

A 5-Minute Guide To Starting A Successful Podcast

- SPECIAL REPORT -

You probably listen to a few podcasts. In fact, you've probably made it a habit of listening to one while you're driving to work or you're running on the treadmill. If you've been thinking about starting your own podcast, then you're in the right place.

In this short guide, I'm going to show you the exact steps you need to follow so you can launch your podcast and succeed beyond your wildest dreams!

Just a disclaimer though. If you're thinking of starting a podcast because you've heard a lot of people have made huge sums of money with their podcasts, then you may need to rethink your strategy. Sure, you can probably earn some income from your podcast, but don't think it's going to happen anytime soon.

The truth is podcasting is a long-term game. It's not something that can propel you to overnight success – there are other platforms for that. In podcasting, the name of the game is “slowly but surely.”

You build your audience over a period of time, and when you get to a good number of followers, that's when you start thinking about monetizing your podcast. What I mean to say is, you don't think about making money at all when you're just starting out.

If you want people to remain loyal to your podcast (and your brand), then you need to work hard for it. You need to demonstrate why they can trust you. You need to provide value in whatever ways you can think of.

When you go into podcasting, you go into the business of helping people. So, thinking about making money right off the bat is a big no-no. Zig Ziglar's popular quote, "You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help other people get what they want" actually applies to podcasting.

With that said, here's what you need to do if you want to start a successful podcast:

1. Choose the right niche

First and foremost, niche selection is an important part of the podcast process. It's hard enough trying to stand out from a sea of podcasts, so you need to find a way to be different!

When you're hosting a run-of-the-mill podcast with nothing to show as an advantage to your listeners, then you're not doing yourself any favors.

In fact, you're going to lose out in the long run because people are just going to skip your show and instead tune in to your more established competitors!

So, what you need to do is you need to take a long, hard look at what you bring to the table. What is it you do best? What are your passions, your interests? Is there an existing podcast for that? If there is, what can you do to make your podcast stand out? Can you do something special that none of your competitors currently do?

Of course, this step is only important if you haven't already got an established brand. If you've got a successful blog and you've already got followers who know your brand by heart, then you need to stick to your branding.

For instance, if you're known as an expert in knitting in your offline or online community, then you probably wouldn't want to start a podcast about Internet Marketing. You're just going to make it hard on yourself, and you're going to confuse your audience!

The exception to this is you're actually looking to change niches and want to be known in another industry. Now that you've got your niche sorted out, it's time to prepare your podcasting tools.

2. Prepare your podcasting tools

Some people go all out when they buy their podcasting tools. They buy equipment and software that cost several thousand dollars. If you have this kind of cash lying around, then there's nothing wrong with following this path.

However, if you belong to the majority of podcasters who started out with minimal budgets, then know that a shoestring budget is enough to kickstart your podcasting career.

To start off, here are some of the most important tools you'll need:

- Good quality microphone with pop filter

Your podcast success is going to depend largely on the quality of your audio. No matter how great your content is, if you sound like you're on a tin can, then you're going to turn people off. People expect quality. If you think you can publish a poorly-edited and low-quality podcast and get away with it, then you're sorely mistaken.

You can use your computer's built-in microphone, but don't expect professional sounding audio to come out of it. In fact,

expect for the worst. So, the first thing you need to invest in is a good quality microphone.

Now, prices for microphones can be all over the place. Some can go as low as \$20 to several hundred dollars. Again, you don't need to splurge, but do check reviews and find the best one that fits your budget.

In addition to your microphone, a pop filter is necessary as well. You just need to put it in front of your microphone so it can filter out those plosive sounds from your b's, d's, g's and p's. The overall result will be something you'll actually enjoy listening to!

- Audio editing software

No podcast will be complete without a touch of editing. Sure, you may not need it if you're really good, but in most cases, you would want to cut out those dead airs and anything else that won't add value to your topic.

If you've been live streaming your podcast episode on YouTube or Facebook, then you may or may not need to edit your audio file for upload to iTunes later on.

But then again, video is a different medium than audio, and people who're listening to you on a pair of headphones will be expecting quality audio from your show!

Some of the top audio editing software you can use for free are Audacity (available for Windows, Mac OSX and Linux) and Garage Band (available on Mac only).

