Next in Marketing | AppsFlyer

Episode 18: TikTok Says it Can Help Advertisers Reach Gen Z and Measure How Well Their Ads Work

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Mike Shields (20s):

Hey guys, this is Mike Shields and this week on Next in Marketing I got to talk to Jorge Ruiz Head of Measurement at TikTok. We talked about how his company guages success and what metrics brand you should care about when working with the red hot social video platform. Ruiz also has been vice for Ad buyers as they try to navigate the changing data landscape while trying to master cross-platform attribution. Let's get started. Welcome Jorge, how are you?

Jorge Ruiz (43s):

Hello! Hi there! Thank you for having me.

Mike Shields (45s):

I'm excited to talk to somebody from TikTok in general, and you have probably like one of the most interesting front row seats in the industry. You're seeing what's going on all the time on this fascinating app. One of the things that I think is interesting you know, I'm confessed to not be a huge TikTok person. I'm an occasional lurker and viewer. I don't make a lot of videos or any, but there was a great piece of information about just that laid out how you guys, your design is fundamentally different than so many other social platforms. Where you don't have to do much if you're a user. You don't have to necessarily create or have a ton of friends on there. You don't have to, its not like snapper, it opens up and you're expected to kind of create. You can just get on and start watching stuff. Can you talk about that? Like that fundamental design and why that was important and what makes it different?

Jorge Ruiz (1m 28s):

I think from my point of view, this is really a natural evolution in mobile and helping to best deliver the stories and content that people enjoy seeing. It's also important to point out that were more about the content versus just a social graph. So for example, where really all about the For You Feed where TikTok is a short form of content and entertainment. And you can get, just as you mentioned, you can get going and discovered the content from the first time you opened the app. It's so much content that you can just jump right into and find utility even from like the first moment you open it. And part of that magic of TikTok is that there's just no one For You Feed essentially, the content that you scroll through. Because while different people may come up with some of the same standard videos, each person's feed is uniquely tailored to that specific individual.

Jorge Ruiz (2m 9s):

And in order to provide a variety of interesting content, really TikToks recommendation system is help to build, to discover the different videos that when they traditionally watch each of the pieces of content. So for example, for each user's experience in the, For You Feed, that specifically tailored to the interest and determine by a number of factors. So for example, user interactions, video information, or a device settings. But back to the content versus a social point, you don't need to make many connections to make the app useful. You can certainly enjoy the experience of just leaning back and watching, or also investing the time in using our mobile tools and filters to create something for the world to see.

Mike Shields (2m 43s):

Was that designed to be kind of less, maybe intimidating? They are like, 'Oh my God, I can't, I don't, nobody follows me on Twitter. What's the point?' Like those kinds of things that are barriers for other platforms or was it also a conscious effort to get away from the competitive aspects of trying to have likes and friendships and things that have made things hard on other social platforms?

Jorge Ruiz (3m 7s):

I think it just goes back to one of our missions is just to bring joy, inspire creativity. So there's plenty of great things that people do in their daily lives. And it's just being able to just open up the

app and just jump right in and you know. And then as a system learns, what you like to watch, it just jump in, enjoy the content and if you want to participate, you want to create, you can be just as rewarding, but it just the ability to just, not feeling the pressure on building something perfect for you, but just jumping in and being authentic.

Mike Shields (3m 34s):

Right. What are the kinds of things when someone is new to TikTok, we don't have much to go on, you would probably start showing them and I'm imagining some of the same videos of other people are seeing. What are the things that trigger a different presentation for an individual of users. What do you learn about people quickly about their viewing preferences?

Jorge Ruiz (3m 51s):

You know, for each individual's profile or each individuals feed, its going to be very much tailored just for them. And the system, of course, will also try to find the best content and the things that resonate with individuals, but its really, it starts with the three components that I think are important when thinking about the success and the way that we look at it for this product. Its really about discovering, creating, and participating. For me, I'm a firm believer that TikTok is a community where it really belongs with everybody. It's an inclusive platform and encourages users, and if they want to be themselves. And what this means is that we looked for a very similar interest that people may not otherwise see. And that's true if you just want to lean back and discover or learn and create.

