Business Podcasting 101

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Podcasting Introduction

What is podcasting?

Simply stated, a podcast is a mini audio or video show that is automatically sent to your iPod, personal media player or computer every time a new episode is available.

Podcasting is portable – it’s radio or TV to go. When you synch up your iPod or personal player, the podcast is automatically transferred and you can take it with you and listen or watch while you are working out, driving, at work or at home.

Podcasting is personal – it’s a new medium that uses the small screen and headphones to create an intimate relationship between you and the message.

Podcasting is powerful – it gives users total control and flexibility, enabling them to watch or listen anytime, anywhere and on any device. With podcasting, any time is prime time. It’s been called “TiVo for the internet.” Millions are converting to technologies like podcasting for this simple reason: instead of going to the internet, the internet now comes to them.

How does it work?

A user subscribes to the podcast through any of several popular podcatching or RSS-reading (Real Simple Syndication) portals such as iTunes, MS Zune, MyYahoo, Google, NewsGator, PodNova and Odeo. Once a user is subscribed, each time there is a new podcast episode, it is automatically downloaded to the user’s RSS Reader and synched to any portable media device they choose.

And this is what is distinct about podcasting – enabling a user to subscribe so the media is automatically sent to their portable device.

Subscribing is a one-time event, and the user doesn’t have to worry about getting spammed from giving away an e-mail address, making it easier for them to trust the publisher. (The publisher needs to produce quality content on a consistent basis, of course, as deleting a podcast is as easy as subscribing to one.)

However, a user doesn’t have to subscribe or even own an iPod to enjoy a podcast – they can watch or listen to it right on their computer via streaming.
Who are the users of podcasts?

Podcasting is already considered one of the fastest growing entertainment technologies of all time even though it only first emerged in 2005. In fact, podcasting is so new, the Oxford English Dictionary made “podcasting” the word of the year in 2005.

Today, according to eMarketer, more than 18 million people are regularly downloading podcasts. There are already more than 200,000 podcast shows available (which is 5x as many radio stations). And, that same report estimates that by 2012, more than 65 million people will be regularly downloading podcasts.

Recent research from Arbitron and Edison Media also indicates that podcast users – whether on iPod or through another device or on a computer – are a highly desirable demographic.
Podcasting for Business

How are businesses using it?

Business are using podcasting in a number of creative ways – for both internal and external communications. Podcasting takes advantage of affordable bandwidth, time- and place-shifting devices like the iPod, and RSS technology to make rich media communications just as easy to publish and consume as “plain” communications. Here are some of the ways businesses are using it now:

- Sponsoring or creating shows that reach niche audiences
- Distributing an audio version of a conference call to investors and analysts
- Producing video newsletters for employees
- Creating multimedia product catalogs for distributors
- Taping speeches and conferences for posterity
- Providing news stories to the media

These uses, however, are just the tip of the iceberg for using podcasting to achieve business goals. As a new medium, it’s open to new uses. Here are a few general rules about what type of content fits into the podcast sweet spot:

- Podcasts are ideally suited for any regularly scheduled meetings or events where there is content everywhere that can be published over time and after the fact!
- Podcasting should have a consistent schedule. Think of it as a magazine or show that you want to see on a regular basis – once a month, once a week, or even once a day.
- Content that is one-off or an isolated event doesn’t work well in podcasting as you have no time to build audience and awareness.
- Podcasting is great for bringing together like-minded, geographically separated parties. In real estate, it’s “location, location, location.” In podcasting, it’s “niche, niche, niche.”
- Podcasting makes it “cool.” Textbook publishers have been trying to get students to utilize supplementary materials for years, without success. McGraw-Hill recently posted that material as a podcast on iTunes and saw great results.
- Podcasts must remain “cool.” Boring content will lead to few subscriptions and lots of cancellations. Keep the content interesting, and keep it consistent.
Separate feeds can be established for differing content. Users can subscribe only to the feeds relevant to them.

