



Insights exchange for the model-driven economy

Sector Spotlight

The TikTok Shop Playbook

How Content-Led Commerce Is Reshaping Retail

February 19, 2026

Carbon Arc Data Assets:

TikTok Shop, Digital Advertising, Credit Card – US Complete Panel, Clickstream

Executive Summary

TikTok Shop rewrote the rules of US commerce in 2025, surpassing \$14B in US revenue as it cemented itself as the dominant discovery-to-purchase engine of the social commerce era.

The data reveals a new playbook: concentrated SKUs tied to brand moments and amplified through sustained video content drive outsized scale, and organic creator momentum generates more durable revenue than paid activation.

This model isn't exclusive to social-native or emerging brands. Legacy brands are increasingly leveraging TikTok Shop as an additional sales channel and a tool for product activation. This is not a passive marketplace. It's a content-driven activation engine reshaping retail in real time.

Key Takeaways

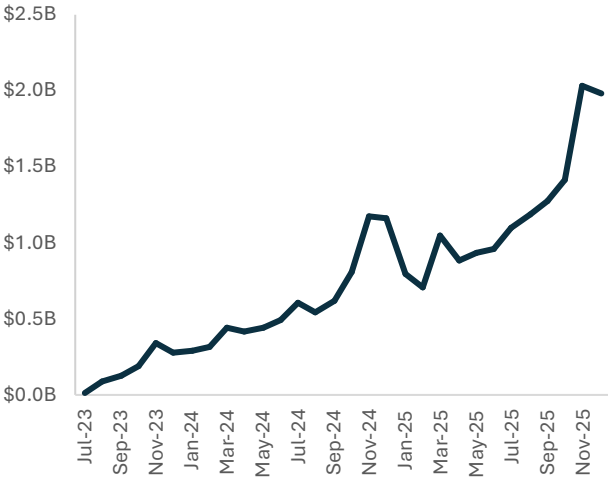
- TikTok Shop delivered a breakout year in 2025, surpassing \$14B in US revenue and placing it firmly in the company of major retail platforms.¹ At the same time, the model is scaling rapidly across international markets
- Medicube's ~\$100M in US sales reflects execution, not brand equity. A disciplined creator flywheel delivered sustained scale.
- Medicube's TikTok Shop revenue is highly concentrated in a single core SKU. Video commerce drives the majority of sales, underscoring a new social commerce model where content is the storefront.
- Organic creator moments drive larger and more durable revenue inflections than paid activations. On TikTok Shop, earned virality compounds while paid support produces smaller and shorter-lived lifts.
- TikTok Shop reshapes product hierarchy, elevating curated sets and exclusives over legacy bestsellers. The platform functions as a launch and activation engine - not a passive catalog extension.
- TikTok Shop is unlocking incremental growth for legacy brands. QVC saw explosive revenue growth on the platform while gaining meaningful exposure to younger generations beyond its traditional base.

TikTok Shop in 2025: A New Force in Global Commerce

TikTok Shop is one of the fastest-growing and still least understood forces in global commerce. It is redefining social-driven retail, pulling billions of dollars into a model where content, creators, and conversion live in the same feed. In 2025, US revenues exceeded \$14B - putting TikTok Shop on par with legacy marketplaces like eBay.¹ Globally, the platform has expanded in a deliberate, country-by-country roll out, steadily building scale while reshaping how consumers discover and purchase products.

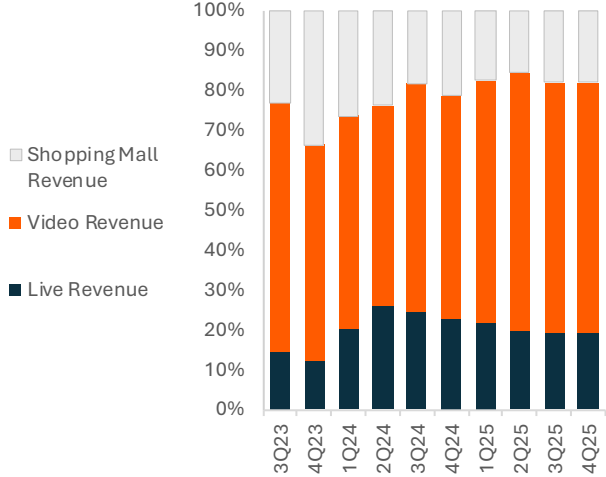
Video commerce drives nearly two-thirds of US revenue, and that share has held steady since launch, suggesting the platform's core monetization engine is content-driven discovery, not traditional marketplace browsing. As the platform matures, understanding the strategies of brands that are winning today - from content cadence to creator partnerships to channel mix - will be critical for emerging digital-native brands, scaling incumbents, and legacy retailers alike. The playbook is being written in real time.

