

Get Media Coverage By Being Authentic Online

Takeaways from this episode:

Authentic Social Media – Rabia Kamara, who has a degree in marketing, started from scratch one day on her Instagram for Ruby Scoops. She realized she had to tell her own story – and not just share dessert photos – in order to grow her ice cream business. She started becoming more intentional about sharing who she is and what she believes in. That was a game changer.

Representation Matters – Sharing her story is important because representation matters. Rabia was well into her 20s before she said she saw anyone that looked like her on television. Kids should be able to see people like them excelling in the media.

Getting Media Coverage – Do research to find television opportunities and start filling out applications or emailing news stations. Pitch interesting segments to local news based on national holidays and other timely or interesting happenings. Show up early, be nice, and make eye contact so your personality can shine on camera.

Ruby Scoops Ice Cream & Sweets Owner Rabia Kamara grew her successful brand by staying true to herself.

After winning the Food Network competition Ben and Jerry's Clash of the Cones, Rabia Kamara saw her social media reach drastically increase with thousands of new fans following @RubyScoopsIC on Instagram. Such is the power of media

coverage and storytelling to grow a brand.

“There was an unlock in me where I realized that people didn’t just want to know about my business, they wanted to know about me as well,” said Ruby Scoops owner Rabia Kamara on the Restaurant Influencers podcast with host Shawn P. Walchef of <https://calibbq.media>.

“I just decided to let people know who I am and what’s important to me. And really started to invest in causes that meant a lot to me.”

Ice Cream is a Blank Canvas:

Rabia Kamara has a deep-rooted love for desserts that she can’t keep to herself.

The heart and mind behind Ruby Scoops in Richmond, VA, Rabia’s cultured taste palette and love that spans generations of the past, present and future has her sharing warm stories and celebrated traditions through the cold canvas that is ice cream.

“I’m a person who absolutely loves food and sharing,” the business owner said. “It is my love language. So, being able to turn my passion into something profitable and making a bit of myself by doing the thing I wanted to do my whole life means a lot to me.”

In Fall 2021 Rabia Kamara won Ben and Jerry’s Clash of the Cones on the Food Network. Her winning flavor was called Bia’s Black Joy Sundae, which included Salted Malted Dulce de Leche Ice Cream, Vanilla Ice Cream with Dark Chocolate Fudge Brownie Chunks, Blondie Brownie Chunks, and Seafood Seasoning Caramel.

A Maryland native, Rabia returned to Richmond after attending college in Virginia. Now more than a decade in the food industry, she’s spent the past years spreading joy and altering opinions in the media through her creative approach

to craft ice cream.

"I'm a first generation African-American," Rabia shared. "My mother is Egyptian, Mauritian and Indian and my father is Sierra Leonean. I also grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland. It's a big melting pot, a diverse place. I've had the privilege and honor of being able to experience a lot of different kinds of foods.

While main courses catch the eyes of most in their culinary come-up, there was something about that frozen dessert dish that not only spoke to Rabia but allowed her to better speak to others.

"Ice cream is such a blank medium, you can do whatever you want with it as long as it scoops," believes Rabia. "I'm allowed to introduce people to flavors in a way that they're comfortable with."

For Rabia, those flavors take inspiration from her Northern African and Middle Eastern heritage.

Unique homages to favored Filo, Kataifi and Nutcakes allow her to flip American ideals on ice cream and even cheesecake by playing with shredded texture toppings and ricotta fillings.

"Getting our eyes opened up to different cuisines that make our eyes twinkle and sparkle opens up the world for us in an entirely new way," Rabia states on the Restaurant Influencers podcast.

As expressed, ice cream is not only a way to challenge the taste buds of her regulars, it's also a way to educate and storytell.

That has proven particularly true in February, as Ruby Scoops has celebrated Black History Month by offering weekly flavors inspired by African American pioneers in the food industry.

Alfred L. Cralle, the inventor of the modern ice cream scooper, received tribute as Ruby Scoops was dubbed Alfred's Pop Shop for the entire month. Specialty ice creams honored Nathan Nereus Green who taught Jack Daniels how to distill whiskey, George Crum who created potato chips and George Washington Carver who is well known for his work with peanuts but less known for his background as an artist.

While Rabia is clearly a culinary entrepreneur, she's just as ambitious when it comes to building community. Her reverence to the past as presented by her Black History Month celebrations is only one part of the equation as every detail from the Ruby Scoops logo to her space's mural artwork is intended to inspire and uplift younger patrons who look just like her.

"It was really important to me that the logo and anything surrounding it made it very clear that I am a black woman and that I want to encourage people that look like me, especially younger people that look like me, to follow their dreams and do what they want," shares Rabia Kamara.

Not only does her logo inspire Rabia each day she goes to work, it proves the unexpected jolt of joy for children to get excited about more than just a much-appreciated sugar rush.

"Little kids come in and see the mural of me in the shop or they see the logo and they say, 'Mommy that looks like her. She looks like me,'" beams Rabia.

EPISODE LINKS:

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