

Podcasting in the Creator Economy:

A Long-Term Opportunity



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August 2024

When IAB published its hallmark study, "[The Creator Economy Opportunity](#)", in December 2023, it opened with an eye-popping stat from Goldman Sachs highlighting the long runway for creators and advertisers to partner with one another on brand storytelling to highly engaged consumers.

"The numbers are clear," the study begins. "The Creator Economy, valued at \$250 billion in 2023, is expected to nearly double to \$480 billion by 2027."¹

As the study explains, the explosive growth trajectory of the creator economy is rooted in the alignment of marketing messages with the "personally relevant nature" of creator content, but its focus was on traditional video and social media influencers rather than on podcasters, whose extraordinary community building talents are particularly well suited to fostering the deep emotional connections that drive influence in the Creator Economy.

As alignment with the personal nature of creator content has become an essential tactic for marketers – and as podcasters are producing an ever-increasing amount of social and video content – it is vitally important to understand the unique capabilities of podcasters to create value for their audiences and for advertisers within the context of the Creator Economy.

This guide therefore serves as a follow-up to "The Creator Economy Opportunity" and will focus on the power of podcasting as a vehicle for influence and engagement.

Podcasters Deliver Best in Class Influence

Passion is the heartbeat of the podcast industry. Whether it's passion for new information, self-improvement, or better understanding the world around us, podcasts have become the premier destination for developing new perspectives about our daily lives.

This passion for the expansive, long form conversations typical of podcasting creates an unparalleled level of trust and affinity that is central to the process of influencer marketing in today's fragmented media landscape. 73% of podcast audiences say it is critical for them to get in time with their favorite podcasters each week, and nearly 9 in 10 describe that time as a meaningful part of their lives.²

Speaking to this thirst for immersive and illuminating conversations, Millennial influencer and host of the "It's Me, Tinx" podcast, **Christina Najaar**, explained the special characteristics of podcasting this way:

"I feel closest with my podcast listeners because they're opting in. It's not like social media where you can passively consume content and even if I'm not someone's favorite, I still show up on their 'For You' page. With my podcast, people are opting in to hear from me. So, I am the most raw, honest, and vulnerable on my podcast. And I think that that's why my listeners and I have such a close relationship."



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Because of this close relationship, 75% of all podcast consumers and 86% of Millennials say that podcasts are not only their passion but also their main source of information for the things that they are most passionate about,² and 50% of Gen Z podcast consumers – the fastest growing cohort in the medium – report that podcasts enable self-directed learning and bring them closer to the important cultural conversations of the day more than any other form of media.⁶

The net result for podcasters is an intensity of audience loyalty and interaction that has resulted in 75% of podcast consumers saying that podcasters are more influential to them than original influencers in social media or entertainment.²

The net result for brands is a halo effect conferred upon marketing messages that has resulted in 91% of podcast listeners acting after hearing a podcast ad¹³, making podcasts a truly special means of brand storytelling online.

"Because we've been doing this for a long time and the audience is extremely loyal, dedicated, and engaged, they are responsive to Marc's endorsements and show a willingness to support the products that are linked to the show." – **Brendan McDonald, producer of Marc Maron's WTF podcast**

Podcasting Produces Unmatched Intimacy of Connection with Audiences

As Najaar noted, the bond that she has with her podcast audience is deeper and more intimate than the connection she shares with those who are consuming her non-podcast content because of the active decision they make to immerse themselves in her show, which is built around candid discussions about everything from dating and mental health to pop culture and life in general.

"It's Me, Tinx" publishes three times a week with a live recording every Wednesday, including [one in July 2024](#) during which Najaar spoke with a listener who married young and was seeking advice on how to handle moving to a different city for a new job and lifestyle that she loved but wasn't sure her husband was fully prepared to embrace.

During their conversation, the discussion moved through topics of self-growth, establishing independence, and being comfortable with the change and uncertainty ahead, after which the listener crystallized the feeling of intimacy and trust that is the hallmark of podcasters' best-in-class influence within the creator economy this way:

"I just really needed to hear that, especially from you. I wouldn't have jumped and made this move if I hadn't been listening to you for the last couple of years, so thank you so much."





