

Podcast Tutorial: Four Basic Steps

This podcast tutorial is broken down into four steps:

1. Plan
2. Produce
3. Publish
4. Promote

Let's take a quick look at each section of the podcast tutorial.
Plan Your Podcast

I know you are probably anxious to press record and get your voice on the net. But a little planning will help you stay focused. In the end you will produce a better podcast that will attract and keep more listeners. This will also make your job as a podcaster a lot easier.

In the planning section I will raise a few questions for you to consider and help you make some important decisions about:

- * Podcast Topic
- * Podcast Format
- * Choosing a location for your podcast

We'll also talk about how to outline and plan each episode of your podcast before you record.

Produce Your Podcast

This is where you will open the mic and start talking (or whatever else you plan on doing in your podcast). In this section, I'll go over podcasting gear and podcasting software.

We'll also learn how to record your podcast and create an MP3 file in the Audacity Tutorial.

Publish Your Podcast

Once you've created your first podcast, you need to prepare it for publishing and post it to the internet. This section covers topics such as:

- * Creating an MP3 File
- * ID3 Tags for Podcasts
- * Podcast Hosting (blogs, web hosting, RSS feeds)
- * Free Podcast Hosting
- * Naming Your Podcast File
- * Uploading Your Podcast
- * Writing Podcast Show Notes

* Posting Show Notes

Promote Your Podcast

Of course you'll want more listeners for your podcast. You want to become a recognized expert and celebrity on the internet now that you have your own show, right?

In this section we'll talk about how to find listeners for your podcast.

Ready to get started? Let's get to it...

Choosing a Topic for Your Podcast

How to Plan Your Podcast

Before you get started with your podcast, you need to make a few decisions. Don't worry. This isn't going to be a long drawn out process. I'm sure you just want to get your voice on the internet as quickly as possible.

There are just a few questions that need to be answered first. I want to help you make a quality podcast that will attract and keep more listeners.

Here are a few things you need to decide for your podcast:

- What's the topic of your podcast?
- What's the format of your podcast?
- How long will each episode be?
- How often are you going to release new shows?

Trust me. If you take just a little time to think about these things now, then your podcast will turn out much better. A well-planned podcast will get more listeners. It will also keep you focused and make it easier in the long run.

Podcast Your Passion

What do you want to podcast about? Actually, let me ask you this first: what are you interested in? Even more, what are you passionate about?

SIDENOTE: If you're interested in creating a podcast to promote your business or to make money, there are some special considerations for choosing your topic. I will also talk about this below.

I'll be honest. Creating a podcast takes some time. But podcasting is a lot of fun and very rewarding. You will have the most fun if you're podcasting about something you

love. You could become a celebrity on the internet or a recognized expert on your chosen topic. Here are some questions to help you choose a topic:

- What hobbies do you have?
- What do you love to talk about?
- What things would you do whether or not you got paid?
- What are your areas of expertise?
- What do people ask you for help with on a regular basis?

How to Choose a Topic That will Be the Most Enjoyable for You and Boost the Quality & Popularity of Your Podcast

Do you love to water ski? Are you good at woodworking? Do you love riding horses? Any of those pastimes I just mentioned would make a great podcast.

Whatever your passion is, there are others out there with similar interests. There will be people who want to hear and learn about what you do because they love to do it, too. If you share your experiences, your knowledge and your passion, people will listen.

If you have special expertise or knowledge, there will be people who want to learn what you know. They'll come to recognize you as a source of the information they need through your podcast.

You could also talk about the town you live in. You could review local businesses or provide tourism information. The list goes on. The important thing is that it's something you love. The reason I emphasize passion is because it will make your podcasting experience easier and more enjoyable.

If you want to enjoy making your podcast in the long term, then choose a topic that you love. Again, the possibilities are endless. You can do comedy. You can do music. You can do politics. Make a choice and run with it.

Podcasting about Nothing in Particular at All or "The Show About Nothing"

Have you ever seen that episode of Seinfeld where Jerry and George decide to write a sitcom about nothing? While this was a clever idea for their show and made for a funny story in Seinfeld, I wouldn't suggest it for your podcast.