- Cover art for your podcast

People who search for new podcasts to listen to on podcast directories usually judge a podcast by its cover. Upload a visually-attractive cover, and you're virtually increasing your chances of getting discovered. Do the opposite and expect no one to listen to you. If you don't have an artsy bone in your body, then you can easily – and cheaply – outsource the creation of your podcast cover art.

- Intro/outro music/voiceover

You don't want your podcast episodes to go straight into you talking about your topic. You want some sort of introduction that will let people know your show's about to start. You can create your intro and outro on your own, or you can leave it to freelance experts who'll be happy to create it for a small fee!

- Podcast hosting service

While you can technically upload your podcast audio files to your web hosting server (if you have a self-hosted blog, this is what you use), it's not recommended. The reason for this is because regular web hosting servers aren't configured to host podcast files.

A podcast hosting service, on the other hand, offer a lot of podcast-centric benefits. For instance, they make it easy for you to upload your audio and they'll automatically update your RSS feed which then pushes your content to iTunes and other podcast directories.

Most hosting companies charge a minimal fee per month, so if you're looking to grow your podcast, it's best to choose a service that will grow with your show!

3. Plan your podcast episodes

Planning your episodes in advance can mean the difference between a successful podcast and a so-so one. Having the foresight to think about what you're going to discuss on your future episodes is a great way to ensure your show's going to keep on running for the foreseeable future.

There's a reason why content calendars exist – it helps you plan your content, and it gives you a top view on how your content's moving along. Is everything still in line with your original goals? Will your content still help you achieve your podcast's mission?

It's so easy to procrastinate and say you'll do your planning once you've run out of things to talk about. Come up with a planning system that works for you. You can try setting some time each month to plan the next month's episodes – what topics to cover, the guests you're going to interview, and so on.

4. Record and edit a few episodes

While it's possible to launch your show on just a single episode, it's not going to encourage people to subscribe to your show. You can have the best podcast cover art and the most persuasively-worded description, but if you only have a single episode to your name, then chances are people aren't going to subscribe.

The truth is we're all spoiled for choices. Often, when looking for new podcasts, people scan the episode titles and see if the show is going to be a good fit for them. They'll think, "This show looks great. They have some very interesting titles in here."

With a single episode, no one's going to bat an eyelash. You're not going to give your prospective audience the "push" they need to subscribe to your show. So, take the time to record a few episodes before you even start thinking about launching your show!

5. Sign up for podcast hosting

There's a reason why there are companies who exclusively offer podcast hosting. That's because website hosting and podcast hosting are very different, and if you host your podcast files on your web hosting server, you're not going to get all the benefits that come with dedicated podcast hosting.

Web hosting services are geared for just that – website hosting. Podcast audio files work differently. A 20-minute audio recording will probably be more than 20MB or 30MB in size, depending on the recording and file quality.

Imagine how much bandwidth your podcast files are going to consume if you have a popular podcast and you have hundreds – or even thousands! - of people simultaneously listening and downloading your episodes! You're probably going to get shut down by your web hosting service!

The good news is podcast hosting services are very much affordable. Most basic plans start at around \$5 per month. If your podcast grows, you can easily upgrade to the next hosting tier. Most of these services also include optimized and distribution-ready RSS feeds, your own podcast web page, and more!

6. Submit to directories

If you chose a good podcast host, then you should be able to quickly generate your RSS feed so you can submit your show to places like iTunes or Apple Podcast, Spotify, TuneIn, Stitcher, Google Play, etc.

You want to be listed in the most popular directories. You don't want your hard work to go to waste. People often go on podcast directories to search for new shows to listen to. So, make sure you tag your audio file with your show's name, your name, the episode title and number, and the artwork for your podcast. This will make it easier for people to decide if you're worth listening to or not!

7. Promote your new show!

The last thing for you to do is to promote your new show anywhere you can think of! You can pay for advertising if

you've got the budget for it, or you can build your audience slowly but surely.

Tell your family and friends. Write about it on your blog and email your list. Create social media profiles for your show, make sure you use your show's name, the same artwork as your podcast, etc. for branding purposes.

You're not even limited to promoting your podcast using online techniques, you can also use offline methods! Include a link to your podcast in your business card, or hand out flyers at the supermarket or wherever your target audience hangs out.

Are You Ready To Start Your Own Podcast?

Starting your own podcast need not be so hard. Simply the follow the steps I've shared in this guide and you'll have your podcast up in no time at all! Remember, your podcast is just another vehicle for you to give valuable information to your target audience. Make sure you make it worth their while!