Internal Communications Uses

Here are some additional uses for podcasting within a business entity:

“Synched” Training. Your sales, support and field staff now have instant access to real time company information through synched laptops. Much employee training, however, is anything but real time. An important training module can be produced and podcast to relevant employees quickly and securely. In an age where compliance is king, making sure every one is up to date on policies and procedures won’t wait for the next conference. According to a Wall Street Journal article, Siemens cut costs by over $200,000 for one worldwide unit by podcasting training materials instead of herding the unit into a hotel for a few weekends.¹

Missed Meetings. Did a key employee miss a productive meeting? If it’s recorded and podcast, they’ll know about it the instant it’s podcast. Also, maybe a presentation should have been seen by hundreds of employees, instead of the few who were invited. Podcasting can overcome that.

Nuanced Communications. Wars have been fought over misinterpreted e-mails. If you’re coming across the wrong way with mass e-mail messages, try podcasting to get the message across the right way.

Recorded Support Calls. “This call may be recorded for training purposes.” Yes, but how long does it take to make it to training? Dropping a good call recording into a podcast feed means “best practices” can be distributed far more quickly.

Keeping Their Eyes on the Road. Books on tape revolutionized the publishing industry, making it a bit safer to drive next to an avid “reader.” A CNNMoney story indicated that iPod jacks would come standard in most vehicles within just a few years. Apple believes 40% of new cars sold in 2006 will be iPod ready. Now you can make time sitting in traffic jams more productive for your employees.

CEO Messages. When the CEO speaks, podcast it. Enough said.

External Communications Uses

Once your public relations or marketing department gets its hands on a podcasting platform, here are some of the things they’ll want to look into:

**Investor Relations.** Most companies are now using webcasting to post their earnings reports and other significant investor communications. By making these webcasts into podcasts, your investors will receive the information automatically instead of needing to “remember” to check for it quarterly.

**Product Evangelism.** With the right person doing it, getting the word out about what’s coming can be a hugely effective draw for customers. Just make sure your evangelist isn’t a marketer. Find someone who “keeps it real” for the customers. (Hint: they probably already have a blog going anyway.)

**Ads via Podcast.** Let’s face it. A lot less TV is being watched by younger audiences, and most people watch the Super Bowl for the ads these days. If your ads are clever, wrap them up as a podcast. If you have additional content not seen on the telee, by all means include it.

**Podcast Ads Have Amazing Recall Rates**

FACT: Ads in podcasts are three times more effective than traditional online audio or video ads, and seven times more so than television ads, according to studies conducted by Podtrac and TNS Marketing (April 2008).

**Events without Walls.** Say you had 500 attendees at your user conference. How many more wanted to come but couldn’t? If you had a regular event podcast, they’ll get the highlights. Once they subscribe, they’ll be at all your events.

**Marketing.** Podcasting represents an entirely new channel to be in touch with your consumers and prospects. As mentioned above, only a clever new campaign hitting the target demographic will adequately utilize this opportunity. No product is too boring. It’s all in the marketing. Just witness the campaign put together by a kitchen blender manufacturer, Blendtec. On YouTube.com, their video series “Will it Blend” gets anywhere from 200,000 to 1.5 million views per video. That’s mixin’ it up the podcast way!

While many podcasts have the potential to reach hundreds of thousands of users – if not millions - a podcast success for business is not defined by numbers alone. It’s also how the company uses the podcast – promotes, publicizes and advances it as a messaging platform.
What are the key benefits of podcasting?

Podcasting enables an organization to deliver its messages to niche audiences via a dynamic multi-media medium – to internal audiences such as employees or external ones such as consumers or the trade. This platform provides numerous benefits by providing:

- Ongoing direct communication channel with your audiences that doesn’t end up in the junk mail box or get blocked by spam filters
- Access to a younger demographic (18-35) which is typically hard to reach
- New distribution outlet for existing content
- Cost-efficient platform for creating new multi-media messaging campaigns
- National and international distribution
- New relationship with your audiences by giving them control over your media

Where can businesses go next for podcasting help?

While most podcasting companies focus on helping the individual become a podcaster, BurstMarketing is different because we specialize in providing start-to-finish podcast solutions for businesses and organizations of any size.

The first thing we do is to develop a podcasting strategy that is aligned to and supports your business and communications goals. Then, you can select from our Podcasting Tool Kit for the solutions you need. We can help you script, produce and create your podcasting content. Or we can help you repurpose that which you already have. We can install our web-based technology so you can be up and managing your podcast as soon as possible. Or we can manage it for you. We can help you distribute and promote your podcast so it has the chance of getting seen or heard by the greatest number of people. Or you can do it yourself.

