

BUILDING A COMMUNITY ONLINE

With *Julia Busuttill Nishimura*

TDF SMALL BUSINESS

SUMMER SCHOOL

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Over the past few years, beloved foodie and cookbook author Julia Busuttill Nishimura has built a loyal and highly engaged community on social media, which has been an incredible asset to her business, helping to drive sales for her best-selling cookbooks and workshops, and bring her many commercial opportunities.

In this lesson, Julia offers excellent advice for anyone looking to build their social media presence in an authentic way. She outlines the advantages of growing your audience slowly and steadily over time, and offers lots of ideas for content planning and audience engagement, as well as how you can measure and review your efforts, to be really clear on how social media is driving traffic to your website.



“Above all, you want to create value for your followers. Find out what your community needs, and be there to provide that.”

Visit [Squarespace.com](https://www.squarespace.com) for a free trial and when you're ready to launch, use the offer code **DESIGNFILES** to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.

1 SLOW & STEADY

You don't need 100,000 followers to create a strong online community. In fact, accounts with massive numbers of followers usually see less engagement per follower than accounts with a smaller following.

Focus on quality over quantity. Forget about big numbers, and aim for '1000 true fans' - and focus on how you can really connect with them.



2 CONTENT PLANNING

Imagine 3-4 'types' of content you will post regularly. For me, that might be - what I'm cooking, what I'm eating, family snaps, and re-sharing recipes cooked by my followers.

A good rule of thumb is to post to Facebook and Instagram at least once a day - so it's worth finding tools to streamline this process. For instance, Squarespace's story editing app 'Unfold' makes it easy to pull together photos and text, to create beautiful stories for social media, just using your phone.



3 Authenticity is key

It's so important to be genuine on social media. Your community will be far more engaged if they feel you're connecting with them in an authentic and meaningful way. So, don't be afraid to show a personal side on Instagram.

For me, I like to share videos where I talk directly to my followers, and share my everyday food and recipes. For you, it might be showing behind the scenes of whatever you do - or sharing the things that go wrong sometimes, alongside the wins!



4 TWO WAY STREET

Social media is a two way street - of course you need to post inspiring content, but it's also great to answer questions, respond to feedback, and like, comment and re-share other people's content too!

The more you actively engage with others in a generous, genuine way, the more your own community will grow.



FIVE Measure + Review

It's a good idea to regularly review what content your audience are really loving, and what isn't performing so well.

If you've connected your social media accounts to your website, you can assess where your traffic is coming from using Squarespace Analytics, and you can also see which content is resonating best with your audience. This will help you plan future content, and grow a really engaged, loyal audience over time.



6 Create Value

Above all, you want to create value for your followers.

Find out what your community needs, and be there to provide that! For me, that's sharing cooking videos. For you, it might be - styling or design advice, travel guides, or other free, inspiring content, like e-books, podcasts and more.

