

# CAM

COMMUNITY ACCESS MEDIA



## Podcasting Basics

So you want to know how to start a podcast. In this course we're going to walk you through every stage of launching your show, from planning to publishing. Together we will explore the dos and don'ts of getting a podcast off the ground. By the end, you'll know exactly how to make a podcast, and hopefully be motivated to do it as soon as possible!

# Course Outline

1. Plan your podcast, from listener, to problem, to unique solution.
2. Name your podcast – and don't take long to do it!
3. Plan initial episodes to get a feel for your topic and its longevity.
4. Choose a format which balances quality and sustainability.
5. Choose your equipment and use it to record a show.
6. Produce your show in a sustainable way.
7. Publish your podcast to iTunes and elsewhere.
8. Think about next steps, promotion to monetization.



# Planning Your Podcast

- What's your podcast for?
- Who is your podcast for?
- Give them a reason to listen.

## Planning Your Podcast

There are two big questions you need to ask yourself here, and they're joined at the hip.

# What's your podcast for?

- Why do you want to make a podcast?
- Identify your “why.”
- It's important to keep in mind so that you can stay motivated even when you're finding it difficult to get a show out.



What's your podcast for?

So firstly, why do you want to make a podcast? Are you a freelancer? A business? Or a marketing manager? If so, you might have identified podcasting as a great way to build authority, and provide your customers and target audience with valuable and entertaining content.

Or are you looking at podcasting from a hobbyist perspective? This might mean you'll be creating a show in your spare time. And the subject will be something that you're passionate about.

In either case, you can identify your “why” here. That's important to keep in mind, so that you can stay motivated, even when you're finding it difficult to get a show out.

Next, what about your “who”?

# Who is your podcast for?

- Customers or clients?
- Hobbyists and those with shared interests?



## Who is your podcast for?

If you're coming at it from a business point of view, and you're (for example) a personal trainer who wants to make a health and fitness podcast, then your target audience might be people who are interested in healthy eating, weight loss, exercise, or bodybuilding.

If you're creating a hobby show – let's say it's based around your love of zombies and post-apocalyptic fiction – then your target audience would simply be folks with the same passion. They might be fans of TV shows like *The Walking Dead*, video games like *Resident Evil*, books like *World War Z*, and films like *Night of the Living Dead*.

A lot of smart people talk about creating listener personas. It's a good idea, sketching out exactly why it is that you'd like to listen to your content. That persona is something to keep in mind every time you plan an episode: "Would John, our listener persona, like this? Is this focused on what he likes, what he's interested in?"

That persona and those questions help you to keep your show focussed and on track, both of which make for more engaging content.

So we know who you want to reach, how do you reach them? You need to give people a reason to listen. This means creating content that they will get something out of when they listen.

# Give them a reason to listen

- Provide value for your listener.
- Give them a reason to come back for more.



## Give them a reason to listen

Whether you're providing information that will help someone to lose weight (in the case of our personal trainer), or doing a really entertaining interview with one of your favourite authors (in the case of our zombie podcaster) you're providing value for your listener.

Not only have you given them a reason to listen, you've given them a reason to come back for more. It's important to think about this in the planning stages. Can you write down 10-15 potential episodes that you think your target audience would love to listen to?

# Naming Your Podcast

- The Clever Name
- The Descriptive Name
- Using Your Own Name

## Naming Your Podcast

There's three main camps when it comes to naming your show.

# The Clever Name

- Remember people need to be able to find it when searching for information.
- Try to incorporate a description into the title.



## The Clever Name

You might think of a really clever name for your show. But remember that people need to be able to find it when they're searching for information about your topic. If you have a clever/catchy name for your show, then try to also incorporate a description into the title. There's no point putting out great content if nobody can find it.



# The Descriptive Name

- It's the searchable choice.
- Simply call your show what your target audience is searching for.
- But some may say it's a "boring" title.



## The Descriptive Name

The searchable (but some might say boring) choice is to simply call your show what your target audience are searching for. If our personal trainer called her show The Fitness Podcast then there's absolutely no doubt as to what the show is about. It's a good idea, although possibly reduces how memorable it is, just a bit.

Avoid getting too long and wordy if you go down this route. Remember you'll need to say the podcast name quite a lot when recording your episodes, so make sure it rolls off the tongue.