Exhibit 1: US TikTok Shop Revenue



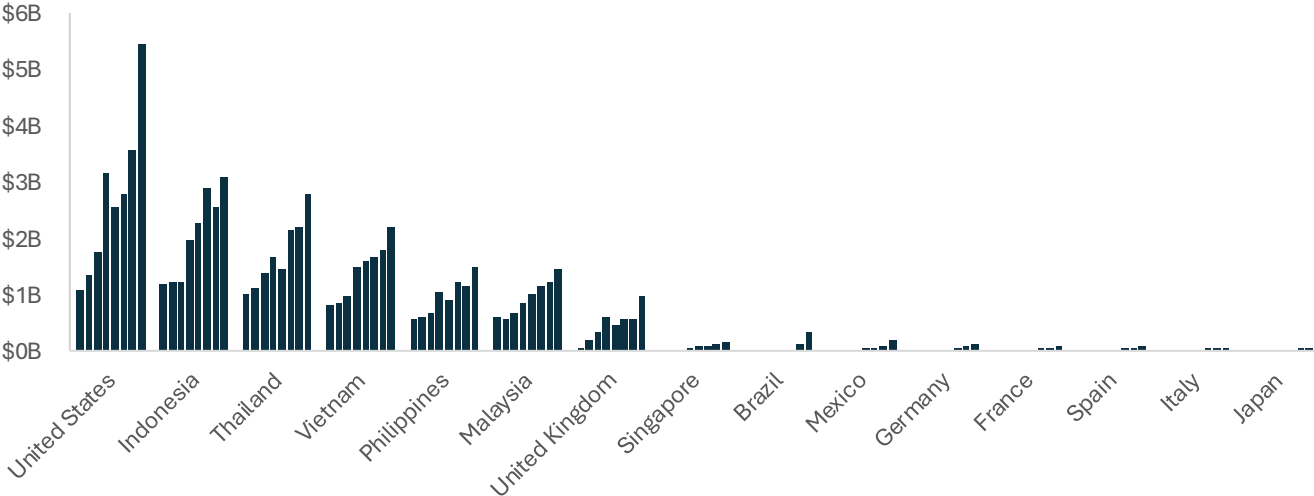
Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: 185.81 Tokens

Exhibit 2: US TikTok Shop Revenue Composition by Channel



Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 3: International TikTok Shop Revenue by Quarter (2024–2025)



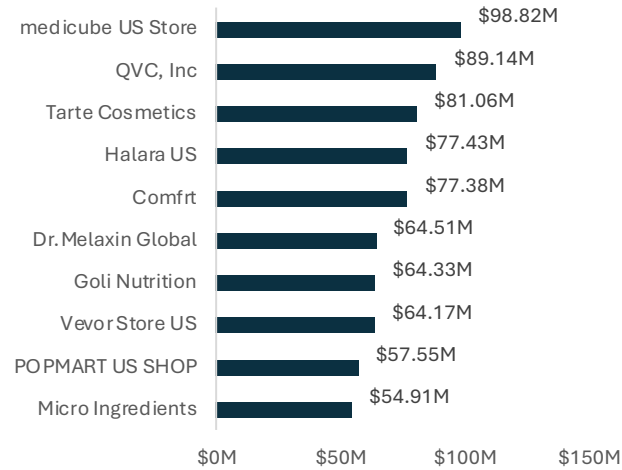
Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: 1,632.59 Tokens

Medicube: How a K-Beauty Brand Became TikTok Shop's Top Seller

Medicube was the top-selling merchant on US TikTok Shop in 2025, generating nearly ~\$100M in revenue. The brand represents an early winner in the social commerce era, not because of pre-existing brand equity, but because of a disciplined, platform-native growth strategy that leaned into creator partnerships, product innovation, and TikTok-native commerce moments.