There are podcasts where the hosts just sit and talk about nothing in particular. There's usually some comedic quality to the show. One of the most popular podcasts, the Dawn & Drew Show (caution, this is not a work/child-safe podcast) uses this format.

If you choose to go this route, just be aware that it has already been done and it will be harder to stand out. You need to have just the right flare.

Podcasting to a Niche

<http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com>

Podcasting is powerful because it can do what can't be done with broadcasting. Podcasting is great for reaching small, focused and underserved topics of interest (niches).

By choosing a specific area of interest to focus on, your podcast can become a powerful source of information and enjoyment for others who share your interest.

You'll find it easier to market your podcast, maintain listeners and even make money with a podcast that focuses on a niche topic.

If you try to be all things to all people, you will lose in the end. You'll spread yourself too thin and your podcast will be weak and harder to maintain.

How Your Podcasting Goals Affect Your Choice of Topic

The reason I bring up your goals right now is that they should affect what subject you choose for your podcast. Here is why. If you have business aspirations for your podcast or want to gain a large audience, then you need to think about the potential size of your audience.

If your podcast is going to be about caring for Vietnamese Potbelly Pigs (yes this is a real kind of pig), then you shouldn't expect as big an audience as if your subject was NASCAR.

How large is the market for your topic? Is there a demand for it? If you want to make money with your podcast, promote your business, or gain a large audience, then you need to make sure there is a demand for your topic.

If you want to eventually make money with your podcast, then be sure your topic is profitable. Will people spend money on your topic? Is it important enough for them to pull their wallets out and give up their cash?

Also, how much competition is there? The good news is that podcasting is new enough that many niches are wide open. There is a good chance you can create one of the first podcasts on your topic (maybe even the very first one).

I don't want you to get 3 months down the road and find you're not reaching your goals because you didn't take some time to plan your topic. It's worth giving it a little thought and doing a little research right now.

If you need some ideas, take a look around at one of the podcast directories to see what others are doing. Something may spark your imagination. Here are some example shows and topics that are already being podcast:

GothamCast: This is one of my podcasts. It is a guide to New York City as well as a vicarious NYC experience. It's sort of an audio blog of my discovery of the city as a

<http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com>

transplant from the west. The podcast combines my passion for music, photography, culture and history all wrapped in the incomparable vibe of The Big Apple.

Coverville: This is a music-based podcast that plays nothing but cover songs (a new rendition of songs written by someone else). Brain Ibbot chooses a selection of cover songs by a variety of bands and puts them together into a casual 35-minute show with information about the songs and artists in between the music.

This Week in Tech: This is a very popular podcast with a panel of hosts discussing the latest in technology. It's news mixed with a lot of interesting and informed opinion.

Media Artist Secrets: This is a business-minded podcast for the creative artist. It teaches media artists how to market their talents. It offers inspiration and ideas for growing their business and developing their talents.

Catholic Insider: A podcast by Father Roderick Vonhögen, catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Utrecht, The Netherlands. This podcast contains news, interviews, music, reviews, audio-documentaries and other information about the Catholic faith and lifestyle.

The list of topics goes on from comedy to food to education to movies and more. Pick your niche in the podcasting world. You could become a recognized expert in your field. You're only limited by your imagination.

SUMMARY

The first step in planning your podcast is to choose a topic. When you choose a topic for your podcast:

- * Choose something that excites you. This will make creating your podcast fun now and in the long run.
- * Make sure there is enough demand for your topic, especially if you want to make money, promote a business or gain a large audience.

Once you have a topic for your podcast you need to choose a format. Format is important for keeping your listener's interest. If you don't carefully consider your format, not only could you lose your subscribers, but you can also run into problems with your hosting and drive yourself crazy because your podcast takes too much of your time to create.

Choosing a Format for Your Podcast

Here are the questions to ask when it comes to choosing a format for your podcast:

- * Will you be doing the podcast solo or will you have other hosts?

- * What segments do you want to do (e.g. tip of the day, reviews, breaking news, interviews etc.)?
- * How long will your podcast be?
- * How often will you release new shows?
- * Will you just be talking or will you play music as well?
- * Maybe you will buck the norm and come up with something completely different?

SIDENOTE: If you plan to use music in your podcast that is not your own, you need to get permission to use it. It's not legal to use copyright material in your podcast without permission.