# Using Your Own Name

- Great option if you already have an audience.
- Incorporate your name along with something descriptive.



## Using Your Own Name

This is pretty much a no-no unless you've already got an audience. If someone started 'The Mike Smith Show' and it was about rock climbing, people would just think "who is Mike Smith?" and move on to the next podcast. Again, you can incorporate this into your show's name along with something descriptive ('Rock Climbing, with Mike Smith'). But avoid naming the show after you without any other details.

# Planning Your Episodes

- How long should a podcast episode be?
- How often should I release a new episode?
- Podcasting in Seasons
- Episode Titles

## Planning Your Episodes

After establishing what type of content you'd like to be putting out in your podcast, it's time to think about the episodes themselves. So, when looking at how to start a podcast, what are some of the most common questions about podcast episodes?

# How long should a podcast episode be?

- Depends on content.
  - Don't cut down good content.
  - Don't pad out succinct work.
- Depends on audience.
  - Your listeners will tell you if they think your episodes are too short or too long.



How long should a podcast episode be?

Podcast length depends solely on content. Don't cut down good content or pad out succinct work!

How long does it need to be to get the message out? If you asked most podcast listeners, a “short” episode would probably be anything under 15 minutes. And a “long” episode would probably be anything over an hour.

Many will reference the time of the average commute (said to be around 20 minutes) as a good length to shoot for. But anything from 20 up to 45 minutes seems to be within the “sweet spot” for an episode length.

Don't worry too much about these figures though, ultimately your episode lengths should be decided by two things.

- Your content
- Your audience

If you have 50 minutes of valuable, relevant content, why chop it down to 20? Or likewise, if you've said everything you have to say in 10 minutes, why pad it out to 30? In extreme cases, say you do an interview and it's a fantastic conversation from start to finish but runs for 2 hours. You can always chop it in half and create two episodes.

Over time, your listeners will tell you if they think your episodes are too short or too long. Try to survey your audience once a year to gather data like this, and you can adjust accordingly.

Be wary of making big decisions based on one or two comments though. Only opt to change things when you're sure it's something that will benefit the majority of your listeners. Remember, it's often the minority that are the most vocal!

# How often should I release a new episode?

- Consistency is key.
- Depends on content.
- Depends on audience.
  - Survey your listeners.



How often should I release new episodes?

People plan in hours of the day & days of the week. A weekly podcast taps into that, which is a powerful thing.

Just like episode lengths, your content will dictate this. That said, there's a good case for putting out a weekly episode if you can. When you get to a point where listeners know the day of the week your show releases on, then you know you're having an impact on them.

That impact is still possible if you do a fortnightly, or even monthly show, but people plan their lives around what time of day it is, and what day of the week it is. Those are the two routines at the forefront of our lives, and tapping into them can be a powerful thing.

That said, it's doing nobody any good if you're just putting episodes out for the sake of hitting a self-made deadline. You'd have a greater impact on your target audience if you put out one excellent episode a month instead of four very average episodes. So again, let your content dictate what you do here. And once you've been podcasting for a while and have gained a bit of traction, ask your audience.

# Podcasting in Seasons

- Builds in a break.
- Break your content into themes or topics.
  - Repurpose that content later.
- Don't lose momentum.



## Podcasting In Seasons

Season podcasting gets you off the publishing treadmill, bringing the fun back into podcasting!

Starting a podcast doesn't have to be like jumping on a treadmill, where you have to get a new episode out every week/fortnight/month. You can take a leaf out of television's book and podcast in seasons.

When you start a seasonal podcast, each season will usually have a theme. You might create episodes based around that theme or topic for 6-12 episodes, then have a break. After a month or two, you'll launch a new season (with another theme/topic) and repeat the process.

If your content is appropriate for it, you can even turn each season into a course or an ebook further down the line, so there are many benefits to seasonal podcasting. One pitfall however is that you might lose momentum (and the interest of your audience) during your breaks. We've found, though, that if you prepare them for it, and explain when you'll be back, then you combat both issues. You can't miss your own deadline after all!

# Episode Titles

- Choose good, searchable, descriptive titles.
- Don't simply leave it at Episode 1, Episode 2, etc.
- Make it clear what they will get from listening to your show.



## Episode Titles

Just like choosing a name for your podcast, choosing good, searchable, descriptive titles for your episodes is important.