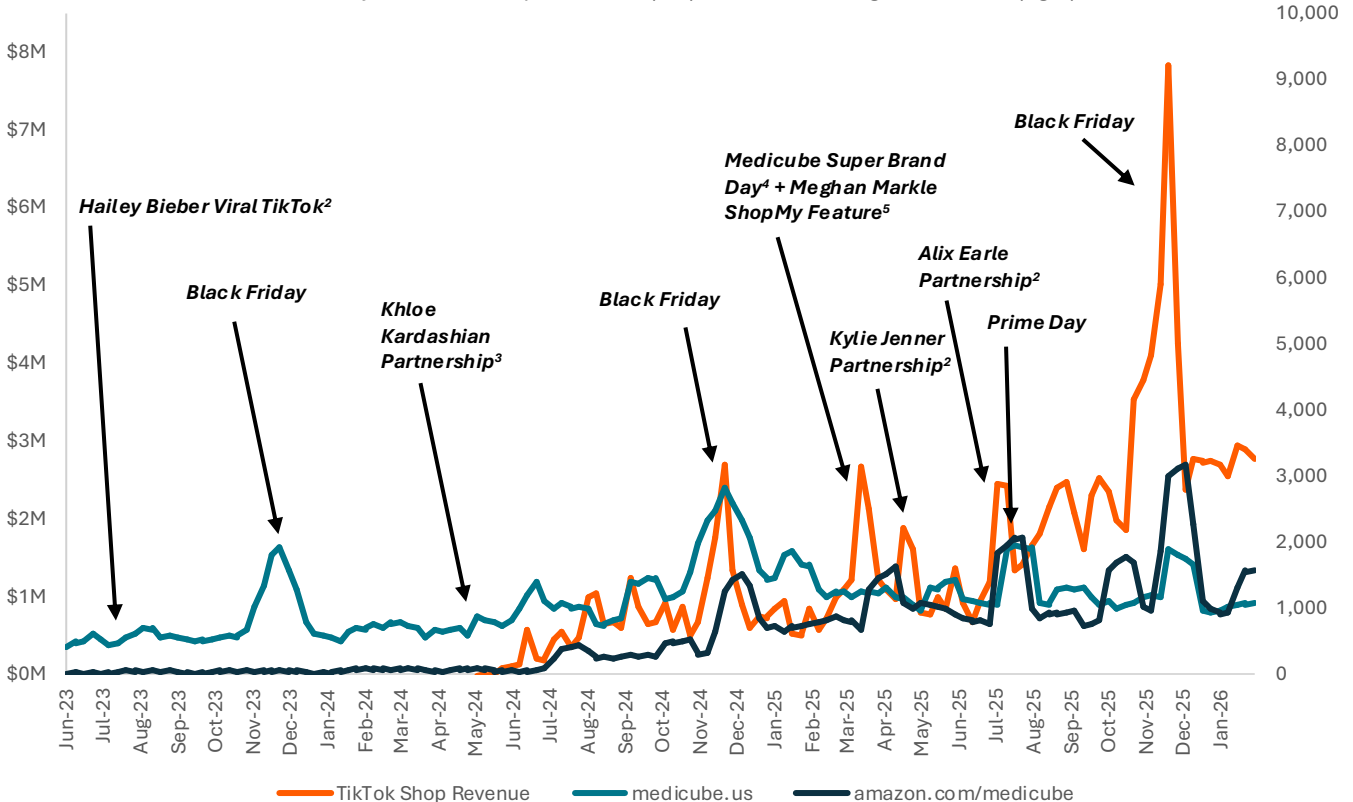
Medicube's breakout moment came in Summer 2023 when its Age-R Booster Pro went viral after being featured in Hailey Bieber's skincare routine.² From there, the brand systematically scaled - launching its TikTok Shop in mid-2024, capitalizing on major retail events like Super Brand Day, and layering in high-profile creator partnerships with Khloe Kardashian, Kylie Jenner, and Alix Earle. Each activation drove a visible revenue inflection, but the cumulative effect has been more important than any single moment: Medicube built a compounding content flywheel where each partnership reinforced brand awareness and drove sustained growth across channels.

