

# Report: Consumer Purchasing Behavior on TikTok (2024–2025) by Generation

TikTok has rapidly grown into a key channel for product discovery and social commerce in the U.S., especially among younger consumers. Over **50% of U.S. adults 18–29 use TikTok**, compared to about 40% of those 30–49, 26% of those 50–64, and 10% over 65 ([35 TikTok stats every marketer needs to know in 2025](#)). This skew toward younger users means **Gen Z (born ~1997–2012) and Millennials (1981–1996)** dominate the platform’s shopping influence, though **Gen X (1965–1980) and Baby Boomers (1946–1964)** are gradually joining in. In fact, **nearly 4 in 5 Gen Z and 7 in 10 Millennials engage in social shopping at least occasionally**, whereas less than half of Gen X and under 30% of Boomers do ([Four in Five Gen Z’s and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)) ([Four in Five Gen Z’s and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)). TikTok’s entertaining short-form videos and viral trends (“TikTok made me buy it”) are reshaping how products are discovered and purchased across generations. Below, we analyze each aspect of this phenomenon – from discovery through purchase – highlighting generational differences with up-to-date 2024–2025 data and studies.

## 1. Product Discovery on TikTok: Organic vs. Paid Content

**Organic content on TikTok is a powerful engine for product discovery**, especially for Gen Z and Millennials. TikTok’s algorithmic “For You” feed surfaces trending posts, reviews, and creator content that often introduce users to new products in an engaging, authentic way. About **71% of TikTok shoppers say they get shopping inspiration just by stumbling across something interesting in their feed** ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#)). Viral challenges and hashtags (e.g. #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt) can rapidly popularize items organically. Influencers and everyday creators play a crucial role – **49% of TikTok users say that creators on the platform inspire them to explore products/brands** the creators feature ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#)). Gen Z in particular treats TikTok as a search and discovery platform: **17% of Gen Z uses TikTok to research products before purchasing**, far more than any other generation (only 8% of Millennials, 3% of Gen X, and virtually 0% of Boomers do the same) ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)). In fact, **nearly 40% of Americans (and 64% of Gen Z specifically) have at least once used TikTok as a search engine** for information, including product searches ([35 TikTok stats every marketer needs to know in 2025](#)). This underscores that younger consumers rely heavily on organic TikTok content – from reviews to unboxings to tutorial videos – to discover new products and services.

**Paid content (advertising) on TikTok is also an important discovery vehicle**, but it works best when adapted to the platform's style. TikTok offers in-feed ads, sponsored hashtag challenges, and now search ads, which brands use to reach consumers. Many **Millennials and Gen Z do encounter and act on TikTok ads** – one study found **Gen Zers are 23% more likely to make daily/weekly purchases after viewing a TikTok ad** (versus using TikTok's dedicated Shop) ([New Epsilon Research Finds Gen Z is 2x More Likely to Use an ...](#)). Overall, **61% of TikTok users have made a purchase directly through the platform or after seeing a TikTok advertisement** ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#)). Millennials, who came of age with online ads, are nearly as likely as Gen Z to buy via influencer or ad content they see on social media ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)), indicating they are receptive to paid promotions if relevant. **Millennials actually report being slightly more influenced by traditional digital ads than Gen Z**, likely because they never knew a time without e-commerce ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#)). That said, pure ads on TikTok can feel intrusive or less trustworthy to younger users unless done in a relatable way. A **TikTok marketing study noted that using "Spark Ads" (which leverage an existing organic post as an ad) helped brands build trust** and authenticity with TikTok audiences ([TikTok What's Next 2024 Shopping Trend Report](#)). This blurs the line between organic and paid – a strategy crucial for resonating with Gen Z.

**Generational differences in discovery: Gen Z and young Millennials** are heavily influenced by TikTok's organic ecosystem. TikTok has become **Gen Z's favorite channel for product discovery**, even slightly ahead of Instagram ([Gen Z Social Media Trends & Usage | Sprout Social](#)). They tend to follow creators rather than brand accounts, and *44% of Gen Z have made a purchase based on an influencer's endorsement* ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#)). Organic influencer content feels more credible to them than polished ads. Paid content still reaches Gen Z, but it needs to feel native to TikTok to be effective. **Older Millennials** (in their 30s) also use TikTok for discovery but continue to use Instagram and Facebook for finding products as well ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)) ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)). They are somewhat more tolerant of brand-driven content – for instance, **about 61% of Gen Z and 34% of older generations follow brands on social media** ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)), showing Millennials fall in between (many do follow brands, but they also like peer content). **Generation X and Boomers** use TikTok far less for discovering products. Many in these generations still primarily discover new products via more traditional channels (Google search, retail stores, or Facebook) ([How Each Generation Shops in 2024 [New Data from Our State of ...](#)]). Those Gen Xers and Boomers who are on TikTok might encounter product videos shared by family or see the occasional ad. Notably, TikTok's influence is starting to extend beyond youth: *even shoppers in their 40s have proven more likely to buy via TikTok Shop than the average consumer* ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#)), indicating that some Gen X are embracing TikTok-based discovery. However, by and large **Facebook remains the dominant social platform**

for product discovery among Gen X (60% of Gen X social shoppers use it) and Boomers (54%), while TikTok is used by only a minority of these older consumers for shopping (e.g. ~14% of Boomers) ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)). In summary, **organic content reigns for Gen Z and Millennials on TikTok**, whereas **paid content and external search play relatively bigger roles for Gen X and Boomers** who have lower engagement on the platform.

