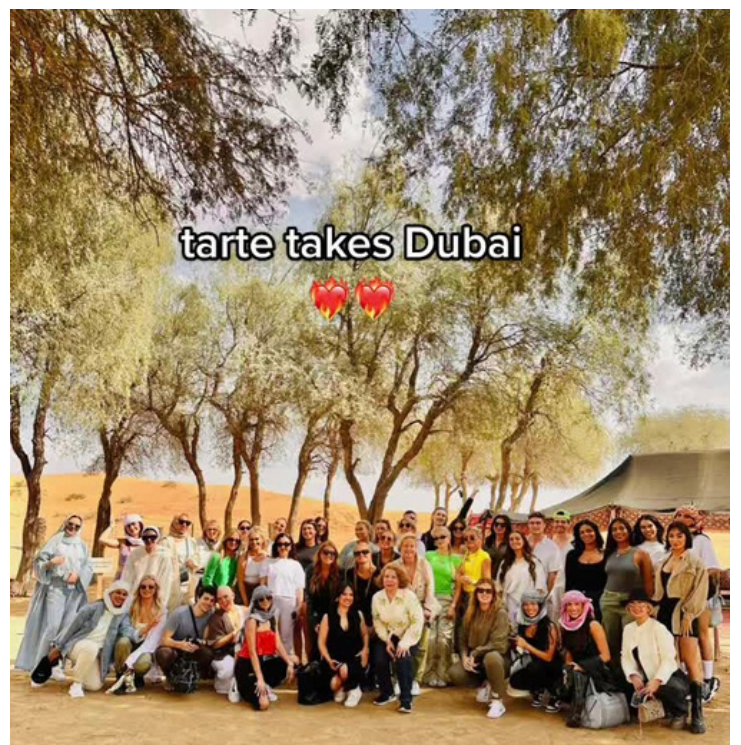


#TrippinWithTarte Campaign: Dubai 2023





Introduction

Tarte Cosmetics, a United States-based beauty brand, utilizes influencer marketing as a primary strategy. Since 2015, the brand has taken current internet influencers in the beauty and fashion space to all-inclusive style vacation destinations. From January 18-20, 2023, Tarte hosted approximately 50 popular creators from eight countries in Ras al Khaimah, in partnership with Sephora Middle East. These brand trips are elements of a campaign called "Trippin' with Tarte," used as an opportunity for the company to promote its new products, build relationships, and emphasize its missions and reputation. The latest installment promoted Maracuja Juicy Glow Foundation, which launched on February 10, 2023, and retails \$40 USD. In exchange for the event, Tarte often receives media attention through earned media posts by attendees.

Tarte focuses on its mission to be natural, as their makeup and skincare products are cruelty-free and "infused with good-for-you ingredients and kindness" as stated on the brand's website. As of December 2022, Tarte has an estimated annual revenue of \$100-200 million and experiences about 2 million site visits a month at [tartecosmetics.com](https://www.tartecosmetics.com) (SimilarWeb, 2022). Tarte Cosmetics was founded in 2000 by Maureen Kelly. Today, Kelly remains CEO of the brand, and it is a member of the KOSÉ group.



Research

The most recent "Trippin' with Tarte" event was not necessarily planned with ample conventional research methods, as the brand is known to put most of its advertising spend towards influencer trips since 2015 (Spruch-Feiner, 2023). Tarte partners with individuals with recent relevance, who push trends to their millions of followers. The brand has transitioned from inviting beauty/fashion YouTubers in the 2010s to social media influencers.

Influencer marketing is a strategy used by many organizations as an increasingly effective way to connect with people. According to an article published by the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 80% of companies surveyed plan to allocate at least 10% of their marketing budgets to this method, and in 2021, two-thirds of businesses increased these budgets (Barta, 2023).

