



OWN YOUR PRESENCE / GUIDE 3 OF 5

Set up a **TikTok** Business account

The full path from a new account to a business profile with a clickable link, real analytics and — if you want it — ads and a shop. Including the one trade-off nobody warns you about.

TIME NEEDED

20–30 minutes

COST

Free

SKILL LEVEL

Complete beginner

YOU'LL NEED

A phone

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READ THIS FIRST

The one thing to decide before you switch

BUSINESS ACCOUNTS LOSE ACCESS TO TRENDING MUSIC

The moment you switch to a Business account, TikTok restricts you to its **Commercial Music Library** — around a million royalty-free, pre-cleared tracks. **You will no longer be able to use trending chart music**, and you won't be able to Duet or Stitch videos whose audio isn't commercially cleared.

This is the single most common regret. People switch, discover the music has vanished, and switch back. Read the comparison on the next page before you do anything.

Why the restriction exists

It isn't TikTok being difficult. Popular music is licensed for *personal* use on the platform. A business using a chart track to promote a product is commercial use, which requires a different — and expensive — licence. The Commercial Music Library is TikTok's solution: tracks that are legally cleared for exactly that.

So which account type do you actually want?

	BUSINESS	CREATOR (OR PERSONAL)
Best for	Shops, restaurants, salons, trades, services, anyone selling something	Personal brands, coaches, influencers, anyone monetizing through views and brand deals
Music	Commercial Music Library only	Full library, including trending audio
Link in bio	Immediately, from zero followers	Requires 1,000 followers
Analytics	Full dashboard, exportable	In-app view only
Creator Rewards / Fund	Not eligible	Eligible
Private profile	Not possible	Possible
Ads & scheduling tools	Yes	Limited

THE SHORT VERSION

Selling a product or service? Go Business. The clickable link from day one and the exportable analytics are worth more than trending audio, and commercial tracks are perfectly good for showing your work.

Building a personal brand, or planning to earn from views and brand deals? Stay on **Creator**. The music restriction and losing monetization eligibility are severe.

Switching is **free, instant and reversible** in both directions, so this is a decision you can revisit.

The four TikTok things, untangled

TikTok has four separate products with confusingly similar names. Most small businesses need exactly one of them.

WHAT	WHERE	DO YOU NEED IT?
Business Account	In the phone app	Yes — start here. Free, five minutes. This is your public profile.
Ads Manager	ads.tiktok.com	Only if you'll pay for advertising.
Business Center	business.tiktok.com	Skip it if you're one person. It's a management layer for teams and agencies.
TikTok Shop	seller-us.tiktok.com	Only if you'll sell physical products inside the app. Separate registration with ID and tax documents.

ABOUT THE US OWNERSHIP CHANGE

In January 2026, TikTok's US operation moved into a new joint venture — TikTok USDS — with Silver Lake, Oracle and MGX as major shareholders and a majority-American board. **Nothing about signing up changed.** No new app, no re-registration, no account migration. If you held off because of the ban headlines, there's nothing left to wait for.

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Work through it in order the first time. After that, use this page to jump straight to the part you need.

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Before you start

Must have

- ☐ **A phone.** The switch to a Business account exists only in the mobile app — there is no way to do it from a computer.
- ☐ **An email address or phone number** not already registered to another TikTok account.
- ☐ **To be 13 or older** to have an account; **18 or older** for TikTok Shop selling, affiliate features and monetization.
- ☐ **Your business name** and a **username** — have two or three backups ready.

Strongly recommended

- ☐ **A profile photo** — square, at least 200 × 200 pixels, shown as a circle
- ☐ **A bio written in advance** — you get 80 characters, which is much tighter than it sounds
- ☐ **Your website address** and a **business email**
- ☐ **Three to five videos ready to post** — an empty profile gives visitors nothing to stay for

Sizes and limits

Profile photo	200 × 200 px min	Square, displayed as a circle. Upload larger for a sharper result.
Username	2–24 characters	Letters, numbers, underscores and periods only. No spaces or hyphens. Cannot start or end with a period or underscore, and no two periods in a row. Changeable only once every 30 days.
Display name	30 characters	This is your business name as people see it.
Bio	80 characters	Very tight. One clear line about what you do plus a call to action.
Password	8 characters min	Mix letters, numbers and a special character.
Video	1080 × 1920 px	Vertical, 9:16. Keep text away from the top and bottom edges where the interface sits.