## 2. Trust and Credibility: Influencers, Reviews, and Comments

When evaluating products on TikTok, consumers look for signals of trust – and the credibility cues they heed can differ by generation. **Influencer recommendations are a major trust signal** on TikTok across all ages, but especially for young users. A recent survey showed that **nearly 3 in 5 Gen Z consumers trust recommendations from local or micro-influencers** on social media ([How TikTok Shop is changing the way brands reach customers | Marketing Dive](#)). In fact, **Gen Z is the most likely generation to turn to influencers for product advice** – 11% of Gen Z said influencers are their *most trusted* source for product recommendations (more than any other source except friends/family), compared to only 7% of Millennials and just 2–3% of Gen X and Boomers who say the same ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)). This reflects Gen Z's comfort with online creators: they often perceive influencers (especially those who seem “authentic” or are experts in a niche) as akin to peers. **Millennials** also value influencer input – over half of Millennials (56%) have bought something based on an influencer's recommendation ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)) – but they split their trust more with traditional sources. Millennials grew up reading online reviews and forums, so they will look at both influencer opinions and other consumers' feedback. **Gen X** tends to be more skeptical of influencers; they place more weight on *thorough research and user reviews*. According to marketing research, Gen X “reads A LOT of online reviews” and is highly *research-driven* in making purchases ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#)) ([Generational Marketing for Social Media](#)). They expect factual, quality information, and an influencer's word alone might not suffice unless that person has established expertise. **Boomers**, similarly, are cautious – they *trust recommendations from “peer influencers” in their own age group* or community more than from young internet stars ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#)). An older creator demonstrating a product (for example, a popular grandmother figure reviewing a skincare item) can resonate strongly with Boomers by lending relatability and credibility. But generally Boomers will want to see proof beyond just one TikTok video, often consulting *word-of-mouth from friends or consumer reports* before believing claims.

**Comments and peer reviews on TikTok videos are another key trust factor across generations.** TikTok's comment sections often become mini review forums whenever a product video goes viral – users ask “Does this actually work?” and others reply with their experiences. These peer comments can significantly sway perception. **Younger consumers (Gen Z & Millennials) are**

**very likely to scan comments for validation** of a product's quality or to spot red flags (like multiple people saying an item broke or is a scam). In TikTok's culture, a highly-liked comment such as "I bought this and it's legit 🔥" can boost trust quickly, whereas comments calling something overhyped will inject skepticism. This peer feedback loop serves as a form of **crowdsourced credibility**. **Older users** who venture onto TikTok also value comments, but many of them still prefer off-platform reviews (e.g. reading Amazon reviews or Googling the product) to feel fully assured. A study on social commerce trust found that **cognitive and emotional trust both impact TikTok purchase intentions**, and elements like \*community feedback in comments significantly influence consumer perceptions ([\[PDF\] THE ROLE OF COMMENTS ON PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS ...](#))]. Thus, a savvy brand will monitor and even engage in the comments, addressing questions or concerns to build trust (note: Gen Z especially appreciates when brands directly answer questions in the comments, showing transparency ([Gen Z Social Media Trends & Usage | Sprout Social](#))]).

**Influencer vs. official brand credibility:** All generations generally trust "real people" more than ads, but the degree varies. On TikTok, *\*~60% of users (across ages) say they're more likely to trust a brand after learning about it from an influencer than from an ad* ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))]. This highlights the power of influencer-driven, organic-feeling content. Gen Z and Millennials are particularly influenced by relatable creators who share honest product experiences – authenticity is paramount. In fact, *\*nearly 40% of Gen Z say they trust influencers more today than they did a year ago* ([Gen Z Social Media Trends & Usage | Sprout Social](#))], indicating growing comfort with creators as credible voices. That said, repeated exposure to a brand via TikTok ads can also build credibility over time; one analysis found *\*brand trust can increase by 41% after users consistently see its ads on TikTok* ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))]. *Repetition and consistency help with older consumers in particular – Gen X expects a reliable, high-quality brand presence across platforms before trusting enough to buy* ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))]. Likewise, **Boomers respond to seeing a brand engage professionally and respond to customer concerns**, which signals legitimacy. They also appreciate **clear indicators of quality and service (e.g. demonstrations, guarantees)** in TikTok content to overcome their skepticism ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#)) ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))]. In summary, **influencers are key credibility builders for Gen Z and Millennials**, while **peer reviews, comments, and a solid brand reputation matter increasingly as the audience age rises**. Smart brands often leverage a mix: using influencers to introduce and validate a product, and encouraging satisfied customers to leave reviews or UGC content, thereby creating layers of trust signals that appeal to all generations.

