



Should You Consider a Podcast?

PODCASTS ARE POPULAR AND YOU CAN PROBABLY FIND AN AUDIENCE IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING WORTHWHILE AND INTERESTING TO SAY. A PODCAST COULD IMPROVE YOUR COMPANY'S EXPOSURE AND REPUTATION.



In 2006, I started the TechByter Worldwide podcast. I didn't have much choice because WTVN Radio (with listeners in Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Indiana) dropped live programming on Sunday morning, which is when Technology Corner had been on the air for nearly 20 years.

A year later, the TechByter Worldwide podcast had listeners in those 6 Midwestern states. Not as many listeners as before, but that's unimportant as you'll see in a moment. The podcast also had attracted listeners on every continent except Antarctica. That's why I changed the name.

The number of listeners is less important because every podcast listener is worth several on-air listeners. Why? Consider radio. Most people have one or two radio stations that they like. The radio is on, but listeners may not be actively

involved. Podcasts are different. Listeners have to seek out the podcast and explicitly choose to listen.

Instead of having several thousand over-the-air "listeners" who aren't actively participating, TechByter Worldwide has less than 1000 listeners who must make a conscious decision every week to listen.

Podcast Essentials

CONTENT ATTRACTS LISTENERS. IF YOU PROVIDE INFORMATION THAT PEOPLE CONSIDER USEFUL, YOU'LL HAVE LISTENERS. THEY WON'T LISTEN JUST TO HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE, THOUGH, BECAUSE THEY'RE BEING BOMBARDED BY HUNDREDS OF OTHERS WHO WANT THEIR ATTENTION. TELEVISION, RADIO, MAGAZINES, PODCASTS, BOOKS, FACEBOOK, ON-LINE NEWS SOURCES - THEY'RE ALL COMPETING FOR ATTENTION.

Being a broadcast guy, I'd always considered podcasts to be inferior, much as the journalist in me generally considered blogs to be inferior.

What I've found in the past decade is that podcasts offer significant advantages for both listeners and for content providers. I can record the program at a time that's convenient for me; listeners can listen at a time that's convenient for them. If something interrupts, listeners can stop the podcast and continue it later. If the topic isn't interesting, they can fast forward through it or turn it off. And if I should happen to say something compelling, a listener can rewind and listen again.

Broadcast radio offers about 20 minutes of content per hour. The other 40 minutes are commercials, newscasts, sports, weather, and jingles. These are all essential for broadcast radio, but not for podcasts. That's why I've adopted the



Double Win!

Record your podcast when it's convenient; people listen to your podcast when it's convenient.



Reach out to your current clients and to those you would like to have as clients.

tag line “an hour’s worth of news in about 20 minutes” for the Techbyter Worldwide podcast.

Podcast Popularity Increases

TECHNOLOGY MAKES IT EASY TO OBTAIN PODCASTS OF YOUR FAVORITE PROGRAMS AND LISTEN TO THEM WHEN IT’S CONVENIENT. OVER-THE-AIR BROADCASTING WITH ITS NEVER-ENDING STREAM OF COMMERCIALS THAT REPEAT ENDLESSLY, HOUR AFTER HOUR, CONTINUES TO ALIENATE LISTENERS.

Darryl Parks, who was the program director at WTVN during some of the years I was there, recently decried the current state of AM radio in *Radio World*. “In news/talk, for example, there is a lack of investment, so it’s fundamentally the same format as it was 25 years ago. Most AM stations run syndicated conservative talk all day long. If there’s a local show, it parrots what the national hosts are saying ‘Obama bad!’”

Parks makes a case for podcasting both for broadcasters and for listeners: “Which is cheaper? Having 40 acres of land, a tower site and equipment or broadcasting on the Internet? Eventually it will

come down to that. Revenues for many news/talk stations are in decline because of aging demographics and increased competition. As audio goes more to an ‘on demand’ model on devices like iPads, those products are expensive. The people who gravitate to those devices are more affluent, and those that can’t afford the devices will be left to listen to terrestrial radio, watch over-the-air TV or read a printed newspaper. It’s a qualitative issue, and look at the demographics.”

Parks continues, “Many conservative talk radio shows discuss the Reagan years, but their target audience, a 45-year-old guy, never even had the chance to vote for Reagan because he turned 18 in 1988. You might as well be talking about the Korean War. Talk radio is stuck 25 years in the past. Its audience is aging out and becoming less desirable to advertisers.”

So maybe now is the time for you to consider podcasting for your business.

It’s not expensive or difficult. My favorite audio application is Adobe’s Audition, but you can use the free open-source Audacity application. There’s no shortage of Creative Commons music that can

be used to open and close the program. When the program is complete and ready to be published, you need only to place the audio file in a publicly accessible location and update files that are read by podcast syndicators such as Apple.

You will need to learn how to edit audio files so that you can remove mistakes. Recording TechByter Worldwide takes 20 to 30 minutes per week. This is followed by another hour or so during which I edit out errors and add the program open and close files and music between program segments.

If you’re interested in podcasting, your website hosting account already has everything you need. I can help with the development. The key point, though, remains that the podcast content must be relevant to and useful for the people you want to reach. Ω



Ah, yes, the first day of April.

One of the best April Fool’s tricks was turned around and aimed at me. The *Internet Cleaning Day* in 1997 was so clever that I reported it on WTVN. People were supposed to take memory chips out of their computers and vacuum them to remove excess data bits.

The turnaround came when a WTVN listener claimed to have ruined his computer by taking the chips out and vacuuming them!

It was a well played reversal and I fell for it. Beware the first of April! Ω



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