Podcast Audience Engagement Metrics	The Top 5 Attributes of Podcast Creators
76% of podcast users say “I feel close to the host in the podcasts I listen to.” *	Likeable
70% value the transparency and authenticity of their favorite podcast host **	Credible
65% agree that it is important for a podcast host to use an advertised product or service. *	Relatable
62% say that they trust ads in a podcast when they are read by the host. *	Fun
61% say “I am interested in hearing podcast hosts recommend brands or products.” *	An Expert
* MRI-Simmons Podcast Study, April 2024 // ** SiriusXM Media, Podsurvey Podcast User Study, Q1 2024, n=4,688 Podcast Listeners 18+	Nielsen Podcast Brand Impact Norms, Q1 '24

Intimacy That Creates Community

The ability of creators to make a dramatic impact is not limited, of course, to podcasting, and advertisers must continue to diversify their influencer marketing spend across any current or future platforms where audiences go to experience the kind of meaningful connection described above.

Najaar herself started out as a TikTok influencer who burst onto the scene as TikTok’s self-described “older sister” during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to post widely consumed content there on a daily basis.

In a world where people describe their time with podcasters as being a critically important part of their lives, however, the level of intimacy that creators like Najaar have established with their podcast audiences is often the engine that drives their influence across the many different platforms where they create and share content, frequently including video clips of their most poignant snippets of conversation during their podcast episodes.

Najaar’s fellow Millennial influencer, Alex Cooper, who brings her own blend of extreme honesty and forthright commentary to a similar array of soul searching topics, is one of podcasting’s best examples of this dynamic and of podcasters’ most important value proposition to advertisers: the ability to build genuine communities of people whose shared interest in and spiritual alignment with their favorite podcasts makes them uniquely attentive and receptive to the ads they hear on those shows.



In the lead-up to the 2024 Paris Olympics, for instance, Cooper treated her podcast listeners and viewers (her podcast, "Call Her Daddy," is available in video form for those who choose to watch as they listen) to a [deeply personal conversation](#) with former Olympian and fellow NBC Paris Olympics correspondent, Aly Raisman. Cooper and Raisman's talk included a deep dive into Raisman's mental health journey and into how her decision to publicly discuss her experience with sexual abuse during her gymnastics career has helped others in the wider community of fellow sexual abuse survivors work through their own pain.

As they delved into Raisman's experience, **Cooper summarized her thoughts** in a way that speaks to how many people turn to podcasting for a sense of community, affirmation, and strength in numbers, saying,

"I believe the two of us sitting here and continued conversations ... will empower people to speak up" and "I hope people can listen to you and hear you and know at home that if they have endured anything similar, we see you."

This spirit of community, built on a foundation of real and authentic podcast conversations about matters of consequence to people from all walks of life, is the driving force behind why Cooper, a former Division 1 soccer player at Boston University, is now a multi-platform star with such wide-ranging influence that her value to NBC and its advertising partners led to her hosting a live, interactive watch party on Peacock during the U.S. women's soccer team match with Germany at the Paris Olympics.

Opportunities for Podcast Creator/Brand Partnerships



This special talent of Alex Cooper and so many of her fellow podcast creators to build community and genuine influence with their audiences has produced growth and engagement that make them essential partners to brand advertisers.

The number of Americans twelve years of age and older listening to podcasts at least once a month has risen more than threefold in the last ten years to 135 million people, and the amount listening weekly has jumped over 325% to nearly 100 million.³

This remarkable growth has vaulted podcasting into true mass medium status, with more than 60% monthly reach

in the key advertising demos of 18-34, 18-49, and 25-54, and podcast audiences not only comprise some of the most desirable consumers for marketers to reach but also offer a way of reaching consumers who are otherwise hard to reach via ad supported media.

Podcast consumers are younger, more affluent, and more diverse than the general population, and of those 100 million engaging on a weekly basis, they are consuming more than six different episodes and over seven hours of podcast content every week.⁴

What's more, podcast consumers are a vital means of reaching consumers of ad-free video, and their responsiveness to the ads they are exposed to in podcasting drives exceptional ROI up and down the marketing funnel.



