Introduction

I've been podcasting since October, 2014 and have produces over 200 episodes for clients. I believe podcasts can provide a tremendous service to your client and membership base and provide both current and prospective customers a valuable resource and make your organization the "go-to" resource to fill their needs and address their pain points.

Here's a basic primer on how to begin a podcasting program:

Step 1 - Determine the mission and who you are serving.

It's difficult to develop a program unless you know who you're serving and how you're addressing their needs. You don't have to be perfect on the outset. Once listeners respond to the episodes and provide you feedback, you can refine this.

Mission -

Who is the target audience? How does this podcast fill their needs?

Spoiler alert: You will be asked to use this mission statement to incorporate into your podcast intro.

Step 2 - Determine the format and frequency of the podcast.

What generally kills new podcasts is unpredictability and inconsistency. Successful podcasts publish on a set schedule and have a set format that listeners can expect. You can mix things up from time to time in the format, but people like to know generally what to expect when they consider subscribing to a new podcast. It's also important to note that it's easier to ramp up than scale back in the frequency (you will likely lose subscribers if your weekly podcast reverts to monthly.)

Format -

Single host? Multiple hosts? Rotating hosts?
Solo or Interview? Mixed?

Frequency -

Monthly - minimum for sustainable audience - good use to leverage materials/ conference and event promotions, etc.

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Weekly - most common for sustainable audience

Daily - Usually too ambitious for most budgets/staffing resources.

Frequency -Easier to ramp up than pare down.

Step 3 - Script and create the show beginning (intro) and ending (outro).

Take the mission statement you've created and script out the introduction and ending that you will have a professional voice talent read. You'll then script a show ending that includes a call to action - examples: joining an email list, subscribing to iTunes, etc.

You'll then select royalty free music through a service and put the elements together using one of the audio editing programs listed below.

Professional voiceover recommendations-

Usually starts at about $150-200 for roughly 40 seconds (20 intro/20 outro)

musicradiocreative.com

Show music -

Usually starts $10 - $20

melodyloops.com

Step 4 - Determine podcast hosting service and create an account.

If you're interested in distributing your podcast to services like iTunes, Stitcher, and Spotify a podcasting service is a must. Audio files will fill up a web hosting server in a very short period of time, making these services a necessary element of a podcasting program.

Show hosting service?

Libsyn, podbean soundcloud

$5-$50 month depending on the upload volume.

I recommend Libsyn. Plans start at $5/month. If your podcasting program takes off, libsyn offers a mobile app on their professional plans.

Step 5 - Purchase and familiarize yourself with the recording equipment

Professional sound quality is very important in lending credibility to your podcast. A sizable portion of your listening audience will be using headphones or earbuds (many listen while working out, mowing the lawn, etc.) thus more likely to hear the limitations of cheap equipment.

While most modern computers and laptops have a microphone, the quality is limited and your audience will notice it if they are experienced podcast listeners. Fortunately, you can get a professional sound with a $300-500 investment.

Recording Equipment

Microphones - Recommended beginner and travel configuration

2 ATR 2100's (second if you're conducting interviews)

> Amazon - $64 each
>
> Optional - Microphone stand $10 to $50 each.
> Optional - Pop filter - $5-20 each.

Mixer

2 microphone -

Behringer Xenyx 802 - Amazon $60

Mackie - 402VLZ4 - Amazon $109

4 microphone -

Mackie PROFX8V2 - Amazon $199

Optional - Upgraded microphone cables - Mogami Gold Cable 20 feet - Amazon $66 each.

Digital Recorder

While you can get an adapter to feed the mixer directly into a computer (Behringer U-control UCA 202 for $30), I have found that solution has some limitations and some hissing and periodic feedback issues. I now recommend a digital voice recorder to do the actual recording from the mixer. This approach also has the added benefit of enabling you to record interviews "on the fly" in conference halls and show floors.

Recommended Recorder -

Roland R-05

$200 americanmusical.com

You'll also need a 3.5 mm TRS to dual 1/4 inch TS stereo breakout cable. Hosa makes a good one for $5.

Step 6 - Pick an audio editing program

This is where the work is done. You record the materials on the Roland and then plug in the sound card to your computer. If your computer does not have a SD card capability you'll need a SD card reader (Unitek makes a good one for $15.)

You'll then edit the episode, merge the professional intros and outros with this program.

Free programs - I highly recommend either of these.

Garageband - Mac
Audacity - PC

Paid programs - If you have them already and are familiar with how they work, go for it.

Logic Pro - Mac - $200

Camtasia - has less audio editing capabilities, but you can integrate still images and video - $249

Adobe Audition $10/month.

Step 7 - Create a content calendar and establish a recording schedule - Start recording episodes

There's nothing worse than a deadline tomorrow and no plan for what you're going to do and/or say. A content plan and a set recording schedule where you do several episodes in a sitting are vitally important if you are to have a successful podcasting program!

Editorial Calendar -

First episode tip - dedicate all or part of the episode to what this podcast is any why you are doing it. Pin that episode to the top of your podcast page when you start to build the library.

Plan at least 3 months out - Work in Events and other promotions

Episodes - produce at least 2 weeks in advance.

Recording - Try to capture a month's worth of episodes in one sitting.

Step 8 - Set up Website and email program

Your website should be your content hub and the quickest place to refer clients to in finding your content. While there's iTunes, stitcher, and other services that will help you distribute content, your website enables you to maintain a grater degree of control over your message and other services you provide.

Website tips-

Treat podcast postings as a blog entry. Dedicate a "post" to each episode. Link the podcast service feed to the post page. Post episode with show notes and or transcript. This will provide great SEO value to your website.

Be sure to create categories to group your show - will help in search in can help is assisting content planning.

Consider freebies - supplemental helpful materials that a user can download to help out on the topic - make email list registration a requirement to get the freebie

Email marketing opportunity -

This is often the goal of a good podcast program - building an email list of business prospects. Notification of a published podcast episode provides a great opportunity to communicate to your audience without wearing out your welcome.

Step 9 - Review content calendar, get audience input, track analytics and adjust accordingly.

About WillPower Consulting

Willpower Consulting is a Michigan-based consulting firm dedicated to helping organizations, associations, and start-ups maximize engagement. We use the freshest strategies for communicating with your audience, whether that's an online learning platform, podcast, video, integrated website, or something entirely unique tailored to your mission and message. Where there's a Willpower, there's a way. Let's get started.

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