Jorge Ruiz (4m 32s):

And for me, personally, one of the things that I love when I jump in and I use the app is the ability to just, sometimes, I love, there are certain interests of the things that I liked to follow a lot or I'd like to just pay attention to if I like cars, if I like cameras, whatever it is, but sometimes discovering content that I never otherwise expect it. So when I see, for example, on the last couple of months when you have doctors or nurses taken a break and then being able to just being able to be funny, educating candid, just being real, but that's content I would not otherwise have found or even if it's not

Mike Shields (5m 3s):

Right, you're not going to search for that.It doesn't mean we don't think about it.

Jorge Ruiz (5m 5s):

Exactly, exactly. So the key for me is part of it is like, yes, any system and you want to build, you want to be able to kind of build and deliver relevant experiences, but it's also equally as rewarding as being able to just get them, to get people to see something new that they have shared interest. And for me, when I use the app and when I really like to spend my time watching TikTok and I just, I love finding a new experiences or finding new voices that I wouldn't otherwise have seen.

Mike Shields (5m 31s):

Right. As much as people want personalized experiences on the web, they love serendipity is still a gray.

Jorge Ruiz (5m 38s):

Yes, that is the right with serendipity.

Mike Shields (5m 41s):

Okay. So how do you know you're doing a good job? IF you assume, from what I know about the other major big platforms. YouTube, will say what they care really about is watched time, or Facebook, I believe they'll measure success, they're satisfied if people are interacting and engaging. What's your most important metrics for success? And how has that drive your design or your just product decisions?

Jorge Ruiz (6m 5s):

Well like I mentioned, just a little bit ago, I think that's a huge part of it is that it's really about, it's still early days for us and really it's about discovering, creating and participating. So we talked a little bit about community already, but I think it's also, I mean if you think about how you want to have a really rewarding experience on the For You Feed it really, you have to put so much effort on discovery so that for every voice there's an audience and making sure that you can build a really great experience. So I'll give you a good example to kind of bring it home. So for example, let's talk about music, since it's so built-in to the DNA. You can have a base or a piano player in the basement working on a song and they can quickly get recognized by the community if they have something awesome, they've created.

Jorge Ruiz (6m 47s):

But then later on seeing professional musicians that are just pros in their fields, that are reacting to those same encouraging videos and they love it. They jump right in and then they can have a little feature called Duet, but they love seeing new content, whether you're a pro or just brand new and this creation look can go on and on and on and on. And it's really, this is kind of a rewarding experience that kind of work, whether you are just creating videos or leaning back. But also what's really important is, so you're going to lean back and just watch the videos and see all this cool stuff happening. But, the other thing that is also important for us is having, we want to build and we started, we want to be able to create really amazing creator tools and that is special because, yes, we have fun filters, video editing, all this extra cool stuff, but it's just that other ways will quickly get you and really express yourself in something that you could actually have a very information rich content that you could actually jump into the community and really stand out.

Mike Shields (7m 38s):

You made me think when you mentioned, a big music artist, surely everyone's seen The Ocean Spray, Fleetwood Mac, a TikTok that has gone viral. Like, did you guys see that coming? That doesn't happen every day. I'm sure. When you start looking at data, are you, do you see that on the cusp of exploding?

Jorge Ruiz (7m 56s):

I think as a researcher that has been doing things like paid on earn and all this stuff is in many prior lives. I think that back to the point when you mentioned earlier, that's one of the things that I

love right now is that so much of it is about serendipity. And sometimes, you can't necessarily plan far ahead and think about virality. But when you have this culture of relevance and you have this great opportunities, it's a matter of just hands down, focus, build, and provide your experiences, great tools and just make it frictionless. So you can actually have the ability to reward for the kind of content that people were able to see. And yes, with Fleetwood Mac, and with The Oceans Spra, example, it was a very, it was very serendipitous, but it just having those magical moments and in marketing today are really special.

Jorge Ruiz (8m 41s):

But we also want to continue to be able to build more tools, more systems. We want to be able to make it easy for the community as well as advertisers to really test and learn and build their businesses with us.

Mike Shields (8m 52s):

Right. So, okay. Let's talk about advertisers. Obviously Ocean Spray did not, that was serendipity. Like you mentioned, they probably could have never engineered that if they wanted to, they're presumably thrilled with it, but you liked The Ocean Sprays of the world to come on board, as either in, some kind of traditional advertising form or to try and create moments like that. How do you explain it? This is always a challenge for any big platform that when it takes off. How do you explainTikTok to advertisers and the numbers that they can make sense of, you know, like, do they want to talk to you about how do you use, how do I translate this to television or is what I see in other social platforms and how do you, what kind of numbers do you talk to them about?

