitch; it's the storytelling and passionate resonance. In TelCo ads, users were especially drawn to the product/service being featured and the sentimental tone of the creative. In FinServ, it was the use of characters, mascots, spokespeople, and big-name athletes, and narrative-driven storytelling that made the ads more memorable and effective.

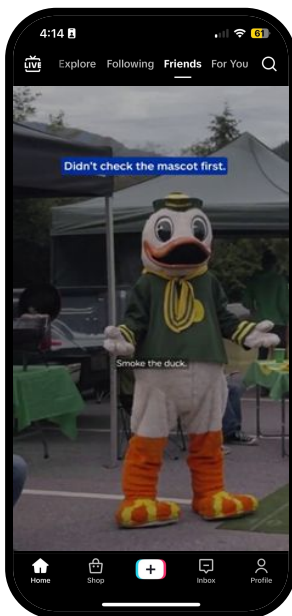




**Bringing the Game to Life
with Creative Strategies
that Resonate**

High Consideration Brands Score Big During Sports Moments

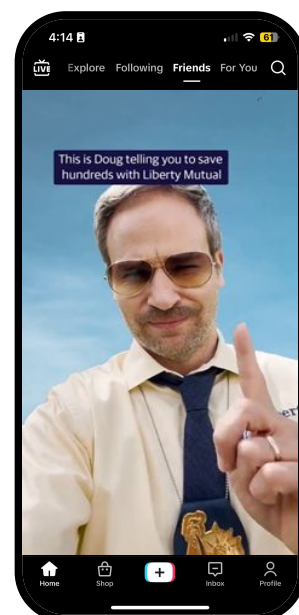
To better understand what types of advertising truly connect during sports moments on TikTok, TikTok commissioned Ipsos to conduct an in-context ad assessment using its Creative | Spark solution. The study evaluated 14 ads, seven each from TelCo and FinServ, directly in the TikTok feed. What emerged were clear creative patterns that distinguish winning strategies from forgettable ones.



Among the approaches tested, **sports-led** creatives consistently demonstrated the highest ad recall across both categories¹. These ads, often featuring celebrity athletes or dramatized sports moments, grab attention by aligning with the sentimental and cultural energy already pulsing through the feed. The use of familiar faces and authentic sports scenarios not only stops the scroll but also creates an immediate connection with fans.

Brand ambassador-led ads, while slightly less sentimentally charged, proved strongest in driving brand linkage¹.

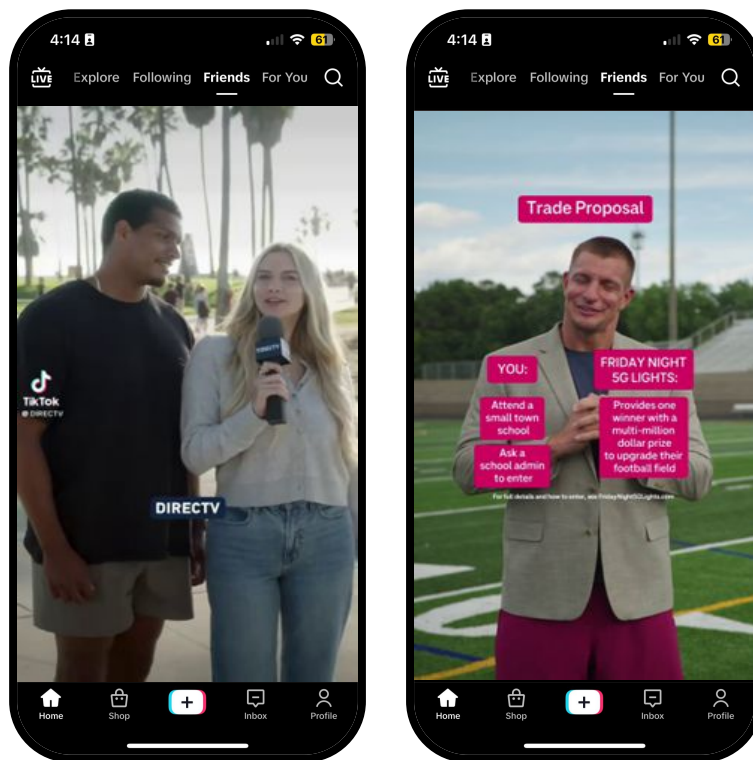
Recognizable mascots or spokespersons like the Geico gecko serve as built-in brand cues, helping viewers instantly identify the advertiser. These distinctive assets act as branding shortcuts, reinforcing memory and attribution even in short-form formats¹.



