

# PODCAST CHECKLIST

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# PLANNING AND PREPARATION



## 1. Decide your motivation

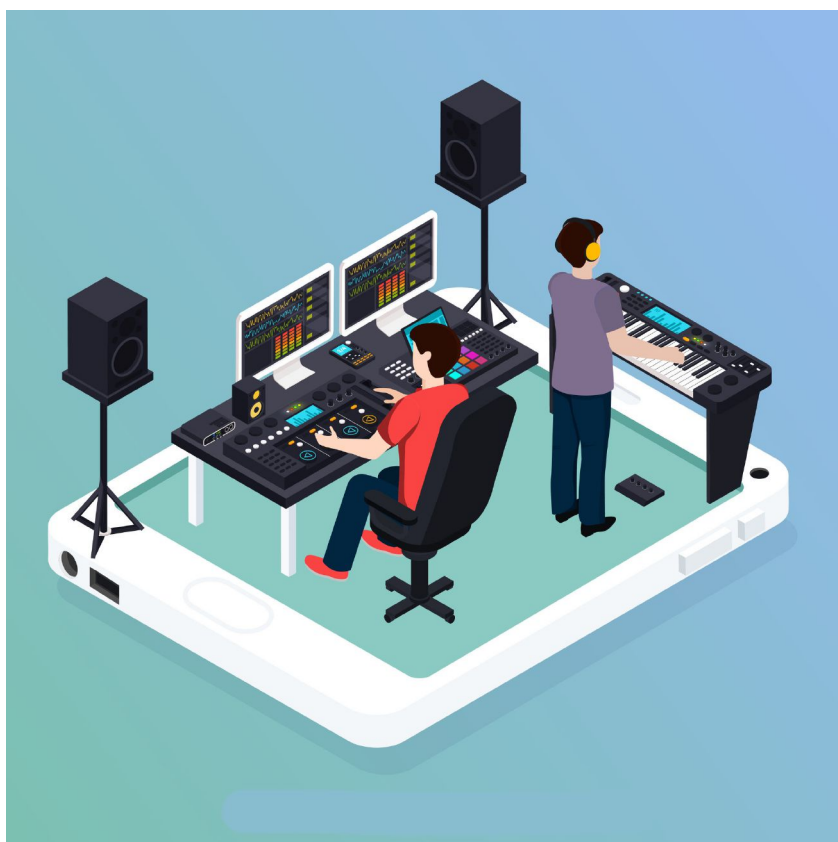
- **Expand your brand's influence:** build a deeper connection with your existing audience and expose your brand to a new audience.
- **Build authority:** develop a personal connection with listeners and leverage that feeling of intimacy to build your personal authority as a thought leader/influencer.
- **Network:** interviews give you a reason to network with high-profile influencers.
- **Find new sources of revenue:** advertising and sponsorships bolster your existing sales funnel – new leads and sign-ups for your paid products.



## 2. Develop your angle, find your topic

- **Find a theme** or interest that relates to your industry and audience's passions: it must be sustainable and can last more than ten episodes while still keeping your interest and the interest of your audience.
- **Find your niche:**
  - What are you interested in? If you're not engaged, your audience won't be either.
  - Who is your ideal listener? Age, gender, schooling, why do they listen to podcasts?
  - How do the two compare? Look at your interests and see what your audience would want to listen to. Cross out what they don't want to hear and list what's most interesting to them. Focus on the first two/three topics, the rest can be for special episodes if you're in a creative slump.
- **Check out the competition:** if you're having trouble coming up with a topic, check existing podcasts, categories, and what's hot, new and noteworthy.
- **Choose a podcast type** – you can mix and match depends on your topic:
  - News and current affairs: flexibility on structure but requires a lot of work to produce.
  - Interviews: good for networking, versatile, less pressure, and no specialized skillset required.
  - Discussion: conversation, best for co-hosts with great chemistry; can be difficult for editing.

