

Successfully Connecting With Community Over Social Media

With Chef Ona Lee of @clarascanning



Introduction

First, I would like to express how grateful I am to have been asked to speak to all of you today. I think by telling a bit of my story, I can better connect with all of you and provide you with some of what has grown my page @clarascanning to over 120,000 followers.

Completely naturally, with no special tricks.

Starting With a Goal

Before any other steps are taken, affirming a goal for our social media is at the top of my personal list of importance.

I believe worthy goals produce effort, and effort along with connection produce viewership.

My personal goals are to provide a space where people can learn, participate, and purchase my locally sourced and produced goods while supporting local food systems in whatever way each viewer is able.

This means they can watch simple tutorials, gain inspiration for making the push towards eating more locally, as well as succeed in the same goals by purchasing tickets to my classes or hiring me for any of the services I provide.

Starting With a Goal Pt.2

At the end of the day I am a business and need to support myself and family but, I believe the financial support will come even if I put connection first.

My personal style is to choose a much more organic page as well as organic growth over simply producing content to gain views.

Even professional content coaches* have said that people are growing tired of trending audios and extremely fast clips. If you like the audio, if it fits the video, and you are able to convey the information in the allotted time, go for it.

However trending audios are not my thing. I have used trending audio maybe twice in the entirety of Clara's page. I do not try to emulate influencer culture, people have caught on to this and are often turned off by these tactics.

*Brock Johnson @brock11johnson

(I find most Social Media coaches to feel very fake and demanding, but Brock Johnson has a more personal and laid back approach with content that is simple to understand and apply if you do appreciate coaching)

Finding Your Style

Do not rush this step, it takes time, courage, and input from your audience. It is an awkward phase, I am still figuring it out and my content changes with the seasons. You may find certain accounts inspiring but do not attempt to recreate other pages, simply be yourself and keep your goal in mind.

This will go against what the algorithm demands, but keeping up with the algorithm is a good recipe for burnout. I believe serving my community near and far is more important than keeping up. I have tried and it left me with very little time for life.

Start by making honest informative videos, teaching yourself how to edit, and by doing this you will get feedback via the viewers and your analytics. I pay way more attention to the people responding but both are valuable tools.

Over time this will all add up and you will find what works best for you and your viewers.

What to film? How to inspire?

The only real answer here is the best way to inspire is to walk our talk. We have to live what we preach or we will be constantly searching for ideas to produce, when really it can just be integrated into our day. This keeps ourselves healthy as well as inspires others.

There's a saying that goes "anything is content" and this is mostly true.

Making dinner? Film it!

Going shopping? Film it!

Curating an event for patrons or the community? FILM. IT.

And to keep yourself in the present moment, edit later.

Content Ideas for Connecting to People Within the SNAP-Ed Programs:

All of these ideas can be used many times in different ways, you can utilize these prompts endlessly.

- How to prepare simple foods with items only sourced via the food banks
- Showing people items they may not know they can use their SNAP EBT cards for
- How to use a SNAP EBT card to buy food plants or seeds and starting gardens in any kind of space
- Happy customers talking about their foodbank hauls
- Happy customers showing their SNAP EBT purchases
- Showcasing community events
- Clips of the work and care that goes into organizing
- Talking about why you do the work you do

Film a Wide Range of Shots

People are more engaged by multiple angles and cuts or transitions. I use only one phone, and two different tripods for the majority of my content.

Through simple adjustments and editing we can produce clips that are engaging and full of material without taking a ton of time to produce. Learning these things does take time through trial and error. My first 1 minute video took me over 6 hours to edit. Now it takes me about 1 hour to produce a 1.5 minute clip, and minutes to produce videos that are 30 seconds or less.

All videos on Instagram are now “Reels” but Reels are limited to 1 min 30 seconds. If you want your video to be seen from start to finish in stories keep it under 15 seconds. If you have more to say, say it! If it is interesting enough, people will watch the whole clip from a few seconds to 1.5 minutes or more.

Key to Excellent Quality Shots

Clear, crisp video quality and audio is important to viewers. Some say audio is more important than video quality.

To achieve this, bright natural light with minimal background noise is best. I end up filming outside a lot, not just because it is where I process most food during pleasant months, but because lighting is easy.

If you are shooting indoors, find good window lighting and minimize background noise. If you have loud appliances, unplug them temporarily, turn off fans and TVs or devices, keep your phone on silent. This is very important. An auxiliary lavalier microphone is a good idea for speaking pieces. I have a lavalier mic I found at Best Buy for around \$30, it can clip to clothing or to my tripod so it is out of sight. You can also use bluetooth headphones equipped with mic.