Exhibit 4: Top 10 Shops by Revenue - US TikTok Shop



Source: Carbon Arc TikTokShop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 5: Medicube Weekly US TikTok Shop Revenues (left) vs 4-week Rolling Clickstream (right)



Source: Carbon Arc TikTokShop – CA0045B / Carbon Arc Clickstream – CA0030
Price: 243.2 Tokens / Requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Medicube: Product Mix, Channel Economics & Ad Strategy

Medicube's product mix from 2025 reveals a clear leading SKU. The Affordable Glass Glow Skincare Set - a bundle of the brand's most popular products - generated over \$35M in 2025, accounting for more than a third of Medicube's ~\$99M in total TikTok Shop revenue. The set serves as an entry point into the broader Medicube ecosystem, giving new customers a curated introduction at a single price point. The rest of the portfolio provides breadth, but the Glass Glow set is the primary engine.

Revenue was overwhelmingly driven by video commerce, with live streaming at 25% and shopping mall contributing virtually nothing. On TikTok Shop, content is the storefront. Medicube's ad spend remains concentrated on Meta platforms, though TikTok's share has grown from low single digits in 2022-2023 to ~13-15% in 2025.

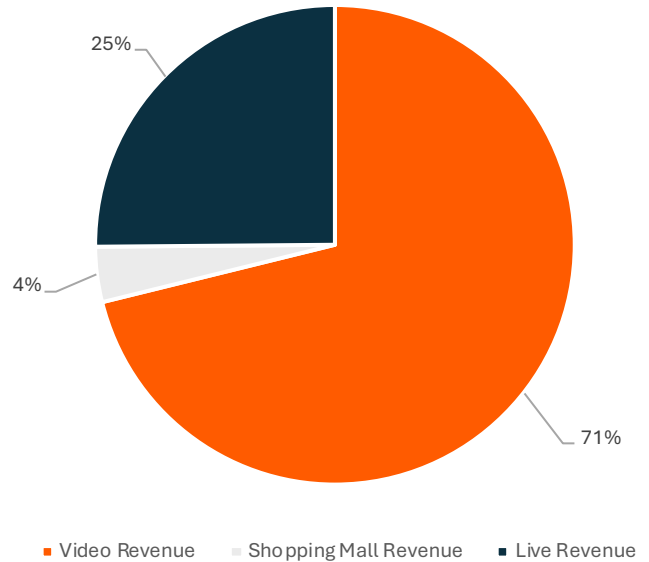
Exhibit 6: Medicube Top 10 Products by US Revenue (2025)

Bars = Total Revenue, Labels = Average Unit Price



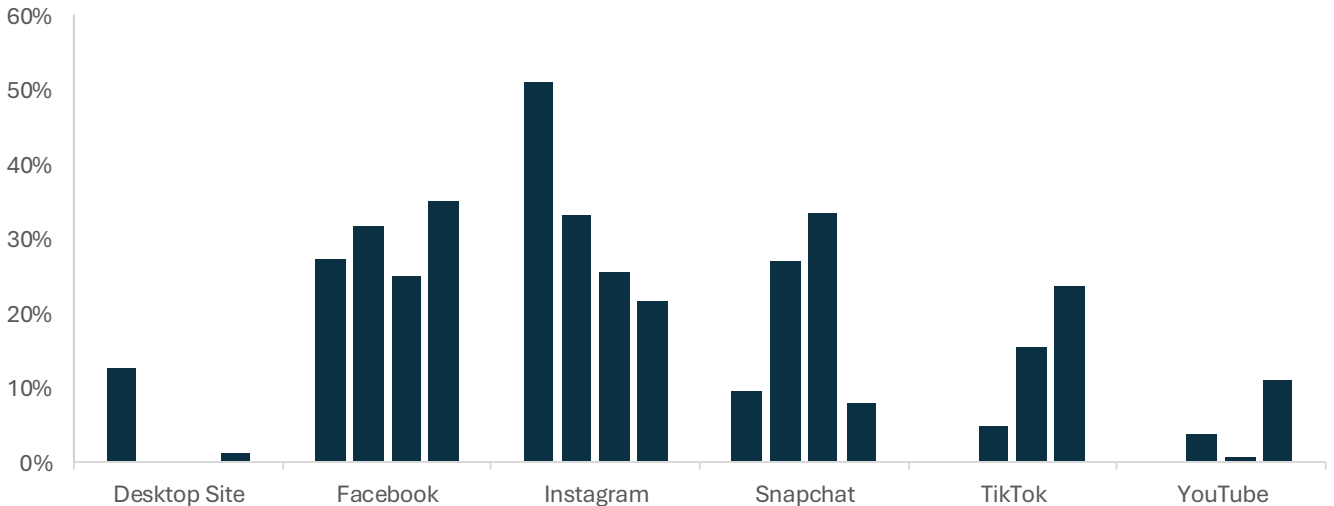
Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 7: 2025 Medicube US TikTok Shop Revenue Composition by Channel



Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 8: Medicube Ad Spend Composition by Platform (2022–2025)



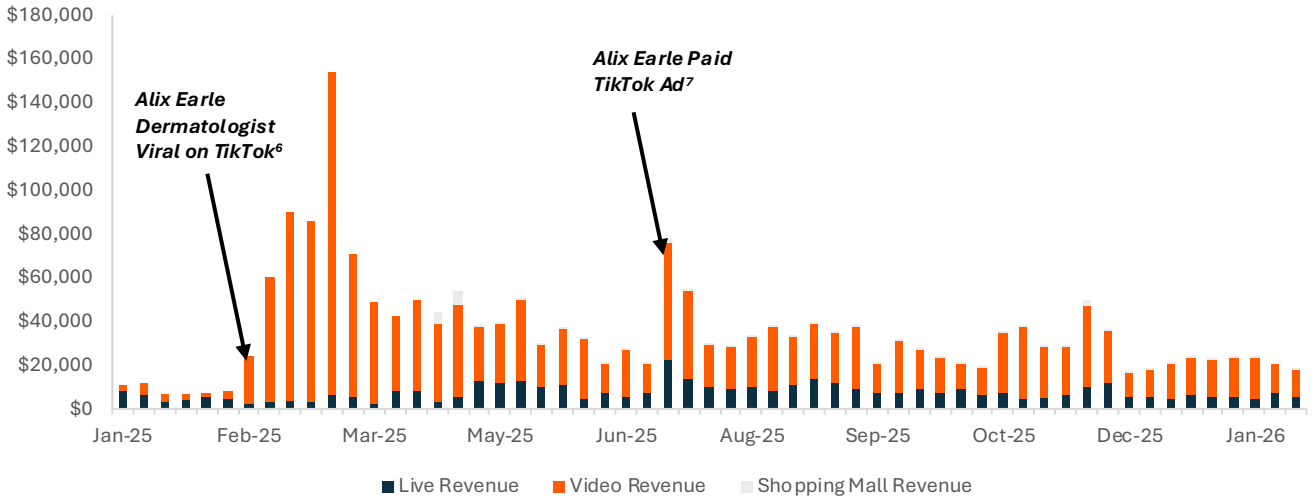
Source: Carbon Arc Digital Advertising – CA009
Price: not available through platform or bulk delivery, requires custom build

Exploring the Creator Economy: Medicube’s Viral Pore Pads

Medicube’s Zero Pore Pads illustrate the power, and limits, of creator-driven commerce on TikTok Shop. An organic Alix Earle mention on February 13⁶ drove weekly video revenue from near-zero to ~\$160K, with video views surging to yearly highs in the same period. The revenue spike was almost entirely concentrated in video revenue, with live and shopping mall channels contributing minimally.

