**Podcasting**

Podcasts have become increasingly popular over the last few years and continue to grow, this may be because people generally have less time and podcasts are a convenient way to listen to dramas, documentaries, interviews and interesting content while on the go.

As most people use headphones to listen to a podcast the presenter can be very ‘exposed’ as your voice is literally in the listeners head. There is no room for fake, forced or over performed delivery as it’s just too intermate and you will be found out within moments if you’re putting on an act.

It is essential when podcasting that you are authentic, natural and genuinely interested in what you’re talking about and for that reason picking the right subject matter is key.

**How to find your Podcast subject matter:**

Start by thinking about topics you’re either knowledgeable about, passionate about or keen to learn more about, make a list of those subjects and then use an online keyword planner to see how many people a month are searching for any terms related to your subject. If the search numbers are low this is a good indication that the subject may not have a large audience and you don’t want to spend years creating a podcast that nobody is interested in.

It’s important to produce regular content, at least once a week, so you’ll need to be passionate about your subject in order to maintain consistency and keep it fresh, if you become bored with it, it won’t be interesting or engaging for the audience and you’re more likely to skip episodes.

When you’ve decided on the subject matter have a think about the style, will it be comedy, informative, interview based, reviews, training, etc. and who is your target audience.

Then have a look on iTunes (now Apple Podcasts) as it’s likely that someone has already made a Podcast on the same or similar subject and this is a good way to make sure yours is different. What can you bring to the table that nobody else is doing, think outside the box, what is your USP (Unique Selling Point)?

If you already present a radio show you might be able to turn it into a podcast (minus the music), making it so much easier to be consistent and start with a bigger audience. Just check with your radio station to ensure you have their permission.

**Podcast Formats to consider:**

1. Interview Shows – Where a host or hosts feature guest interviews focused on a particular subject. E.g. Paul Mckenna Positivity Podcast, Fearne Cotton’s Happy Place, Joe Rogan, Under the Skin with Russell Brand, Hot Mess Mums Club.

2. Conversational Podcasts – Like hearing a chat with two friends. These shows often have multiple hosts and episodes that feature discussions on a various topics. E.g. Can I Speak to Your Manager, Another Round,

3. Scripted Non-Fiction – Serial podcast one story, scripted. E.g. Serial, Slow Burn

4. News recap – Recaps the news sometimes focused on a specific industry, E.g. The Daily, The Two-Minute Briefing

5. Educational Podcasts – Scripted non-fictional shows teaching something to an audience E.g. Stuff You Should Know.

6. Scripted Fiction – Audio Drama similar to a radio drama E.g. Bubble, The Archers

You might want your podcast combine 2 of these for example a news recap with a featured guest interview.

**Consistency:**

Will you schedule a podcast once a week or once a month? Whatever you choose to do, make sure you’re consistent as you can lose an audience by missing a few weeks or months. If you’re going on holiday or going to be busy it’s a good idea to record several episodes at once and schedule their release over a period of time.

**Length:**

This will depend on your frequency but generally a new podcast should be no longer than one-hour, 30-45 minutes is ideal but it might be worthwhile starting with shorter episodes until your build up your following and engagement. It’s easier to get a new audience to listen to something short to start off with.

**Show introduction:**

A show’s introduction has three key qualities: It’s short, welcomes listeners to the episode, and mentions what’s coming up whilst making it sound interesting and entertaining.

*“Welcome to [podcast name], the show that [brief podcast hook or tagline]. I’m [host(s) name] and today we’re talking about [topic] with [guest name]. We also [tease something] during the show.*

When opening your Podcast it’s important to engages listeners straight away, if it doesn’t sound appealing you could lose your audience quickly, so to keep them listening use ‘Hooks’.

A hook is an idea, suggestion or tease that grabs the audience’s attention or intrigue. It can also highlight what the audience will gain from listening, maybe they’ll discover the secrets of making money on the stock market or how to make the perfect BBQ. Always be thinking what’s in it for them, why should they listen.