Jorge Ruiz (9m 29s):

Well we are certainly in our early days, but one thing I think that is consistent in any Advertising program is that you have to think about the focus against your business objectives and really working from there. Each client will certainly have their own objectives and their own metrics, and we will certainly build and design an eco-system to meet those needs and mind. For example, today, we have an ads platform where you can create your business objectives and very much it's a Measurement Ecosystem that we are going to be building through this journey. For example, the great work that we're doing with AppsFlyer. So I am really happy to know, and to see that as of most recently, I think we're a top 10 AppsFlyer partner in terms of app install volumes.

Jorge Ruiz (10m 10s):

So we are, for both iOS and Android. So I'm glad to see that we are starting to like, get an advertiser adoption, but what I love to see us also that 85% of those thousands of AppsFlyer client apps, where they are using the TikTok for business integration, they are already bringing in revenue. So to me, what this is telling me is that we should definitely have more momentum, more activity, but also there's a lot of testing happening where there's Advertisers value being created already. And so now that our ads option platforms raise to come online, we really wanna build on it, and we want to continue to make it easier to just jump in and start testing. And I think, as of today, I think we still have an ads credit program for the new Advertisers.

Jorge Ruiz (10m 49s):

So the key point is to just jump right in, test and we definitely have a platforms systems in mind that we want to build.

Mike Shields (10m 58s):

You may have just stolen my question, cause I was going to ask you, you're from the agency world before you were in this role. What advice do you have for brands that are trying to figure out how to just get their feet wet with TikTok or get to make sense of all the different metrics that are coming at them in this wild changing world, is it just get out there and try stuff. What kind of advice do you have for your agency counterparts?

Jorge Ruiz (11m 18s):

Yeah, I think it's just jump right in and start testing. And I mean, part of it is just becoming more fluent in learning what TikTok is and how it works and just a part of it starts by just downloading the app. But I will say that at a high level big on the line portfolio and umbrella that I really would love more conversations with my H and C peers, it's all about creative because creative is hands down going to be the most rewarding and the most difficult lever that is under the advertiser control, to capture consumer attention. So it's one thing to test platform, but it really starts by

having the first to learn as to how the kind of content and the kinds of things that resonate with the community.

Jorge Ruiz (11m 59s):

But also while thinking about it, like the cultural relevance or this moments as to certainly some clients or some agency may be thinking, what else can I do for the next kind of ocean spray thing? Or what can I do for a, like a bigger marketing campaign? It really starts by understanding the app really well and building from that, but kind of going back to the creative, when I think it's really rewarding about this creative aspect is it's so much about authenticity and ingenuity, and that a lot of it has to do with the tone of how the community is interacting and it kind of building for themselves to where having ads that could work on TikTok and being able to just be making the most out of the TikTok. This is where a lot of the testing needs to happen.

Jorge Ruiz (12m 40s):

And he really starts by leaning in and determining, do I want to use my standard ad? Do I want to put a new ad? Do I want to do. How much of a tone or a authenticity they want to put in there, but that it starts by a testing.

Mike Shields (12m 52s):

And as every new platform starts to become a bigger, get bigger on Advertisers radar, they often want to shove their TV ad. Or use an existing standard creative. By now, I would hope they are accustomed of the idea that it's a much better to build something for the platform. But do you guys still ran into that? Like somebody wants to repurpose their TV spot and shove it into a TikTok screen, or is that not so such a problem?

Jorge Ruiz (13m 14s):

I think for me, I'm always up there to have the opinion that we want to build with advertisers. I'm not always going to know every clients' business goals or the design so their creative. So the client's will know best, which are the creatives are going to be super important for the messaging. But I think we have to build for Mobil. We want to be able to tailor for their relevant experiences. But just one thing that's very important, and what I've seen is if you actually spend time in TikTok

and you just look at the videos or looked at the comments, it's a very positive environment and the tone matters a lot. So you can have a great ad, a great ad is a great ad.

Jorge Ruiz (13m 55s):

If you give me a lifetime, like a 0% discount or credit card, well, it sounds like a great offer to me. But the key thing is to making sure that the way that your building the ads, its really it's native to the TikTok platform in terms of both the tone and the way that the community is speaking. So, you know, great, we're fullscreen. We have sound, there's a lot of things that are pretty cool to build against, but a lot of it is just how thinking how the community itself as engaging and how the community that does love, they love our ads. They love how they engage to each other., But making sure that when brands communicate, brands have a voice too and brands have to be authentic themselves in communicating to our community.

