Podcast Launch Guide

Here are the steps needed to launch your podcast.

Plan

☐ **Create Audience Avatar**

The first step in planning your podcast is to think about who you want your audience to be. You can't be all things to all people. It's best to be specific and know as many details about your audience as possible. If this was an individual person, what would they be like? Create your audience avatar so you know exactly who you're talking to.

☐ **Determine Show Format**

Since you know your audience, you can now shift your focus and think about the overall format for your podcast. While keeping your audience avatar in mind, consider the following questions...

- How often will you release new episodes?
- What day will you release these episodes?
- How long will each episode be?
- Will you be interviewing guests?
- Will your podcast have different segments?

☐ **Name Your Podcast**

The name of your podcast is very important. It should tell your audience what your show is about using as few words as possible. This name should appeal to your audience avatar. It will also appear in searches, so be sure to use important keywords that people may include when searching for similar content. It's also important to do a quick search through podcast directories to make sure your name isn't too similar to other shows.

☐ **Design Artwork/Cover**

Every podcast has a square image that represents it. This image is what makes your podcast stand out. And yes, podcast audiences do judge a book by its cover, so it's really important to have great podcast artwork. Unless you're a graphic designer, we recommend hiring a professional to design your podcast artwork or cover.
View the bonus download to see the difference between great artwork, and artwork that could use some improvement.

☐ **Choose Podcast Equipment**

You could spend a lot of money on podcasting equipment, but you don't need to. There's really only a handful of things you'll need.
- Desktop or laptop computer
- USB microphone
- Microphone stand
- Headphones
- High-speed internet (10MB+)

See our bonus download for recommendations on specific equipment based on your budget.

☐ **Select Podcast Host Provider**

All of your podcast episodes are uploaded to your podcast host provider. Your provider also gives your RSS feed which will be used to distribute your podcast to sites such as Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Our preferred podcast host provider is Megaphone (megaphone.fm). They are the industry leader for dynamic insertion which is a technology that allows you to place ads in your episodes electronically and remove them. Other popular platforms include Anchor, Buzzsprout, and Podbean. Choose your podcast host provider and log in to add your podcast artwork, description, and other information needed to publish your RSS feed.

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Produce

☐ **Schedule Recording/Guests**

Let's schedule your podcast recording. It's usually easier to schedule your recordings on a specific day or time of the week/month. Perhaps you record every Friday? Or maybe you record on the first Monday of every month? You can do bulk recordings or single recordings. Bulk recordings mean you record multiple episodes on the same day, back to back. This can be nice because it gives you more of a break in between recording dates. But it is more work up-front. If you're booking guests for your podcast, we recommend using an online scheduler (Calendly.com or OnceHub.com), so they can pick the recording date that works best for them.

☐ **Research Guest/Topics**

Research the content you'll be discussing in your episode. If you invited a guest, you probably already know some information about that person, but it's always a good idea to go deeper. You could schedule a pre-interview with your guest, but at least search and see if you can access previous audio or video interviews so you can get a feel for their personality. You should also research any topics you're planning to discuss on your podcast. Try to find information that provides different viewpoints which give you different perspectives on the matter. Takes notes on what you discover so you can use this information when writing your episode outline or script.

☐ **Script/Outline Episode**

Take that research and use it to create a script or outline for your episode. Most podcasters don't write out everything, but it's important to at least have some bullet points so you know what you're going to talk about. And if you're recording with guests, it's helpful to show them your script or outline in advance so they know what to expect. Consider creating your script or outline through Google docs, so you can easily send them a link.

☐ **Create Podcast Intro/Outro**

Most podcasts have a show intro and outro. Sometimes it's pre-recorded and sometimes the host reads them live during each recording. Podcast intros usually include some theme music and the goal is to introduce the podcast and show host to the audience. Podcast outros wrap up the episode and usually include information about where you can find the podcast and how to connect with them.

☐ **Find Podcast Music**

Music and sound effects can make or break your podcast.
It's important to not only find quality tracks but make sure you have permission to legal use them. If you have a podcast editor, check and see if your editor already has a music subscription that would cover episodes they edit for you. If you're editing your own episodes, we recommend either searching online for royalty-free music or getting a subscription to SoundStripe (soundstripe.com). Their music is incredible and one flat fee covers all your downloads. Use promo code PODCAST to save 10%.

