

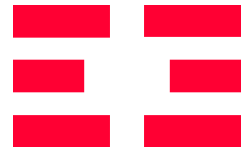


ByteDance (TikTok)

Locations: China (HQ)

Industries: Media and Entertainment

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

DESCRIPTION:

Note: This company is likely subject to the influence and control of the Chinese Communist Party, which actively censors speech and denies the freedoms we strive to protect. Therefore, 1792 Exchange urges extra caution when evaluating this vendor for business relationships.

ByteDance (and its popular social media platform TikTok) have regularly terminated or censored conservative voices, such as Lila Rose of Live Action and the Babylon Bee, without explanation. TikTok provides a benefits package for employees which covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion. The company is part of the Global Alliance for Responsible Media and does not provide its employees with protections against viewpoint discrimination. The company uses its corporate reputation to support ideological groups such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). The company also donates directly to GLAAD. TikTok is a member of the MCCA, indicating its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on race. For these reasons, ByteDance receives a High Risk rating.

Corporate Weaponization

Has denied service to customers, suppliers, or vendors due to their political views or religious beliefs OR corporately boycotts, divests, or sanctions regions, people groups, or industries. **High Risk**

ByteDance, a Chinese tech company and developer of TikTok, promotes censorship in the app's terms of service. For example, the app recommends that company-employed moderators immediately censor posts discussing Tiananmen Square, Tibetan independence, and other concepts that the Chinese Communist Party would see as dissidence [\(1\)](#). In late 2020 and early 2021, TikTok interfered in user discussion of the 2020 US general election results on the platform, employing "fact-checkers" and removing or hiding creators whose facts were deemed "inconclusive" [\(2\)](#)[\(3\)](#). The app's administrators employed a similar tactic for removing posts expressing vaccine hesitancy from the algorithm [\(4\)](#). TikTok also de-platformed Kyle Rittenhouse in late 2021, and the ban has persisted even after the court decided not to convict Rittenhouse on any charges [\(5\)](#). The app has also permanently banned conservative voices, such as Live Action leader Lila Rose and satirical publication The Babylon Bee, with seemingly no explanation [\(6\)](#) [\(7\)](#)[\(8\)](#)[\(9\)](#).

Charitable giving (including employee matching programs) policies or practices discriminate against charitable organizations based on views or religious beliefs. **Lower Risk**

The company does not discriminate against religious organizations in its charitable giving. TikTok primarily donates through initiatives such as matching user engagement with financial contributions to non-governmental organizations and charitable partnerships [\(1\)](#).

Employment policies fail to protect against discrimination based on political affiliation/views and/or religion.

Medium Risk

ByteDance does not provide viewpoint protections for its employees (1)(2).

Corporate Governance and Public Policy

Uses corporate reputation to support ideological causes and/or organizations hostile to freedom of expression. High Risk

Despite heavily monitoring and manipulating the discourse on the TikTok platform, ByteDance's leadership specifically has stayed largely quiet regarding American political and social issues (1)(2). However, former employees of ByteDance claim that the company used its now-deleted news app TopBuzz to censor negative press about the Chinese government and spread pro-CCP stories (3). ByteDance denies the allegations. Additionally, TikTok updated its community guidelines in 2022 to make "misgendering" an offense worthy of a ban from the platform (4). TikTok's higher-up employees participated in "Blackout Tuesday" amidst the BLM protests, and the company heavily endorsed various Pride Month movements in partnership with GLAAD (5)(6).

Uses corporate funds to advance ideological causes, organizations, or policies hostile to freedom of expression. High Risk

TikTok provides a benefits package for employees which covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion (1)(2). The company is a member of the Global Alliance for Responsible Media (3)(4)(5). In June 2020, TikTok announced that it had pledged \$1 million to "fighting racial injustice," although the platform did not disclose how the money would be allocated (6)(7). In 2019, TikTok engaged in a giving campaign of up to \$50,000 to GLAAD (8)(9). The company is a member of the MCCA, indicating its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on race (10)(11).

Uses corporate political contributions for ideological, non-business purposes.

Lower Risk

ByteDance does not operate a PAC at this time and has not lobbied for ideological purposes (1)(2)(3).

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