



Chef Jamie Oliver's Food Tube: A Recipe for YouTube Success

For several years, Jamie Oliver's channel functioned less as a YouTube channel and more as a platform for videos embedded on jamieoliver.com. The upload schedule was erratic, ranging from many uploads on a single day to more than 18 months with no uploads at all.

In total, the years of ad hoc uploading had gained the channel 4.5 million video views and 51,895 subscribers.¹ Not bad, but could the channel do better?

About Jamie Oliver

With a clear strategy focused on user engagement and regular content creation, Jamie Oliver has become one of the most important YouTube channels, surpassing the 600K subscribers mark.

- Website: <http://www.jamieoliver.com/>
- YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/jamieoliver>

Goals

- Build a community for food lovers on YouTube
- Launch and establish new cooking talent
- Grow overall viewership, subscriber base and watch-time

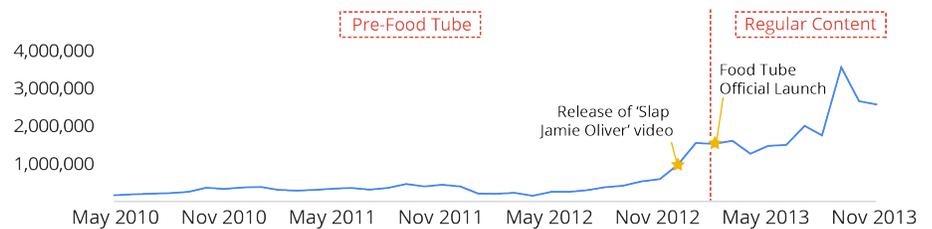
Approach

- Engage fans with a breakthrough launch
- Make regular content work with an in-demand celebrity
- Build personal connections with Oliver's audience

Results

- 1.8 million monthly video views on average
- More than 600K subscribers
- 8 million minutes average monthly watch-time

Views

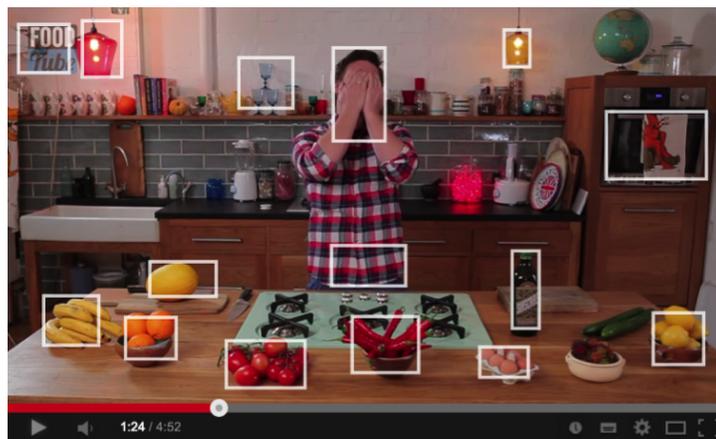


Here we outline three key strategies that drove the Jamie Oliver Food Tube channel to its current success:

Engaged fans with a breakthrough launch

On December 7th, 2012, Oliver's team uploaded a teaser to preview the launch of his Food Tube channel. The team decided to hook the audience first and communicate about the new channel later.

Which would catch your attention—a standard trailer or the chance to slap a celebrity?



Slap Jamie Oliver - Interactive

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"YouTube has been amazing for allowing me to draw in disparate talent."

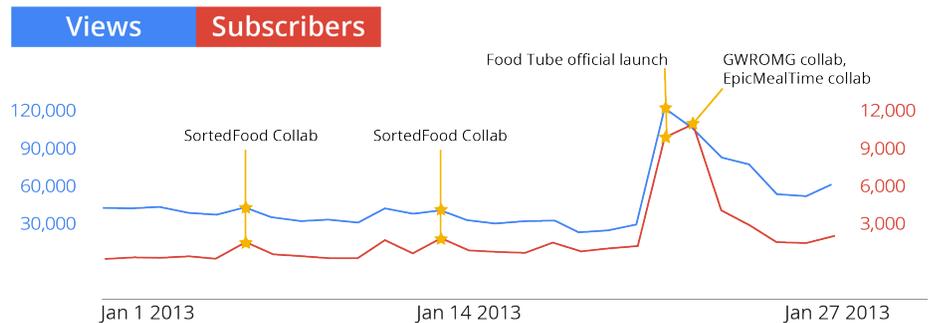
— **Jamie Oliver**, *Broadcast magazine*³

"Don't try and hide the fact that it's from the TV show; people are smart and will always know. You have to be transparent, brand it and tie it into your original content."