BurstMarketing also has taken podcasting an important step further.

We use podcasting as a platform for empowering your audiences to decide when, where and how they get their media – even if they don’t have an iPod. Podcasting is really part of a larger paradigm shift in the way that consumers get their media. In that regard, podcasting is a misnomer – it’s more like mediacasting – allowing the user to choose their device, time and location for playback. An iPod is just one of the options.
With BurstMarketing’s podcast platform, you can have access to all these distribution devices – a distribution network unlike any other.

It’s where your media goes next!
Burst Podcasting Tool Kit

1. Burst Platform: Podcast Publishing Technology

The Burst platform is a podcast publishing technology that enables us to host, manage and archive your podcasts while making it easy for the end-user to access them by iPod, on computer, through cell phones or e-mail alerts. We will program and design a specially-branded podcast “companion” site that has the RSS (real simple syndication) feed necessary to distribute your podcast. Our platform gives you the capacity to:

- Allow users to listen or watch to the podcasts on site through an embedded or pop-up player
- Allow users to subscribe to the podcast not only through iTunes but through other RSS feed portals such as MyYahoo and Google
- Allow non-technical users to subscribe by e-mail alert
- Create links to and from blogs and other sites to increase audience
- Allow users to post comments to each podcast, to create community
- Tag your posts so they are found by blog searching software
- Incorporate text and images into your feed to make it graphic and informative
- Archive MP3s (audio) or MP4s (video) of previous podcasts
- Provide tracking and usage data of the site and its podcasts
- Create additional pages of content in support of the podcast, i.e., a podcasting 101 tutorial for beginners or pages for whatever you want
- Place banner ads for sponsors and other content
- Make sure all productions are XML and RSS compliant and validated

2. Production: Audio or Video

With our Emmy-award winning crew of audio and video technicians and artists, and using state-of-the-art digital technology, we can produce audio or video podcasts from start to finish – from scripting to post-production – in a highly cost-efficient manner. We also
have professional voice-over and on-screen talent available, or we can help you create and coach your own podcasting “star.”

If you have existing content, we can help you by repurposing or reformatting your audio or video for podcasting and the Web. This can include everything from creating professional intros and outros to inserting sponsorship spots to optimizing and compressing the audio or video for maximum distribution.

3. **Audience Development:** Distribution & Promotion

Burst Audience Development ensures that your podcast has the chance to be seen and heard by the greatest number of people in your target audience. As part of our comprehensive Audience Development program, we register the podcast with the major portals such as iTunes, MyYahoo, Podcast Alley and Odeo. We ensure that your feed is compliant with all podcatching software. And we work the “blogosphere” by tagging our podcasts so that blog and search engine directories can find you and your content.

Plus we work with you in creating audience and driving traffic through promotions, publicity and media relations, such as blast e-mails, press releases, and linkages form other Web sites.

4. **Burst Dashboard:** Usage Reports

We will provide you with the Burst Dashboard, a comprehensive report that gives you valuable information on who is listening to, watching or downloading the podcasts. Not only is this essential for measuring the effectiveness and reach of your podcast – if you decide to seek advertising or sponsorships – it is a must to quantify your audience. Our dashboard aggregates information such as:

- Subscribers – through iTunes, by e-mail or through other portals

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Unique visitors to your podcast website
• Downloads (listens or views) of your podcast
• Time spent listening or watching your podcasts on site

5. Monetization

Making money from your podcast may not be one of your goals – and for most businesses, it isn’t. But if it is, we can help.

If you want to monetize your podcast, we can assist you in developing the go-to-market plan for attracting advertisers or sponsors. We can assist you in developing the rate sheet for audio or video insertions, sponsorships and selling banners on your podcast companion Web site. And we can set up your podcast site to accept Google AdWords and other sponsored-search or affiliate advertising.

Moreover, in certain circumstances, we are also ready and able to sell advertising and sponsorship for you on a commission or revenue-sharing basis.