Approximately 13 American influencers were part of the international crowd in Dubai, fit for Tarte's U.S. consumers. Many were current popular names on the platform, arguably pushed by TikTok's algorithms throughout the event in Dubai—including Alix Earle, a rising influencer on the app (4.6 million TikTok followers), Meredith Duxbury (17.6M), Ellie Zeiler (10.9M), Mian Twins (6.9M), and Monet McMichael (2.9M) (Ryan, 2021).

The invitees mentioned are primarily Gen Z, such as Earle, a student at the University of Miami. Their followings often consist of people similarly

aged due to their relatable, yet aspirational, content (O'Gorman, 2019).

The makeup company likely collaborated with influential TikTok users because of the app's recent popularity. In 2023, 60% of the app's users are Gen Z, and the app has over 138 million monthly active users in the United States (Wallaroo, 2023). Additionally, the brand website's current reach is primarily adults aged 18-34, they make up 55.28% of total monthly viewership, and 76.57% are female (SimilarWeb, 2022). Tarte may have an interest in attracting more of this population.

In a journal article, the term "calculated authenticity" is used to describe "Trippin' with Tarte." The term is defined as the manipulation of perceived brand transparency (O'Gorman, 2019). Tarte potentially aims to create a glamorous, yet genuine, persona around the brand (O'Gorman, 2019). TikTok is an effective medium for this style of content (Barta, 2023)

More research could have been conducted on Tarte's behalf, including qualitative data from Gen Zs belonging to all races and ethnicities to ensure they were resonating with young individuals and that there was a diverse array of people included and promoted.

Target Audience

Demographics	Young adults, primarily Gen Z and Millennials aged 18-34.
Interests	Social media, fashion/beauty, shopping, traveling

The intended audience for "Trippin' with Tarte" is people aged 18-34, primarily Gen Z, followed by Millennials, particularly those interested in beauty and fashion. Tarte's target population is active on social media, primarily TikTok and Instagram. In 2022, about 50% of Gen Z uses social media daily, and Millennials rank second with 44% online every day (Watson, 2022). Gen Z may follow an array of trending social media users and appear to be taking their advice on brands and products to support. 44% of Gen Z has made at least one purchase directly based on influencers' recommendations, compared to 26% of the general population (Williams, 2020).

The intended audience was appropriate for Tarte's influencer trips as the brand invited popular TikTok-based influencers. Their content was most prevalent due to their large followings compared to other attendees. Even though the trip itself was extravagant, Tarte tried to work authenticity into earned media posts, which posed as advertisements. This approach catered to Gen Zs, who value genuine content and self-expression (Cannon, 2023).

Objectives

#TrippinWithTarte aimed to promote the brand while also building momentum for the new foundation launching on February 10, 2023, according to CEO Kelly (Spruch-Feiner, 2023). Tarte employed various objectives:

Informational: message exposure to Gen Z about Tarte's products through influencer marketing with people with large social media followings, particularly on TikTok and Instagram

Attitudinal: continuation of influencer trips represents the brand's interest in reinforcing attitudes and forming new ones that did not previously exist about the genuine, yet glamorous, aspects of the successful brand (calculated authenticity)

Measurable objectives:

1. Attain 1 million total likes on owned TikTok content posted within the trip's three-day timeframe
2. Earn 50 media placements about the Dubai trip/brand within 1 week of the trip