You can also create an ‘open loop’ which is when you introduce a little bit of information about your topic, but you don't give it all away. leave your audience wanting more as generally we like to complete things and have closure, when you don’t give someone the immediate satisfaction of an ending they’re more likely to wait until they get a resolution.

If your show has a guest, open your show with a clip or a quote from something they said in the interview. Then follow with a backstory about the guest, this will tease your audience and you have created an ‘open loop’ which our subconscious thinks is an unfinished task.

**Show outro:**

The outro is your opportunity to thank your guests for participating, recap what you discussed and announce upcoming episodes, events, or promotions.

*“Make sure you follow us on social media [social media tag names] if you haven’t already where we’ll give you a preview of next week’s episode. Also don’t forget to [up sell or promote your services, event tickets, book].*

Get your listeners to subscribe and leave you a review:

*“Before we go, make sure you subscribe to us, so you get notified of our future episodes and show some love for your favourite podcast by leaving us a review on Apple Podcasts. Join us next week where we [next episode’s topic / guests].”*

**Scripting:**

Depending on the format of your show, writing a script can be a great way to ensure that you’re always prepared and it can give you more confidence when delivering your messages.

However, using a script can also distance you from your audience as it can sound like you’re reading and many people prefer a more ‘chatty’ conversation style, in fact the most successful podcasts are rarely scripted.

It might be a better idea to have some bullet points and an agenda and if you have anything scripted, read it aloud a few times before you start.

As podcasting and radio are both audios, your audience doesn’t have any visual cues, nor can they see our expressions so it’s important to be very descriptive so the listeners can easily build a picture in their mind.

**Signposting:**

Signposts are basically a transition telling your listener you’ve finished with one story or feature and you’re moving onto something different.

Examples of signposting are:

*‘Moving On’* – When you’re moving to a new point

*‘Lets Turn’* to or *‘Turning To’*- When you are changing your topic completely

*‘Going Back’* – When you’re moving back to a Previous Points or question.

*‘To Finish Off’* or *‘Finishing Off’* - When you’re wrapping up

*‘I want to talk more in depth about…’* or *‘Lets elaborate on’* –

If you want to go into more detail about a topic.

*‘On a Side Note’* or *‘Going off on a tangent …’* When you’re briefly going off topic

*‘Re-capping on the previous point I made about’* or ‘Lets go back’ or *‘Remember what I said’*.

When you are repeating something or to draw specific attention to something and give emphasis. Repetition is an important technique in public speaking for getting a key message across to the audience.

**Branding Your Podcast:**

**Naming your Podcast:**

Think of a catchy name that is relevant to the subject matter and stands out, the more memorable it is the better. Many people who will be looking for specific podcasts will be searching via Google or Apple Podcasts so it’s a good idea to include some keywords within your title if you can.

*Here are some examples of famous podcasts:*

**Creative Names:** E.g. The Orange Tree, Parden My Take, Planet Money, Ear Biscuits, Code Switch, Happy Place.

**Descriptive Podcast Names:** E.g. Sports Wars, Football Weekly, The Return: Property & Investment Podcast, The Healthy Self Podcast.

**Using Your Own Name(s):** E.g. The Joe Rogan Experience, Sam Talks Technology, The Rachel Maddow Show, Views with David Dobrik and Jason Nash, Literally! With Rob Lowe.

If you are just going to use your name, be aware it might be harder to gain new followers until you become well-known it’s just a name.

**Your Podcast Taglines:**

This is your catchphrase or slogan and is an important part of your personal brand that can be used at the start of each show. It should tell people who you are and what you stand for in just a few words, so try to keep it should short, simple and memorable.

Examples:

*Smart Passive Income Podcast (Pat Flynn) - ‘Smart Passive Income Podcast, where it’s all about working hard now, so you can sit back and reap the benefits later’*

*The School of Greatness (Lewis Howes) - “Welcome to The School of Greatness. My name is Lewis Howes former pro-athlete turned lifestyle entrepreneur and each week we bring you an inspiring person or message to help you discover how to unlock your inner greatness. Thanks for spending some time with me today – now let the class begin”.*

**Creating your Artwork:**

Creating your logo and artwork is equally important for your Podcast and should visually communicate your subject.

