

# FUTURE PROOF: Create your own content

By [Oon Yeoh](#) - June 7, 2020 @ 9:00am



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THERE was a time, not too long ago, when if someone loses their job, they'd turn to driving a taxi. Later, being an Uber driver was the thing to do. When Grab took over, that became the thing unemployed people took to doing.

These days though, you can't really do that anymore as the Covid-19 pandemic has really killed demand for ride-hailing services.

Grab Food and Foodpanda riders as well as grocery delivery service riders are in high demand now but if you don't fancy riding around on a motorcycle, that's not really an option for you.

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But if you're someone who has just lost a job, what can you do?

One possibility is to create your own content. If you can learn to become a content creator, it opens up lots of possibilities for you.

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If your content is good enough, you can actually make money directly from the content itself.

But even if the content doesn't generate much money for you directly, it's useful for your personal branding.

Lastly, anyone who's able to create content will be appreciated by companies as content marketing starts to become more popular.

In short, learning how to create content is a way to future-proof yourself.

There was a time when you had to go to university to study media or publishing or film in order to learn how to make content. And after you graduated, you'd have to join a publisher, a media house or a production company of some kind to get the necessary practical training to create professional quality content.

Then social media came along and changed everything. Suddenly, everybody's a publisher.

The Internet has all the tools you'd need to publish an e-magazine or e-book.

You could have your own podcast and even your own video channel. There's nothing stopping you from doing any of these things, which don't require a license or permit (unlike in traditional media).

Blogs gave everyone a soapbox to share their views on things. The advent of the smartphone made it possible for everyone to be a photographer or a videographer.

The cameras on today's smartphone can produce HD quality videos (in some cases, 4K quality).

But perhaps most importantly, the expectation of the viewer has changed. In the past, anything that you read in papers, magazines or books, or heard on the radio or watched on TV had to be of professional quality.

Not so with social media. Consumers of social media content just don't have the expectation for content to be perfectly shot, perfectly edited and perfectly presented. If the underlying content is good, they're happy with it.

## THE SUGU PHENOMENON

It's because of the times we live in that someone like Sugu Pavithra (621,000 subscribers and counting) can become the cooking sensation that she is today. No doubt timing was definitely on her side.

During the Movement Control Order (MCO), people couldn't go out to eat, so many people were cooking at home. But timing alone doesn't explain her great success. After all, there are many Malaysians doing cooking videos on YouTube. Why did her videos take off like a rocket?

There were multiple reasons and all of them were present in a perfect storm that launched her into the consciousness of all Malaysians who love local food.

Here are some of her key success factors:

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- These are some of her key success factors:
- a) She exudes sincerity and authenticity;
  - b) Her recipes are for dishes that Malaysians love, especially curries and other spicy fare;
  - c) The recipes are in a home-cooked style which have a genuine quality about them;
  - d) The videos have a very simple format and are easy to follow;
  - e) The ingredients used are very easy to find;
  - f) She speaks in Malay, which every Malaysian can understand;
  - g) There's a human touch to the videos. She often features her kids in the videos.

Sugu's been featured a lot in the press and has amassed a huge following. Apparently, she's been getting lots of calls from sponsors etc who want to send her things. In fact, her video postings are slowing down because she and her husband have only one phone to shoot the videos with – the same phone they get calls on.

If I were a phone brand, I'd be sending over a bunch of phones to her family, together with all kinds of accessories for shooting videos!

What we can learn from the Sugu phenomenon are the following:

- a) For social media videos, production quality doesn't have to be TV station broadcast quality. If you shoot using a mobile phone, it's good enough for web videos;
- b) The quality of the content counts more than production values. The underlying content must resonate with the target audience;
- c) Keep it simple;
- d) Sincerity and authenticity rule.

This would apply to any content you make, whether it's cooking or otherwise. Most people have something they are good at.

We live in an age where it's possible to become content creators. You don't need a big production team to do this.

Sugu has done it with the help of her husband, who shoots the videos while she cooks.

As for the platform to deliver your content, there are plenty of social media platforms to use. In Sugu's case, she uses YouTube.

You could start a blog, use Facebook, Instagram... whatever works for you. What's important is that the content you're sharing is useful and relevant to the target audience. Keep it simple and keep it real.

As mentioned earlier, the content itself could potentially make money. In Sugu's case it has. She has so many followers and her videos are seen so many times that she was able to earn some income from YouTube advertising.

But beyond the income she gets from YouTube are the opportunities that her fame has opened up to her. Everyone loves an underdog story and her unexpected success has been a delight to many. I think everyone hopes this will lead to greater things for her.

A cookbook perhaps? A TV series? Endorsement deals? Who knows but

this is her opportunity. And all because she decided to create her own content with the limited means she had at her disposal. It's something you could do too!

Oon Yeoh is a consultant with experiences in print, online and mobile media. Reach him at [onyeoh@gmail.com](mailto:onyeoh@gmail.com).

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