- o Storytelling: easiest to produce but requires a lot of creative effort.
- o Educational: information, trivia, and quick tips; every episode must deliver high-quality information while keeping short and to the point.



### 3. Find the right tools

- **Audio:**
  - o USB mics: plug into the computer and start recording.
  - o Analog microphone: XLR connection and high-quality sound; great for live shows but more expensive.
- **Audio set up:**
  - o Smartphone, **Rode SmartLav+**, and an audio recording app (the setup I currently use).
  - o **Rode Procaster** (XLR version of the podcaster microphone) and **Zoom H6 recorder**.

- **Recording**

- o **Zoom:** video screen capture recording, great for screen capture..
- o **Screenflow:** Video screen capture recording for mac.
- o **Loom:** free, new product.

- **Editing**

- o **Audacity:** for Mac and Windows, you can record directly from a microphone into Audacity.
- o You can outsource it (e.g., on **UpWork**), but there are plenty of tools if you want to do it yourself.

## 4. Develop podcast info

- **Decide on a schedule:** should it be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly? Make sure you have a reliable schedule for your listeners.

- **Name:**
  - Don't include "podcast" in the title.
  - Make sure it isn't already being used.
  - Creative: gets the attention but doesn't have anything to do with the content of the podcast (e.g., "The Moth – true-story experiences of real people").
  - Descriptive: describes what the podcast is about (e.g., "The Smart Passive Income Podcast").
  - Host name in the title (e.g., "The Tim Ferris Show").



- **Description:**
  - Outlines who the podcast is aimed at and what it will do for them.
  - Should be explanatory: needs to speak to listeners' pain points specifically and tell them what they can expect to gain from the podcast.
  - Should be search-friendly: understand the algorithms of search engines and the search bar on the podcast site; include popular keywords that relate to the topic but don't stuff the description with them.
  - Should be concise: don't want a wordy description; the preview only shows the first few lines, so the most important messages should come first.





- **Logo, cover art:**
  - 3000x3000 pixels.
  - Should look professional, stand out from the rest, and convey the message of your podcast.
  - Commission someone to create your artwork (e.g., on [Fiverr](#), [Speedlancer](#), or [99designs](#)).



# PODCAST PRODUCTION



## 1. Intro music

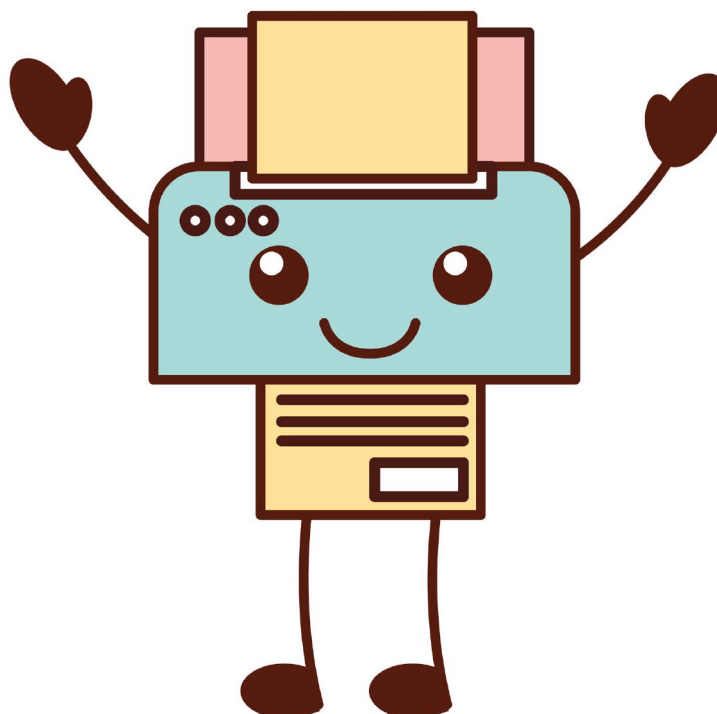
- **Start and end** of every podcast episode.
- **Outsource** (e.g., **UpWork**, **Fiverr**, or ask your friends)
- **AudioJungle**: find existing music that works with you speaking over top.
- Find **copyright-free tracks** at **Free Music Archive** or **Vimeo Free Music Archive**.