### **3. Consumer Path to Purchase: From TikTok Exposure to Transaction**

The journey from first seeing a product on TikTok to finally purchasing can be **very quick and impulsive for some, or more extended and research-intensive for others**, with clear generational patterns. TikTok's design encourages discovery and impulse: content is fast-paced and often paired with direct shopping links, which means **impulse buys are common**. Fully *\*55% of American TikTok users admit they have made an impulse purchase on social media* ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))]. TikTok even coined the meme "TikTok made me buy it" to describe how users spontaneously buy items that go viral. **Gen Z and Millennials are the most prone to these impulse purchases on TikTok**. They spend the most time on the app (many Gen Z spend 2+ hours daily) and thus encounter more temptation. TikTok's short-form videos make shopping feel like an *extension of content consumption rather than a formal transaction*, which lowers the barrier to impulse buying ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#))]. For example, a catchy 15-second video showing a cool gadget or a makeup transformation can drive a young viewer to click "buy" almost immediately if the item is affordable. **Beauty, fashion, and trendy lifestyle products** in particular see a lot of snap purchases from young TikTokers ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#))]. A TikTok trend report noted that highly engaging videos and creator demos blur entertainment and shopping, fueling quick decisions (a user thinks "that looks so useful/cute, I want it now!"). Indeed, *\*67% of TikTok users (majority younger) said they were inspired to shop for a product they saw even when they weren't actively looking to buy anything* ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))] – a testament to TikTok's impulse-driving power.

However, **not all purchases are immediate; many consumers follow a multi-step journey, especially as age increases or for higher-priced items**. Often the path goes like this: A user sees a product video -> they become interested -> they seek more information (either by watching additional TikToks, reading comments, or searching outside TikTok) -> they compare options or wait for reviews -> then purchase via their preferred channel. **Gen Z's path to purchase tends to stay within TikTok for longer** before exiting. For instance, if a Gen Z user sees a skincare product, they might tap the product tag to see details in TikTok, watch another creator's review of the same item, and check comments for people's feedback. Only after this *in-app research* might they finalize the purchase (possibly even through TikTok Shop if available). This behavior aligns with Gen Z's tendency to use TikTok as a search/review platform. *\*In one survey, 22% of TikTok users (largely Gen Z/Millennial) said they sometimes research products on TikTok before turning to any other method* ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))]. So for younger shoppers, TikTok often *contains* much of the consideration phase – they trust the community feedback and video demonstrations there. If they need more assurance, they might look at Reddit or YouTube for longer reviews, but many will make a decision on the spot if the TikTok consensus is positive.

**Older generations take a more extended and deliberate path to purchase from TikTok. Gen X**, being research-driven, will rarely buy something the first time they see it on a TikTok video.

Instead, a Gen X consumer might save or screenshot the product, then **do further research**: read reviews on Google, check the brand's website, perhaps ask friends or look on Facebook groups. Only after gathering confidence will they purchase, often on a desktop or a retailer site they trust. Social commerce data shows that for Gen X and Boomers, *social media is just one touchpoint* – they often complete the transaction elsewhere due to comfort with traditional e-commerce ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)]). Many Gen X/Boomers will go from TikTok to Google (“let me see if this product is on Amazon or has good reviews on a trusted site”). This doesn't mean TikTok didn't influence them – it may have triggered the interest – but their journey has more steps and checks. It's also worth noting that **a significant portion of older consumers simply lurk and do not convert at all via TikTok**. As of early 2024, *\*nearly half of Gen X and over 70% of Boomers did not shop on social platforms at all* ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)]). Those who do are a smaller group that's a bit more tech-forward or motivated by convenience.

**Impulse vs research by generation:** Summarizing, **Gen Z is the most impulse-driven** on TikTok – they're digitally native, trust the app's content, and value speed/convenience. Many Gen Z purchases on TikTok are low-consideration (like a fun accessory or viral snack) and happen within minutes or hours of discovery. That said, for pricier or important items, even Gen Z will apply some brakes and perhaps consult external info; for example, a Gen Z shopper might watch TikTok reviews *and then* read a Wirecutter article or look at Amazon reviews for an expensive gadget. **Millennials** often straddle impulse and research. They are comfortable buying online (they “remember no time when you couldn't research or buy online ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))]), so a Millennial might impulse-buy a cheap item on TikTok, but for something like a home appliance, they'll likely do comparison shopping. Millennials also frequently use TikTok in combination with Instagram or Google – e.g. they might find a product on TikTok but complete the purchase on a familiar site if that feels easier or more secure. **Gen X and Boomers** lean strongly toward research over impulse in the TikTok context. If something catches their eye on TikTok, it's often just the first step of a longer journey. They might need to overcome trust concerns (is the seller legit? how is the quality?) by consulting multiple sources. *Impulse buys do occur among older adults* – for instance, 38% of Boomers in one survey admitted they have purchased an item based on an influencer's recommendation (so they can be swayed on occasion ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#))). Typically these are lower-risk items or purchases driven by a trusted personality. But relative to younger cohorts, older generations are more restrained and methodical. Their path to purchase often *leads off TikTok* and back to channels they trust (brick-and-mortar stores, Amazon, etc.), unless the brand on TikTok is very well-known or the transaction is irresistibly easy (like a one-click purchase with a big coupon).

