



I.M.P.A.C.T. · EXPERIENTIAL IMPACT REPORT

TIKTOK GARDEN CANNES 2026

A creator garden and B2B innovation hub at the Carlton Hotel on the Croisette, scored against Gradient's six-dimension experiential methodology.

72/100

SCALED I.M.P.A.C.T. SCORE

● STRONG








I.M.P.A.C.T.

01 — THE ASSESSMENT

THE I.M.P.A.C.T. SCORE

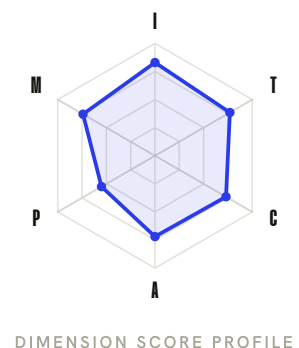
TikTok returned to the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity 2026 as an official festival partner, anchoring its presence in the Garden at the iconic Carlton Hotel on the Croisette. Running Monday June 22 through Friday June 26, the TikTok Garden was open to the public and served as the company's primary hub for bringing together creators, brands, and partners throughout the festival week. TikTok brought 16 creators spanning food, lifestyle, music, comedy, sports, and beauty: among them chef and author Tineke Younger, musician and comedian Morgan Jay, beauty influencer Katie Fang, and American track-and-field Olympian Chari Hawkins. Creators shot behind-the-scenes content for their own TikTok channels from the garden, participated in panels across the Croisette, and connected brands with

partners through the week. Major product announcements at Cannes included Symphony Agent, TikTok's latest AI innovation built with cultural intelligence, enabling advertisers to create TikTok-first campaigns at speed and scale across Creative Studio, Content Suite, and TikTok One. TikTok also announced the integration of Symphony capabilities into dentsu's AI platform Zoyumi, and the launch of Custom Creator Networks: a new Content Suite feature allowing brands to curate pools of employee, partner, or advocate creators, with the first network launching with Starbucks and its Green Apron employee creator program. The activation's overarching theme, *'Creativity is the multiplier,'* invited marketers to fall back in love with the creative process before AI scales it.

DIMENSION	PERFORMANCE	RAW
I Integrated	 83%	15/18
M Measurable	 74%	14/19
P Participatory	 55%	11/20
A Affective	 72%	13/18
C Community-Building	 73%	11/15
T True-to-Brand	 77%	10/13
TOTAL SCORE	 72%	74/103

Each bar shows the dimension as a percentage of its maximum.

<p>SCORE BAND</p> <p>Scores of 60-74 are Strong. The experience excels in several dimensions with clear, addressable upside.</p>	<p>BENCHMARKS</p> <p>Macallan 74 · Veuve EOTS 71 · Canva Cabana 74 · LinkedIn Rooftop 65 · Amazon Port 90 · Pinterest 87 · Adobe 88.</p>
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02 — STRENGTHS & UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

WHERE IT WINS, WHERE IT GROWS

AREAS OF STRENGTH

Integrated *83%, the strongest dimension*

TikTok's integrated score reflects a structurally distinctive channel architecture: the 16 creators brought to the Carlton Garden are not just guests but active distribution nodes. Every creator posting behind-the-scenes content from the garden extends the activation's reach to their combined audiences on TikTok itself, meaning the platform, the channel, and the content creators are unified in a single gesture. Beyond the creators, TikTok operates across brand social, its dedicated [tiktokatcannes.com](https://www.tiktokatcannes.com) microsite, TikTok Newsroom, trade press via a Variety exclusive (secured before the festival), partner announcements with dentsu and Starbucks, and an official Cannes Lions partnership. The dentsu Zoyumi integration and the Starbucks Green Apron Creator Network each generate independent partner-channel reach.

The gap from a maximum score is the absence of confirmed OOH, email CRM outreach, and physical partner-owned touchpoints beyond the Carlton Garden itself.

True-to-Brand *77%, distinctly TikTok*

TikTok's Cannes identity is coherent with what the platform stands for. The decision to bring 16 working creators, not just executives, as the primary presences at the festival is distinctly TikTok: creator-first, authenticity-led, anti-broadcast. The tagline, "*Before audiences get to watch it, love it, want it, you get to create it,*" reflects the platform's founding posture as a tool for creators rather than a window for audiences. Symphony Agent's framing, cultural intelligence helping advertisers create TikTok-first campaigns, reinforces the idea that TikTok has its own creative logic that cannot simply be repurposed from other platforms. The Starbucks partnership, enabling employee creators to participate in the creator economy, is brand-true to TikTok's democratization thesis.