## 2. Record intro and outro

- **Type up what to say**, record yourself speaking it, and use it for every episode.
- **Intro**: introduce the show, who it is for, what kind of episodes you'll have (you could just read the description of the podcast).
- **Outro**: tells the listeners to visit the website for show notes and transcriptions and asks them to comment, review and share.
- **Hire a professional voice artist** as you get more funding to record the intro and outro.

### 3. Recording

- **Choose a recording software:**
  - Solo shows: **Audacity** (Windows), **GarageBand** (Mac).
  - Interviews: **Zoom** – you can create video and export the audio separately.
  - **Zencastr**: ask the guests to record their voice on their side – better audio quality and easier to edit.
- **Record on two programs at the same time:** the secondary recording should be on an external device.
- **Have an echo-free room:** it doesn't have to be professional-grade, but you should have a quiet room where you can be heard clearly (you can just put a carpet in the room).

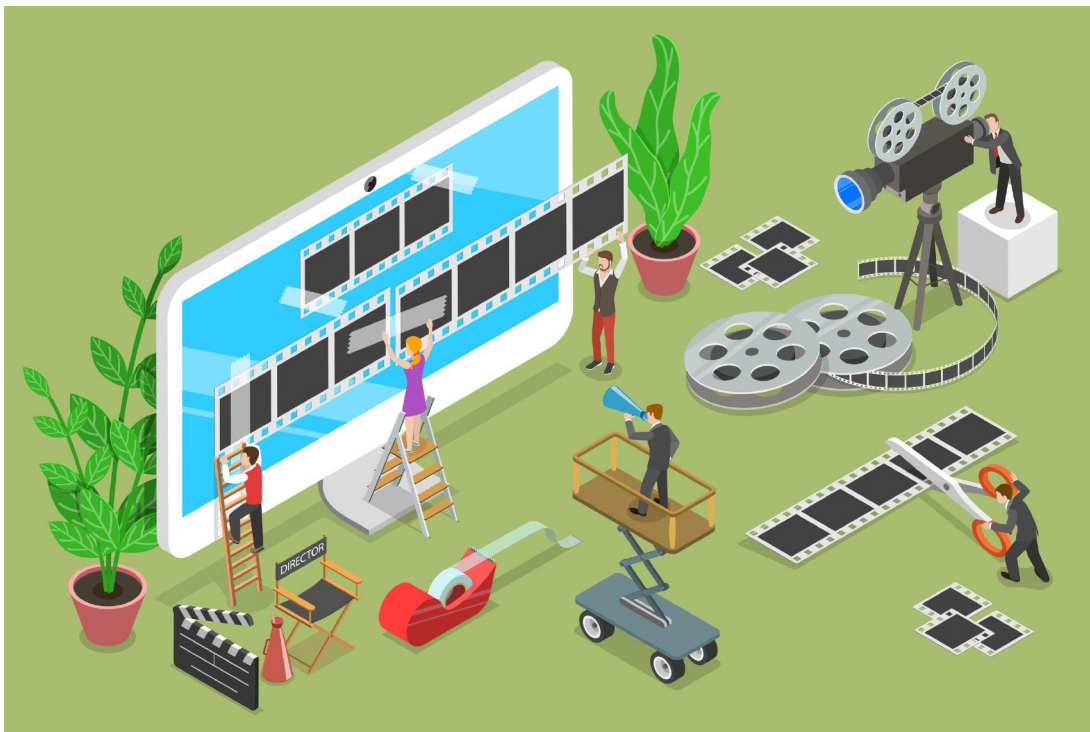


### 4. Draft relevant documents

- **Create sections and questions document** with all relevant info – refer to it during the recordings so you don't get stuck:
  - Dot points for beginning of episodes.
  - Notes for introducing guests.
  - Questions to ask guests if you get stuck.
  - Dot points for end of episodes – ask guests where people can find out more about them.
- **Draft transcript:** **Rev.com**, **Temi**, **Descript**, etc.

