HOW TO PRODUCE YOUR BUSINESS PODCAST

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This guide dives deep into the production of a podcast. It includes information on the roles you'll need to fill, how to manage production and an equipment and resource guide.

THE PODCAST TEAM

THE HOST ROLE

This person is the voice of the podcast and has the most public-facing role. The primary responsibility of the host is to make the content of each episode excellent. This means being prepared for each guest, researching topics, preparing scripts and whatever else it takes to make an episode entertaining and valuable to your audience.

PRODUCER ROLE

The producer's responsibility is to make sure episodes are created, edited and published consistently. The producer oversees and is responsible for the process of creating the show from start to finish. This includes scheduling guests, managing the host, audio engineer and anyone else involved in creating and publishing episodes.

Additional duties may include:

› Creating ideas for episodes, making coherence

› Finding (and managing) guests

› Managing the production schedule

› Writing, recording, editing, releasing, promoting the episodes

› Analyzing and responding to the metrics

This could very well be a full-time job for someone and should be if you want your podcast to be consistent and professional. Producing a podcast is a lot of work!

AUDIO ENGINEER ROLE

The audio engineer is responsible for editing the show and making sure the audio quality is the best it can be. In the early stages, this is the easiest and most cost-effective role to outsource.

PODCAST PRODUCTION EXAMPLE

There are many types of podcasts. This section focuses on creating a specific kind of podcast and puts constraints for you to work with as a starting point. Then you can figure out what changes to make for your situation.

HOW LONG SHOULD YOUR PODCAST BE?

Remember, the point of the podcast is to help your listeners solve a problem or address an issue, or you're entertainingly providing valuable educational content. In some cases, the listener is up for content that strays from your central strategy, but you should start there first.

Focus on more casual fans, who listen to three to four podcasts per week. There are other podcasts with massive fanbases, but they have huge budgets and dedicated staff. You can't compete with them, and you shouldn't try. Instead, leverage the advantage you do have - your listeners' patronage. If your core audience is existing customers, it means they've already said, "Yes, I value what you do in the context of what I bought. I want more value, for free, from this podcast, and I will give some of my valuable attention to it."

Your job is to honor that trust and provide more of it, and then get out of the way. Do not overstay your welcome. If your listener feedback is, "I love your podcast, I wish it was longer" that is fantastic! But if your best stuff is the last five minutes of you talking for 1.5 hours, you have failed.

Again, there are exceptions and you and your business may be one. But start with the foundations:

› If you have a co-host or are interviewing someone, your episode should be 20 to 30 minutes long. If you are doing this solo, it should be 10 to 15 minutes long.

› A good rule is to understand that your total production time will be four times the length of the published episode for a Q&A style podcast, discussing issues and solving them (narrative podcasts take considerably longer).

We are aiming for the type of podcast you can sustain on a weekly or twice-monthly basis for at least six months with enough effort to make it valuable to your current customers.

PRE-PRODUCTION

IT'S TIME TO PREPARE.

1 Schedule the time to do the work!

2 Write an episode outline. Here is an example template.

- › Intro - 1 minute (Script this, but read it live every time. It will help you get into things.)

- › Break the ice (optional) - 2 minutes

- › State the question or problem this episode will address - 2 minutes

- › Discuss the answer or solution - 10-15 minutes

- › Summary: Recap critical points - 2 minutes

- › Promote resources, additional content - 2 minutes

- › Outro - 1 minute

  - • Call to action - your invite to your audience to participate in some way or take an action.

    - • This is your success metric - not the number of downloads, but the number of people who start engaging you based on episode content. This is your "funnel."