## 4. Top Categories Purchased via TikTok, by Generation

**Certain product categories thrive on TikTok's shopping scene, and generational preferences influence which items each age group buys most.** Overall, **beauty and fashion are the standout categories on TikTok Shop and in TikTok-driven purchases**, reflecting the platform's youthful skew and trend culture. By the end of 2023, *\*81% of TikTok Shop's U.S. sales were in the beauty and personal care category (skin, makeup, hair, etc.)* ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#))]. This aligns with the observation that countless beauty products have gone viral on TikTok (think skincare serums, hair styling tools, cosmetics). **Gen Z** (especially female Gen Z) are leading this trend – in one survey, **55% of Gen Z women said social media led them to buy more skincare products**, and similarly high numbers bought more clothing due to social media discover ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#))]. Young women on TikTok are often influenced by beauty “hacks” and makeup tutorials, which drives demand for those items. **Fashion, particularly fast-fashion apparel, is another top category for Gen Z on TikTok.** TikTok's haul videos and outfit inspiration clips translate into real sales. An analytics report found **11% of TikTok Shop customers had bought fast-fashion apparel in a 12-month period**, higher than the 7% among average shopper ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#))]. Moreover, TikTok shoppers showed high overlap with discount clothing retailers like Shein and Tem ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#))], indicating the appetite for affordable trendy clothes among young buyers. Gen Z men, for their part, are often drawn to **tech gadgets and gaming products** that trend on TikTok – e.g. a cool phone accessory or a new gaming device that goes viral. In fact, **38% of Gen Z men reported buying more tech products because of social media influence**, a higher share than women in Gen ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#))].

**Millennials** on TikTok also purchase a lot of beauty and fashion, but their category interests are a bit broader as many are in life stages of home-making and parenting. Millennials are known to use TikTok for discovering **home goods** (like clever kitchen gadgets, home organization tools that often trend) and **childcare or parenting products**. For example, a Millennial mom might see a TikTok about a baby swing or educational toy and purchase it after seeing the demo and comments. While hard data by generation for those categories is sparse, we can extrapolate: Millennials were the first generation to embrace online reviews for appliances and home items, so when such products show up on TikTok, they pay attention. **Millennial consumers also have significant overlap with Gen Z on beauty/fashion** – one study showed 56% of Millennials have bought something from an influencer's recommendation (almost equal to Gen Z's 58% ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#))]), with beauty and clothing being common examples. Additionally, some Millennials (and older Gen Z) are into **fitness and wellness trends** on TikTok, leading to purchases of supplements, workout gear, or health foods that go viral.

**Gen X** on TikTok tends to gravitate toward practical and hobby-related categories when they do buy. Common categories for Gen X (who are in their 40s and 50s) might include **home improvement or DIY gadgets, kitchen appliances** (as many enjoy cooking content on TikTok), and perhaps health-related products. For instance, a Gen X user might see a TikTok about a new

kitchen air fryer or a powerful cleaning tool and decide to buy it – these are items that align with their household responsibilities and interests. Gen X might also use TikTok for finding **gift ideas** for their kids (who might be Gen Z teens) – e.g. a cool tech toy trending on TikTok could be purchased by a Gen X parent for their child. Data from holiday 2023 shows TikTok is becoming a gift shopping channel: **about 5% of all Americans shopped TikTok Shop for gifts in 2023's holiday season**, including \*15% of Gen Z and 8% of Millennials ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#))]. While Gen X and Boomers weren't highlighted, this implies some of them participated likely for gift purchases (buying for younger family members, for example). Also, given **TikTok Shop's dominance in beauty**, it's plausible Gen X women also buy skincare/makeup they see – there are popular TikTok creators in their 40s and 50s reviewing beauty products, catering to that demographic.

**Baby Boomers** are the smallest demographic of TikTok shoppers, but those who do engage often focus on **health, personal care, and hobby items**. For example, a Boomer might buy a nutritional supplement or a pain relief gadget if they come across a TikTok video (especially if presented by a relatable older creator or medical professional). Boomers also enjoy nostalgia and practical solutions, so a TikTok video showing a handy gardening tool or a classic candy re-released might catch their interest. One anecdote noted that the top TikTok creator promoting a trendy sports drink was a mom in her 40s, and for a skincare brand it was a grandmother – showing that \*creators from older generations can successfully sell to their peers on TikTok ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are | LiveCraft](#))]. Thus, Boomers might purchase skincare or wellness products if marketed by a peer influencer highlighting how it benefits them (e.g., an older woman demonstrating a skincare routine that reduces wrinkles could drive Boomers to buy that product).

It's important to note that **across all generations, the products that do best on TikTok tend to be visually demonstrable and lend themselves to quick videos**. This is why beauty (you can show a transformation), fashion (show an outfit or haul), gadgets (show before/after or how it works), and food (recipe or taste test videos) are huge. TikTok's own data confirms this: aside from the ~80% share of Beauty in TikTok Shop sales, other growing categories include **apparel/accessories (TikTok Shop U.S. sold about \$1.01B in apparel in 2024 ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#)))**, \**food (13.6% of TikTok Shop volume) and household care (5.7%) ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))*]. So younger generations are driving beauty/fashion sales the most, but there is a niche of TikTok-led food purchases (e.g., viral snacks or recipe ingredients) and home goods – categories likely appealing to Millennials and Gen X. **Gen Z** is also known for being adventurous in trying viral food hacks and then buying those ingredients or snacks, whereas **Gen X/Boomers** may be more interested if it's a food they already like or something with a nostalgic twist.

## 5. Impact of TikTok's Shopping Tools (TikTok Shop, Links, In-App Checkout) by Generation



TikTok has been integrating more shopping features – such as **TikTok Shop (launched in the US in late 2023)**, product showcase tabs on profiles, clickable product links in videos, and in-app checkout – to streamline the path from discovery to purchase. These tools are **shaping consumer behavior by reducing friction**, but their uptake varies generationally.

