



SMALL BUSINESS PODCASTING KIT

THE GUIDE TO STARTING YOUR OWN PODCAST

The Small Business Podcasting Kit



9 Steps to Making Your Own Podcast

Want to make your own podcast? Follow this recipe, being sure to account for all of the ingredients ahead of time. If there is anything that most podcasters will tell you, it pays to be prepared!

We spent some time and methodically broke down the steps necessary to build a framework around your podcast production. These tools below will help you to lay the foundation of your podcast.

In 9 simple steps, you'll learn how to make your own podcast.

Go to Voices.com

1. PLAN YOUR PODCAST

With anything, including a podcast, it truly benefits you to be prepared. Whether you are in podcasting for leisure or business you will need a plan. Planning topics to discuss, possible guest interviews, and the duration of your show in advance will go a long way when producing a professional sounding podcast. Since you'll be recording your podcast in an almost live fashion, you will have the flexibility of going back and re-editing sections before committing your show as "podcast-ready".

Before you started, you'll need:

- A web publishing tool (Try Blogger, TypePad, WordPress or MoveableType)
 - A file hosting service (Try LibSyn for free, AudioBlogger is also a good choice)
 - Recording software (Try Audacity for Window-based PCs or Garageband on Mac)
 - Microphone (Try a good headset microphone or a USB Microphone)
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Identifying The Theme of Your Podcast - The Nucleus of Your Podcast

Developing your podcast description is a necessary step in the branding process. When you are brainstorming your podcast description, make sure that it explains the purpose of your show and accentuates the theme of your podcast. Aim for two to three sentences in length.

Selecting a Name and Personify Your Podcast

When selecting a name, be sure that the name of your podcast reflects the content that you are recording. For example, if your subject matter is about travel, your podcast name should be branded to complement your show. To illustrate, a podcast about travel might be called Globetrotter, Passport Podcast, The Travel Guide, and so on. Make sure that the name you choose is also available as a domain name online. Try to make your name unique but easily understood and recognizable.

Acquiring a Domain Name and Blog Name

Once you have picked a name for your podcast, purchase the domain name for your podcast. This is extremely important because interested listeners and inquisitive searchers will be able to find your podcast in Search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, MSN and others.

2. WRITE A SCRIPT

So, you've got the voice or at least a voice in mind for your podcast. What's missing? A script or your game plan! Take a look at a typical outline that will help you to plan out the duration and distribution of content throughout your podcast.

Sample Show Outline

- Show intro monologue (who you are, what you're going to talk about): 30-60 seconds
- Intro music jingle (repeat for each show so listeners identify the jingle with your show): 30-60 seconds
- Topic 1: 3 minutes
- Topic 2: 3 minutes
- Interlude (music or break): 30 seconds
- Topic 3: 3 minutes
- Topic 4: 3 minutes
- Closing remarks (thank audience for listening, thank guests, talk about the next show briefly): 2 minutes
- Closing music jingle (suggest same as Intro music jingle): 2 minutes

3. SET-UP RECORDING EQUIPMENT

Now, in with the hardware! Experimenting with recording your podcast can be done with your existing computer, some free software and online tools. Experimental is the key word here, as you do get what you pay for.

Bear in mind that this set-up won't give you or your audience a good indication of your vocal quality and may reflect poorly on your business. Yikes! For this reason, I'd strongly recommend investing a modest amount (less than \$500.00) in some basic recording equipment, specifically a microphone and a book about audio recording.

Computer Based Recording

Record using your computer

One of the biggest trends in recent audio production involves merging digital recording with computer technology. The recording of audio onto a computers' hard drive allows you to edit and manipulate your sound files. This data can be stored as a sound file such as .wav or .aiff.

There are multiple advantages to recording and editing your voice-overs using your personal computer.

- The ability to record long and uninterrupted narration.
- Digital editing. Quickly and easily remove unwanted background noise or embellish the audio track with music and sound effects.
- Digital Processing. Add effects to your voice, such as reverb, or echo, and master your entire demo for sonic clarity.