## 5. Guest booking

- **Create a guest info form:**
  - Add bio, photos, links, and social profiles.
  - **Gravity Forms** (WordPress), **Typeform**, **Google Forms**.
- **Booking system:**
  - Allow guests to book time slots (e.g., with **Calendly**).
  - Set up automatic reminders for you and your guests: integrate it into your Google Calendar system.
  - Add automatic “thank you” page.
- **Follow up and launch emails:**
  - Create an email template to send to guests immediately after their interview to thank them, let them know about the process and when you go live with the interview.
  - Create an email template for when the interview goes live, so that they can check it out and share it.



## 6. Editing

- **Edit intro/outro:**
  - Add the music you picked – it requires audio editing (could be outsourced).
  - **Audacity**: envelope tool – fades the music out before you start talking in the outro and after you finish speaking in the intro.
  - **Auphonic**: easy system, free for up to two hours of audio per month – you can create a preset that automatically adds your intro/outro, runs several sound quality enhancements, and exports your file to Dropbox or Google Drive.

- **Editing tips:**

- Pay attention to pacing: make sure the podcast flows naturally – cut anything that’s not pertinent to the podcast (including “hellos” and pre-interview conversation).
- Watch for clipping in your audio editor – if your microphone gain is too high, the waveform will touch the top and bottom; change your microphone volume so that the waveform stays in the middle of the bar.
- Check over audio levels: make sure the audio doesn’t swing wildly from soft whisper to loud screaming; don’t make your listeners adjust their volume half-way through.
- Make sure tags are in order: edit ID3 tags before publishing; this is how mp3 players get their info about an audio file.
- Make sure your file is in the right format: export it as mp3 with fixed bitrate – 128kbps is a good bitrate (keeps file size low while maintaining good audio quality).

## HOSTING, LAUNCH, AND PROMOTION

### 1. Find your hosting platform

- **Don’t store your audio files to your website:** it will slow down your site and leads to excessive bandwidth usage; if you do, it’s easier to track traffic, but you have to make sure your website is well-maintained.
- **Set up a website specifically for your podcast:**
  - WordPress – install Seriously Simply Podcasting plugin.
  - Host your podcast feed, make announcements.
- **Find a podcast hosting service:** most work similarly, only a few have unique aspects
- (e.g., **Buzzsprout**).





## 2. Before you launch

- **First episode:**
  - Introduction episode.
  - Tells people what to expect from your podcast – it's a good way to get used to the editing/upload process.
- **Have at least three to five episodes ready before launch:**
  - It makes your podcast look more complete to have several episodes ready to be streamed.
  - A lot of podcast listeners like to binge-listen to several episodes at a time – you want them to be able to listen as much as they want without the risk that they'll move onto another podcast if they don't get enough of what they're looking for.
  - Make sure these first few podcast episodes are value-packed – you want to make a good impression on potential listeners.
- **Have a month's worth of episodes ready to go:**
  - Never work under the wire trying to produce a new episode every week.
  - Good in case of emergencies when you can't record/edit.
  - If your podcast is time-sensitive, create several evergreen episodes ahead of time (e.g., for a podcast about the stock market, have backup episodes about the stock market crash of the 30s or the origin of the stock market).
- **Before you upload, double-check:** cover art, title, description, and metatag information associated with the mp3 file.



### 3. Launch

- **Need a podcast feed** that you can submit to iTunes or your chosen podcast directories: some service providers will create this URL for you, while others will require you to set up your own website with the podcast structure to use as the feed URL.
- **Submit to podcast directories:** it can take up to two weeks before your podcast gets approved – be careful about promotion plans if you’re relying on your podcast to be out by a certain date:
  - **iTunes** – aligning to specifications and getting approved can be hard; follow the steps exactly as Apple says.
  - **Google Podcasts.**
  - **Stitcher** – offers useful statistics about downloads and habits of listeners, opportunities to monetize your use of the platform.
  - **Spotify.**
  - **Blubrry, Miro** – less popular.
- **Upload to your site:** decide how many you want to launch with and set them all up.
- **Set up web statistics** (e.g., Google Analytics).
- **Set up media download statistics** (e.g., Blubrry Statistics).
- **Set up an audience survey** (e.g., Blubrry Audience Survey).