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Record Episode

Recording your podcast online has never been easier. You can even record high-quality audio and video through your web browser. We recommend using Zencastr (zencastr.com) to record your podcast. Zencastr allows you to record your tracks separately, so you can easily edit out any mistakes. They even have a plan that's completely free.

Here are the recording steps...
- Create your Zencastr account.
- Go to your dashboard to create a new episode.
- Send your guests a link to your recording page.
- When it's time to record, go to the recording page.
- Click the record button to start recording.
- When you're done, click the recording button again to stop.
- Allow your files to upload to Zencastr.
- Download your files

To use Zencastr, you'll need a desktop or laptop computer, Google Chrome browser (Brave/Edge work as well), and high-speed internet, preferably 10MBs or higher.

Edit Episode

It may seem a bit intimidating, but editing a podcast doesn't have to be super complicated. Most shows simply edit out any mess-ups and add some additional elements such as a pre-recorded show intro and outro, music, and commercial spots. Audacity (audacityteam.org/download) is a free editing program available for both PCs and Macs. You can also use Garageband which is a free program on Mac computers. If you feel overwhelmed by the editing process, you can usually hire a good podcast editor for about $50 per 30 minutes of content.

Dynamic/Baked In Ads

Whether you're promoting your own products and services, running affiliate links or ads for other products, you need to have a way to insert these ads into your podcast. You can either do this through dynamic insertion or through baked-in ads. Baked-in ads are ads that are either pre-recorded or read live, but they are physically edited into your episodes and cannot be removed unless you edit them out. Dynamic insertion ads are pre-recorded, but they are electronically inserted into your episodes and removed when the campaign is complete. You can usually make more money with dynamically inserted ads because you can run the same ad across all of your episodes at the same time. But you'll need to have a podcast host provider (like Megaphone) that offers this feature. You'll also need to set up your podcast episodes with ad markers, so the system knows where to place the ads. Check out our bonus download for more information about dynamic ads versus baked-in ads.

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Promote

Upload Content

Once your episode has been edited, you should upload it to your podcast host provider. You can save it as a draft, release it immediately, or schedule it for release later. Most podcast hosting platforms require you to upload an MP3 file. You'll also need to write an episode title and description. Your episode titles are searchable, so keep them simple and include keywords relevant to your content. Your episode description is not searchable. Keep it short since most people will be looking at it on their mobile devices. Include any important links or contact information discussed in the episode.

Distribute RSS Feed

You want as many people as possible to find your podcast. That's why it's important to submit your podcast to popular directories and apps. There are three main places to distribute your RSS feed: Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts. Download the attachment for more information on distributing your podcast to these sites. There's no charge to appear on these sites, but you do need to have at least one episode in your RSS feed. Some podcasters choose to create a short promo for their podcast and publish that first so their podcast starts showing up in these directories as quickly as possible. Once you submit your RSS feed to these sites, your new episodes will appear there automatically. Encourage your audience to subscribe to your show, so they'll receive notifications when new episodes are released.

Promote Website/Social

If your podcast is part of your business, then it's important to include episodes from your podcast on your website. You can create a special section for it, or include it as part of your blog. Ideally, each episode would have its own post and unique link for SEO purposes. Most podcast host providers will provide a podcast page for you, so if you don't already have a website (or don't want to build one), you can always use that. Consider buying a unique domain name and forwarding it to that page. If you're on social media, be sure to promote your episodes there as well. Audiograms are a great way for people to hear a clip from your podcast and determine if they want to subscribe. You can learn more about audiograms at Headliner.app.

Guest Promotion

Once your episode has been posted online and all your links are active, you'll want to contact your guests and encourage them to promote their episode as well. Some podcasters also provide their guests with graphics they can use. If your guests are promoting any links, make sure they promote your links on your website to help send more traffic your way.

Create One-Sheet

You may not need it right away, but it's a good idea to create a one-sheet for your podcast. A one-sheet is a simple and concise way to give potential partners and advertisers key information about your show, and it's only one sheet. This may include your podcast demographic, download numbers, advertising options, and feedback from listeners. Canva (canva.com) has some great templates for creating one-sheets and media kits .