PC Computers

Minimum voice-over requirements for PC

According to Gartner Research, Windows-based PC's account for 90% of all computers world-wide. If you have purchased your personal computer in the last three years and you're running Windows XP, your system should be more than adequate to record an audio file with a microphone, and then save the recording as an MP3 file.

- Personal Computer
- Intel Pentium 4 or equivalent Processor
- Windows 2000 / Windows XP
- iTunes for PC
- 1 GB of available disk space

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- 512 MB of RAM
 - Audio Line In and Audio Line Out
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Mac Computers

Minimum voice-over requirements for Mac

Recently with the launch of Apple's iTunes, it shows that Apple is committed to the digital revolution. Since most iPod owners are also Mac owners there is also a lot of great software available for the Mac platform.

The misconception that the Mac is simply too expensive or that they are only for students and artists is quickly being proven wrong. Apple has also offers the Mac Mini, a scaled down version of the Mac that allows previous PC owners to make the switch but still keep their monitor, keyboard and mouse - all for just \$499.

- Mac G3 or better
 - Mac OS X
 - iTunes for Mac
 - 1 GB of available disk space
 - 512 MB of RAM
 - Audio Line In and Audio Line Out
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Microphones

Amplify your voice

Whether you are using a Mac or PC, you will need a microphone to record your voice into your computer. One option is to purchase a microphone (or you may already have one) with a 1/8th inch jack. This is the size of the jack or audio line in port on your personal computer. The other option is to purchase a USB microphone, which have made significant advancements in their quality over the past few years.

4. RECORD YOUR PODCAST

Recording a Long-Distance Interview

For interview-style podcasts, you can record using Skype to record or plan to record via a conference call with free services such as FreeConference.com. Both services allow multiple people to participate on a call.

Recording an In-Person Interview

For those of you who intend to record and conduct on-site interviews, I'd recommend visiting the location of the interview ahead of time to become familiar with your surroundings. Scope out the best place to setup shop and minimize any extraneous or background noise (unless that's the atmosphere you are trying to create).

Recording One-Person Shows

If you are hosting the podcast and are speaking directly to your audience, life becomes a lot easier because you are in control of where you record, how you record, and the material you present. Simply have your show outline ready, plug in your microphone, set-up your recording software and hit record. Be sure to record in a quiet environment and let anyone present in the office (or house) know that you are not to be disturbed until the recording is finished.

5. EDIT, MIX AND EXPORT YOUR EPISODE

Your Goal with Editing

Your finished podcast should flow seamlessly from one sentence to the next. If your editing has caused abrupt interruptions, or simply doesn't make sense (not a good thing), then perhaps you should reconsider your editing style or seek help from a professional to fine tune your production and achieve a "podcast-ready" podcast.

Room Tone - Natural Sound Temperature

A location's room tone is its auditory fingerprint. These are non-specific sounds generated by the natural acoustics of the room. Editing may also be required when sounds overlap. If they occur while you or another individual in your podcast are speaking your editing can be more challenging. To preserve the original performance, try to find another take of the word(s) in question (the one you want to replace) and edit or splice the word in to replace the unusable take.

Production Techniques - Mixing in your show intro, imaging, and musical transitions

Remember when you wrote your podcasting script? Now is the time to mix in your show intro, the section that announces the name of your podcast and the episode number. It is most effective if this is the voice of an announcer, distinct from your own. Try fading your background music in when a new segment begins. Lower the volume level of the music when you are speaking so that your listeners can hear every word you say. At the end of the segment, fade your background music out. Use musical transitions between the various segments of your podcast. These musical transitions are known as bumpers, stages or sweepers.

Key Points About Mixing

In this section you balanced the volume levels of the voice-over(s), music and sound effects. You are now ready to export your podcast recording into an MP3.

6. UPLOAD YOUR EPISODE TO A WEB HOSTING PROVIDER

Next, you'll need to upload your MP3 file to a web hosting service. By doing so, you'll be making the audio available for download by anyone with Internet access. Sounds great, doesn't it?