**TikTok Shop** (the in-app marketplace) has quickly gained traction with young users. Within months of its U.S. launch, *\*about one-third of Americans on TikTok had tried TikTok Shop ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))*. Adoption is highest among TikTok's most active users: *\*30% of daily TikTok users in the U.S. tried TikTok Shop in its first year ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))*. Generationally, this skews young – **Gen Z adults (18–24) are about 3.2× more likely than the average consumer to buy something on TikTok Shop**, and those 25–34 (younger Millennials) are 1.8× more likely ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#)). In other words, **Gen Z and Millennials are the primary adopters of in-app purchasing on TikTok**. A study from early 2025 found that **55% of Gen Z social media users had made purchases directly within TikTok's app**, leveraging features like in-app checkout ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)). These young shoppers appreciate the convenience: TikTok's seamless integration of entertaining content and shop now buttons enables what feels like spontaneous, fun shopping. Many Gen Z users report that TikTok's integrated shopping makes buying “feel less transactional and more part of the experience ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#))”. Moreover, TikTok Shop often offers exclusive deals (coupons, flash sales), which *\*58% of TikTok users said would encourage them to buy via the app ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))*. This speaks to all ages but especially budget-conscious young people. In fact, TikTok Shop has run viral promotions (like steep discounts on popular items) that drove huge engagement from Gen Z/Millennials looking for a bargain. ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)) *Generational differences in preferred social shopping platforms. This chart from a 2025 study shows Millennials (green) vs. Boomers (red) and the platforms they most commonly use for in-app purchases. TikTok is a major social commerce platform for younger generations (42% of Millennials reported using TikTok to shop directly in-app), whereas Boomers rely far more on Facebook Marketplace and are far less likely to use TikTok for purchases (only 14% of Boomers ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#))). Instagram also outpaces TikTok among Boomers, while Millennials use a mix, with TikTok and Instagram both popular for shopping.*

While younger consumers are embracing TikTok's native shopping, **older generations have been more cautious**. *\*Gen X and Boomers cite privacy concerns, unfamiliarity with the process, and loyalty to traditional e-commerce as reasons for hesitancy ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially](#)*

[TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)】. Only 7% of Gen X and 1% of Boomers in a survey said they shop frequently via social media ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)】), and many of those who do prefer Facebook's more established marketplace. **Facebook remains the go-to for older users** partly because they trust it more and have used it longer. By contrast, TikTok's in-app checkout might feel too new or risky (entering credit card info into TikTok can seem dubious to someone not as tech-savvy). However, as TikTok improves trust and security features, some older users are slowly trying it. Among those who have tested TikTok Shop, satisfaction is high: *\*84% said it was easy to use and 80% found the checkout process fast* ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#)】). These positive experiences will be key to converting more skeptical users. Additionally, TikTok has integrated third-party payment options like PayPal ([How TikTok Shop is changing the way brands reach customers | Marketing Dive](#)】), which may reassure users who don't want to give TikTok their card directly.

**Features like live shopping and product links also have varied generational impact.** TikTok Live Shopping (where hosts sell items during a livestream) is a format that TikTok is pushing. This interactive, real-time shopping is very popular in Asia, and TikTok hopes to replicate that. So far, it appeals mostly to younger audiences in the U.S. – Gen Z and young Millennials might tune into a live event if it features a favorite influencer or a chance at a limited drop. For example, brands have run live flash sales with influencers on TikTok; **a popcorn brand recruited two young creators to host weekly live shopping streams** with giveaways and saw strong engagement ([How TikTok Shop is changing the way brands reach customers | Marketing Dive](#)) ([How TikTok Shop is changing the way brands reach customers | Marketing Dive](#)】). In general, **livestream shopping is growing** and tends to have high conversion when viewers are engaged ([Four in Five Gen Z's and Seven in 10 Millennials Are Now Shopping at Least Occasionally on Social Media Platforms, Especially TikTok, YouTube, Facebook & Instagram | NuVoodoo](#)】). Older generations, on the other hand, are *less likely to watch TikTok livestreams*. Boomers are more familiar with TV shopping (QVC), but may not be aware of or comfortable with TikTok Live. That said, if an older user does stumble on a live selling event (say, an author they follow selling a book, or a local shop owner streaming), they might find it novel. It will likely take time (and perhaps older hosts) for live social selling to catch on with Boomers/Gen X.

**Clickable links in TikTok bios or videos** (which lead out to external websites) are a simpler tool that spans generations. Brands and creators often say “link in bio” for viewers to purchase on an external site. Gen Z and Millennials will use those links readily if the TikTok Shop option isn't available – for instance, a small business might not have TikTok Shop set up, so young users will click to its Shopify site to buy. Older users, interestingly, might *prefer* link-out because it takes them to a traditional webpage where they feel more in control. So clickable links serve as a bridge for those not ready for in-app checkout.