Apple Podcast is the most popular directory, they have specific artwork specifications and attractive artwork is a requirement to get into their ‘New & Noteworthy’ section.

*Excerpts from Apple Podcasts:* [Cover art must be] a **minimum size of 1400 x 1400 pixels and a maximum size of 3000 x 3000 pixels**, 72 dpi, in JPEG or PNG format with appropriate file extensions (.jpg, .png), and in the RGB colorspace. To optimize images for mobile devices, Apple recommends compressing your image files.

When adding text to your artwork try not to use any more than two fonts and ideally have five words or less, this will limit distractions making it quick and easy to see exactly what the content is about.

If you have a website or social media pages that are a part of the podcast brand try and use the same logos, images, themes, colours and fonts this will help your followers recognise you.

Fiver is an example of a website where you can find someone to design your artwork if you’re not confident at doing it yourself. Just make sure you find a designer with examples of good artwork in their portfolio.

**Music:**

This is another important part of your brand that can help you stand out and be instantly recognisable, think of the theme music to Coronation Street or The X Factor as soon as you hear it you know what’s coming up.

It’s generally a good idea to only use music in specific areas like the Intro and Outro but if you do choose to have it as a ‘Tuck under’ throughout the whole show make sure it isn’t too loud and distracting.

**What music can I use?**

1. Creative Commons Music - This is music that artists share with the world and allow you to use for free.

2. Royalty-Free Music - Means that you don't need to pay royalties to the artist every time that you use their song, which is how using music has traditionally worked. Creative Commons music is royalty-free. But royalty-free music also includes any songs that you might need to make a one-time payment for or have a subscription to a service to use.

3. Public Domain Music - Copyright eventually expires and music enters the public domain. That means that you can use it however you see fit. Lots of older music like classical music or old children's songs and nursery rhymes fall under public domain but it’s always best to check. Some companies like Disney extend their copyright.

4. Music That You Get the Rights For\* - You can use any music on your podcast that you explicitly get permission to use. If you have a contact who is a musician, or in a band, many of them would love the exposure and publicity. Always get the artists or their label to give you permission in writing. As podcasts are available to everyone worldwide make sure you get rights for this as sometimes music licences are restricted to geographic region.

**Free music for podcasts:**

• Incompetech:

• The Free Music Archive:

• 909 Music on Soundcloud:

• Musopen:

• Danosongs:

• CCMixter:

• Purple Planet Music:

• YouTube Audio Library:

• Pixabay Music

• Soundbible:

**Paid for music for podcasts:**

• Shutterstock

• PremiumBeat

• Pond5

• Audiojungle.net

• Soundstripe

• Neosounds.com

**Sound effects:**

• Soungle

• Freesound

• Sound Dogs

• Soundsnap

**Voice overs:**

• Audio Bag – this is a complete service that includes everything from voice talent to music, sound effects, and the audio production.

• Voice 123

• Voices.com

• Fiver

• Voiver

**Record, Editing and Broadcast:**

It’s fairly easy and affordable to start recording your podcast, all you need is a computer, recording software, hosting platform and a good quality microphone.

An audience is very unlikely to listen for any length of time if the sound quality is poor so it’s worth investing in a good microphone.

Here are a few popular microphones that many Podcasters use:

**Blue Microphones Snowball iCE -** https://amzn.to/39TNPOR

**RØDE PodMic Dynamic Podcasting Microphone:** https://amzn.to/33rkUAu

**Blue Yeti USB Mic:** https://amzn.to/31gGLrN

**Rode NT-USB Microphone:** https://amzn.to/3frjsQU

**Webcams:**

Videos are great way to create interest around your podcast, posting small ‘teasers’ on social media and YouTube can help build your following. Although most computers come with a built-in webcam it can be tricky to position the camera for the required shot and some are low quality. An external webcam is a simple solution:

Logitech C920 HD Pro Webcam, Full HD: https://amzn.to/3keCjm6

**Where to Host Your Podcast:**

Most sites require a monthly subscription, but it may be a good investment for the exposure and quality.