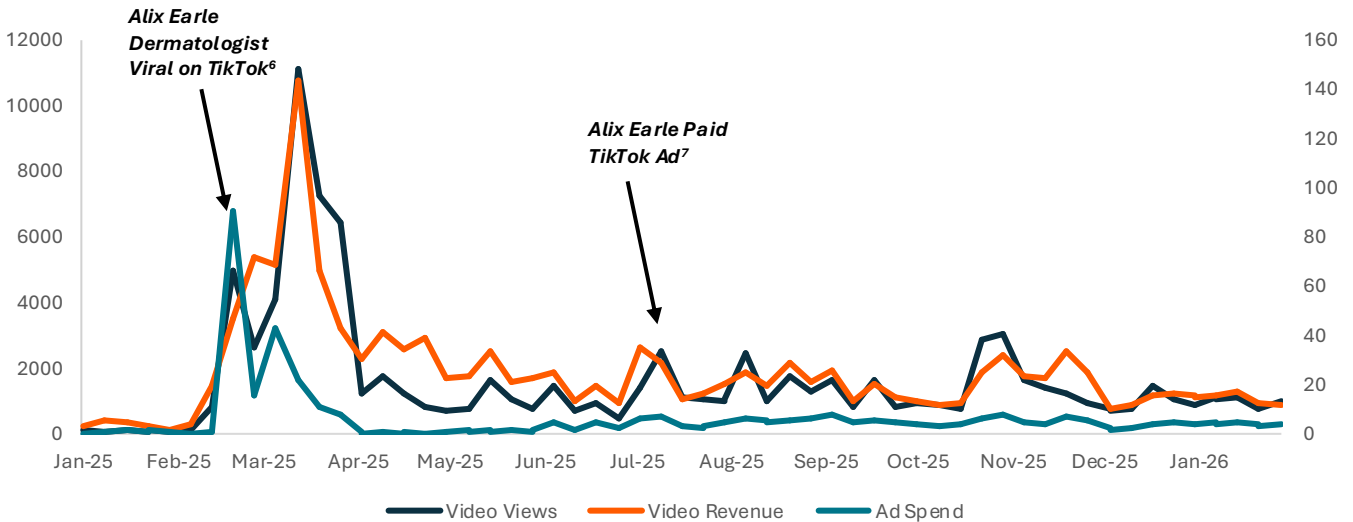
A subsequent paid Alix Earle ad on July 7⁷ generated a smaller and less sustained lift, with peak revenue roughly half the organic spike and a faster decay. Notably, ad spend ramped materially around the paid campaign but delivered diminishing returns relative to the organic moment - suggesting that paid creator activations for this product carry significantly lower ROI than earned virality.

Exhibit 9: Medicube Zero Pore Pads - Weekly US TikTok Shop Revenues



Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
 Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 10: Medicube Zero Pore Pads Indexed Weekly Video Views (left) vs Video Revenue / Ad Spend (right)



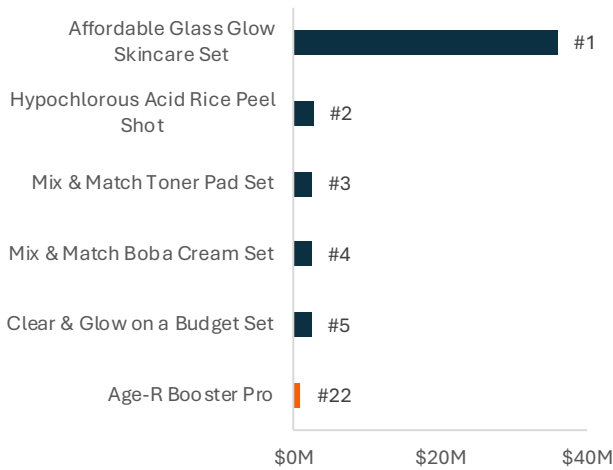
Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
 Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

New Products, New Rules: How Brands Are Using TikTok Shop

TikTok Shop's content-driven discovery model produces a fundamentally different product hierarchy than traditional retail. Across beauty brands of varying size and maturity, the top-selling products on TikTok Shop are often not the brand's traditional bestsellers.^{8, 9, 10, 11} e.l.f.'s top product is a TikTok Shop exclusive, not the viral Power Grip Primer. Tarte's CC Undereye Corrector leads on the platform, while its signature Shape Tape Concealer ranks 11th. Brands are increasingly using TikTok Shop as a channel for new product activations and promotions, and the data reflects that.