The biggest mistake when it comes to naming your episodes is to call them “Episode 1”, “Episode 2”, and so on. Nobody’s going to know what to expect if they listen. The whole point of a podcast is that people listen to it, so give them a reason to click on one of your episodes.

Make it clear to people what they will get from listening to your show. If you look on any podcast directory you will see shows with titles like “How To...”, “Five Tips For...” etc. These are popular because they work. You just need to make sure that you are delivering in the episode what you promised in the title.

The extra benefit of this is that iTunes allows searching by episode name. So you can show up not only for the terms in your podcast title, but for the keywords in your episode names. That gives you a whole extra level of reach if you name them well.



# Podcast Format

- The Solo Show
- The Co-Hosted Show
- The Interview Show
- Other Formats

## Podcast Format

Next up in how to start to a podcast, we need to take a look at the format of your episodes. There are a few different options available to you here, and the beauty of it is – it's your show. This means you can experiment with each of these formats, and you don't actually ever have to stick with one.

You might be comfortable with a certain format and settle into a groove, or you might prefer a 'mixed bag' approach. It's totally up to you. So what are the common types of podcast show formats?

# The Solo Show

## Benefits

- You don't need to rely on anyone else.
- Building a reputation as the authority on your subject.
- The podcast is exclusively yours.

## Challenges

- Intimidating for the beginner podcaster.



## The Solo Show

Also known as the monologue.

**Benefits:** You don't need to rely on anyone else to record your episodes, and you're building a reputation as the authority on your subject. The podcast is also exclusively yours, so you can make calls on sponsorship and monetization. And you don't need to split the profits with anyone.

**Challenges:** Perhaps the most intimidating style of show for the beginner podcaster. One of the biggest challenges of the solo show is getting over the feeling that you're 'talking to yourself' and realizing that you're actually talking to the listener.

# The Co-Hosted Show

## Benefits

- Helps eliminate “mic fright.”
- Someone to share ideas, debate, mock.
- Great chemistry creates great listening experience.

## Challenges

- Scheduling the recording time.
- Who “owns” the podcast?
- What happens if your co-host loses interest or becomes unavailable in the future?



## The Co-Hosted Show

Presenting alongside a friend or colleague.

**Benefits:** A great way around the ‘mic fright’ or recording alone is to chat on the show with someone else. If you find the right co-host you have someone to bounce off, debate, or even mock (don’t be too mean!). Some co-hosted podcasts have great chemistry between the presenters. This can create a great listening experience.

**Challenges:** Not only do you need to set aside time to record, but that time must also be suitable for your co-host. There’s also the question of ownership: who’s podcast is it, do you split any future income 50/50? And what happens if your co-host loses interest or becomes unavailable in the future?

# The Interview Show

## Benefits

- Talk to your heroes!
- Your guests will bring their audiences.

## Challenges

- Interviewing is a skill.
- You'll have to find guests.



## The Interview Show

'Borrowing' the expertise or entertainment value of others.

**Benefits:** Talking to your heroes. Doing an interview show gives you the opportunity to have a chat with someone you've always looked up to. On top of this, your guests will have their own audiences who may listen to the interview and end up subscribing to your show. If done right, you can really grow an audience this way.

**Challenges:** Interviewing is a skill that you'll need to hone through practice, so don't approach the A-listers in your field straight away. You'll need to constantly find and approach potential guests, schedule interviews, and rely on others to show up (in person or digitally). You also need to rely on technology (like Skype) to work properly throughout each call.

# Other Formats

Examples include

- Roundtable
- Documentary



## Other Formats

Finally, there are a bunch of other formats that aren't so commonly used, but might well suit you.

For example, you've got:

- Roundtable – One regular host and a number of guests, talking through one specific topic.
- Documentary – A narrator walks you through a range of interviews, conversations and on-location clips to paint a picture.

# Recording Your Podcast

- Equipment
- Recording and Editing Software
- Scripting
- Talking Into a Mic
- Remote Guests or Co-Hosts

## Recording Your Podcast

So once you've done the groundwork and planned out your show, it's time to get to work recording your first episode.

# Equipment

## Minimum

1. Computer
2. Microphone
3. Internet access



## Equipment

The bare minimum you need to record a podcast is a computer with a built in microphone and access to the internet. As a general rule, though, the more limited and lower cost your setup and equipment, the more limited the sound quality of your show will be.