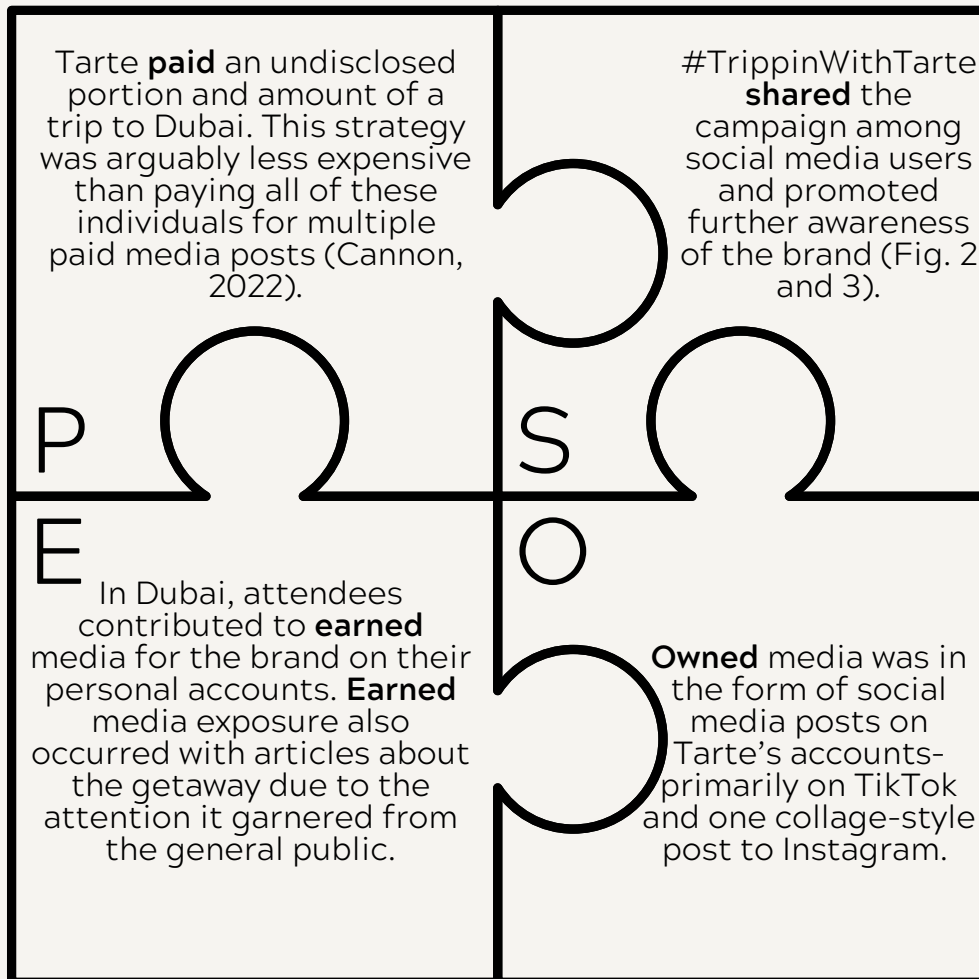
Article Name/Publication	Message	Intended Target Audience	Effective or Ineffective? Why or why not?	Call to Action?
"Hey Tarte Cosmetics – We Need to Have A Chat About This Press Trip" (Hypebae, January 23, 2023)	Discussed the campaign and the author agreed with Vogue Business' consideration of the trip as "tone deaf."	People interested in streetwear, fashion, and beauty. Directed towards women.	Ineffective. Describes the flaws with Tarte's campaign for being exclusive and inappropriate considering how much successful the brand is.	No call to action for Tarte
"Why the Internet Became Fixated on an Influencer Trip to Dubai" (TIME, January 25, 2023)	Highlighted on Kelly's exclusive with Glossy in response to public opinions (Tik Tok users trying to break down travel costs and question the advertising strategy).	Generally educated audience interested in beauty and fashion, all ages	Effective. Discussed Kelly's awareness of the backlash and promoted the company and Dubai invites. However, it mentions more specifics on users questioning Tarte's method.	Hyperlinked attendees and included some of their content from the trip: videos and captions.
"With Lavish Dubai Influencer Trips, Companies Spend Dearly for the Social Spotlight" (Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2023)	Focused on the expenses and how brands/celebrities have been using the Emirates and its boosting economy as a marketing strategy while supporting the tourism industry in the nation.	People involved in business industries and intelligent consumers not necessarily interested in beauty and fashion	Ineffective. Although Tarte's marketing strategy was mentioned, coverage was minimal towards the brand and more focused on Dubai's tourism industry and general trends.	No call to action for Tarte besides hyperlinking aspects related to Dubai.
"Tarte and the future of the influencer trip" (Marketing Brew, January 27, 2023)	Focused on the campaign's success in garnering attention	People interested in tech, business, and finance, primarily targeted Millennials	Effective. Tarte's marketing strategy was mentioned. Discussed various viewpoints on the campaign.	Hyperlinked Tarte's hashtags

The brand used luxury digital marketing with the campaign. Media captured this interest as an effective marketing strategy, while also highlighting the mixed public reaction.