(A rule of thumb indicates that you need at least 500 subscribers and more than 5,000 unique visitors per month to get an advertiser’s attention. Plus you need to serve an identifiable market that is national in scope and provide a long-term, professional podcast show that maintains a relationship with its audience.)
Podcasting Checklist

Before you begin podcasting, here are some things to think about. Answering or thinking about these questions will give you head start on what you need to effectively use podcasting to assist your business and communications goals.

The Basic Strategy

- What are the goals of your podcast?
- Which audiences do you want to reach and how often?
- Is this primarily for public relations and marketing or do you also want to create revenue through advertising, sales or premium sales content?
- Can your marketing or IT group do this or will they need assistance?
- Who will manage the ongoing maintenance of the podcast? Production? Posting? Audience development?
- What kind of start-up and monthly budget do you have?

The Publishing Platform

- Do you want a podcast feeder site to look like an extension of your existing site, or do you want it to have a somewhat different look and feel?
- Will you supply the design or will you need assistance?
- What distinct URL would you like? (e.g., www.yourcompanypodcasts.com)
- Do you want to make it easy for people to subscribe through iTunes, other podcast portals and by email (with embedded content)?
- Do you want to make it easy for people to listen or watch on their computers without an iPod?
- Do you want a cellphone strategy?
- Do you want to create community around your podcast and allow for media-sharing?
- Do you have other content – ads, graphics, text, files, information – that you want to distribute on your podcast site?
Podcasting Production

- Which medium works best for your content? Audio or video? Or both?
- Do you have access to existing content that can be repurposed?
- Do you have in-house capacity or do you need production assistance for repurposing or creating content?
- How often do you want it to come out? Weekly? Monthly? Daily?
- How long will each episode be? Under five minutes? 10 minutes? Longer than 20?
- Do you want to use someone in-house for talent (voice-over, interviews, on-air)?
- Do you want produced intros and outros with music or sound effects?
- What sound and video quality do you need for the production? Will your average users have broadband access and desire high bit rate downloads?

Audience Development

- Will you register your podcast for distribution through all the portals such as iTunes, MyYahoo, Google, PodNova, Odeo and Podcast Alley?
- Do you want a blogging strategy where podcast posts are tagged so they are easily found by blog search engines?
- Do you want to allowing commenting on your posts to create community?
- Will you allow user-generated content (a la Web 2.0) or do you want to control all content production?
- Do you want to link to blogs and other web sites that reach a similar audience?
- Do you want a MySpace page to promote the podcast?
- Do you have a public relations strategy (i.e., press releases) to support the podcast?
- Will you provide links from your home page to the podcast?

Usage Reports

- Who will manage the ongoing tracking of usage of your podcast?
- What statistics are most important for you to capture and aggregate?
  # of subscribers? # of downloads? # of unique visitors? # of page views?
  Countries of origin? Podcast subscribers? Portals and browsers used? Length of time on site?

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Do you want data on popularity of each episode or just the overall podcast?

How do you want to use the reports? To demonstrate audience to sell advertising? For internal management?

How often do you need a dashboard of usage reports? Monthly? Quarterly? Annually?

## Monetization Strategy

- If you want a monetization strategy, do you anticipate revenue coming from advertising, sponsored search, premium content or direct sales?
- Do you want paid-search advertising on your site (through Google and Yahoo)?
- How long are you willing to wait to build audience before you begin selling advertising? Three months? Six? A year?
- Do you have access to potential advertisers and sponsors who might support your podcast from the beginning?
About The Company

*BURST*MARKETING* is a podcast publishing company that creates, distributes and promotes audio and video podcasts that burst across the new distribution network of portable media devices from iPods to laptops to cell phones. The company is considered an early leader in podcasting, and has special expertise in helping businesses to use podcasting as a powerful tool in their communications and marketing strategies.

The company was founded by Rob Simon, a media entrepreneur who has started three newspapers, two cable television companies and one of the country’s top marketing, public relations and Internet agencies. Simon’s partner is Marisol Konczał, a marketing executive and a published author. In addition, the company includes Emmy-winning radio and television talent plus personnel with publishing, marketing, design, technology and Internet expertise.