That said, simple USB microphone setups can give great results if you choose the right mic. Plus, you are much better to get started and see whether you enjoy it before forking out big sums of money on audio equipment.

There's a benefit to keeping things simple in that it's very easy to record. That means you'll be able to keep the show regular in the early days and really give yourself a chance to build a loyal following.

# Recording and Editing Software

## Audacity



- Easy
- More than adequate for a solo podcaster using a USB mic.
- Free

## Adobe Audition



- More complex
- More powerful and flexible
- Ongoing subscription cost



## Recording and Editing Software

When you plug your USB microphone into your computer, you will need some software to actually record and edit the audio. The good news is that this doesn't have to cost you anything. There's a great free program called Audacity which will be suitable for all your podcasting needs.

Another favorite is Adobe Audition, which is available at CAM, in the Media Lab at the library or through a paid subscription.

### Ease of Use

Audacity is extremely simple to open up and start recording with. There are drop-down menus on the main window where you can select the mic you want to record with, the headphones or speakers you want to listen with, and whether you'd like to record in mono or stereo. There are also sliders which let you set your recording and playback volumes, along with level meters to monitor your signals.

With Audition, it isn't as obvious when it comes to selecting a mic and setting your levels before hitting record. To do this, you need to go to your Audio Hardware settings inside the Preferences menu.

### Saving Your Work



You refer to your saved work in Audacity as a “project”, whilst in Audition, it’s a “session”.

The universal “Save” and “Save As” rules apply here for both.

Saving an Audacity project for the first time will create an Audacity Project File (.aup), and a separate folder containing the project’s data.

Saving an Audition session will create a folder for the session and its materials on a whole. Inside that folder you’ll find the actual Adobe Audition Session File (.sesx) where you can open up your save.

Audition sessions tend to take up a lot less room than their Audacity project counterparts, because of where and how either of them store their data.

### Exporting an MP3

Once you’ve finished putting your episode together, you’ll want to export it as an MP3 prior to uploading it for the world to hear.

Inside Audition this is quick and easy, just select a bitrate, name your file, and mix it down.

The latest version of Audacity supports MP3 exporting options as the MP3 just had its patent dropped.

### Summary: Audacity vs Adobe Audition

Adobe Audition CC is undoubtedly more powerful and flexible.

With that said, the ongoing subscription costs can be a barrier for some.

The fact that Audacity is completely free makes it appealing to many beginners.

If you’re a solo podcaster using a USB mic setup, then Audacity will be more than good enough for your needs.

If you’re looking to use a mixer and multiple microphones though, then learning Audition is absolutely going to be worth it in the long run.

# Scripting

- Fully scripted
- Reading to your listeners
- Sermon
- Bullet points
- Talking with your listeners
- Conversation



## Scripting

Once you're set up with a microphone and your editing software you are ready to hit 'Record' – but what will you say? That's where scripting comes in.

When we talk about 'scripting' it's easy to imagine a fully written out essay that'll be read out word by word to become your podcast episode. That approach can work. But sounding like you're **READING** to your listener and sounding like you're **TALKING** to them are two very different things.

The intimate nature of podcasting is far more suited to being a conversation, as opposed to a sermon. So try to wean yourself off a fully scripted show with bullet points of everything you want to cover. This will become easier over time with practice, until eventually writing a full script will seem unnecessary.

Also, the way you open and close your episodes is really important too!

# Talking Into a Mic

- Can be intimidating.
- Focus on that single ideal customer/listener.



## Talking into a mic

This is probably the most difficult thing to conquer when learning how to start a podcast. You can make this difficult for yourself by imagining that you are either “talking to yourself” or “talking to a microphone”. Instead, focus on talking to a single person. We talked about who your podcast is for earlier on, your listener persona. If you are a business, you may already have this persona or “avatar” sketched out. Remember, an avatar is basically your ideal customer/listener.

When creating that persona, it’s up to you how much detail you put in. Some people go as far as creating jobs, hobbies, likes, dislikes, family, friends, etc. The point here is that holding a conversation with them, rather than yourself or the microphone, will sound much more natural and engaging. This means that everyone who listens feels like you are talking directly to them. And this leads to building and strengthening relationships over time.