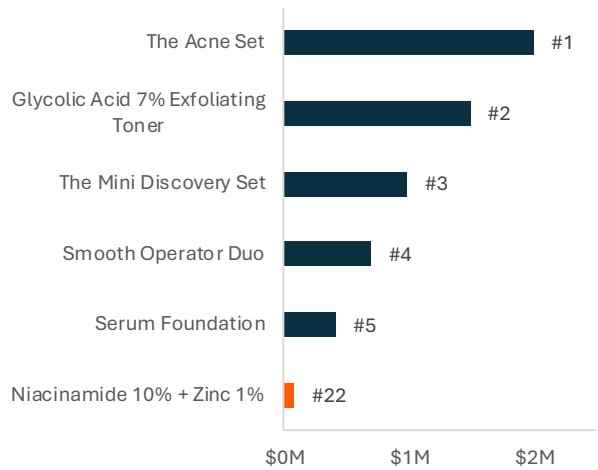
For brand operators, this reframes what TikTok Shop is. It's not a marketplace to list your catalog - it's a launch and activation channel. The data suggests TikTok Shop is uniquely effective at cultivating demand around specific SKUs, making it a natural fit for new product launches, limited drops, and platform-exclusive offerings. The brands seeing the strongest results are the ones treating TikTok Shop as a distinct channel with its own product strategy, not an extension of what's already working elsewhere.

Exhibit 11: Top Products by 2025 US TikTok Shop Revenue – Medicube



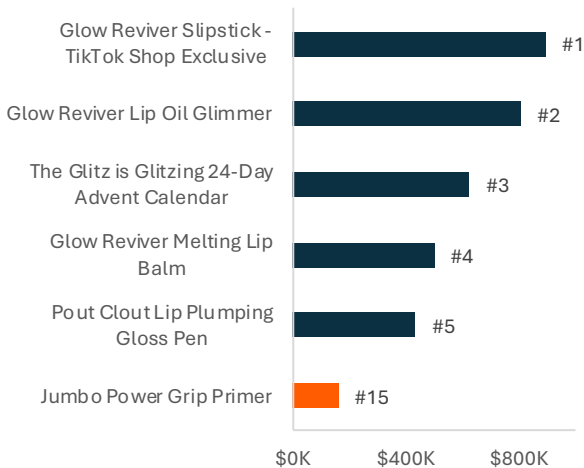
Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 12: Top Products by 2025 US TikTok Shop Revenue – The Ordinary



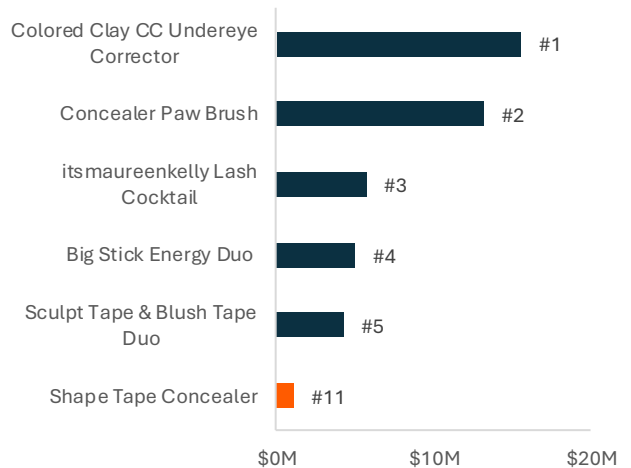
Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 13: Top Products by 2025 US TikTok Shop Revenue – e.l.f. Cosmetics



Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 14: Top Products by 2025 US TikTok Shop Revenue – Tarte Cosmetics



Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Old Brands, New Channel: How Legacy Names Are Winning on TikTok Shop

Medicube isn't an outlier - TikTok Shop has become a growth engine for legacy brands too. Established names like Tarte Cosmetics, QVC, and Crocs have found serious traction on the platform, proving that brand trust and TikTok's reach are a powerful combination. QVC is a particularly striking case: a brand facing years of declining momentum has tapped into an entirely new demographic through TikTok Shop, while giving the platform a recognizable name that builds consumer confidence for big-ticket purchases.

Much of QVC's TikTok Shop revenue has come through video rather than live content, suggesting creator amplification carries meaningful scale effects. And the demographic story is hard to ignore - 67% of QVC's traditional card spend comes from Baby Boomers, meaning TikTok Shop is opening a fundamentally new customer base for the brand, not cannibalizing the existing one.

