



Could Podcasting Be a Welcome Addition to Your Marketing Mix?

by Donéa Boiner

Developing a marketing strategy can be a daunting task that begins with first understanding how your business fits into the marketplace, assessing your competition, and then determining how you'll compete. If part of your strategy hasn't yet included podcasts, you may be missing out on a promotional vehicle that can potentially enhance your overall marketing mix.

Podcasts first arrived on the scene in 2004, not long after the introduction of Apple's iPod. At the time, it was known as "audioblogging" and served as an auditory subset of the digital journaling phenomenon. Most likened the practice to radio with more portability and creative freedom than an online journal. The earliest examples of podcasts were generally isolated to the entertainment industry as digital recapping sessions for favorite television programs. Fast-forward years later, and this prematurely purported trend has turned into a sustainable marketing force with abounding branding and revenue possibilities.

Over the past five years, interest has continued to grow among B2B and B2C companies that consider podcasts a strong addition to their content marketing strategy, and a great opportunity for customer engagement. After all, podcasts can be accessed on the go; wherever you are, and whatever you may be doing, chances are good that you can tune in and listen. For companies, that means you can reach a near-captive audience nearly anywhere.

A recent **Edison Research study** showed a rise in podcasting, with monthly listeners growing from 21 percent to 24 percent year over year among an 18-54 age demographic. According to the survey, most audiences listen to podcasts from home, while vehicles and desks were a close second and third respectively. Podcast advertising (i.e., brand commercials during breaks in a podcast episode) has also expanded and is forecasted to grow nearly 25 percent annually through 2020.

As more companies integrate podcasts into their marketing mix, more streaming apps and smart home devices like Amazon Alexa, Google Home and Amazon Echo offer podcasts to accommodate user interest in brand storytelling. Over the past two years, streaming services like Spotify and even digital media players like Apple TV have added podcasting to their membership menus.

Although entertainment continues to be the favorite podcast category, education, government, business, tax and accounting, technology, news, politics and marketing have joined the ranks of industry contenders.

All this points to podcasting as a strong, momentum-based marketing tactic. Yet, that doesn't necessarily mean it's right for every company. If you're considering adding podcasting to your marketing mix, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you looking for new ways to engage with customers?
- What marketing techniques could your business utilize to reach customers and prospects that you haven't yet tried?
- Would your customers be interested in learning about industry trends, products and/or services by tuning into your podcast, and hearing your people give their thoughts and insights?
- Does your company have a new product it seeks to promote, and could the company potentially benefit from podcast advertising?
- Does your company have the time and resources necessary to develop informative and engaging podcasts over time? Are you ready to be in the podcasting game for the long haul?

- If the answer to the last question is yes, would podcasting be a complementary piece of a broader marketing strategy – i.e., would it serve a strategic marketing purpose, and if so, what would that purpose be?

Hopefully, asking these and other questions can help you determine whether podcasts could be an intriguing add to your marketing mix.

Do you have questions about podcasting, content development, or other **marketing** issues? Please contact Donéa Boiner at 440-449-6800 or **email Donéa**.