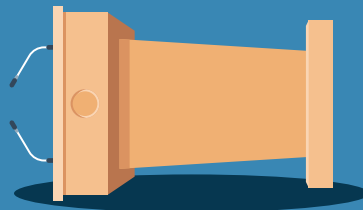




HOW TO START AND GROW YOUR PODCAST

**Stories &
Strategies**
Podcast Productions



Thanks for downloading this Guide. Obviously, you're thinking about podcasting. Maybe you've already started the journey and have episodes published, maybe you're in the middle of putting your business case together, or maybe this is just a twinkle of an idea. Whatever stage you're at, this Guide will help. It's been written to be used, not read.

Let's begin with the most important question: Is it worth doing this?

The WHY?

There are ~four million podcasts in the world today. To us, this suggests a completely under-saturated market in its infancy. There were four million websites in the world in 1999—today there are 1.93 billion. The overwhelming majority of those websites are inactive, about nine out of ten. Similarly, the majority of podcasts today are inactive, about three out of four.

At the same time, podcast listenership is climbing every year. In Canada, the United States, Great Britain, and Australia, one in four adults is now listening to podcasts every week, with the average weekly listener downloading nearly eight episodes per week. Podcasting has become their personal habit and their preferred channel for not only entertainment, but for information. At the same time that average weekly listener is listening to about 90% of each episode, tends to have a University degree, and earns a higher-than-average income.

Where social media tends to be quite fleeting in human memory, podcasts go deeper and give brands an opportunity to be more authentic, more engaging, and more memorable.

If your brand is strengthened by having more awareness and influence and a remarkably more personal connection with people who fit this profile, then a podcast fits your business strategies.

In a report commissioned by the BBC, organizations with branded podcasts saw:

89% higher awareness

57% higher brand consideration

24% higher brand favourability

14% higher purchase intent

12% higher memory encoding than other forms of content

16% higher engagement

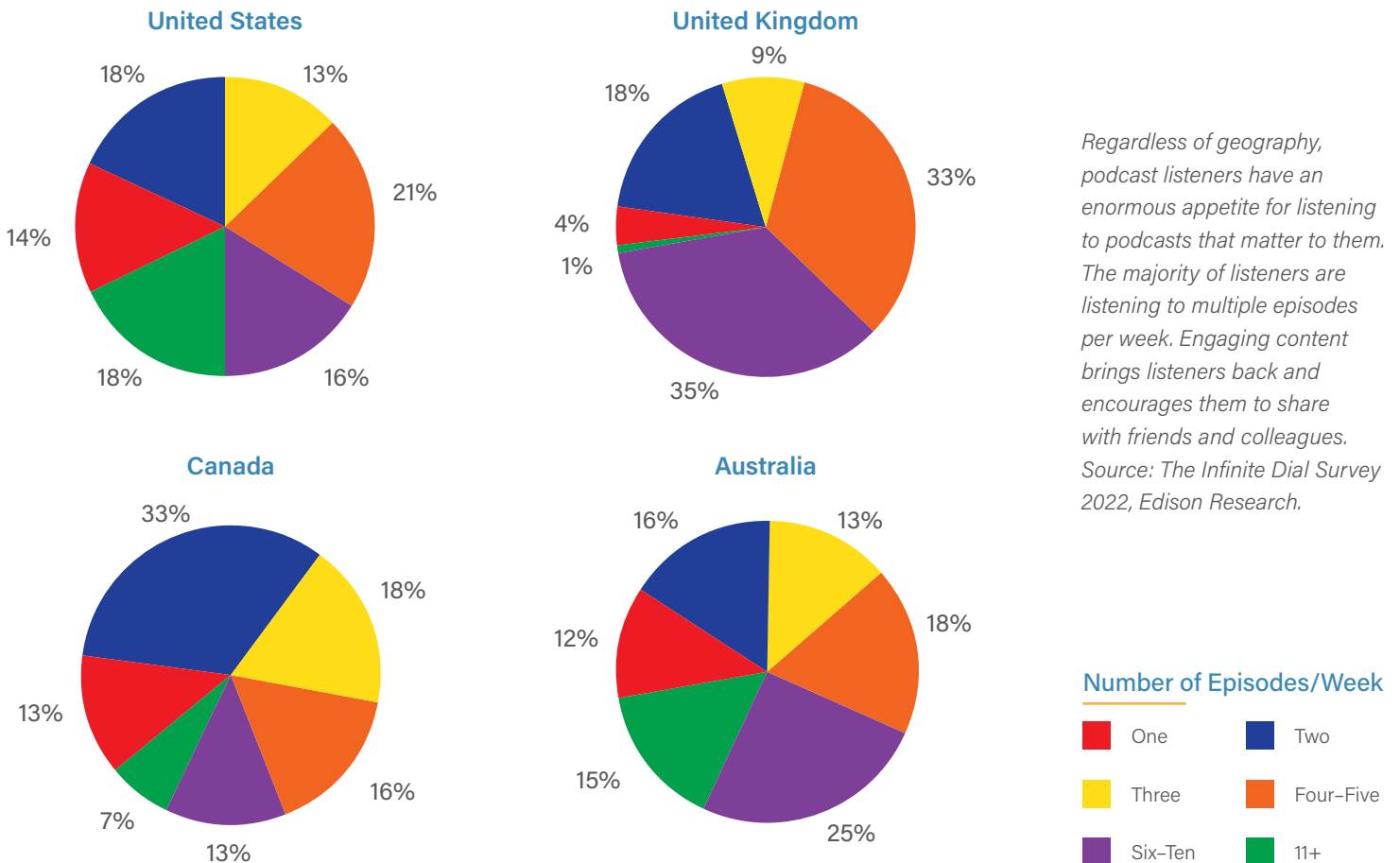
The WHERE

Listening to a podcast is different from visiting a website or scrolling through social media, or any other kind of communication medium. 71% of podcast listeners say they prefer podcasts because it gives them the opportunity to multitask. There's a common misconception that people listen to podcasts during their daily commute. They do, but that's a small fraction of podcast listening. Most people are listening while they're at home—doing housework, looking after children, doing dishes, mowing the lawn, shoveling the snow, or any of those day-to-day chores we do all the time. They choose podcasts because they don't demand a person stop what they're doing to watch this video or read this article. They choose podcasts because they weave their way into their lives... THEIR time. Podcasts become extremely personal.



Source: NPR & Edison Research

Average Number of Episodes per Week for Podcast Listeners, by Country



Regardless of geography, podcast listeners have an enormous appetite for listening to podcasts that matter to them. The majority of listeners are listening to multiple episodes per week. Engaging content brings listeners back and encourages them to share with friends and colleagues. Source: The Infinite Dial Survey 2022, Edison Research.



Starting Your Podcast CHECKLIST

- Develop Plan & Measurables
- Determine Style
- Work Up an Episode Plan
- Name Your Podcast
- Create Podcast Artwork
- Decide On A Host(s)
- Choose a Microphone
- Choose a Recording "Studio"
- Choose Audio Editing Tools
- Choose Your Distribution
- Launch Your Podcast!
- Promote and Grow

The HOW

Develop a Plan & Measurables

First, you'll need to develop your podcast plan and measurables for how it supports your communications and/or business strategy. Suggested measurables might include analytics showing how listeners are going from your podcast to other pages on your website. They might include social media comments that demonstrate support for your brand, you might run contests or other engagement activities that show interaction. Essentially the same ROI indicators you have for your website, you can use for your podcast.

Determine Podcast Style

Next, determine what style of podcast you're going to develop.

There are four main types:

1. A solo host show – the benefit of this style is listeners tend to develop a strong bond with the host. They become the one they trust the most. The challenge is the host you choose must have energy, enthusiasm and the topical intelligence to pull this off.
2. A co-host show – the benefit to this style is the energy of two people playing off one another. The obvious detriment is good chemistry between two people is incredibly rare
3. An interview-based show – this is the most common type of podcast and can be part of a hosted or co-hosted podcast. The benefits include the ability to tap into the niche expertise of guests as well as their network as they help you in promoting episodes they appear in
4. A narrative-based show – the benefit to this style is these are usually substantially researched and produced. They are extremely well-planned and done well, take the listener on a journey through story

Work Up an Episode Plan

Within your podcast plan should be a section for episode planning and preparation. Every good business or communications plan should be a living document and this segment of the plan will be constantly updated and revised. Conduct topic ideation and identify guests if that fits your podcast style. Then choose four episodes you feel should be your first (or next) four. Always work four episodes in advance. To develop these topics, write down your own ideas, do some internet research aligned with your topic, review other podcasts in your genre or niche, and search through Q&A sites like Quora or Yahoo Answers.

Name Your Podcast

You'll need a name for your podcast. This is one of the most important decisions you'll make in the process. To grow your listenership, you'll need to be searchable. The vast majority of people looking for new podcasts search the directories (Apple, Spotify, Google Podcasts) so a clever name like "Between Two Ferns," is never going to be found. If your podcast is about Nanotechnology you should call it "The Nanotechnology Podcast." The podcast title is your biggest opportunity to leverage SEO in the podcast directories.

Create (or Commission) Podcast Art

You'll need to develop attractive podcast art. This is a critical component of your success. All podcast art must be between 1400 and 3000 pixels square, 72 dpi, in jpg or png format. Absolutely no bigger or smaller. It's a critical component because it's the first impression for your podcast. Think about when you're choosing a new movie or series to watch on Netflix—how much of your decision is based on art or short video clips of the show? Aside from recommendations from friends or actors you recognize, the art and teaser video is the most influential.