Exhibit 15: Indexed QVC TikTok Shop Revenue (left) vs. Card Spend (right)

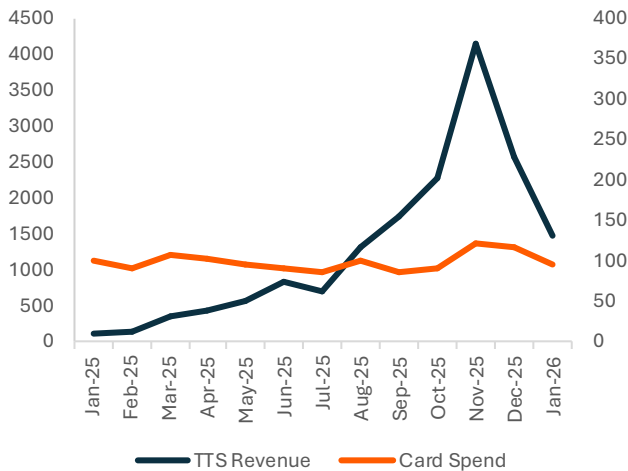
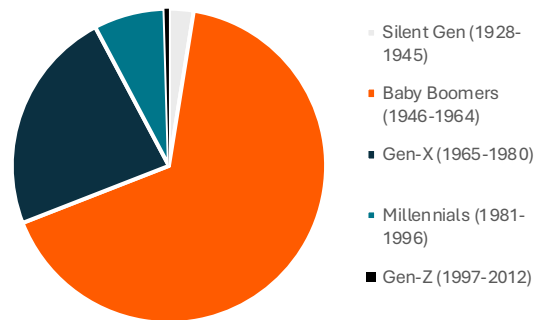


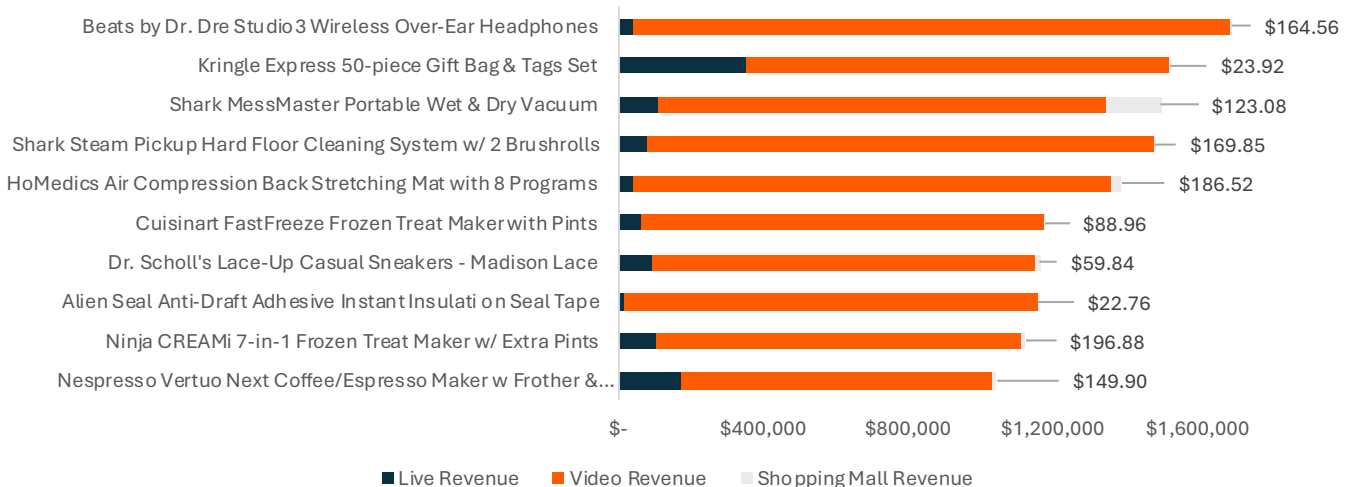
Exhibit 16: QVC Card Spend by Generation (2025)



Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B / Carbon Arc Credit Card – CA0056
Price: 120 Tokens / 11.37 Tokens

Source: Carbon Arc Credit Card – US Complete Panel – CA0056
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

Exhibit 17: QVC Top 10 Products by US Revenue (2025)
Bars = Total Revenue, Labels = Average Unit Price



Source: Carbon Arc TikTok Shop – CA0045B
Price: requires row-level bulk data access, available on request

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