The score does not reach maximum because the Carlton Garden format itself, a garden space with panels and meetings, could be replicated by any competing platform. The physical environment does not embed brand codes as deeply as a proprietary hardware experience would.

AREAS OF WEAKNESS

Participatory 55%, *the clearest structural gap*

Participatory is TikTok Garden's lowest score and its clearest structural gap. The Carlton Garden is primarily a networking, meeting, and panel venue: visitors attend sessions, connect with creators, and participate in B2B conversations, but they do not participate in the outcome of the experience in the way the methodology defines. There is no confirmed interactive installation, on-site creative tool, personalized take-home, or co-creation moment that puts guests in the driver's seat. The creators shooting content in the garden are the participants; the broader Cannes audience is largely an observer of that process. This is the central tension in TikTok's Cannes format: the platform's entire value proposition is active participation (creating, not just consuming), but the physical Cannes presence does not translate that participation to the visitor experience.

An on-site Symphony Agent demo, where visitors could build a TikTok-first campaign brief in real time, would close this gap directly.

Affective 72%, *second-lowest*

Affective is scored second-lowest. TikTok's Cannes messaging is emotionally resonant at the thematic level: "Fall back in love with the creative process" speaks directly to the anxiety and fatigue that AI has introduced into the ad industry's creative culture. The creator lineup generates genuine emotional pull, particularly for attendees who follow these creators. However, the physical Carlton Garden experience does not itself generate a visceral or memorable emotional moment. The garden format is pleasant and prestigious, but not surprising, immersive, or designed to provoke a specific emotional response. Compared to activations built around spectacle (Snapchat's AR art exhibition), discovery (Pinterest's Visual Search Studio), or sensory depth (Nikka's whisky ceremony), TikTok's Cannes presence operates at an intellectual-professional register rather than an affective one. The Starbucks Green Apron program story is genuinely moving, but its emotional impact is mediated through a press release rather than a lived experience.

PRIORITY MOVE

PUT A LIVE SYMPHONY AGENT STATION IN THE GARDEN.

Let any visitor input a brand challenge and watch the agent generate a TikTok-first concept on the spot, converting an observed process into a participated one.

03 — THE CONVERSATION

LET'S FINALIZE THIS REPORT

The score is a starting point, not a verdict. This assessment draws on public information, your insider knowledge could move these results. Each question below, answered, scores the experience up.

M MEASURABLE

- Combined TikTok reach of 16 creators posting BTS content, total views and impressions?
- Total visitor count to the Carlton Garden across five days?
- Trade and press impressions: coverage volume across Adweek, Campaign, The Drum, and Variety?
- Symphony Agent trial volume: how many advertisers engaged with the tool during the festival?
- Starbucks Green Apron Creator Network, anticipated creator count and content volume at launch?

A AFFECTIVE

- What was the most spontaneously shared moment from the Carlton Garden across the week?
- Which creator panel generated the strongest audience emotional response?
- Was there a specific garden design or sensory element that elevated the space beyond a standard event venue?
- How did attendees describe their experience on TikTok or social, what words recurred?

P PARTICIPATORY

- Was there an interactive or hands-on activation inside the Carlton Garden beyond networking?
- Did visitors use Symphony Agent tools on-site, or was this a demo for a selected audience?
- Did creators co-create content with brand partners or visitors during the week?
- Were there any personalized take-homes: content, branded assets, or experiences tied to individual guests?
- What was the on-site discovery format for TikTok's product suite: demos, presentations, or self-service?

C COMMUNITY-BUILDING

- Is there a post-Cannes TikTok creator community for the 16 attending creators to continue the conversation?
- Did the Carlton Garden host any structured community formats (roundtables, breakout sessions), or purely open networking?
- Was there a registered guest list or CRM capture mechanism that allows TikTok to follow up post-event?

This score does not define overall event success. It identifies where an experience excels, and where untapped potential still exists.

Gradient Experience is a boutique experiential strategy and production studio. The I.M.P.A.C.T. Methodology, developed by Dr. Sam Sterling (DBA, Masters in Business Research), is a proprietary scoring framework that reflects a weighted composite across six dimensions of experiential marketing effectiveness: Integrated, Measurable, Participatory, Affective, Community-Building, and True-to-Brand.



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— THE CONVERSATION

OPEN TO A 15-MINUTE CONVERSATION?

This assessment draws on publicly available information. Your insider knowledge of this project could meaningfully change these results, let's finalize the report together.

BOOK THE CONVERSATION →

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