Mike Shields (14m 35s):

Right? All of the things you're describing, the fact that it's got a very distinctive attitude, its fun, its positive, but your brands want to be authentic. That to me screams, TikTok is for brand advertising, but I'm imagining you don't want to limit yourself to that. You're a digital company. How do brands measure ad effectiveness .Is it mostly about reaching frequency? Is the performance, is it a mix? What are you seeing?

Jorge Ruiz (15m 4s):

Well let me give you a couple of examples. Lets talk about like Performance campaigns. Since that should be pretty top of mind for most of the folks in the audience. So while in our auction, Ads Manager platform, we can certainly create campaigns where you can have objective against reach, site or mobile traffic, app installs, video views are online conversions. Let me talk about three examples on how we've had some a,advertisers drive the value for the businesses. So Bumble, a premium mobile app in the US, they were able to increase their app install volume five times and decrease cost of registration by 64%. Then there's a, BB or an automatic mutual fund investment app from Indonesia, that were able to increase the registrations by a 400% and then decrease their cost for registrations by around 10%.

Jorge Ruiz (15m 55s):

How did they achieve this? They were really trying to make the most of all the bells and whistles within the auction to maximize efficiencies. But equally important, they produce creatives that were specifically made for TikTok and often including human models and a catchy song or a dance. And to top it off, they were consistently producing two to three new creatives each week. On the other hand, Princess Polly, an Australian fashion retailer, they were able to increase the return on Ad spend by around 15 times. Here in this example, they were able to run a discount campaign using the auction ads for the traffic objectives. And their aim here was to promote getting a wider reach or driving more traffic to the websites, but ultimately the advertiser was able to send true value by looking at their discount codes to really understand how they were able to get a return on Ad spend.

Mike Shields (16m 43s):

It's interesting cause I might think, well, if you're telling brands to have these fun songs and be really creative or authentic, that wouldn't land itself to somebody swiping up and trying to click it on an offer or using codes, but you're very much, or app installed, but you're very much finding that those two things coexist well.

Jorge Ruiz (17m 1s):

I think there really ultimately goes back to whether your thinking about brand or performance, when you have to think about the creative and the tone, it has to be authentic. And it has to be something to where you're really communicating. You have to communicate your message for why you are trying to build, but the community very much, they will respond to ads and they do engage with ads. But it has to be with the right tone. And just to give you an example, I think that a couple weeks ago Cantar just ranked as number one globally in having some of the strongest advertising equity in the field. But when I looked at those kinds of things, that comes across as we're very fortunate that we are trying to build and we very much want to to protect the community. That's highly authentic and we're in a place where brands are also a part of that experience as well.

Jorge Ruiz (17m 47s):

And that tone is important, whether you're thinking about brand or, or direct response, how you choose to execute and how you choose to build it. And I think that's, you have to test on a case by case basis to what works best for your business.

Mike Shields (17m 58s):

You keep mentioning how brands are using the auction and trying to track to the success of whatever their objective is? It's probably a little, it's easy or I would think if you were doing that just in TikTok, but of course every brand wants to connect everything they do across screens and platforms. In your mind, you're a measurement guy, what's the state of s cross-screen attribution in the industry right now. It's a big question.

Jorge Ruiz (18m 24s):

It's a big question is, and it's not quite early enough to start drinking. But it's a tough one because there's so many things happening and so quickly in an industry and how technology is evolving that I'm not sure I'll have the answer. I can certainly, all of us have our own conjections, but we certainly, there's lot to be done. I mean,I can tell you that in my own personal opinion, one thing that I do see accelerating is a strand that is this trend with the evolution of measurement in the next few years, it's going to be based on consumer choices and privacy in mind. So for example, I do think that the most recent update that I've read with Apps Flyer around aggregated attribution and differential privacy, to me, that's super interesting. I'm really curious to see how that evolves in the coming year, but I do think this kinds of trends where, as an industry, we are going to be exploring the different kinds of solutions.

