

M'sian chef a hit in Sydney

Jackie M's social media presence helps boost her food business

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DUBBED Australia's high priestess in Malaysian cuisine by Time Out Sydney, Malaysian-born Jackie M has paved the way for authentic Malaysian food in Australia. Since humble beginnings serving Malaysian cuisine at Sydney's Organic Food Markets on the weekends, the Seremban native has since become the chef with the second-widest reach on social media in Australia.

"When I started out, I operated my business on a shoestring — this meant no marketing budget and no recognition or write-ups in traditional media about my restaurant and other activities. I relied solely on word-of-mouth recommendations for business, and that was enough for me to enjoy generally brisk trade.

"The social media aspect really hit home one of the early years I took part in the Hyde Park Night Noodle Markets when people waiting in line to order food started tweeting pictures of the crowd in front of my stall, and of the food they had bought from me," said Jackie.

Her highly successful social



Authentic cuisine: Jackie M (right) with one of her students during her cooking class.

media presence can be attributed to her authenticity and accessibility online. With Jackie, what you see is what you get.

"My online self is very congruent with the offline me, insofar as I like to push the envelope and take risks with some of my posts. I'm a bit of a

no-nonsense, tough-as-nails, impatient, blunt and snarky hawker who snaps at people who confuse my *char kway teow* for *pad Thai* for instance," she said.

"There are lots of wrong ways to do social media but I think a big NO is to try and sell to your audience

without first gaining trust or adding value. People sometimes forget the 'social' aspect of social media; it takes an investment of time to build relationships for it to finally show results."

Single mother to baby Noah, who was born with Down Syndrome,

Jackie is an advocate for children with Down Syndrome and uses social media to share her son's story and connect with other families.

"Noah has brought nothing but sheer joy to not just me but many people on social media as they follow his progress," he added.



Long queue: Jackie M's stall at the Hyde Park Noodle Market in Sydney.