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The Power of Podcasting: What Exhibitors Need To Know

By Susan Friedmann

What's the most precious commodity in the world? Nope. Not gold. Not platinum. Not uranium. Not diamonds. The most precious commodity in the world is not something you can mine, or harvest, or hoard in safety deposit boxes.

The most precious commodity is something you have an almost endless supply of. Major industries go out of their way to get it from you. Entire trades have sprung up for the sole purpose of enticing you to part with yours.

What is this precious thing?

Why, it's your attention. I'm hoping by this point that I have yours. Capturing the attention of today's mass-media savvy consumer is quite a trick. Consider the competition: streaming video on the desktop computer, television shows on your cell phone, video game consoles that allow you to play with competitors halfway around the world. How in the world are you going to get a consumer who has all of these entertaining options available to pay attention to your products and services?

Enter the podcast. Podcasts are audio or video files distributed over the internet. Listeners download the files, and either play them on the computer or a listening device, such as an I-Pod. Podcasts can be on any topic -- there are regular podcasts devoted to life in Iceland!-- and any length. Some are a few minutes, others go for over an hour.

Podcasts have two distinct traits that will appeal to exhibitors:

1. They allow the listener to multi-task: Many of our clients are busy, busy people. They may not have the time to sit down and read a magazine article, much less the new book you've just authored. Yet they can listen to your podcast while driving to work, going for the morning jog, even while working on some less-vital aspects of the day's paperwork.

2. The feed the societal need for self improvement: Podcasting offers listeners the experience of attending a one-on-one lecture with some of today's most foremost experts. Listeners who want to

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advance their careers, improve their health, or do a better job raising their kids are natural audiences for podcasting.

Podcasting can play an integral role in your development as an Expert. Regular podcasts that share industry information, insights, advice, and guidance will create the impression that you're someone the public can turn to. This is an ideal time to display your expertise and speak directly to the topics that are relevant to your market and target audience. Considering the low cost of podcasting — you can get up and running for a few hundred dollars — can you afford to forgo this opportunity?

To be an effective podcaster, remember the four C's. Your broadcasts must be Concise, Chatty, Clear and Consistent.

Concise: Each podcast should have a clear focus. Pick one point you want to concentrate on and select your material to support and illustrate that point. It is better to offer several short, clearly focused

podcasts than one, long, rambling, self-indulgent diatribe.

Chatty: Make your material engaging. That might be difficult, especially if you're talking about estate planning or tax avoidance strategies, but it's necessary. Use real life examples and simple language to communicate your points. Listeners will tune out jargon, dry statistics, and 'academic-speak'.

Clear: Once upon a time, politicians and thespians used to train by speaking with a mouth full of pebbles. The thought was that if one could make oneself understood even under those circumstances, clear speech would present no problem if one were unimpeded. I'm not recommending you start putting rocks in your mouth. However, make an effort to speak clearly. Listeners won't value what they can't understand.

Consistent: You can podcast monthly. You can podcast weekly. You can even — if you're brave and have the time — podcast daily. It doesn't really matter, as long as you pick a schedule and stick to it. Blow off your listeners at your peril. If there's no material when they expect it, they won't come looking twice.

Once you have your podcast up and running, remember that you have to promote it. Link to it from your website, add info about your podcast to your signature files, and include a mention in your print advertising. People won't listen if they don't know the podcast exists!

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; website:

What is Podcasting?

By S. Housley

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What is Podcasting

Podcasting is quickly becoming a buzz word among the techie crowd. So what is podcasting, anyway? Podcasting is online audio content that is delivered via an RSS feed. Many people liken podcasting to radio on demand. However, in reality, podcasting gives far more options in terms of content and programming than radio does. In addition, with Podcasting, listeners can determine the time and the place, meaning they decide what programming they want to receive and when they want to listen to it.

Listeners can retain audio archives to listen to at their leisure. While blogs have turned many bloggers into journalists, podcasting has the potential to turn podcasters into radio personalities.

Podcasting can be used for:

1. Self-Guided Walking Tours – Informational content.
2. Music – Band promotional clips and interviews.
3. Talk Shows – Industry or organizational news, investor news, sportscasts, news coverage and commentaries.
4. Training – Instructional informational materials.
5. Story – Story telling for children or the visually-impaired.

Podcasting is the syndication of audio files using RSS. Podcasting works the same as a standard RSS feed reader or news aggregator, the only difference is that the feed you subscribe to contains an audio file in it. Instead of reading content in your RSS feed reader or aggregator, you can listen to the contents of your feed using a reader or aggregator that supports podcasting, or you can listen to them on an iPod or similar device. While podcasting was named for the iPod, you do not have to have an iPod to listen to a podcast. Podcasts can be displayed on websites with clickable links to audio files and many of the standard RSS readers, like FeedDemon's latest beta, have begun supporting audio enclosures.

The audio file that makes the feed a podcast rather than a standard RSS feed is contained in the 'enclosure' tag. The easiest way to think of this is as an e-mail attachment.

Although the "enclosure" tag is not new to RSS feeds and has been included in the RSS v2.0 specification for about four years, podcasting has only really been around since August of 2004.

Webmasters are finding creative ways to provide media-rich content. The syndication aspect and potential increase in audience size are an attractive lure. Listeners benefit from podcasting because, like RSS, podcasting is a means to publish content that ultimately gives the recipient the control over

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the information they want to see or hear.

Podcasting Resources –

Podcasting Tools – <http://www.podcasting-tools.com>

Podcast Alley – <http://www.podcastalley.com>

PodcastBunker – <http://www.podcastbunker.com>

Podcasting News – <http://www.podcastingnews.com>

It will be interesting to see how this publishing medium develops. Currently, only the technical crowd has endorsed podcasting as a new audio medium, but the potential is real and the process is not overly complex. With a little time I think this field will develop and prosper.

About the Author: Sharon Housley manages marketing for FeedForAll <http://www.feedforall.com> software for creating, editing, publishing RSS feeds and podcasts. In addition Sharon manages marketing for NotePage <http://www.notepage.net> a wireless text messaging software company.



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