Jorge Ruiz (19m 8s):

I'm certainly trying to keep up and read as to what's going on in this. But even at a higher level, because I don't wanna focus in just a one particular techniques, I think at a higher level what's important is that if I'm sitting in on the client side, on the advertisers side, if it's my business, I think as a research, like as a measurement and research veteran, you have to go into a world in the next couple of years where there's probably no one right answer, because a lot of the things are a moving target, but you have to have the right framework on how you could actually come up with a multiple ways to come up with a bit with a business decision. So for me, I'm a firm believer that the right goal standard is randomized test and groups for incrementality.

Jorge Ruiz (19m 50s):

But I also recognize that this is not possible in many cases. And while this may sound rather traditional, I have seen a growing resurgence in bringing back things like media mix models as a complementary part of, or even attribution models today. But again, we're all trying to figure out different places, but we have to be okay, that we we'll have to compartmentalize our frameworks. We we'll have to figure out what the right, you know, what pivots we need to make.

Mike Shields (20m 13s):

So it sounds like George, brands almost have to build out a structure to be ready for all kinds of different measurement techniques and not expected to kind of have an answer for how to do this stuff for a number of years maybe, and just be really flexible and try everything.

Jorge Ruiz (20m 29s):

Well, I mean, I think that there is definitely going to be a ton of innovation. And I think, I mean, definitely, when we're looking at our attribution there has to be multiple ways that we can try looking at it. I mean, I'm a firm believer in looking at gold standards, have randomized tests and groups for incrementality, but what we have to recognize that in different cases, even things like sometimes the answer is going to be bringing it back with looking at media mix models. But I am, I think in terms of the things that I'm particularly interested in looking at just from personal curiosity is to see how much progress we can make on things like aggregated attribution or a differential privacy. There's just so many new concept, but measurement is definitely a team sport now and we have to figure out the right way to not only continue to drive advertiser value, but continue to find a way that we can have stable framework's to continue to have the rigor and the discipline to ensure that we're getting the most value for a day across the ecosystem.

Mike Shields (21m 23s):

All of the things we're talking about, attribution in different forms of the brands need to try and modeling. There was never a huge pool of talent in the industry that were both great data scientists who really understand the nuances of the industry and understand modeling, those folks were kind of a unicorn. I wonder if its going to be, so from your perspective, how have you

been successful at finding people that are kind of dual threats in that role and, what does the business need to do? The agency world need to do to get more folks in those disciplines?

Jorge Ruiz (21m 56s):

Well there's a, I mean, this is what should keep up every manager up at night and rigorous of a field. But for me, I'm pretty proud of the town that I'm bringing on board. And I want to continue to really focus on my journey and bring in like a strong talent to continue to build them. But I think what I think is super important to look at across talent tools is that they can be both an opportunity that it's both for the strength as well as diverse experiences. So what I really hope to find is that for each individual to shine so there particular strengths, as you built a team, you can really bring them together to compliment each other and really bring like a competitive team. But I think part of it starts with, and I hear I'm thinking about like, when I'm looking at it people that are starting out on their careers and they are thinking about why should they go into measurement and why should we think about Data science.

Jorge Ruiz (22m 46s):

I think that's some of the things I have noticed. Here's a couple of pieces of advice that I have in terms of, if you're thinking about starting your career earlier on, or like, what your first couple of years in measurement that I think are often important in terms of just kind of it being that star within your team. I think good measurement and data science, for this to really land well, as long as you're building it, it really starts with thinking about trying to look at it at the business and the problems that you're tryinh to solve. So no matter what how complex or simple the project, if you expect anybody to take action from the work, you have to communicate clearly. You have to be candid about what it does, and it, and most importantly does not answer and practice how you can persuade the decision or within your team organization.

Jorge Ruiz (23m 28s):

And for example, a secret weapon, that is quite often neglected, and I've seen this, that I've had to in the past coach and coach to help us up just seeing it is a need to write well. A great PowerPoint, that's going to sizzle, but that's not always going to get you to the influence you think it does if you don't practice what you want to say clearly to get that decision. And sometimes that decision is from the contribution of your work or some of that can be how you

influence peers to align on what the most practical way to understand trade-offs. So that that's one component. And then the other component is just making sure that as you think about what you want to do in your career from a measurement cause I do believe it's a really strong career. It's just focusing on the strengths that are part of your passion, because I do think that it is critical to be self-aware on this.