RESERVED WORDS ARE BLOCKED

Username containing **admin**, **support**, **official** or **tiktok** are blocked for unverified accounts, and anything that looks like it's impersonating a known brand can force a name change later. Pick something clearly your own.

PART 2

Create your TikTok account

ON A PHONE

- 1 Install **TikTok** from the App Store or Google Play.
- 2 Tap the **Profile** icon at the bottom right, then **Sign up**.
- 3 Choose **Use phone or email**, or sign up with Google, Facebook or Apple.
Available options vary by country. Signing up with email gives you the cleanest separation from your personal accounts.
- 4 **Enter your date of birth.** TikTok asks this first, before anything else.
- 5 Enter your **phone number or email** and create a **password**.
- 6 Complete the **puzzle-slide verification**. Drag the piece into the gap.
- 7 Enter the **6-digit code** sent by text or email.
- 8 TikTok assigns you a random username. **Change it to yours** — remember you can only change it once every 30 days after this.

GET THE DATE OF BIRTH RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

Entering an under-13 birthday **permanently blocks the signup on that device** — not for a day, permanently. It is far and away the most common way people lock themselves out before they've even started. There's no undo. Type carefully.

ON A COMPUTER

Go to **tiktok.com** and sign up there: birthday, then email and password, then the puzzle verification, then the emailed code. It works fine.

BUT YOU'LL STILL NEED YOUR PHONE

The switch to a Business account (Part 3) exists **only in the mobile app**. If you're setting up from a computer, you'll need to open the app on your phone to finish. Plenty of people hunt through desktop settings for twenty minutes before discovering this.

Switch to a Business account

TAP PATH — PHONE APP ONLY

Profile → menu (≡ or ⋮, top right) → Settings and privacy → Account → Switch to Business Account

IF THE MENU LOOKS DIFFERENT

Depending on your app version, the fourth step reads either **Account** or **Manage account**, and the menu icon at the top right is either three lines or three dots. Both lead to the same place.

- 1 Open the **Profile** tab (bottom right).
- 2 Tap the **menu icon** in the top right corner.
- 3 Tap **Settings and privacy**.
- 4 Tap **Account** (or **Manage account**).
- 5 Tap **Switch to Business Account** and read through the intro screens.
- 6 **Select your business category** — E-commerce, Education, Food & Beverage, Arts & Crafts, Personal Blog and so on. Pick the closest match; you can change it later.
- 7 **Add your business email and website**. Both have a **Skip** option if you'd rather add them later.
Add the website now if you have one — the clickable link is the main practical reason to be on a Business account.
- 8 Done. The switch is instant and free.

To reverse it, follow the same path and choose **Switch to Personal Account**.

What you just unlocked

- **A clickable link in your bio**, immediately, with no follower requirement — normally you'd need 1,000 followers
- **Full analytics** you can export, not just view
- **Business Suite**, including the Message Center
- **Access to Ads Manager** and third-party scheduling tools
- **TikTok Shop** merchant tools, if you go that route

And what you just gave up

- **Trending music**. Commercial Music Library only from here on
- **Duets and Stitches** on videos whose audio isn't commercially cleared
- **Creator Rewards Program eligibility** — no earning from views

- **The ability to make your profile private**

WHERE THE MUSIC WENT

When you tap **Add Sound** on a new video, you'll now only see Commercial Music Library tracks. Nothing is broken — this is the restriction working as designed. There's more there than people expect, and you can filter by mood and length.

Finish the profile & secure it

Write the bio — 80 characters, no room to waste

This is the tightest bio limit of any major platform. Cut everything that isn't information.

Doesn't fit and says nothing: "We are passionate about creating beautiful experiences for our valued customers ✨"

Works: "Braids & protective styles · East Dallas · Book below ↓"

Add your links

TAP PATH

Profile → Edit profile → Website

Business accounts can also add **Instagram** and **YouTube** links from the same screen. These show as their own buttons on your profile, separate from the website field — so you get three destinations, not one.

Turn on two-factor authentication

TAP PATH

Profile → menu → Settings and privacy → Security → 2-step verification

Choose **at least two** methods — typically SMS plus email, or an authenticator app plus email. If one becomes unavailable, the other gets you back in.