1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

High Consideration Brands Score Big During Sports Moments

Meanwhile, **creator-led and sports-led** content resonated most on authenticity, an essential ingredient for short-term consideration. Audiences responded positively to creators and athletes sharing personal experiences or engaging with the product in real-time sports contexts. These formats foster trust by putting the message in the hands of people who feel like peers, not advertisers¹.



Across both sectors, one tactic stood out for its ability to drive intent: the problem-solution framework. **Ads that clearly articulated a customer pain point and then offered a tangible, brand-led solution outperformed others in driving action¹.**



For TelCo and FinServ, where decision-making often involves overcoming friction, like switching providers or navigating financial complexity, this clarity of purpose made the difference. These ads not only entertained but also conveyed utility, increasing both relevance and comprehension¹.

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025

The Fit Effect: How to Align to Key Motivations of Viewers


At the core of effective advertising on TikTok is *fit*, the behavioral science principle that communications are more effective when they align with the viewer's mindset, motivations, and moment. For sports fans, this means two key things: they are driven by positive, forward-looking sentiments, and they value personal agency in their choices.

Sports fans are promotion-oriented; they engage because of the thrill of potential success and the joy of the moment. Seventy-four percent say watching sports excites them, and 75% say they feel hopeful that their team or player will win.

Brands that tap into this positive poignant terrain, showing how their products enhance rather than interrupt the experience, can earn more meaningful attention.

T-Mobile's "benefits beyond the ballpark" campaign successfully aligns with this mindset by spotlighting how its service amplifies fans' enjoyment of the moment.

Visa's "enjoy every bit of The Olympic Games" similarly speaks to this promotion orientation by promising a richer experience through their product.



Benefits beyond the ballpark.

When you join T-Mobile, your Magenta Status benefits start on day one. Enjoy streaming perks, travel rewards, exclusive entertainment access, and more just for being a customer.

[Find out more >](#)

Limited time. Qualifying plan required.



VISA | PARIS 2024
Worldwide Partner

Enjoy every bit of The Olympic Games thanks to Visa.

Use your QIB Visa Signature or Infinite Credit Card for a chance to win a full paid trip to attend the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

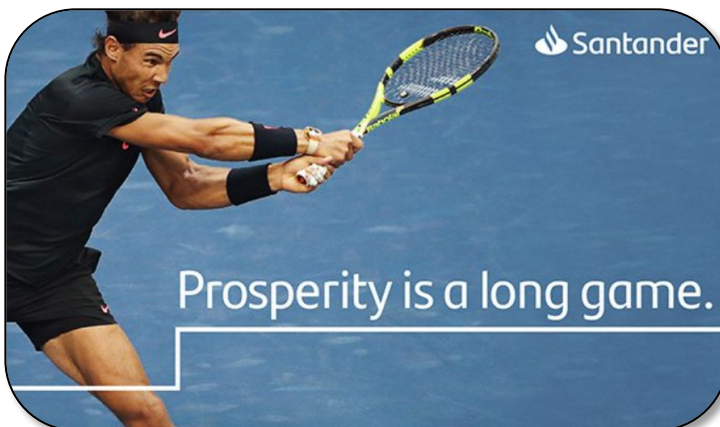
*Terms and Conditions Apply.