# Remote Guests and Co-Hosts

- Phone interfaced with your audio board
- Record with Skype, Zoom or other online platforms.



## Remote guests or co-hosts

Whether you have a co-host in another country, or regular interviewees from all around the world, it isn't difficult to record your chat with them. The most common way of doing this is to use Skype and record the call.

# Producing Your Podcast

- Editing
- Music
- Cover Art

## Producing Your Podcast

Next stop, editing! This is where you take out mistakes, stitch together different audio clips, add in music or FX and make sure it's all sounding great with EQ, levelling, compression and more.

# Editing

- Do it yourself.
  - Audacity
  - Adobe Audition
- Outsource it.



## Editing

So, you've already got Audacity to record with, and this is also the perfect platform for production. Or, if you opted to go Audition, there's are plenty of learning resources available. If you're prepared to spend a bit of money to save time though, you can always outsource your editing and hire someone else to do it for you.

# Music

- Add music to the beginning and end to add professionalism and production value.
- Usually 15 seconds or less.
- Legally acquire the rights.
  - Royalty free, stock, music library.
    - Usually have to pay a licensing fee.
  - Creative commons licensed music



## Music

There's no rule to say your podcast must have music, but many choose to add some at the beginning and end to add that extra layer of professionalism.

Though you might see films or TV shows with 1 minute or more of intro music, don't copy this in your podcast. You don't want to have a piece of music on its own for any longer than 15 seconds.

### What Music Can I Use?

There are many websites that have music you can legally use on your podcast. This type of music will usually be referred to as royalty free, stock, or library music. Usually you can pay a one off fee for a song which entitles you to use it on your show, or you can now get subscriptions that give you access to a huge library.

It's possible to find free music if you search for 'creative commons' licensed music, but it's often very commonly used and not the best quality.

There are also varying levels of creative commons licenses. Some are very liberal, whilst others ban you from using that music for commercial purposes. Always check the source site and make sure you have permission to use a particular piece of music.

# Cover Art

- It's your first impression.
- Sources
  - Creative commons licensing
  - Professionally designed



## Cover Art

Just like your episode titles, first impressions are everything. Having attractive cover art that stands out is vital when your show lines up against thousands of others in the iTunes store.

Just like music, creative commons licensing can be found in visual art too. Many podcasters use creative commons/stock images to create cover art on platforms like Canva.

You can also have artwork completely custom designed by a professional or approach an artistic or photography-loving friend to see if they will help you put something together.

Ideally your cover art should be 1400 x 1400 pixels, in JPG or PNG form, and under 500kb in size. Stick to these specs and it'll help you avoid having any issues in directories like iTunes. Your artwork will often be viewed by potential listeners in a much smaller format, so avoid cluttering it full of details that could turn it into a mess. It should be clearly readable when only around 200px wide.



# Publishing Your Podcast

- Media Hosting
- Your Podcast Website

# Media Hosting

- Media hosts store your audio files for distribution.



## Media Hosting

When it comes to getting your podcast out there for everyone to hear, you'll need a media host. Media hosts are services that store your audio and allow your listeners to listen, download, and subscribe to your podcast.

One common misconception when learning how to make a podcast is that you upload your podcast to places like iTunes. This actually isn't the case.

In short, though, you need to sign up with a media hosting service to host your audio files, and you can either have a website set up on their site to deliver them, or place them on your own existing website.

Once you've created your show inside your media host of choice, you can then submit it to be listed in various directories, where listeners can discover, subscribe to, and download it.

# Your Podcast Website

- Often included with media hosting account.
- Incorporate delivery into your existing website.
- Set up a new website for your podcast.



## Your Podcast Website

When you sign up for media hosting, you often get a free website with it too. If you're running a hobby show, this is a good option to keep things nice and easy.

But, if you want more control, more tools, your own branding and to own the space where your podcast lives, then you'll want to create your own website for it. That means buying web hosting too

If you've already got a website for your business or your brand, then you don't need extra web hosting – you can just set up your podcast on your main website.

Alternatively, you can set up a brand new WordPress website as a home for your podcast – it's surprisingly easy!

# Next Steps

- Promotion
- Building Your Listener Base

## Next Steps

Once your podcast is launched and out in the world, that's when you'll move on to thinking about promotion and building your listener-base.

# CAM

COMMUNITY ACCESS MEDIA



## Podcasting Basics

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