Free Podcast Hosting Services

The easiest solution is to host your MP3 at a podcasting hosting service, such as LibSyn.com or AudioBlog.com. These are wonderful web services that will not only store the MP3 file of your podcast, but also provide you with some statistics including number of downloads.

Regular Web Hosting Services

If you currently have a web host, for example, the company that is already hosting your website, you can just as easily work with this set-up. You may need your webmaster to assist you with configuring this part, however in short, you'll need to create a new directory on the server called "podcasts" and upload the MP3 file to that directory using FTP, short for File Transfer Protocol, which is the standard means of adding new files to a website.

At the end of this step, you should have your first episode uploaded to a web hosting provider.

7. CREATE YOUR PODCAST EPISODE AND SHOW NOTES

This is where your web publishing tool comes into place. For simplicity, we'll use Blogger as the example. In essence, you'll be creating a "New Entry" just like you would when posting an article on your blog.

How does it differ then from a regular blog post? You'll be including a hyperlink to the MP3 file on your server where the MP3 is hosted.

Tips for Creating a Podcast Episode Entry

- Give your podcast a title
- Number your episode
- Add a short description for your episode
- Add a hyperlink to the MP3 file for this episode
- Add tags to help search engines identify the contents of your podcast episode

Once you're done creating the episode, click "Publish" and you'll see your post on the Internet.

8. BURN YOUR PODCAST FEED

FeedBurner

FeedBurner is an excellent service that manages your RSS feed for you. What exactly is RSS? RSS, commonly referred to as Really Simple Syndication, is a subscription mechanism that enables you to receive new content as it becomes available, either downloaded to your PC or media player. RSS files are used to summarize the contents of the audio programs.

At FeedBurner, you add your blog's RSS feed (i.e. <http://yourdomain.com/yourpodcastnamehere/index.xml>) and burn that URL into FeedBurner, which makes your podcast available for subscription using any feed reader such as Google Reader, FireFox Feed Reader, Bloglines or hundreds of others. This feed is also used to submit to iTunes, so it's best to use FeedBurner to make the next step. If you do, the marketing and promotion of your podcast, a whole lot easier.

Your FeedBurner feed will be something like this:

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/yourpodcastnamehere>

9. ADD YOUR PODCAST TO ITUNES AND OTHER PODCAST DIRECTORIES

iTunes - How to submit your podcast to iTunes

1. Open the iTunes program.
2. Sign-in to the iTunes Store. You'll need to create an account if you don't have already one.
3. Within the Store, click on the section called "Podcasts" on the left hand side menu bar.
4. Click on "Submit a Podcast" on the left hand side menu bar.
5. Enter in your podcast feed URL.
6. Confirm the on-screen detail, the click submit. You'll receive an email once your podcast has been accepted by the iTunes team.

There are also a few dozen great podcast directories that we've listed below.

AllPodcasts

Website: <http://www.allpodcasts.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.allpodcasts.com/Update.aspx>

Blinkx Podcast and Video Directory

Website: <http://www.blinkx.tv/>

Submit here: <http://www.blinkx.tv/beta/PodcastSubmit/>

BlogExplosion Podcast Directory

Website: <http://www.blogexplosion.com/podcast/>

Submit here: http://www.blogexplosion.com/members/podcast_main.php

BlogUniverse Podcast Directory

Website: <http://www.bloguniverse.com/radlinks/>

Digital Podcast

Website: <http://www.digitalpodcast.com/>

Submit here: http://www.digitalpodcast.com/add_anywhere.php?cat=1

GetAPodcast.com

Website: <http://www.getapodcast.com/addfeed.aspx>

Gigadial

Website: <http://www.gigadial.net/>

IdiotVox

Website: <http://www.idiotvox.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.idiotvox.com/index.php?spid=7>