BUSINESS ACCOUNTS ARE BEING ACTIVELY TARGETED

There have been sustained phishing campaigns aimed at TikTok business accounts through 2026 — usually fake "brand partnership" or "copyright violation" messages containing a login link. **TikTok will never ask for your password in a direct message.** Two-factor authentication is what stops a stolen password from becoming a stolen account.

Find your analytics

TAP PATH

Profile → menu → Business suite → Analytics

Give it about a week to gather meaningful data. On desktop you can export it. The number worth watching first is **average watch time** — it tells you whether your opening seconds are holding people, which is the thing TikTok's recommendation system cares about most.

Automated messages — check whether you qualify

Business Suite includes a Message Center with welcome messages, keyword replies and suggested questions. **It isn't available to every business account** — it requires either advanced account access or a Verified Business Account. If you don't see it, that's why, not a bug.

If you do have it: messages are limited to 250 characters for a welcome, 500 for a keyword reply, and each one goes through **moderation taking one to five business days** before it goes live. Editing one during review means resubmitting it.

Ads Manager

Skip this part entirely unless you intend to pay for advertising. A Business account posts, replies and grows perfectly well without it.

FOUR FIELDS YOU CAN NEVER CHANGE. READ THEM TWICE.

When you create an advertiser account, **the timezone, the country/region, the legal business name and the currency are permanent**. There is no edit option and no support request that undoes it. Get one wrong and your only remedy is abandoning the account and starting a new one.

- 1 Go to the TikTok advertising signup page and create a login with your email or phone plus a password.
- 2 Agree to the terms, click **Sign Up**, and enter the verification code sent to you.
- 3 Fill in the advertiser account details — **slowly**:
 - **Country/Region** — determines which regulations apply. *Permanent*.
 - **Industry**
 - **Legal Business Name** — must match your official records exactly. Mismatches are the number one reason accounts fail approval. *Permanent*.
 - **Time Zone** — get this wrong and every report and schedule is offset. *Permanent*.
 - **Phone Number**
 - **Currency** — all billing happens in it. *Permanent*.
- 4 Agree to the terms and click **Register**.
- 5 Enter your **billing information** — address and any tax details for your country.
- 6 Add a **payment method** supported in your region.
- 7 Click **Go to Ads Manager**.

Your account is submitted for approval automatically. **Most reviews finish within 24 hours**, and your ads won't run until it's approved. Check progress under **Account Settings → Account Info**.

Business Center — probably not yet

Business Center at **business.tiktok.com** sits above your ad accounts and lets you assign team members roles and permissions without sharing passwords. It's genuinely useful once you have staff or an agency. If you're one person with one ad account, it adds a layer of admin and nothing else — **skip it until you need it**.

SAME PERMANENCE PROBLEM

Business Center's company details are also fixed after creation. If you do set one up, type carefully. The limit is 30 Business Centers per user, which you will never approach.

TikTok Shop

This is a separate business relationship with real paperwork, not a toggle. Only start it if you're genuinely ready to sell physical products.

Who can register — United States, individual seller

- ☐ **18 or older and resident in the USA**
- ☐ A phone number and email **not already used to open another shop**
- ☐ A valid **US Passport, Driver's Licence, State ID or Permanent Resident Card**
- ☐ Politicians are not permitted to register

What you'll be asked for

- Legal name, date of birth, residential address, ID expiry date
- **The last four digits of your SSN, or an ITIN**
- **Bank account details** for payouts
- **ID front and back** — unexpired, unaltered, fully visible in frame
- **Proof of address** — a utility bill, insurance policy, bank statement or credit card statement. **An ID or an unopened envelope will be rejected.**
- **Form W-9** — required once your earnings reach \$2,000
- Files must be under 10 MB, in PDF, JPEG or PNG

Registering as a corporation or partnership instead? You'll also need IRS documents showing your legal business name, address and EIN — specifically a **147C letter or a CP 575** — plus identity documents for the ultimate beneficial owner.

The registration itself

- 1** Go to the TikTok Shop seller signup page.
- 2** Log in with your existing TikTok account, or register with email or phone.
- 3** Select **Individual** (or Corporation / Partnership).
- 4** Enter owner information **exactly as it appears on your ID**.
- 5** Choose your **shop name** and product category.
- 6** Upload your documents.