[For more tips on developing podcast art, try this article on Buzzsprout.](#)

Decide On A Host (or Hosts)

Importantly you'll need to choose a podcast host (or co-hosts). Ideally this is someone at the executive level – possibly even the CEO. Listeners will develop deep trust for the host, they become a key ingredient to the podcast's brand. Two things to think about – is the preferred host a podcast listener themselves? Is the preferred host open and authentic? Answering no to either of these questions should suggest a different direction.



The podcast title is your biggest opportunity to leverage SEO in the podcast directories.

Choose a Microphone

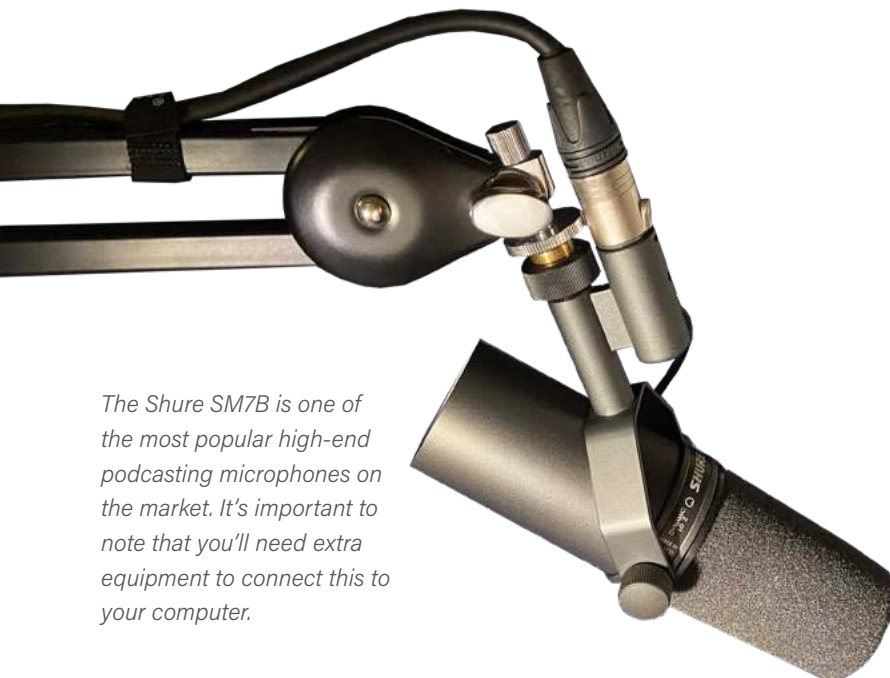
Recording a podcast has never been easier and inexpensive. First, you'll need a decent microphone. We'll recommend one middle option and one more expensive option. We recommend the middle option if you're new to podcasting but if you're all in on the podcasting idea, we recommend the Shure SM7B.

Middle Option - Blue Yeti (below, right)

This can be ordered on Amazon or purchased at most electronics stores. Cost is about \$180/£150. This is a very portable microphone that connects to your computer directly via a USB connection. Nothing to download and used properly the sound is fine – certainly vastly superior to a headset microphone or recording on your computer or laptop microphone. You will sound professional. The drawback to this microphone is it is a compressor microphone and will pick up everything. You will need to sound dampen your recording area with pillows or sleeping bags as you are a bit susceptible to room acoustics. It's an inside secret how great a closet can be as a place to record.

More Expensive Option - The Shure SM7B (below, left)

This too can be ordered on Amazon but there's more equipment you'll need. Cost is about \$520/£400 but you will also need a microphone activator (we recommend the Cloudlifter), an audio interface (we recommend the Focusrite Scarlet 2i2), XLR cables, and a microphone arm. All in this will cost about \$1,100/£900. The SM7B is a dynamic mic with superior sound capability and it is resistant to external noises.



The Shure SM7B is one of the most popular high-end podcasting microphones on the market. It's important to note that you'll need extra equipment to connect this to your computer.

Choose a "Recording Studio"

If your podcast is co-hosted or with guests there's no longer a need to use studios to record. Two very affordable options have developed in the last few years:

1. [Riverside.FM](#)
2. [Squadcast.FM](#)

Both allow you to record from anywhere in the world and sound like you're in the studio side by side. Audio is recorded uncompressed (unlike Zoom or any streaming platform) in 48kHz WAV. The recordings are also local (from the host or guest's local server) and not via the internet. Video is recorded in up to 4K resolution.

Other options for recording include Stream Yard, Zencast, and Open Reel. As of 2022, none of these matches what Riverside and Squadcast can provide.