**In-app checkout versus external purchase preferences differ by age: Gen Z** is increasingly comfortable with in-app checkout (they trust the app's payment process more, especially as

many use mobile payments often). They enjoy the *speed*: quick and easy checkout was rated the #1 priority in Gen Z's shopping experience ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)), and TikTok's native purchase can deliver on that. **Millennials** also appreciate convenience, but a good number still like using familiar retailers – for example, a Millennial might see something on TikTok but choose to buy it on Amazon if available (for Prime shipping and perceived buyer protection). **Gen X and Boomers** overwhelmingly tend to finalize purchases off-app. They might note down a product from TikTok and buy it in a store or on a known website later. Security is one big factor – older consumers worry about scams on new platforms. TikTok's challenge is to mimic the trust signals of known e-commerce (secure checkout, return policies, customer support) to win over these generations. It's telling that even among TikTok users who say social media influences their clothing purchases, only 41% of them (mostly younger) had tried TikTok Shop and liked it ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#)) – implying others might have tried and not been sold, or not tried at all.

In summary, **TikTok's integrated shopping tools significantly boost impulse purchases and conversions for Gen Z and Millennials by making the process frictionless**, but **older generations still largely stick to external purchasing**. The presence of TikTok Shop and easy links means a Gen Z user can go from "I love that" to owning the product in under 5 minutes, whereas a Boomer might still prefer to "see it in person or buy from a known store". Over time, as TikTok's shopping ecosystem matures (and if it avoids regulatory issues or ban ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#))), we can expect some increase in older adoption, especially if incentives (e.g. special discounts) are offered. Already, *\*15% of Gen Z and 8% of Millennials used TikTok Shop for holiday gifts in 2023* ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#)) – these numbers may rise in 2024, and perhaps Gen X will reach high single-digits too as comfort grows. TikTok's own projection was optimistic, expecting its U.S. commerce sales to jump tenfold in 202 ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#)), which likely assumes broader demographic uptake of its shopping tools.

## Actionable Recommendations for Brands

Given these insights, here are concrete strategies for brands to effectively engage TikTok consumers across generations:

### 1. Optimize Content Strategy & Influencer Collaborations by Generation:

- **Gen Z:** *Authenticity and entertainment are key.* Embrace TikTok's native style – informal, relatable, and trend-driven content. Collaborate with micro-influencers and creators who have credibility in Gen Z communities (e.g. a popular college student for fashion, a young makeup artist for beauty). Gen Z trusts peer voices, so encourage influencers to share

genuine personal experiences with your product (rather than a polished ad pitch ([How TikTok Shop is changing the way brands reach customers | Marketing Dive](#)) ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#))). Short, catchy videos (e.g. “day in my life using [Product]” or viral challenges involving the product) can spark organic interest. Engage directly with Gen Z viewers by replying to comments and duetting their videos – this generation loves brands that interact and feel human ([Gen Z Social Media Trends & Usage | Sprout Social](#))). *Tip:* Use TikTok’s **Spark Ads** to amplify organic posts created by Gen Z creator ([TikTok What's Next 2024 Shopping Trend Report](#)) – this preserves an organic feel while getting wider reach via paid promotion.

- **Millennials:** *Blend authenticity with brand values and information.* Millennials appreciate user-generated content and transparency ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))), but they also respond to messaging about a brand’s mission or quality. Partner with influencers who align with causes important to Millennials or who can speak to product quality in depth (for example, a tech reviewer for a gadget, or a mom influencer for a baby product). Since Millennials are the largest generation on social media ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))), ensure your content also highlights your brand’s values (sustainability, inclusivity, etc.) – e.g. showcase diverse creators using the product, or share a quick TikTok about your ethical sourcing. Millennials are more likely than Gen Z to follow brand accounts directly ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#))), so maintain an active TikTok profile that provides value (how-tos, behind-the-scenes, etc.). They can be influenced by ads to ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))), so don’t shy away from using TikTok’s ad formats, but make ads informative and visually appealing. *Tip:* Encourage satisfied Millennial customers to create content (reviews, unboxings) and repost that – this serves as authentic testimonials that their peers trust ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))).
- **Gen X:** *Focus on information, quality, and trust-building.* To engage Gen X on TikTok, content should be a bit more substantive. This generation is skeptical and research-prone, so consider TikToks that present *facts and demonstrations* – for example, a 1-minute video showing “5 reasons why [Product] outperforms the competition” or a side-by-side comparison if applicable. Use captions or on-screen text to highlight specs, durability, or value propositions (Gen X expects the “best of everything” if they are to spend ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#)))). Featuring an expert or an older influencer (late 30s-50s) can help, as Gen X will trust someone they view as an authority or relatable figure. Additionally, Gen X reads reviews, so leverage TikTok’s comment section: pin comments from customers praising the product, or have the creator mention that “1000+ five-star reviews back this up” if true. Another strategy is to use TikTok to tease longer-form content (Gen X might click through to a YouTube link or website for details). For example, post a TikTok of a product in action with a call-to-action like “See full demo on our site.” *Tip:* Use **TikTok’s Q&A** or

**reply-to-comment with video** features to address Gen X questions. If a user asks, “How long does the battery last?” respond with a video answer – this builds credibility and shows excellent customer service, which Gen X value ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))].