Planning

Tarte aimed to increase brand awareness through continuation of the "Trippin with Tarte" campaign. Hypothetical strategies include:

- Highlight** Tarte's connection with their audience and the people they listen to
- Focus** on founding principles and authenticity
- Showcase** Tarte's products and success



Tactic #1 Relationship Building: authentic benefit-exchange

“Trippin with Tarte” 2023 attendees were not required to post about Tarte while on the trip, as they were not paid (Spruch-Feiner, 2023). However, the trip was entirely complimentary and included business class Emirate flights, accommodations at the Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah, and a jam-packed itinerary full of events and activities for influencers and their plus-ones (Spruch-Feiner, 2023).



Figure 1: TikToks posted by attendees during the trip. (left to right, top to bottom: Monet McMichael, Alix Earle, Mian Twins, Meredith Duxbury, Xandra Pohl, Ellie Zeiler).

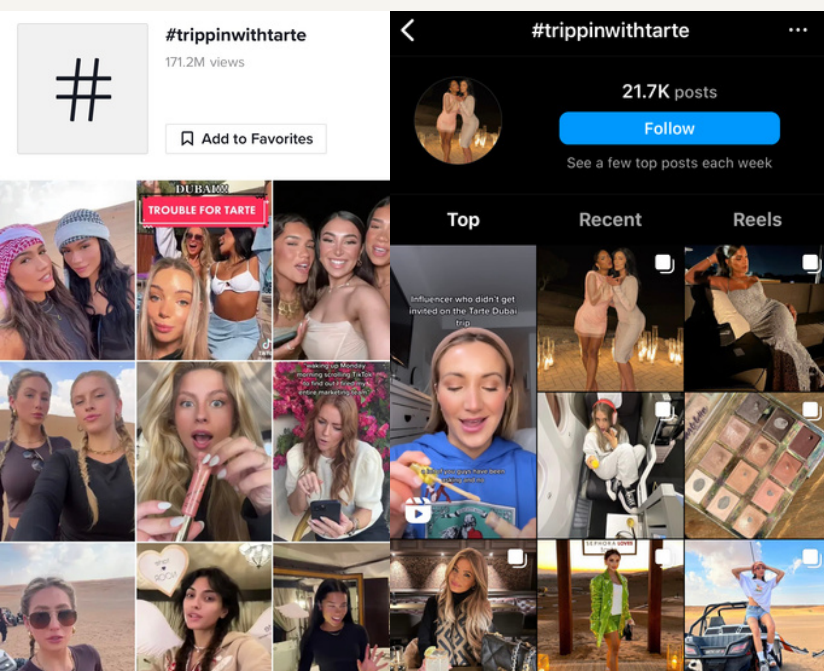


Figure 2: #trippinwithtarte on TikTok

Figure 3: #trippinwithtarte on Instagram

Most of the posts were TikToks, which reached a large audience due to the volume of content. Videos posted by individuals with high follower counts received millions of views.

Many influencers posted “get ready with me” TikToks, usually featuring Tarte products and discussing their plans for the day. The attendees advertised various brands among Tarte, which provided a more genuine feel than pushing Tarte products constantly. The videos often mentioned the brand and used #trippinwithtarte.

Tactic #2 Promotion: Tarte & partners giveaway

Tarte hosted a giveaway on Instagram using #trippinwithtarte from January 18-20 for US-based followers. The announcement was made with a video showing the brand's Dubai "room drop," a decorated hotel room full of Tarte products and gifts from partners, including clothes and makeup.