Internet Archive

Website: <http://www.archive.org>

iPodderX

Website: <http://ipodderx.com/directory>

Submit here: <http://ipodderx.com/directory/add>

Loomia

Website: <http://www.loomia.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.loomia.com/addfeed>

Odeo

Website: <http://www.odeo.com/>

Submit here: <http://odeo.com/create/import-feed>

Ourmedia

Website: <http://ourmedia.org>

Submit here: <http://ourmedia.org/publish>

Open Media Network

Website: <http://www.omn.org/>

Submit here: <http://www.omn.org/submitfeeds.htm>

OpenPodcast

Website: <http://www.openpodcast.org/>

Penguin Radio

Website: <http://www.penguinradio.com/podcasting/#version>

Plazoo

Website: <http://www.plazoo.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.plazoo.com/en/addrss.asp>

Pocketcasting

Website: <http://www.pocketcasting.com/>

Submit here: <http://directory.pocketcasting.com/>

Podcast.net

Website: <http://www.podcast.net/>

Submit here: <http://www.podcast.net/addpod.cgi>

Podcast Alley

Website: <http://www.podcastalley.com/index.php>

Submit here: http://www.podcastalley.com/add_a_podcast.php

Podcast Bunker

Website: <http://www.podcastbunker.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.podcastbunker.com/Podcast/...>

PodcastDirectory

Website: <http://www.podcastdirectory.com>

Submit here: <http://www.podcastdirectory.com/add/>

PodcastHost

Submit here: <http://podcasthost.com>

Podcast Pickle

Website: <http://www.podcastpickle.com/?p=home>

Submit here: <http://www.podcastpickle.com/actions/addCast.php>

Podcasting News

Website: <http://www.podcastingnews.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.podcastingnews.com/>

Podcasting Station

Website: <http://www.podcasting-station.com/index.php>

Submit here: <http://www.podcasting-station.com/submitrss.php>

PodcastShuffle

Website: <http://www.podcastshuffle.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.podcastshuffle.com/submitpodcast.cfm>

Podcast Tools

Website: <http://www.podcasting-tools.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.podcasting-tools.com/submit-podcasts.htm>

PodCatch

Website: <http://www.podcatch.com/>

Ping URL here: <http://www.podcatch.com/howToPing>

Podfeed

Website: <http://www.podfeed.net/>

Submit here: http://www.podfeed.net/add_podcast.asp

Podfeeder

Website: <http://www.podfeeder.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.podfeeder.com/add/>

Potkast

Website: <http://www.potkast.com>

Podscope

Website: <http://www.podscope.com/>

Submit here: <http://www.podscope.com/submiturl.php>

Podsites.com

Website: <http://podsites.com/index.cfm>

Submit here: <http://podsites.com/submit.cfm>

PublicRadioFan

Website: <http://www.publicradiofan.com/podcasts.html>

RSS Network

Website: <http://www.rss-network.com/index.php>

Submit here: <http://www.rss-network.com/submitrss.php>

SingingFish

Website: <http://search.singingfish.com/sfw/home.jsp>

Submit here: <http://search.singingfish.com/sfw/submit.html>

Spanish Directory

Website: <http://www.podcastellano.com/directorio-de-podcasts>

Spain Podcast Directory

Website: <http://www.podcast-es.org/index.php/Directorio>

Syndic8 Podcasts

Website: <http://www.syndic8.com/podcasts/>

Get reviewed at Podcast411

Website: <https://sourceforge.net/projects/opda/>

BONUS!

Time for a Check-Up

Now that you've released your podcasts and are gaining an audience, you can now take steps to measure and evaluate your success and take your podcast to the next level by expanding your audience.

Evaluation

There are a number of key areas that you'll want to evaluate. Here's a list to help you get started.

- Number of Subscribers VS. Number of Listeners
 - Website Hits
 - Feedback
 - Promotional Efforts
 - Web Presence
 - Elements of your Podcast
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Action Plan

Now that you've released your podcasts and are gaining an audience, give yourself the opportunity to measure and evaluate your success, thereby taking your podcast to the next level and expanding your audience.