— **Matt Shaw**, *Food Tube producer*

Food Tube launched on January 21st, 2013, with a 30-minute live show. Kicking off the launch of a new channel with a big event is an excellent opportunity to build buzz and a great way to promote the programming schedule to your new audience.

It definitely helps to have a celebrity who's not afraid to reach out to other YouTubers and collaborate with them to make fantastic videos. Oliver was willing to be parodied (Sorted Food), take part in world record attempts (GWRomg) and be kidnapped and tied up (Epic Meal Time).



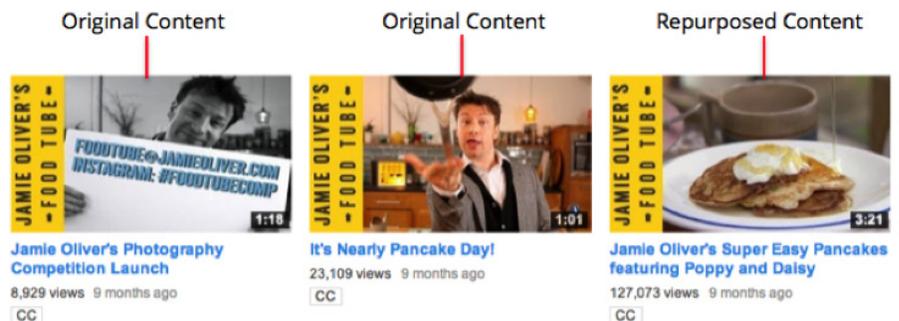
As we can see from the graphs² above, the collaborations helped ensure the launch's success, particularly the collaboration with Epic Meal Time and its large fan base and outlandish videos. It drove both traffic and subscribers from outside of Oliver's usual audience.

Made regular content work with an in-demand celebrity

The Food Tube team devised the strand "Jamie Presents" to showcase the best cooking talent on the internet. Oliver introduces the chefs and explains why they're worth watching. But to make the strand work, the featured chef—and Oliver's endorsement—must be authentic.

As the Food Tube team has expanded, so have the chefs' YouTube profiles. Now all the chefs have their own channels that contain original content as well as blooper reels, deleted scenes and playlists of their favorite videos. This allows the chefs to interact with their audience and develop their individual voices on the Jamie Oliver channel.

The Food Tube team also decided to repurpose TV content to help boost its content offering. But when this was done before, the channel hadn't exactly set the world on fire. So what's different this time?



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"It's really important on YouTube to listen to the audience and be single-minded, agile and responsive."

—Jamie Oliver, Broadcast magazine

Uploads were unpredictable in the pre-Food Tube days. Now all uploads are highly contextualized with optimized custom thumbnails and editorialized end cards. Uploads are also seasonal (cocktails in July and sausages in November) and used sparingly so they don't overwhelm the feed.

Built personal connections with his audience

Despite the repurposed content and the Food Tube team, the channel can always use more Oliver. So what else could Food Tube deliver considering the constraints on the lead presenter's time?



A few months after the launch, the strand "What's Jamie Eating Today?" was created to give his loyal audience a glimpse into his daily life. Quickly vlogged from his phone and sent to the Food Tube team for minimal editing and branding, the clips feature Oliver plus his team and children chatting about his latest meal.

The fast turnaround also means Oliver can comment on an event or the latest food trend and have the video uploaded within hours. The result is a fun-to-watch, low-cost video that places minimal constraints on Oliver's time.

Looking at the progress of the Jamie Oliver channel over the last few years, it's clear celebrity-hosted channels can prove enormously successful, but there are no easy wins. The pre-Food Tube days demonstrate that a celebrity's name alone is not enough to build a sustainable audience.

For Food Tube, understanding the importance of collaboration, authentic presenters and repurposing content in a strategic way has paid dividends.

Sources

[1] "YouTube Analytics — JamieOliver, Monthly Views, May 2010 to November 2013." Online video clip. YouTube. Web.

[2] "YouTube Analytics — JamieOliver, Daily Views/Net Subscribers, Jan. 1st, 2013, to Jan. 27th, 2013." Online video clip. YouTube. Web.

[3] Faber, Alex. "Jamie Oliver Slams TV for Failing to Land Talent." BroadcastNow. 25th July 2013. Web. <<http://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/news/broadcasters/jamie-oliver-slams-tv-for-failing-to-land-talent/5058593.article>>.