### 4. Promotion

- **iTunes New and Noteworthy:**
  - Very secretive about what it takes.
  - You have two months to get into that category, and it’s a huge help in getting exposure.
- **Promotion ideas:**
  - Inform your existing audience and potential subscribers – use SoundCloud to send a short snippet.
  - Use your social media profiles to spread the word – share episode links and mention any guests or brands you may be discussing.
  - Publish a blog article encouraging readers to check out the episode and include a call to action directly to it – publish a follow-up post offering a bonus resource or sharing something else you may have talked about on the recording.
  - Ask to be reviewed – reviews and ratings in the iTunes store help improve your ranking and encourage casual browsers to give your podcast a listen.
  - Let people know the podcast exists – put it on as many podcast libraries as possible.
  - Set up a social media account for the podcast and make podcast episode release announcements.



- o Use an email list/newsletter to convert listeners to customers – create free guides/show notes to provide value to listeners and get them to sign up to your email list.
- o Attend conferences and trade shows that complement your content and genre.
- o Consider using traditional marketing techniques (e.g., Google AdWords).
- **Have a strong call to action:**
  - o Podcast advertising has a high conversion rate.
  - o If you've got a large audience, start advertising to them right away.
  - o If you're just starting out, use your call to action to build exposure and have listeners leave reviews or share your podcast.
- **Transcript show notes:**
  - o If you have a website, offer transcripts or show notes – it's great for SEO purposes.
  - o Makes the podcast accessible to those who can't listen to the whole episode – it gives them an idea of what it's about so they can decide if they want to sit through the whole episode.
  - o Check [Rev.com](#), [Temi](#), [Descript](#), or [UpWork](#) for transcriptionists.



- **Guest podcasting:**
  - o Take advantage of your network – be a guest on someone else's show to put your content out to an already engaged audience.
  - o Invite other podcast hosts to your show or look for other points of leverage (help with content, introduce them to guests you've had etc.).

- **Find your starving crowd:**
  - Find which online communities your ideal listeners hang out in and become an active member yourself.
  - **Reddit r/podcasts** offers a supportive community of podcasters.
  - Search for communities on Facebook, Google Plus, LinkedIn, Product Hunt, Inbound, and Growth Hackers.
  - Avoid spamming.
- **Create shareable images:**
  - Use simple pictures of the guest with a quote from them overlaid on top – share on social media platforms with a short caption.
  - Shareable images make the podcast more likely to be shared by the audience and get more people to listen to the episode – people are more likely to respond to images than straight text.
  - **Canva**, **Typorama**, and **Wordswag** are great for creating your own shareable images.
- **Follow-up email:**
  - Send your guests a reminder or follow-up email once the episode goes live.
  - Get them to mention your podcast on their social media/podcast – make the process easy by creating a sample copy for them in an email so that they just copy and paste it into their own social media.
- **Spin content:**
  - Reuse and repurpose any part of your podcast episode in other mediums to increase your exposure and potential discoverability.
  - Upload the podcast to YouTube.
  - Write an article where you go over the topics you discussed and add links back to the episode throughout the article.
  - It improves the brand's reach and influence, serving your audience members who aren't podcast listeners.





## Hit the ground running

This checklist is just the beginning of an amazing journey. To take things further, grab the **Podcast Blueprint**. It goes much deeper into the process of planning, launching and maintaining a successful podcast, as well as turning it into a real business. Normally, this bad boy is \$47, but we have slashed that price down to just \$7 as a way of saying thank you for reading this entire checklist.