For editing there are several options available:

1. [Adobe Audition](#) (recommended for PC or MAC)
2. [GarageBand](#) (recommended for MAC)
3. [Logic Pro X](#) (recommended for MAC)
4. [Pro Tools](#) (recommended for PC or MAC)
5. [Descript](#) (transcription-based editing) (an intriguing and relatively new software in the podcast space)
6. [Audacity](#) (FREE) (excellent for editing and sound quality but a complex interface)

The Blue Yeti is a budget-friendly microphone that delivers great audio. It uses a USB connection to plug directly into your computer.



Distribution of your podcast

The listening habit people have developed for podcasts is to go to podcast directories and find new podcasts that way. The top directories are Apple and Spotify (about 75% of all podcast listening) then Google Podcasts, Podcast Addict, and dozens of others). You should connect your podcast to all of them via an RSS Feed link.

An RSS feed (Really Simple Syndication) is an online file that contains details about every piece of content a site has published. You don't need to remember that, you just need to know that you need one for your podcast then you need to connect all those directories (Apple, Spotify, Google...) to your feed. After that, every time you publish a new episode it will appear in the directory for your listeners to download.

The easiest way to get an RSS feed for your podcast is through a podcast host. Here are five hosts to choose from:

- [Buzzsprout](#) (recommended)
- [Libsyn](#) (recommended)
- [Podbean](#) (recommended)
- [CoHost](#) (recommended)
- [Anchor](#) (Keep in mind while Anchor is free to use you do allow Anchor to place ads in your podcast episodes at its discretion).



Pro Tip: Use headphones to save hours and hours of time in post-production removing echo and feedback.

Your podcast needs to be where people will listen to it. An RSS feed is how every podcast platform distributes content to listeners. It's also worth considering self-hosting episodes on your own websites where people can directly find you.

Promotion and Growth

All the other steps in developing your podcast are relatively easy, albeit somewhat time consuming. There are two levels to promoting your podcast:

Level one

Content such as audiograms, short videos, other content via your social media channels

Audiograms. Typically a single image of your podcast art with a :30 soundbite from your episode intended as a teaser so people can hear the content.

Short videos. These can be videos of the episode itself or a separate video shot as a promo for the episode by the host. We recommend keeping these to :15 as people's attention spans on social media are extremely short.

Level two

Paid advertising on other podcasts, promo swaps with other podcasts similar to yours, seeking podcasts to interview you as guest





Paid advertising on other podcasts. There are two routes to go. One is to pitch other podcasts you think have similar audiences to yours to place ads in their podcast. Another route is to place ads in other podcasts via your podcast host (Buzzsprout and Libsyn are leaders in this). The average cost per download (known as CPM in podcasting) is \$25/1,000 downloads. Once your podcast has grown in audience the reverse is also possible and you can begin selling time and space in your podcast.

Promo Swaps. The concept here is to approach other podcasts with a similar audience to yours and mutually agree to promote one another within one another's podcasts. Typically, this is done about half-way through an episode (known as the mid-roll).

Guesting on other podcasts. Another great way to get in front of podcast listeners who might give your podcast a listen.

Understanding Listener Profiles

Knowing your audience is critical when it comes to promoting and growing your podcast. Targeting your promotional efforts to those people who are interested in your topic and are regular podcast listeners is a great starting point to maximize your ROI.

			
Interested in your subject	Not interested in your topic	Interested in your topic	Interested in your topic
No podcast habit	Listens to podcasts	Listens to podcasts	Listens to podcasts
			Has listened to one episode of your podcast
✓	✗	✓	✓

Why Level Two is Superior to Level One

Level-One is an important piece but the person you're going to reach via Level One may be interested in your subject matter but not have a podcast habit. Level Two reaches people who have both a podcast habit and a high likelihood of being interested in your subject matter.

Final thoughts

We hope this comprehensive guide helps. There's a lot to this. That statistic about three out of four podcasts quitting and becoming inactive—why does that happen? Most actually quit after seven episodes, statistics show. It's because most organizations and individuals are surprised by how much work is involved in a successful podcast. There's no doubt the ROI on podcasting is substantial. Brands like Coca-Cola, American Airlines, McDonald's, Virgin Mobile, and Telstra all have podcasts. Politicians are beginning to catch on to their value and many government or heavily regulated organizations are also realizing there's great power in developing a channel that creates such personal connections while remaining firmly within their control and edit.



If you feel you're interested in developing a podcast but the work seems daunting, that's exactly where Stories and Strategies comes in. We've developed thousands of episodes for dozens of clients around the world. We also bring substantial marketing and technical expertise to the table. We would love to connect with you and talk about a podcast.

[Check out our Website](#)

Email us at info@storiesandstrategies.ca

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