The Fit Effect: How to Align to Key Motivations of Viewers

Sports fans, especially on TikTok, have a strong internal locus of control. They're deliberate about what and when they watch. Seventy-nine percent choose which sports to watch based on personal interest (as opposed to passively watching what's on), and 72% say they watch sports because it's something they want to do, not because others are watching. More than half (54%) want to focus solely on the game while viewing, and 76% believe each game is truly unique. Effective ads in this environment honor that intentionality by positioning the product as a tool that empowers the viewer to shape their experience.

Santander's "prosperity is a long game," for example, resonates with this mindset by framing financial success as something within the consumer's control. Similarly, campaigns like Verizon's "Take the action with you" reinforce agency by showing consumers how they can access sports anytime, anywhere—on their terms.

Together, these creative insights and behavioral science principles form a playbook for brands looking to not just advertise during sports moments, but to become part of them. When brands align with how fans feel and behave during sports moments, they don't just get noticed—they get remembered, trusted, and chosen.





Final Words

TikTok has redefined what it means to be part of a sports moment. No longer confined to the arena or the living room, sports fandom now unfolds in real time across a dynamic, participatory platform; one where fans discover, react, and co-create the moment. This shift isn't just cultural, it's commercial. As the data shows, TikTok's community is highly engaged, deeply connected, and increasingly influential in how fans experience and act on sports content.

For TelCo and FinServ brands where consumer decisions are complex, infrequent, and trust-driven, this creates a uniquely powerful environment. Sports moments on TikTok offer emotional immediacy and contextual relevance, enabling brands to become part of the story rather than an interruption. When brands align with how fans feel and behave during these moments, especially with the right creative strategies, they don't just win attention: they build equity, deepen consideration, and drive action among the audiences that matter.

The playbook is clear: showing up during sports moments on TikTok isn't a sponsorship, it's a strategy, one that meets fans where they are, speaks their language, and earns their loyalty in the moments they care about.

Methodology

Quantitative Survey

- 15 minute online, device-agnostic survey
- US (n=500 TikTok Users, n=200 Non-TikTok Users)
- Sample Criteria
 - Adults 18-49
 - Current TikTok users (have used TikTok within the past month) OR Non-TikTok users (have used other social/video platforms in the past month)
 - Have watched live sports via TV/live streaming in the past 12 months
 - Recent TelCo switchers or intenders
 - Have switched or signed up with a new TelCo provider within the past 12 months
 - Are planning to switch or sign-up with a new TelCo provider in the next 12 months
 - Recent FinServ switchers or intenders
 - Have switched or signed up with a new financial institution or insurance provider within the past 12 months
 - Are planning to switch or sign-up with a new financial institution or insurance provider in the next 12 months
- Surveyed March 2025

Ad Test

We used **CreativeSpark**, an online survey-based approach, to see how well the digital ads performed. We showed the ad to people who represent our target audience, just like they'd see it on TikTok. Then, we asked them questions about what they remembered, what they felt, and if the ad made them want to purchase the brand or product advertised. We compared the scores of the ads to other ads in the Ipsos norm database to figure out each ad's individual strengths and weaknesses.

Sample Criteria:

- n=150 per ad
- Ages 18-34
- Have used TikTok in the past month



Acknowledgements

About TikTok

TikTok is the leading destination for short-form mobile video. Our mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy. TikTok has offices across the globe, including in Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Dubai, Singapore, Jakarta, Seoul, and Tokyo.

About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest market research company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people. In our world of rapid change, the need for reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater. At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth. This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People. To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do. So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder.

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References

1. TikTok Marketing Science, Sports Advertiser Moments Research, commissioned by TikTok in collaboration with Ipsos, US results, March 2025
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4. TikTok Internal Data, US, Q1 2025
5. All images are public domain from sites unsplash.com and pexels.com or were otherwise provided by TikTok