Simple & Low-Cost - Buzzsprout - Podbean. Podbean, Libsyn

For experienced podcasters - Blubrry

Beginner - SoundCloud – Free for up to 3 hours so good if you’re just starting out and just testing the water.

Budget / Beginner- Anchor – Free and easy to use, Create, distribute, host, and monetize your podcast. Don’t have the same flexibility in editing.

**Podcast Directories:**

This is where your audience can find your podcast, download, listen, subscribe, rate and review. Some of the main one include: Apple Podcasts (formally iTunes), Spotify, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, TuneIn.

You’ll need to submit your podcast’s RSS feed link to each directory, this is generated by your podcast hosting provider and once submitted further episodes will update automatically.

Apple Podcasts is the top directory and currently the only one which is manually checked and listened to by a person, this is to ensure your podcast is quality and you’re not spamming. So, it may take up to 2 weeks for them to approve your podcast. Be sure that your audio quality is professional, and your artwork is to standard.

**Marketing your Podcast and Growing your Audience:**

**Use Paid Ads -** Facebook & Google Ads can be an effective way to target listeners who are interested in your subject matter but it can be expensive. If you’re on a budget try using video campaigns as this is usually a lot cheaper than text.

**Mailing List-** Creating a mailing list is an easy way to keep in touch with your subscribers, informing them of new episodes and events. There are many sites where you can host your list like ‘mailchimp’ and ‘constantcontact’.

**Listener Competitions –** People love freebies so get your audience to share your episode on their social media and one lucky listener will win a small prize. It might be some bonus ‘unseen’ footage, merchandise or you could try to organise a sponsor to provide the prize.

**Word of Mouth Marketing** – Go old school. Get some business cards or flyers to hand out or put them in your local coffee shop, town hall or train station’s noticeboard and think about target marketing, for example if your podcast is on health and fitness target your local gym.

**Cross promotion with guests** – Get your guests to market to their audience too.

**Send Press Releases to Local and National Press** – Create a press pack and send out releases to local media outlets, journalists or columnist who specialises in your subject. Try to think of an interesting angel, twist or story, because if it isn’t news-worthy they’ll just refer you to the advertising department.

**Social Media** – Build a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and post teasers, outtakes and photos, you could even create a countdown for your launch or new episode. Headliner is a great app to make little videos to engage with your followers and build a community. Tag any guests in all your posts and ask them to share and promote it too.

**Influencers** - Find Influencers or celebrities who will either promote your podcast, have an interest in your subject, be your guest or give you a testimonial.

**How to Make Money**

**Affiliate Marketing** - This where you get a commission by referring people to other companies. Amazon is a good example, they have an affiliate programme which is available if you have a Prime account and you’ll earn commission every time a purchase is made via one of your links.

**Sponsors & Advertising** - There are several different podcast ad networks that can connect you with advertisers and they do all the hard work, finding advertisers, negotiating rates, scripting the ad etc. These networks usually ask for an audience of at least 5K or 10K per episode before they get involved, *Midroll* and *Authentic* are two of the biggest. You could also try reaching out directly to companies especially if you have a niche audience relative to their product.

**Crowdfunding & Donations** - Often forgotten about but you can ask for donations to help support you and your podcast, this is particularly effective for podcasts that focus on causes, specific illnesses or conditions and movements for change. *Patreon* is a good place to start but there are many platforms you could use, just search for ‘crowdfunding’.

**Merchandise -** T-shirts, mugs, and other stationery build good creditability for your show and a good way for followers to advertise you**.** A website like ‘Teespring’ can help with merchandise but make sure you have enough sales before you start production.

**Be your own sponsor –** Use your podcast to market your own product, service, or business.