If you cannot achieve good audio quality in your surroundings, mute the footage and add music or a voice over.

Shooting in 9:16 ratio as opposed to landscape is best, videos shot to fill the screen perform better.

Equipment for Filming Many Different Shots

I use one simple phone mount that does above shots as well as direct. They are simple and inexpensive. They are excellent for cooking videos. There are a few different styles to choose from.



Equipment for Filming Many Different Shots

For portrait shots and landscapes I use a standard tripod fitted with a phone holding adapter as shown below. I end up using this tripod quite a bit these days. People really like seeing who is making their content and being connected with directly.



Editing Programs

There are many different ways to produce videos for social media. I have found that the video quality when shot with your phone's camera is much better than shooting footage within apps such as Instagram and TikTok. In-app editors are difficult to use and not as precise as a stand alone editing app. This also makes sharing across platforms a lot easier and you won't have TikTok or Instagram watermarks on your videos.

I use InShot Pro, it was a one time fee of \$29.99 but I use it nearly everyday, the free version has limited features and puts an InShot watermark on the video. It allows me to cut clips, edit the photo quality, adjust lightness/contrast/sharpness etc, I can add voice overs, text, effects, cut and rearrange clips to a 1/10th of a second, add music, extract audios, adjust volume levels, and so much more.

InShot also allows you to select video quality, frame rate, and format when saving. I go with 1080p for quality. 720p is a little low and 4k will take up a lot of storage and is more difficult to upload. I use 30fps and MP4 format always.

Start simple and allow yourself to learn each function over time, I am almost entirely self taught. InShot has an FAQ section that is quite informative with tutorial videos. There are also many great InShot tutorials on YouTube.

Posting

When you are ready to post, there's quite a few keys and features to utilize. Tags, Location, and Audio will all share your video to each of those folders which will make it viewable to a lot more people when used correctly.

First you want to select a good cover, I have found that cover photos with faces or descriptive text do well. Or mouth watering photos of food. Make sure to select the crop so you can choose what 1:1 area will show up in your grid.

You may decide to post to your grid as well as your feed or just to your feed and keep the video visible only in your "Reels" folder. The video will perform better if it is posted to your feed.

Be sure to tag any brands or accounts you used in the video. I really only tag local farms, producers, friends, or collaborators. I make it a point to feature them over big brands. Target and Starbucks have enough reach, I don't need to give them more free press. This also helps people understand we have much of what we need right here in Washington state amongst our smaller businesses and community organizations.

Tagging can be a great way to triangulate fellow accounts and resources for people to find. In the Tag bar you can also select "invite collaborator". This is a great way to cross post the same reel and caption to another account. If the account accepts collaborator, the post will come up on their page exactly as it does on yours. So keep the caption a bit universal so it makes sense to viewers.

Posting Pt. 2

Adding a location can be very helpful especially if you want people to be able to quickly find an address. The location search bar is very vast and you may select an exact location with address or something more broad like counties.

As for captioning, add any additional information you want people to know. The video should have most everything people need to walk away from the post being informed, but the caption is a great tool. For events, I make the time, place, expectations for the event very clear in the video as well as the caption. For more tutorial or information based posts, I add additional info for those who enjoyed the content of the video and want to know more. For recipes I add the exacts in the caption. Not everyone reads captions, so you may want to keep them very simple.

I write captions with the understanding not everyone will see it, I want to make sure my point is mainly in the video, but I do like discussing further because I have noticed there are a good group of people who not only view my posts but read the caption fully.

What time you post can affect viewership, but I have decided that trying to keep on a hard schedule does not work for me. Earlier in the day gives more time during a 24 hour period for people to view but if its a good video it really doesn't matter.

Don't Sweat The Numbers

This part is difficult, and at first it's hard not to fixate on views, likes, comments, and follows or unfollows after posting but take it from me; it is not the most important part of what you are providing.

When I started putting more effort into making my social media, I started at around 1,900 followers and my page has grown to around 120,000 in just a few years. In terms of organic growth that is pretty alright with me.

Unfollows and follows can sometimes be about the same, which can feel frustrating or awkward but people unfollow for many different reasons. Its ideal to not take it personally or focus on it too much. I want to build good relationships, not just focus on the numbers.

Wrapping it up

The main points to take away are:

- Focus on genuine goals
- Be of service
- Take time to learn editing and posting features
- Do not focus too much on numbers
- Do not listen to the avalanche of social media “coaches” and “gurus”
- Take it all in stride
- Have fun!