- **Baby Boomers:** *Leverage reliability, clarity, and cross-platform integration.* To reach Boomers on TikTok, content should feature people and situations they identify with. Work with “peer influencers” – older creators or even well-spoken regular customers in the Boomer age range – to showcase your product in us ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))]. For example, an older adult demonstrating how a kitchen gadget simplifies cooking for their family can strongly resonate (Boomers value products that improve their daily life and family time ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#)) ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))). Keep videos clear and not too fast-paced; use slightly larger text for any on-screen info (accessibility counts). Boomers also respond to *special offers* and loyalty program ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#))], so consider TikToks highlighting a senior discount, a limited-time promo code, or a satisfaction guarantee – these build confidence to purchase. Since many Boomers are more active on Facebook, ensure your TikTok content or influencer videos are repurposed there as well; a multi-platform approach will reinforce the message (they might see it on TikTok and later on Facebook, which could be the nudge to buy). *Tip:* Include a clear call-to-action like “Visit our profile for the link to buy” or even a phone number for orders if applicable – some Boomers might prefer calling or a traditional route, and providing that info can increase conversion (this depends on business type, of course). In all cases, make the purchasing process or next step very straightforward for them.

## 2. Leverage TikTok’s In-App Shopping Tools Effectively:

Brands should **take full advantage of TikTok’s shopping features** to capture the high intent that the content generates – especially for Gen Z and Millennials who are ready to buy on a whim. First, if you’re selling products, **enroll in TikTok Shop** and set up a product catalog. This allows you to add product links directly in your TikToks and run in-app checkout. By doing so, you enable that seamless impulse purchase (critical since 71% of TikTok shoppers are inspired by spontaneous feed browsing ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#))). When a video goes viral, having the item one tap away is huge. For example, if a beauty product is featured, a TikTok Shop link lets Gen Z viewers buy it *right within TikTok*, capitalizing on the excitement before it fades. Also, consider using TikTok’s **Live Shopping** feature for product launches or special sales targeted at younger audiences – promote the live event on TikTok and other channels to draw a crowd. During the live, use the shopping pin to let viewers purchase in real-time. This interactive format can drive urgency and conversion (e.g. “Only 100 units, buy now!”).

At the same time, **accommodate users who prefer traditional purchase paths**, which often means older consumers. Ensure that your TikTok profile has a link (using Linktree or similar) to your website or Amazon page, so Gen X or Boomers who don't want to checkout in-app can easily find you outside TikTok. Essentially, provide both options: in-app checkout for those comfortable (mostly young), and a clear external link for those who want it. Monitor your TikTok Shop analytics: if you see many abandoned carts, that might signal some users aren't comfortable finishing in-app, so consider a strategy to reassure them (maybe a TikTok video addressing "How to safely buy on TikTok" or simply adjusting content to mention "also available on our website").

Another tool to leverage is **TikTok-exclusive promotions**. Since a **major incentive for hesitant users is a good deal (58% would try TikTok Shop with a coupon ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#)))**, offer exclusive discount codes or small freebies for purchasing via TikTok. For example, "Use code TIKTOK10 for 10% off only on TikTok Shop!" can entice Millennials (who love a deal) and even budget-conscious Boomers to give it a go. TikTok Shop currently is heavily used for beauty deals; if you're in that category or similarly crowded ones, promotions can set you apart. Also highlight TikTok Shop's benefits: mention if shipping is fast or if returns are easy, since these are concerns people have. If TikTok offers any buyer protection program, call that out to build trust.

Lastly, **streamline the purchase experience** on TikTok. Keep your product descriptions concise and clear (many will skim), use high-quality images, and ensure pricing/shipping info is transparent. Given Gen Z's desire for quick checkout ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)), minimize the steps – for instance, enable features like Apple Pay or saved payments in TikTok if available, so returning customers (the repeat buyers) can checkout in literally one or two taps. The easier it is, the more likely an impulse view converts to a purchase across all ages. In summary: make buying on TikTok as *fun and frictionless* as watching TikToks, but also provide off-ramps (external links) for those who need them.

### **3. Position Products and Messaging for Generational Appeal:**

Different generations respond to different messaging angles, so tailor how you position your product to each cohort's values and needs:

- **For Gen Z:** Emphasize how your product aligns with trends or social values. This generation loves to be on the cutting edge and also cares about ethics. If your product is viral or "hot" – play that up ("#TikTokMadeMeBuyIt favorite" or "trending must-have"). If it ties to a lifestyle trend (sustainability, DIY fashion, etc.), showcase that. Also highlight causes or purpose: e.g. mention if the brand is eco-friendly, as \*34% of Gen Z value brand authenticity and 25% value transparency more than other gens ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)) ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)). Even in short TikToks, you can drop these hints (quick text like "100% vegan" or a clip of your product's recyclable packaging). Gen Z is also attracted to exclusivity and community – so positioning a product as something that allows them to join a

community or express their identity helps. For example, “Join the fam” or show UGC of lots of Gen Z users using it to create a sense of FOMO if they don’t have it.