Clients & Projects

The company publishes, in partnership with The Tattered Cover Book Store in Denver, *Authors On Tour – Live!*, a weekly podcast of best-selling authors, reading from and discussing their latest work. The podcast is already attracting nearly 10,000 visits per month from listeners who have downloaded more than 250,000 episodes. Please visit [www.authorsontourlive.com](http://www.authorsontourlive.com).

In partnership with Reed Exhibitions, the largest exhibition company in the world, the company produces the official podcast of Book Expo America. Launched in 2006, *BookExpoCast* has already had more than 100,000 downloads. In its second year, we launched two new innovative services: an Authors Studio where more than 80 authors were able to record their own podcast “live” at BEA, and The BEA Story Project, where attendees created their own audio podcast on site. Please visit [www.bookexpocast.com](http://www.bookexpocast.com).

The company is producing a series of audio podcasts for the *City of Denver* to help promote the city’s business environment to individuals and companies considering starting a business in Denver. The podcast features interviews with Mayor John Hickenlooper and Denver business leaders and was recently ranked as one of the top government podcasts by iTunes. Please visit: [www.milehigh.com/newsdata/podcasts](http://www.milehigh.com/newsdata/podcasts).
The company created **BeyondTheBookCast**, a weekly audio podcast, as an educational program for the members of the not-for-profit Copyright Clearance Center, the nation’s largest solutions provider for copyright holders. Please visit [www.beyondthebookcast.com](http://www.beyondthebookcast.com).

The company launched an innovative podcast for the world-famous **Cherry Creek Arts Festival** that includes video and audio previews of the artists and their work; a multi-media guide to the festival; a fireworks simulcast delivered by iPod; and educational and outreach videos on art in the community. The podcast won a Pinnacle Award from the 2007 International Festivals & Events Association. Visit [http://podcast.cherryarts.org](http://podcast.cherryarts.org).

In April 2007, we launched **WeilPod, Healthy Living Podcasts by Dr. Andrew Weil**. Dr. Weil is one of the nation’s leading proponents of integrative medicine and care, and has been twice on the cover of *Time Magazine*. This audio and video podcast provides information on health, aging, wellness and organic holistic living and features several channels of content. The podcast is already drawing 50,000 downloads per month from 15,000 visitors to the site. Please visit [www.Weilpod.com](http://www.Weilpod.com).

We are proud to become the official podcaster for the **Denver 2008 Democratic National Convention**. We will be podcasting audio and video stories on Denver and all the events and speeches leading up to and at the convention in August 2008. Stay pod-tuned at: [www.DNCDenverCast.com](http://www.DNCDenverCast.com).

The company created a video podcast for the **New Denver Ad Club**, a group organizing a new trade association for the Denver advertising community. The podcast is being used to inspire and attract new members, solicit volunteers and send a message about new media to prospective members. Please visit: [www.NewDenverAdClubpodcasts.com](http://www.NewDenverAdClubpodcasts.com).

The company launched a video podcast for the **New York ComicCon**, one of the nation’s largest conventions for lovers of comic books, graphic novels, anime, manga and other new graphic forms of media. The convention attracts more than 35,000 attendees as well as all the major publishing and content companies. Please visit: [www.NYCCast.com](http://www.NYCCast.com).

**NOLO** is one of the nation’s leading legal software publishing companies. They hired Burst to help them transform an existing podcast into a more professionally managed and served podcast, without losing their existing audience, while positioning them for growth and future podcast services. Please visit: [www.NoloCast.com](http://www.NoloCast.com).
Other recent podcasts include an audio and video podcast we launched for the **Starz Denver Film Festival**, featuring behind-the-scenes interviews and previews with the stars and filmmakers at this annual event ([www.DenverFilmPodcasts.com](http://www.DenverFilmPodcasts.com)); we produced audio and video webcasts for The Colorado Health Foundation ([www.coloradohealth.org](http://www.coloradohealth.org)); we produced an audio podcast for the City of Denver’s “One Book, One Denver” reading program ([www.denverculturefeed.org/podcasts/onebookonedenver](http://www.denverculturefeed.org/podcasts/onebookonedenver)); and audio and video informational podcasts for Denver International Airport ([www.flydenver.com/guide/sightsound/index.asp](http://www.flydenver.com/guide/sightsound/index.asp)).

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