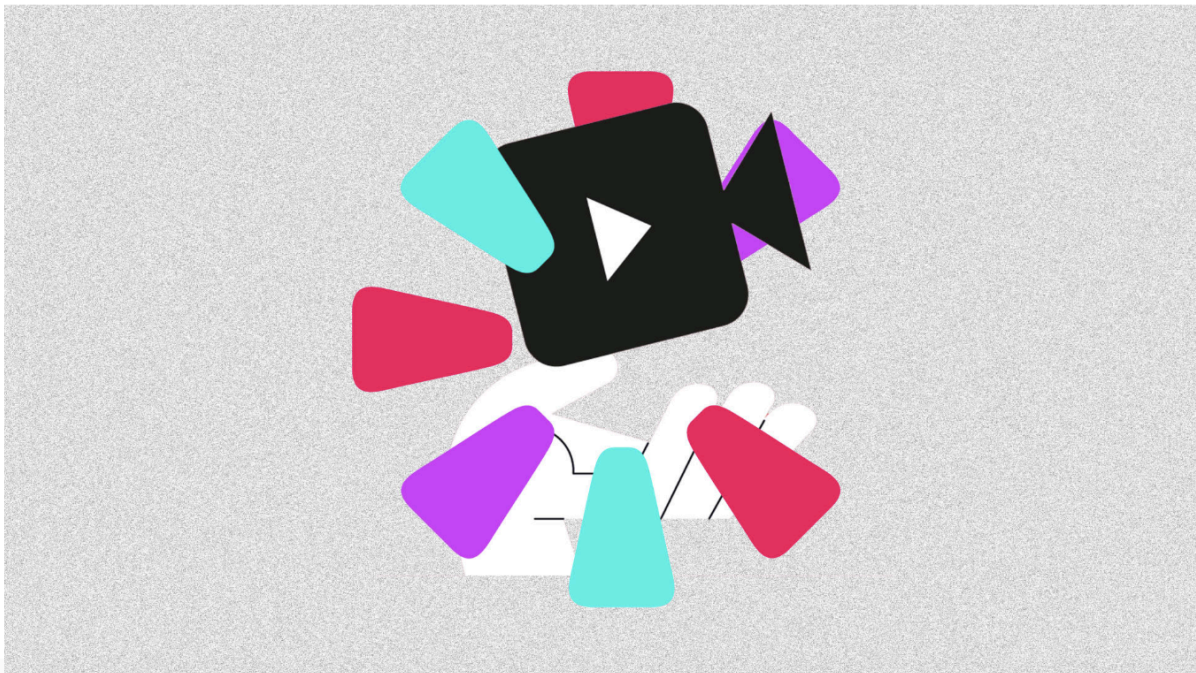


FAST COMPANY

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# Celebrity video site Cameo is now open to all creators

After a successful pilot featuring surprise creators, anyone is now welcome to create Cameo videos.



[Illustration: PureSolution/Adobe Stock]

BY **STEVEN MELENDEZ** 3 MINUTE READ

When the celebrity personalized video platform **Cameo** first launched in 2017, not just anyone could sell custom videos to fans on the platform.

Cameo staff recruited some celebs to the platforms, and existing Cameo video creators were allowed to invite others they thought were successful. And while potential video creators could apply, they generally had to have achieved a certain level of genuine fame—or at least something in the range of 25,000 followers on a major social media platform—before they’d be allowed to start posting.

But in an era where YouTubers, TikTok creators, podcasters, and everyday people like “Hawk Tuah Girl” Hailey Welch can **suddenly go viral**, that meant Cameo was missing out on a lot of potential up-and-coming talent, says CEO Steven Galanis.

“One of the key things that we’ve always believed at Cameo is that there’s more famous people in the world today than there were yesterday, and there’ll be more tomorrow than there are now,” says Galanis. “And we realized that the way that we were onboarding talent, we were missing a lot of the most important emerging talent to come through our ecosystem.”



Steven Galanis, CEO [Photo: Cameo]

So in May 2023, the company quietly launched a pilot of what it calls CameoX, enabling anyone to sign up and start selling videos through the platform after just a few clicks and some basic identity verification. In roughly 18 months, the program brought in about 31,000 video creators, who’ve made nearly 155,000

Cameo videos and collectively sold them for more than \$5 million, the company reports.

Among the most viral self-enrolled creators was the disgraced former New York Republican Congressman George Santos, who **sells personalized videos** starting at \$250 on the platform, where he describes himself as a “former Congressional ‘icon.’” Among his customers was Sen. John Fetterman, the Pennsylvania Democrat, who in December **commissioned a Santos video** facetiously telling then-Sen. Bob Menendez to “stay strong” during his own legal troubles.

Santos’s arrival on Cameo also provided the platform with a wave of media attention. “We woke up in the morning, and I’m getting emails from all these press outlets that George Santos had joined Cameo,” Galanis says. “He put it on his Twitter profile, and all of a sudden, he goes viral and, and that was something that made a massive difference in our business last year.”

On November 22, Santos was joined on the platform by fellow former Congressman and one-time Attorney General nominee Matt Gaetz, who’s **selling videos for \$500 a pop**. Gaetz’s profile notes “Trump nominated me to be US Attorney General (that didn’t work out).”

Modern politicians have become enough like reality stars or YouTube creators that they’re a natural fit for the platform, Galanis says, and they bring a welcome dose of attention to Cameo when they sign up. But they’re not the only unexpected creators to take advantage of the site’s open signup policy. Another surprise hit has been **Mona**, the puppet star of a late 1990s Canadian children’s TV show called *Nanalan’*, who **recently saw** revived interest on TikTok but, lacking a prominent social media presence, had been rejected from Cameo in its exclusive days.



[Photo: Cameo]

“Mona had tried to join Cameo for years,” Galanis says. “Nobody on our team recognized, kind of, the value or what they would be able to do.”

In the past year, the puppet has earned in the “high six figures” on Cameo, which takes a 30% cut of video sales, Galanis says. Other hits have included new types of performers, including **magicians, tarot card readers, and even ASMR content creators**. Nudity isn’t allowed on the site (though performers who’ve appeared nude elsewhere are free to create clothed Cameos), and performers aren’t allowed to claim to be someone they’re not unless they’re clearly performing as an impersonator, but the company is otherwise open to a variety of types of content.

When new creators sign up, they’re still not usually prominently featured on the site immediately, so as to not clutter up the interface, and they’re encouraged to promote their Cameo link through their own social channels. But if they turn out to be successful, they’ll get more promotion through Cameo itself, since while some Cameo customers come to buy a video from a specific person, others come to browse, especially if they’re looking for a gift.

Content creators are able to charge whatever they want for their videos, and the platform is generally moving toward selling more videos at lower prices. But Galanis says even low-cost videos are a boon to the platform, since they can draw new audiences to purchase videos.

“We would rather sell one million \$1 Cameos than one million-dollar Cameo,” he says. “Because every Cameo is a commercial for the next one.”