You should form a basic idea of how you want to structure your podcast. There is one rule to keep in mind:

1. There are no rules with podcasting (just keep it legal)

You can cough into the mic once a week and post it to the internet if you want. Just know that I won't listen to it.

Also, just because we are talking about a "plan" and a "format" does not mean that this stuff is set in stone. You will certainly change your mind as time goes on. You will add things and drop things. Eventually you will find your groove and settle into what works well for you.

But it's good to start out with an outline so you have an idea of where you're going. It will make the process easier and also make your podcast better. A better podcast means more listeners and more fun for you.

Let's talk about a few things to consider when you choose a format for your podcast.
Should You Have A Co-Host

There are a lot of solo podcasts out there. Some podcasts have two or more hosts. One popular format is the husband-wife team who get together in front of the mic and talk. There are also podcasts with several participants discussing a topic at the same time.

You can even co-host a show with someone who lives in another state or another country. This is often done using internet phone software called Skype.

There are advantages to having a co-host:

- Many listeners find the discussion between multiple hosts more interesting than just one person talking
- With multiple hosts you can split the work required to produce the podcast
- There are more people to come up with ideas and content for your shows

This comes with the added complication, though, of coordinating the schedules of multiple people, maybe even across time zones.

The advantage to going solo is that you're totally in control. Again, many podcasts are done solo.

I do solo podcasts as well as a co-hosted podcast.

What Kind of Segments Will Your Podcast Have

What do I mean by segments? Back before podcasting (and when I had a 9-to-5 job and drove to work and before I lived in Manhattan) I listened to the local "morning zoo"-type show on the radio.

They had certain segments that they did every morning. I always knew that they would do the serious news, then later the silly news, then the stupid people awards, then an interview and so on.

These were the segments that they always did. If you watch the morning shows on the TV or radio shows on NPR it's the same. There are certain segments that they do on each show.

What segments will your podcast have?

"BUT WAIT! I thought you said podcasting had no rules and was different than corporate radio!"

I'm not saying to make your show predictable and stale. But your listeners like to know what to expect. Familiarity and structure are comfortable. Having a planned structure will also make producing your podcast easier for you. The point is that a little thought and planning is helpful at this stage.

Here is an example segment structure for a music podcast:

1. Intro Theme Song
2. Welcome Message
3. Announcements
4. Song Intro
5. Song
6. Song Intro
7. Song
8. Music News
9. Song Intro
10. Song
11. Final Comments
12. Outro Theme Song

Here is an example segment structure for a tech news podcast:

1. Intro & Welcome
2. Announcements
3. Top 10 Tech News Headlines with Commentary
4. Tech Quick Tip
5. Outro

Here is an example segment structure for a review show (movies, food, etc.):

1. Intro Theme Song
2. Welcome
3. Announcements
4. First Review
5. Second Review
6. Interview
7. Third Review
8. Final Comments
9. Outro Music

These are just examples. Find a structure that works for you and your listeners and then don't be afraid to change it up a bit when it seems appropriate. You can still be spontaneous.

Are You Going to Use Music in Your Podcast

Even if you don't have a music podcast, you may still want to use music in your podcast. Music is a great way to change things up and drive the show forward.

You can use music to transition between segments. This adds variety and keeps things moving. It also serves as a cue that you are moving into something new or changing gears.

Music makes a good intro. Having an intro theme song is useful for a couple reasons:

- * When your listener hears your theme song, it instantly cues them in that they are listening to your show.
- * An intro song raises the energy level and gives you some momentum going into the show.

If you think you'll want to use music in your podcast, there are some legal considerations. For more info on using music, [click here](#).

How Long Should Your Podcast Be.

The beauty of podcasting is you're not limited to the typical broadcast radio timing. If you listen to a talk show on the radio, everything is timed to the commercials and the "top of the hour".

But now you're in control. Your podcast can be five minutes or it can be 45 minutes. When you decide how long your podcast is going to be, you should think about what's appropriate for your audience. How long of a podcast will your audience listen to?

If the purpose of your podcast is to cover the latest news on a certain topic for the busy professional who is commuting to work, then you probably want to keep it to 15-20 minutes. If you're podcasting a speech from a conference, then it will probably be an hour or more.