- **For Millennials:** Highlight quality, convenience, and values. Millennials are now in their late 20s to 40-ish; many are busy professionals or parents. Position your product as a solution that *makes life easier or better*. If it’s a tech or appliance, emphasize time-saving features; if it’s apparel, perhaps comfort and style; if it’s an experience, how it enriches family or personal life. Millennials also respond to brand values: they like brands that take a stand on issues and treat people well. Nearly \*84% of Millennials (and Gen Z) say they’re more likely to buy from companies that treat their employees well ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#)) – while you can’t detail this in every TikTok, even a mention or a separate TikTok about your company culture or charity work can boost Millennial affinity. In positioning statements, underscore authenticity: avoid overhyping; be honest and open (Millennials can sniff out insincerity and they value the truth). They are also a price-conscious cohort (many have been hit by economic downturns), so for pricier products, stress the value or ROI. For example, a TikTok showing “why it’s worth it to invest in [Product] – it lasted me 5 years...” could resonate.
- **For Gen X:** Emphasize reliability, premium quality, and excellent customer service. Gen X are in their peak earning years but also very discerning – they want the best and are willing to pay if convinced. Position your product as a *smart choice* for the savvy consumer. For instance, highlight if your product has won awards or has superior build quality. Gen X grew up with advertising, so they can be cynical; backing claims with evidence or testimonials from credible sources is effective. If your product is higher-end, don’t shy away from portraying it as such – Gen X doesn’t mind paying for true quality. Also, since they are research-driven, provide the details somewhere easily accessible (like a link to specs) to satisfy that need. Another aspect: Gen X appreciates when you *respect their intelligence* – so marketing should be straightforward and not gimmicky. Positioning that appeals might be, for example, “the last [Product] you’ll ever need to buy” (implying durability), or “recommended by professionals” if applicable. And given Gen X’s family obligations (many have kids, some caring for aging parents), showing how your product is *practical* and solves a real problem will hit home.
- **For Boomers:** Stress ease-of-use, support, and the enjoyment the product can bring. Boomers tend to ask “Will this be complicated?” – so assure them it’s simple. Position your product as *accessible and helpful*. For example, if selling tech to Boomers, emphasize plug-and-play and include setup help if you have it. If it’s a health or lifestyle product, focus on how it improves quality of life or helps them stay active/connected to family. Boomers also hold nostalgia; where appropriate, you can frame products in a way that evokes nostalgia or timelessness (“a modern twist on the classics” for a food or a style item, for instance). Since Boomers have the most disposable income on average ([Generational Marketing for Social Media - Formation Media](#)), positioning can also

appeal to treating themselves: high-end marketing might work if you build trust. Importantly, highlight customer service or guarantee – e.g. “30-day money back guarantee, no questions asked.” Knowing they can get help or a refund if anything goes wrong is a big confidence booster for older consumers who worry about online purchases. Finally, many Boomers are motivated by being able to share or gift to others; showing how the product can bring family together or be enjoyed with grandchildren (if applicable) can be a persuasive angle in your TikTok storytelling.

#### **4. Cross-Generational Engagement and Community-Building:**

This is a broader recommendation that ties everything together – **build a TikTok presence that fosters community and trust across ages**. While you will tailor specific content to each generation as noted, also look for crossover opportunities. For example, running a **hashtag challenge** that invites users of all ages to participate (maybe something fun like a dance or a life-hack related to your product) can generate inter-generational buzz. Some of TikTok’s charm is that content can appeal widely; a wholesome, clever TikTok might be shared by Gen Z to their mom or vice versa. Acknowledge your multigenerational audience in subtle ways: if you notice in comments that Boomers have questions, maybe do a TikTok “explainer” that anyone could find useful. Likewise, share customer stories from different ages (“Meet X, a 55-year-old gardener who loves our tool, and Y, a 25-year-old apartment dweller who uses it too”). This kind of content can validate each generation’s adoption – Boomers see “people like me” using it, and younger folks see that it’s broadly loved (which signals the product’s legitimacy).

Encourage **reviews and referrals on TikTok**: for Gen Z/Millennials, maybe a TikTok contest for user videos about your product; for Gen X/Boomers, ask for their feedback in comments (“If you’re a parent or grandparent who tried this, let us know your experience!”). By amplifying real user voices, you create trust signals that span generations. Remember, *family influence is strong*: Gen Z often get parents to buy things for them, and Boomers often get gift ideas from younger folks. If your TikTok content can spark conversations between Gen Z, their Millennial siblings, their Gen X parents, and Boomer grandparents, you’ve hit a marketing sweet spot. One family-centric idea: produce a TikTok that humorously shows *multiple generations using your product together* – this not only entertains but plants the idea that “hey, this could be enjoyed by my whole family.”

In all, a brand that authentically engages on TikTok, leverages the platform’s shopping tools smartly, and speaks to the unique priorities of Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers will position itself to convert TikTok’s massive cultural influence into actual sales. The years 2024 and 2025 are proving that TikTok can drive significant commerce in the U.S., and brands that adapt their strategies to generational behaviors on this platform will reap the rewards of effective, targeted marketing.

**Sources:** The analysis above incorporates findings from recent surveys, consumer studies, and industry reports in 2024–2025, including TikTok’s own research on shopping trends, Statista



and eMarketer data, marketing industry surveys (Epsilon, Sprout Social), and commerce studies (Capital One Shopping Research, Earnest Analytics, NuVoodoo 2025 Consumer Study), among other ([TikTok Shop Statistics \(2025\): Revenue, Growth & Trends](#)) ([TikTok Shop Is Attracting Millions Of Consumers. 7 Facts About Who They Are - The Wise Marketer](#)) ([How TikTok Shop is changing the way brands reach customers | Marketing Dive](#)) ([85+ Stats on Gen Z Spending and Buying Habits \(2024\)](#))]. These sources are cited inline to support each insight.