One winner scored all the gifts shown by following a few instructions: 1.) like the post, 2.) tag a friend, 3.) follow the list of brands included in the caption. The Instagram post received 1,780 comments.



Figure 4: @tartecosmetics Instagram post about the giveaway on the first day of the trip

Tactic #3 Tarte's Owned Content: sharing the trip and its broader goals

Owned media in the campaign was the content posted to Tarte's TikTok and Instagram accounts. During the trip, they posted group photos of invitees on the daily excursions. Examples of the trip's itinerary included jeep-riding in the desert and a pool party. Posts of the invitees on the lavish vacation made it seem like an incredibly fun and glamorous trip, further playing into the idea of calculated authenticity.

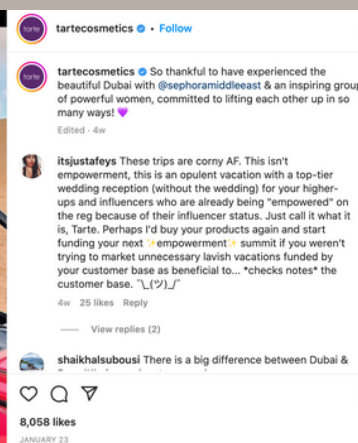


Figure 5: @tartecosmetics Instagram post at the end of the trip. caption: "So thankful to have experienced the beautiful Dubai with @sephoramiddleeast & an inspiring group of powerful women, committed to lifting each other up in so many ways!"

Another narrative the brand took with its posts was social awareness. Since the campaign was in partnership with Sephora Middle East, the brand included collaboration with influential people worldwide. To be transparent with other campaign objectives, Tarte posted a collage-style TikTok video with campaign images explaining the reasoning behind the trip. Statements from Tarte's TikTok: "we are here to lift other women up," "we are here to give back after being given so much," "to empower each other from around the world," and "to celebrate strong women."



Figure 6: CEO Kelly with Kali O'Neill and another attendee
Figure 7: @tartecosmetics TikTok post

Evaluation

Measurable Results

Although the sales impact was not reported by Tarte, evidence suggests that the brand experienced an influx of social media growth, particularly in regard to doubling its earned media value (Hopkins, 2023). Tarte's earned media value was \$19.4M in January, compared to \$10.9M in December 2022 (Hopkins, 2023). The brand ranked #8 for highest EMV among other beauty brands, one place above Rihanna's Fenty Beauty (CreatorIQ). During the week of the brand trip, Tarte's Google searches were up by 35.8% compared to the week before (Hopkins, 2023).

Communication with Gen Z

As the campaign spread across social media users' pages, individuals began sharing their opinions on social media in response to the trip. This was particularly present on TikTok, as people questioned Tarte's budget and how unrelatable #TrippinWithTarte was during a recession (Mautone, 2023). The negative feedback from some of the targeted audience suggests gaps between the brand and its consumers.

Suggestions for Improvement

In efforts to make the campaign more successful among the target audience, perhaps Tarte could have enlisted more research on Gen Z and TikTok as the content was overwhelming in volume. Another element that could have made this campaign more productive among the audience would be to emphasize the campaign's broader goals more effectively, discussing their plans to "give back after being given so much." Lastly, Tarte could have focused on highlighting all attendees better, which would have provided more inclusivity.

Benefits/Overall Success

Despite the divide caused by the makeup brand, #trippinwithtarte was successful in gaining exposure. Additionally, media outlets published articles about Tarte's campaign being an effective strategy that may have a good return on investment (ROI) (Cannon, 2022). The campaign may have been productive in terms of ROI due to the content's volume and execution/exposure through the most popular social media platforms of today seemingly compensated for the cost.

"Trippin' with Tarte" communicated to a variety of audiences, but its exposure was arguably most prevalent on TikTok. The makeup brand even uploaded a video joking about a "Shape Tape Concealer" mascot losing their job after all of the revenue was spent on a trip to Dubai (the post received 4.8 million views). Although Tarte's campaign stirred mixed reactions, it reached younger generations and generally promoted brand awareness.

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