Your Podcast Should Be As Long As It NEEDS To Be.

I know, that is really general advice. What I mean is, make it long enough to serve its purpose, but not so long that you will bore or lose your listener.

When I performed live in a rock band, I learned that it was best to leave the crowd wanting more at the end of the show. I think this applies to your podcast as well. There is a point where the momentum is just right to wrap things up. With time, you will find the happy medium. I would suggest being consistent in how long your shows are so your listeners know what to expect.

In GENERAL, my personal opinion is that a 20-30 minute show is a good length. Your listeners might listen to a lot of podcasts. If you want your podcast to be one that they listen to regularly, then you don't want to take up more of their time than you need to.

But I have a podcast that usually goes longer than 30 minutes because it feels right. This is my co-hosted podcast, so it is easier to change things up and keep it interesting for longer.

In the end, you know what's best for you, your show and your audience.
How Much Time Will It Take to Make Your Podcast

Just because you do a 20-minute show doesn't mean that you will only spend 20 minutes a week creating your podcast. Your time commitment will vary depending on how much preparation you need and your experience.

Keep in mind that the longer your show is, the longer it will take to produce it. Many podcasters spend 2-4 times the length of their show just on preparation before and publishing afterwards.

How the Length of Your Show Affects Your Web Hosting

<http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com>

We will talk more about podcast web hosting later, but for now you need to know that the longer your shows are, the more storage you will need. The longer the show, the larger the MP3 file.

Also, a larger show means you need more bandwidth for your web site. Bandwidth is the amount of information transferred to and from your web site each month. There is a limit to how much you can transfer.

With most web sites this is not a problem, but with podcasts it can be a problem because of the size of the MP3 files. We will talk more about bandwidth later. For now just know that the longer your podcast, the larger the MP3 file and the more bandwidth you will need for your hosting.

How Often Will You Post Your Podcast?

Will you do your show daily, weekly, monthly or just whenever you feel like it? This will depend largely on how busy your life is. How much time does your job, family or other obligations take up? Take an inventory of your life and estimate how much time you will have to work on your podcast.

Stay in Regular Contact with Your Listeners.

It's important, if possible, to have a regular schedule for posting your show. Weekly podcasts are very common. Some shows post on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. If you have a regular schedule it will help with listener loyalty. They will know when to expect from you and look forward to your new shows.

This is one of those do as I say and not as I do things. With my busy schedule, I don't always get my podcasts out when I plan to. But do your best. I'm working on getting better at this.

If you're podcasting for business or promotion, then I would suggest doing at least one podcast a week. Bi-weekly may work, but it's important to have regular contact with your listeners. Every day that goes by your listeners forget about you a little more.

I used to be a guitarist in a band. We played regular live shows and sent out an e-mail newsletter. I noticed that if we let a couple months go by without playing a gig or sending an e-mail to our list, then our show attendance would suffer.

People have short attention spans and short-term memory. You want to stay in the minds of your listeners on a regular basis.

Bandwidth is an issue here, too. The more often you post your podcast, the more people will be downloading from your site which requires more bandwidth from your hosting.

How Often Can You Get Fresh Content for Your Podcast?

How much fresh content is available for your show and how often can you get it? For example, if your podcast is news-based, how often does interesting news on your topic come along? How often can you create the content for your show?

SUMMARY

Spending some time now making some decision about how you plan to format your podcast will only make your show more enjoyable for your listeners, but it will also save you a lot of time and hassle in the future.

Spend a little time deciding how long your podcast will be, how often you will post new show, and what your typical show outline will be. These are important decisions that will affect your time commitment and enjoyment making your show. They will also determine what kind of web hosting you need.

With all this in mind, remember that, you know what's best for you, your show and your audience when it comes to the length and frequency of your show.

One final suggestion I have is to spend some time listening to other podcasts. Pay attention to how long they are. How long of a podcast do you like as a listener? Take note of their structure and the segments used in each show. What segments do you find enjoyable? Jot down some ideas.

Now we need to find a location for you to record your podcast.

Choosing a Podcast Recording Location

Tips for Choosing a Podcast Recording Location

- * Have a place setup (probably wherever your computer is) with your podcasting gear ready to go when you are.

- * Choose a spot that is quiet and free from distraction.