Jorge Ruiz (24m 9s):

And because what I've noticed is that sometimes when there's a very specific academic training or very specific things earlier, and the first couple of years, maybe you look at it as a task one specific way, versus if you're new to the role and you're learning to go. So what I found more important is this types of people that thrive early on is at once, they can quickly identify a process or an approach or something that they really excel at and constantly practice. And after you find what you're good at, you're going to work, or coach at others so that you don't always have to do just that one thing or that one kind of project. So it's important. So part of it is like honing the craft, learning how to shape decisions and influence those decisions, but also how to scale yourself. If you can do those things. I think that you are well on your way to really having a thriving career.

Mike Shields (24m 51s):

Now, your talking a lot about the folks earlier and their career and trying it and how we are trying to attract talent? What about to the agency's and the brands, do they need to train up their senior staff and get them more comfortable with measurement and data science? Or is that not realistic the way things are headed?

Jorge Ruiz (25m 7s):

I think part of it is you have to continue to invest in building great talent and an operational discipline is super important with that. But also my view is that this field is already attractive, but what's often not well told is the success journey that a career measurement data science can do for you. Because I think sometimes it is, these roles by themselves are highly technical and what you wanna do is, I really think there's two things. I think that it's continuing to provide diverse experiences and backgrounds to bring in people from many different places. So, for me, I want to be able to build teams. And I think that high performing teams are teams that are highly diverse,

and you make sure that the teams understand that diversity from the get-go, so people can understand those differences and compliment each other.

Mike Shields (25m 51s):

We keep hinting at how important it is. I'm thinking about diversity and talent in terms of agencies and brands need to have folks from data science and non-traditional accurate, but it's also hugely important to the industry to couple that with diversity of ethnic groups and all sorts of folks across the spectrum. How important has that been and how challenging is it for the industry to get that right?

Jorge Ruiz (26m 17s):

This is a super top of mind I can tell you for me, and, you know, within my team. We're definitely very committed to creating an inclusive platform that's reflective of this diverse world. And it's definitely essecntial to the core values and beliefs that we really want to build, that we were as a business. And so, for example, and for us, this process starts by actively building an inclusive and diverse workforce, and we want to be able to celebrate those differences. So all of those contributions, they play an important part in creating how our products would come alive and how our work with our clients, with their peers, with the community really come to the forefront. So it is just core of who we are. For me, I'm definitely,as I mentioned, I am a firm believer of that building this diverse team is an inclusive.

Jorge Ruiz (27m 3s):

It just a competitive advantage. And it's just the right thing to do. So, one, for example, one thing that, as I mentioned is in the past, in my career, as a measurement in Measurement Research, I've actually in the past, I've been guided to find candidates with the same exact qualifications. So I think sometimes that can be the pitfall on technical roles, because you always tend to look and say, I need this specific speck, or I need this background, or I need this.

Mike Shields (27m 30s): And that was the pull from the get-go?

Jorge Ruiz (27m 32s):

Exactly, exactly. So I think for me, this is why one trait that I do is I'm very mindful that even when I'm building the job profiles or to talk it over with my talent acquisition team. I want to make sure that we don't try to end up with the same exact profile, or is it the same exact, I only want this university, or I only want this, like this, it must be like, you know, this one free set of models. I want to make sure that I have for the talent pool, I want to understand the opportunity, the capability, but also I want to make sure that for, for every interview, that there is the one thing I want to come across clearly, I want to make sure the candidates really shine through is, I want to understand what their superpower is because in my experience I found that sometimes candidates don't exactly have the right background that you're looking for.

Jorge Ruiz (28m 20s):

But if there is something that you see for this opportunity, and they have really strong in virtual thinking, some of the best people I've been able to now see leading careers, they've come from very different backgrounds that were non-traditional and they have just been able to crush it. So if you have, if you have the hunger, the passion, and you really can think of the problem well, yeah,

Mike Shields (28m 36s):

And you can train him on the other stuff, if you could, if they have gotten that drive and the superpower.

Jorge Ruiz (28m 40s):

Exactly. Things like, teaching somebody, like sequels that are, like those are things that will get trained, that some people can pick 'em up. Some people, if that's your thing, you can pick it up. But what I find is often the most important thing in the very beginning is if people can understand the question and they can find ways to either say, I don't know, here's what I think about. Or if they have a really good grasp of having a different problem solving. The reason why this is so valuable for me, is that, my biggest worry for myself is what happens if I'm providing the same exact recommendation and providing the same, like approach, somebody is going to have a better, different approach. And you need to prove, you need to provide an environment where

you have all this different backgrounds of thought,enough background where it's just such a good thing for your business.