- 7 Clear every yellow warning. **Only submit when all fields show green checkmarks** — submitting with warnings outstanding is the main cause of rejection.

FEES, SO THERE ARE NO SURPRISES

TikTok takes a commission of roughly **2–8% per sale** plus transaction fees of around **2.15–2.5%**. Build that into your pricing before you list anything.

Selling other people's products instead

If you'd rather earn commission promoting other sellers' products, that's the **affiliate** route, with different rules: **1,000 followers minimum**, 18 or over, US-based and identity verified. Under 5,000 followers you enter a 30-day pilot capped at three shoppable videos a day and three shoppable live streams a week, graduating at 5,000 followers plus 30 days.

When things go wrong

PROBLEM	WHAT TO DO
"Too many attempts"	Rate limiting after repeated failed attempts. Stop and wait — in bad cases up to 48 hours; retrying resets the clock. Meanwhile: update the app, clear TikTok's cache, try a different browser or a private window, switch between Wi-Fi and mobile data, and turn off any ad blocker. Logging in by QR code from the phone app often works when password login won't.
The verification code never arrives	Check spam. Confirm the country code. Carrier filtering blocks a lot of TikTok's texts, so switch to the email method — that's the fix that works most often. Wait a full 60 seconds before requesting another; rapid re-requests trigger the rate limiting above. VoIP and virtual numbers are frequently rejected outright.
"This phone number is already registered"	Numbers can only belong to one account. Recover the old account with Forgot password , or register with an email address instead. Note that TikTok Shop separately requires a number and email not used for any other shop.
Banned or "under review" right after signup	Usual causes: an age-gate failure, signing up through a VPN that puts you in a different country from your phone, or a device with flagged history. Appeal in-app through the ban notice — Submit an appeal — or via the Help Center feedback form.
The music library is nearly empty	Not a bug — you're on a Business account and restricted to the Commercial Music Library. The only way back to trending audio is switching to a Personal or Creator account.
My ad account wasn't approved	Almost always the Legal Business Name not matching official records. Review takes up to 24 hours; check Account Settings → Account Info for the reason. Since the name is permanent, a genuine mismatch means creating a new account.
A feature I read about isn't there	Several things are country-gated: Business Suite auto-messages, TikTok Shop, parts of Ads Manager and live streaming all vary by region. Automated messaging also needs advanced or verified account access. Its absence usually means you don't qualify yet, not that something is broken.
I can't go live	Live streaming requires 1,000 followers . This is long-standing policy and there's no way around it.
I need to change my username again	Once every 30 days, no exceptions. Wait it out.

REFERENCE

Quick summary

Phone vs computer

TASK	BEST ON	WHY
Creating the account	Either	Both work fine.
Switching to Business	Phone only	The option does not exist on desktop. No exceptions.
Bio, links, profile photo	Phone	Edit profile lives in the app.
Two-factor authentication	Phone	Under Settings and privacy → Security.
Filming and posting	Phone	All the editing tools are there.
Reading and exporting analytics	Computer	Export is desktop-only; the app shows the same data on screen.
Ads Manager	Computer	Too much data entry for a phone — and the fields are permanent.
TikTok Shop registration	Computer	Document uploads are far easier.

The whole thing, in order

- ☐ Decide Business vs Creator — the music trade-off is the deciding factor
- ☐ Create the account, entering your date of birth carefully
- ☐ Set your username — you only get to change it every 30 days
- ☐ Switch to a Business account in the phone app
- ☐ Pick your category and add your business email and website
- ☐ Write an 80-character bio and add your Instagram and YouTube links
- ☐ Turn on 2-step verification with at least two methods
- ☐ Post three to five videos before you promote anything
- ☐ Check analytics after a week — average watch time first
- ☐ Ads Manager and TikTok Shop only when you genuinely need them

A NOTE ON DATES

Written August 2026. TikTok changes menu labels frequently and rolls features out to different countries at different times. If a screen doesn't match, look for wording that means the same thing.

You own this. That's the point.

Your account, your audience, your customer relationships — created by you, controlled by you, with no monthly fee to anyone for the privilege of existing online. Nobody can take it away, raise the rent on it, or switch it off.

THE FULL SERIES — ALL FREE

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