

If you post it, they will come: The businesses turning likes into livelihoods

Adapted from: BBC News (2026) *Viral chicken shop draws customers from hours away*. BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm2701py5np0> (Accessed: 10 April 2026).

By Elliot Deady. Essex, published 19 October 2025.



Image source: Elliot Deady/BBC

Murat Mutlu says he is surprised at how far his customers of his sandwich shop will travel.

Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have made it easier than ever to get noticed by the world. How does it feel when your business is at the centre of a viral trend?

Spend any time on social media and it won't be long before you see footage of some holiday mishap accompanied by the ironic voiceover, "Nothing beats a Jet2 Holiday."

The travel firm's upbeat theme music and tagline has **become an internet meme** unit, and many smaller businesses are also benefitting from social media fame.

They include **Binley Mega Chippy**, which saw trade increase tenfold thanks to videos on social media.

"Spudman" - aka Ben Newman - saw his jacket potato stall besieged with customers after his own videos went viral.

Elsewhere, **"Chip Shop Diva" Destiny Harold** became an internet star, thanks to her appearances in online videos for Merchants fish and chip shop.

In Essex, meanwhile, a number of businesses are currently enjoying a boost in business after going viral.

'Customers travelled three hours for our chicken burger'



Image source: Elliot Deady/BBC

Honywood Sandwich Shop is tucked away on an industrial estate in Basildon.

It has just gone 09:00 on a Tuesday morning and a flurry of customers have already been through the door at Honywood Sandwich Shop in Basildon.

It is mostly loyal regulars popping in for breakfast, but I am told that come the weekend, people will be turning up from far and wide.

The sandwich shop does post its own videos on TikTok, but it is content posted by its customers that has boosted its bottom line.



Image source: Elliot Deady/BBC

The shop's chicken burger is drawing customers from far and wide.

Owner Murat Mutlu, who employs nine staff, says customers started travelling long distances to try his food after one of his regulars posted about the shop and other customers followed suit.

And while traditional sarnies may be the shop's bread and butter, its other items are what TikTokers are talking about.

"It was a big surprise to me to hear [customers] had travelled for our chicken burger for three hours," says the 42-year-old, who took over the shop two years ago.

'It's amazing, really'



Image source: Lauren Carter/BBC

Kristy Chamberlain says people travel to her prom shop from as far as Cyprus.

About 1.5 million UK businesses operate on TikTok, according to figures shared by the social media platform last year.

Among them is Krystalls Boutique, a prom dress shop in Leigh-on-Sea, whose team's sketches based on funny moments they have observed in the shop have racked up millions of views.

Kristy Chamberlain, who opened the shop in 2012, says teenagers travel from the Channel Islands and even Cyprus to pick out a frock after seeing the skits.

She started posting on the platform about 18 months ago after being encouraged by her son.

"Some people drive down for four or five hours just to come here," the 45-year-old says.

"I always ask them if they're tying it in with a family visit and they're like, 'No, my daughter said they only want to come here.' It's amazing, really."

'This has taken over my life'



Image source: Elliot Deady/BBC

Linda Hunter - better known online as Lindy Loo - runs an online clothing business based in Epping.

According to the government's Business Academy, more than 200 million businesses worldwide are using Instagram to reach customers.

Among them, tucked away on an industrial estate near Epping, is Lindy Loo's Boutique, an online clothes shop owned by Linda Hunter.

She started posting on the platform during the pandemic and, after 46 years selling clothes on markets in Essex, Kent and London, was eventually able to pack up her stall.

The 62-year-old has moved the business fully online and ships outfits across the UK and even to Australia.



Image source: Elliot Deady/BBC

The ground floor of Linda's warehouse is wall-to-wall clothes.

As I pull up to the warehouse, I notice Linda delving through cardboard boxes as her team deals with a delivery of new stock.

"This has taken over my life," she laughs.

“All my stock was sitting in my van and my grandson said, in lockdown, ‘We should do a video.’ We started in my living room.”

Today, she is followed by a combined 320,000 people across Facebook and Instagram and tries to post fresh content showing off her latest stock at least five times a day.

‘The response on social media has honestly changed our business’



Image source: Elliot Deady/BBC

Chloe Huggins and Ross Bliss set up their mobile party business in December.

Partners Chloe Huggins and Ross Bliss, both 27 and from Thundersley, started posting videos of their children’s pamper parties on TikTok, Instagram and Facebook after they set up Little Love’s Pamper Bus last December.

The business has racked up about 45 million views in under a year, according to Ross.

Together, they travel around Essex and the surrounding areas in their mobile beauty salon, but have had inquiries from viewers in the United States and the Bahamas.

“The response on social media has honestly changed our business. It’s been amazing,” says Chloe, while showing me around the salon.

The couple say they initially expected this to be a weekend side hustle, but are now helping youngsters party nearly every day.

‘People buy from people’

Faye Martin, a marketing expert from Laindon, says social media has made it easier than ever for traders to reach new customers.

“The way that marketing has adapted over the last few years is that brand awareness is at the heart of it,” she says.

“People know what is an ad and they don’t want to be sold to. People buy from people.

“Subliminal marketing and little skits... are such a good way of showing someone your brand in a really authentic, relatable way so they can look at that and go, ‘Oh, I like that brand - I’m going to purchase from them.’”