- * Make sure the room doesn't have too many echoes or too much reverberation when you record. (Like what it sounds like when you sing in the shower. Come on, I know you have done it.)

- * If you really want to get close to a studio vocal booth sound without having to build one, then try recording in your closet. Your clothes will make a great audience as well as

dampen the sound. I've used this trick to record vocals for a CD. Of course, your family might wonder why you disappear into the closet so much.

Room Noise

Your podcast will sound better if you cut down on the noise that is picked up by your mic. Noise is distracting and makes it hard to listen to your podcast if there is too much of it.

In most cases, minimize the background noise. Sometimes it's out of your control (such as in public places). On the other hand, there will be times when you want to record the surrounding noise.

Soundseeing tours (recording the sounds of your surroundings) have become popular with podcasters. This is an example of when you want to pick up the sounds of your environment. I like to record the sounds of New York City and use the clips in my GothamCast podcast.

Here are some tips for reducing background noise at home:

- * Find a quiet room where you can record in private. Shut the door.
- * Let your family, roommates or whoever else is around know that you will be recording.
- * Be aware of the noise going on outside.
- * Turn off fans, A/C, & extra computers that generate noise.
- * Does your chair squeak when you shift in it? Mine does. This will get picked up by the mic. That reminds me. I need to buy some WD-40.

Here are some tips for recording in public (or other noisy places):

- * Be sure to talk as closely to the mic as you can (without distorting the sound) to make sure your voice is above the noise being picked up by the mic.
- * Do a test recording to make sure the surrounding noise isn't too loud or distracting. Record 30 seconds or so and listen to it. It would stink to record an hour of audio just to find out you can't be understood over the jackhammer in the background.

Tips for Recording on the Go or Away From Home

Recording "on the go" can make for an exciting show. Here are some ideas of interesting things to record remotely (i.e. away from your studio):

- * A live music performance
- * A meeting, convention or class
- * A get-together of friends
- * A festival or other cultural event
- * An interview

You can also record on the go to save time. Sometimes I like to record my podcast while I take a walk. I get exercise and create my podcast at the same time.

To do this you will need a portable recorder. Here are some ideas of what other podcasters use to record on the go:

iRiver or Creative MP3 Players: These are MP3 player brands that often come with a built-in microphone. You can record your podcast into the player and then transfer it to your computer later.

I have a Creative Zen Micro that I like to carry with me in case I get the urge to sound off.

Your Digital Camcorder: I have also used my Canon camcorder to record audio clips. The sound is relatively good and it even records in stereo. I have also heard someone improvise and record into their digital camera.

Your Laptop: Please don't try to walk and record on your laptop at the same time. But for recording at a meeting or other such location, a laptop is a great way to go. Just take a microphone and some headphones with you.

PDA: Many Palms, Treos, Blackberrys and other such gizmos have built-in mics and record your voice to an MP3 file.

Just be sure that whatever you record with has the ability to easily transfer your audio to your computer (for example through a USB cable).

Getting Permission to Record

It's a good idea to get permission before you record in a meeting or other public venue.

Also, if you're talking to other people or interviewing, you should let them know that you're recording and get their permission to use it on your podcast. This is just matter of courtesy and ethics (and possibly the law in your area).

Podcasting in Your Car

<http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com>

Some podcasters record while driving in their car. I think this is usually a matter of multitasking to save time. Just use the same common sense that you would with your cell phone.

Use a hands-free setup and don't do anything stupid. Keep your eyes on the road and stay alert. Don't put yourself or others at risk. Enough said.

SUMMARY

Find a consistent spot to record your podcast (probably where your computer is set up). Make sure it's quiet and free of distractions. You want to be able to get a good recording free of noises that distract from what you are saying.

There are lots of devices that are convenient for recording your podcast on the go including MP3 players with built-in mics.

Now let's put together your first podcast episode.

What Makes a Good Pod-cast (and a Bad One)?

From www.wordpress.com blog user URL <http://mp3host.serveftp.com:8888/wordpress/?p=39>

I felt like posting this little bit mostly because I've been listening to a bunch of pod-casts lately, and, to be honest, they all pretty much suck. I'm going to cover a few things that a good pod-cast incorporates as well as how to go about making a good pod-cast in general if you are planning to start one up. Yes, I will make fun of pod-casts in this post, but if I didn't, who would you have to laugh at?