Mike Shields (29m 27s):

I'm going to guess that's perhaps easier to a place like TikTok because it's young and it's the kind of place every person probably wants to work right now, a tech startup that's blowing up. What about when you were in the agency world, was it harder? And did those companies fall into those traps you described or where they always recruiting from the same school, same networks?

Jorge Ruiz (29m 50s):

I think it's a kind of effort that you have to place on our day to day. It's just you can't just put up for how you have to be always mindful. You have to look up. As you build, it always has to super top of mind. I mean, I can tell you that I think that in my experience, I'll be candid, I've had a, I've been fairly lucky and I've had a very positive experience in across all of my roles. But for me, I think the reason for that is because I've been very fortunate to have a very strong managers and very strong coaches and mentors, that all the way across, even like in my early days at the agency, it's just, I've had very, very strong managers that were able to instill none of two things, a.

Jorge Ruiz (30m 31s):

Get to work, right. Learn how to do the analysis. But also I think most of the managers that I remember that helped me to grow,I mean, they were that tough ones, but they will always excel and skew on the culture and on the people management side of things. It's one thing to have a team that gets the job done, but it's another team that really kind of have built, creates the execution on the culture. And that just something that I've carried along. And I have to make parts of it my own, but culture and execution and strategy, work culture , to think, especially whether its a manager, a leader, you have to set the tone for that. And so for me, I want to be out, I want to have a team that is highly competitive, that's very ambitious, but it starts by bringing the right people with as much opportunity and different backgrounds to be able to have that diversity that you could actually work well together.

Mike Shields (31m 19s):

All right. I'll end things on a lighter note perhaps here. Tell us something, I think the story with TikTok this year,is that it's been, it was always been very passionate, young, big audience, but then I think you added a lot more folks when they were all stuck at home and "older people" started using it. Give us something interesting you've seen either in the audience trends or just the kinds of content that resonated during the pandemic and these weird times we're living in.

Jorge Ruiz (31m 47s):

I think there's a couple of things. I think what's true across everything that I see on TikTok, it just, it is highly authentic. And, even the community, even when somebody is like trying to be like a contrarian or a negative, if you read the comments, people are like, come on, bro. No, why you gonna bring that here?

Mike Shields (32m 6s):

That's not what we're here for. Right?

Jorge Ruiz (32m 7s):

Exactly I think the community is very protective of ensuring that they're building each other up. You can be authentic, you can be funny, or it can be serious but the whole point is you got to be authentic and the community itself very much, you know, they come in and they wanna see that stuff. So for me, I've seen things. What I've mentioned a little bit earlier about doctors and nurses, when they take a break from working in the hospitals, they'll either be funny, goofing off, or they'll have some serious commentary, but not only are they educating, they're informing, but also they're being themselves. This is their break. And that's a view that I typically would not see. I live in New York and I know some of my friends, they live close by to hospitals and its being in New York, it's a real thing.

Jorge Ruiz (32m 51s):

But sometimes, just seeing that window into what the community has to say, I think to me is super important. All of the things that I've seen too is I think what's funny is that in the environment today where a great idea or a great expression of creativity really carries through that also means is that the celebrities, their just like any one of us. So one of my favorite profiles that I've started looking at lately is Anthony Hopkins, because I would have never guessed that he is somebody who would've joined TikTok,but he's funny because his videos, I think, he was playing this thing that he was just like losing his mind what was being stuck at home. I didn't realize that he was a really good piano player.

Jorge Ruiz (33m 32s):

And I think he was like doing recitals in his kitchen, but he's got like I'm going bananas inside, but it's like a little snippets in their life. But he is doing things as himself. And that can be why see a video of Anthony Hopkins? Why see a video of somebody just jamming in their basement with a new song. And then next thing I know some super professional guitarist, is just dueting with them. And its just continuing to see like that this professional group. So it's just, people that, while at home, people are creative that they take a break, they use TikTok, what it's all about to me its authenticity and being able to express yourself creatively,

Mike Shields (34m 12s):

It's kind of like exactly what everyone needs right now. All right. Well that's it, that's inspiring note. On that note, we're going to wrap things up, but Jorge, thanks so much for the conversation. Really interesting stuff.

Jorge Ruiz (34m 21s): Thank you. Thank you. I really appreciate it. Thank you for having me.