3 Your target for this strategy is 25 minutes. You will probably go over, but that's okay. The real point here is to start thinking in time chunks to help keep things moving. Creating value is more important than sticking to a specific time frame. Create show notes based on your script. Show notes are resources you'll release publicly with the episode. If you know you will be referencing something, make sure you have it written down so you aren't scrambling to find it during recording.
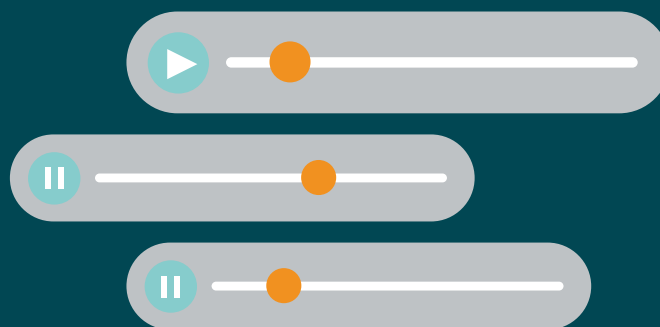
PRODUCTION (RECORDING)

IT'S TIME TO RECORD THE ACTUAL EPISODE.

1 Loosen up before hitting the record button. Try going for a brief walk to clear your mind or a run to wake up.

2 Test your audio. This includes confirming that the audio is being recorded, which is especially important if you have an off-site co-host or guest.

3 Make sure your big-ass timer is visible to you.

4 Start the timer, and hit record.

ON AIR

> › *Once you hit record, do not stop! Keep going!*
>   - This will be difficult. Imagine you are recording live and there are no do-overs. You will probably break this rule. We all do. Fight the urge to stop recording just because you fumbled a word, phrase, or mispronounced something. If you do want to repeat or try again, instead of hitting stop just pause for five seconds while still recording and restart the thought.
>   - Your goal is to create a single audio track for each person. More audio tracks = more post-production time.

POST-PRODUCTION

When the recording is complete, the next step is audio post-production. The primary goal here is to eliminate bad information and reduce pauses, and "ums," "ahs," etc. This can be surprisingly easy, especially if you hire an audio editor to do it! Most professional audio tools will also automatically normalize and level the audio according to broadcast radio standards.

You will also need to add metadata to the recording before submitting it to any platform. This is your title, author, description of the podcast and category.

With the recording complete, you should make a transcript based on the final edit of the episode. Complete the show notes, giving details on the contents of the episode so you can refer back to them.

Finally, you should create content around the show based on a promotional strategy, such as social media posts. Then you will upload everything to the content management system (the platform where it's being posted), and publish it!

EQUIPMENT & RESOURCE GUIDE

Wondering what equipment and production resources will help you get your podcast off the ground? If you're keeping it all in-house, and you want to keep things as simple as possible, here are tools that will give you a professional production. Note that if you're working with outside help, the simplest thing is to follow their recommendations.

RØDECaster Pro podcasting bundle: This bundle is one of the best options developed for podcasting. At a minimum, you'll need the microphone (we recommend the RØDE PodMic), cables and production software. You will want to make sure the cables have Neutrik connectors. Even the best microphone won't give you good sound quality if you skimp on the cables. Also, the boom arm can help you place the microphone just right for the perfect audio.

We recommend you get all your equipment from one vendor such as Sweetwater. Even if it might be less expensive elsewhere, having one central place to go for support will save you time and expense in the long run. It also eliminates any compatibility issues between physical equipment and editing software. If you'd prefer to find your own production software, Auphonic or Hindenburg Journalist are good choices.

While you're thinking about equipment, there's one inexpensive thing you can't overlook — a big-ass timer. This is key to help you keep your podcast segments on track as you record.

As part of your production, you'll need additional audio resources. You can get free and royalty-free music at Free Music Archive or Audio Jungle. Or you can license music from Shutterstock Music, single tracks, or by subscription.

When it comes to a hosting service, we recommend Transistor.fm (alternatively, Captivate.fm). It will allow you to upload your audio to all the popular platforms (for a list of directories, check with Podcast Insights or We Edit Podcasts), gives you basic analytics, and allows you to embed a player on your website, which is a must (you may want to invest in a new domain for your podcast to simplify feed subscriptions).

If after all this you'd prefer to have a service handle your entire post-production or even just help with a specific service such as a jingle, you can look at a comprehensive solution like Music Radio Creative.

CONCLUSION

Producing a podcast takes significant planning and in the end, the effort will be worth it. You'll be able to build your relationship with your existing audience and eventually reach new people. Following the steps in this guide should help you produce a professional podcast.

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