Here is a list of what I'm going to cover in case you really don't feel like reading this whole thing:

- * Be informative and entertaining (or do one or the other really really well)
- * Don't cover the same stuff over and over again
- * Develop tendencies (or personalities to use another word)
- * Sound enthusiastic and interested not monotone and bored
- * Have at least two people in your pod-cast
- * Release your pod-cast later in the week (closer to or on the weekend)
- * Do your show regularly (on a schedule, not at random)
- * Have an RSS feed
- * Get a decent mic
- * Have structure to your show (don't just hit record and ramble)
- * Don't make your pod-cast too long or too short (30 min recommended, 15 min minimum, 45 min maximum)

The most critical part of a good pod-cast is a two part philosophy that I have developed regarding pod-casts in general. In order for a pod-cast to be good it must be informational and entertaining. This may seem simple enough but many pod-casts fail miserably at this concept.

Being informational is not really dependent upon anything other than the knowledge of the people contributing content to the pod-cast. You don't have to cater to any particular brand of information but it does help when you do that just so you're not all over the place in terms of content and you can round up an audience that comes to expect your pod-cast to cover a certain genre. For instance, my pod-cast covers technology. If you listen to even one show, you can tell that within 30 seconds.

Another part about being informational is not saying the same stuff over and over again. You may know a lot about one very specific subject but that doesn't mean your listeners want to hear about that every single time. Now, you can obviously know a lot about technology or soccer or cooking for that matter but you definitely cannot do a pod-cast repeatedly about a single soccer player or one particular recipe. I have yet to listen to a pod-cast that goes over the same content without some purpose but I bet there are some out there. If you can't get new content, go over news stories that you like or that

are related to your podcast's content. My pod-cast does and it provides us with 15 minutes of content for every single show.

Not saying the same stuff over and over again does not mean you cannot develop tendencies on your pod-cast. In fact, this should be something you strive for. Hopefully, your listeners should be able to get to know you through your production and from that they should be able to better grasp what you're talking about or maybe even what your opinions are on certain things.

Now that we have covered being informational, we can move on to being entertaining. More often than not, this means you have to incorporate some kind of humor into your pod-cast. I've listened to some pretty dull pod-casts and they have more or less bored the life out of me. One way to fake entertaining (if you're not funny at all) is to be enthusiastic about your pod-cast. If you speak in a dull, monotone voice for the whole show, it is going to get annoying and boring. This is not something that will get people to listen to your pod-cast again.

In general, you should definitely put some energy into your pod-cast. Most of this should be in the actual production so it seems like you're interested in what you're doing. Don't make your listeners think that you're doing the show at gunpoint or as a formality or anything like that. At least act interested in what you're talking about and maybe your listeners will become interested as well.

Now, you do not have to be both informational and entertaining. It is really nice to have both, but it is not necessary. If you are not informational, you have to be ridiculously entertaining. If you are the most boring pod-cast on the planet, you better have some excellent information. However, if you are mildly entertaining and mildly informational, like my pod-cast, you have a chance. I'm not saying that my pod-cast is popular by any stretch, but I think it is a good example of something that at least captures the listener's attention.

Now, here are a few other tips that you should try to follow as much as possible. Firstly, do not do a pod-cast alone. Your listeners will eventually want to kill you after they hear enough of you. Have at least one other person on the pod-cast with you even if they are just a host and know nothing about what you cover. Also, on the same tangent, try to have a guest every once in a while.

Another very easy tip is release your pod-cast later in the week. Releasing on a Thursday or Friday helps out a lot because people can download your pod-cast and listen to it on the weekend when they have much more free time. I'm not sure how much this really helps, but I know I release my pod-cast on Friday or Saturday every week. Releasing on a Monday or Tuesday just reminds people that their week is just beginning and they have a long way to go before the weekend. Also, if your pod-cast is any good, your listeners may even include it in what they look forward to for the weekend.

Technical Requirements	Excellent	Proficient	Competent	Satisfactory	Poor
Use of Tracks					
Use of Photo					
Volume Control					
Script					
Length					
Continuity					
Music/FX's					
Overall Impression					