30% of weekly podcast consumers are cord cutters who never see network and cable TV ads, and 65% watch at least three hours per week of ad-free streaming TV.⁴ And when they do hear or see ads in podcasts, the trust they have in the creators whose podcasts they consume causes them to pay attention and respond at extraordinary rates.

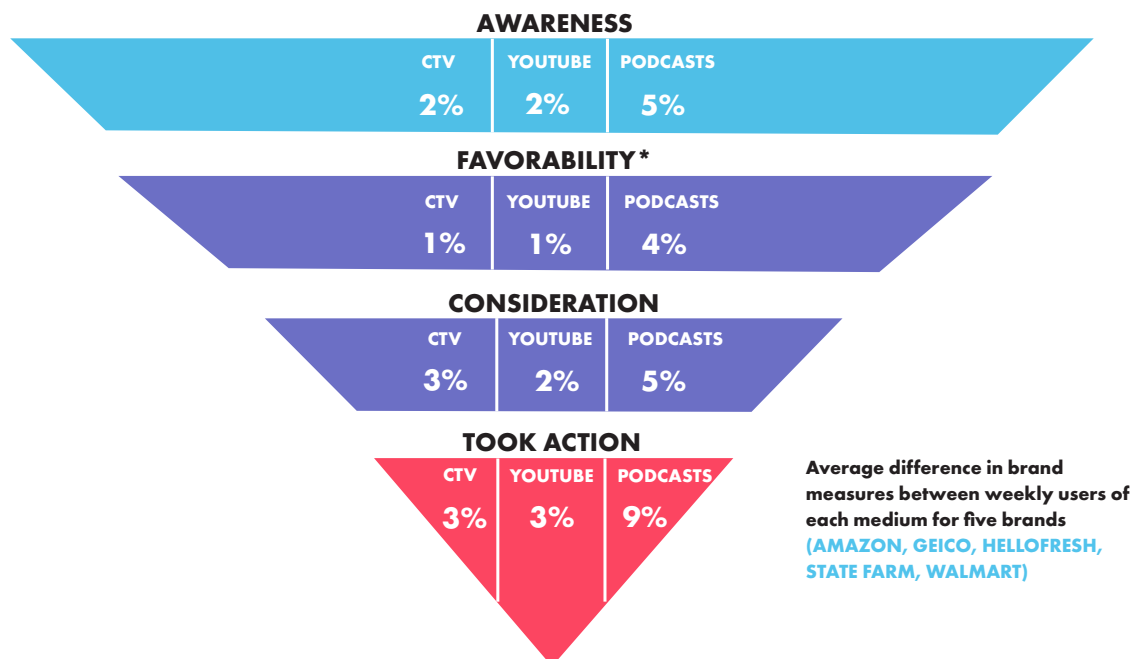
On the attention front, one of the most striking ways to quantify the influence of podcasters comes from a first of its kind cross-channel attention measurement study released in August of 2023 that scored audio and podcasting alongside visual media. The remarkable results of this study, conducted by dentsu and Lumen Research, showed that podcasts drove the highest attentive seconds per thousand impressions compared to Social Media, Online Video, Display, and TV, with an “attention CPM” (aCPM) of only \$2.80 compared to an average aCPM of \$4.30 for all media.⁵

In terms of responsiveness, the KPI based evidence of the halo effect that the personal nature of podcast content confers on podcast ads is equally impressive. In looking at the extent to which podcasters drive top of funnel impact, for instance, Nielsen data shows brand lift increases of +11 points for Awareness, +8 for Info Seeking, +7 for Purchase Intent, and +6 Recommendation following exposure to podcast ads.⁷

And when measuring the response of omnichannel media consumers in terms of the core metrics of advertising effectiveness for large brand advertisers across the entire marketing funnel, the responsiveness of podcast audiences was recently shown to be higher for all measures than the responsiveness of YouTube and CTV audiences.⁸

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PODCAST ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS



Source: The Ad Bargain, Sounds Profitable, 2024

Audience Matters

As noted above, the thing that makes podcasting special for listeners and advertisers alike is the personal relevance of the content that podcasters create, and the depth and breadth of these conversations creates opportunities for advertisers to drive effectiveness for businesses in every industry.

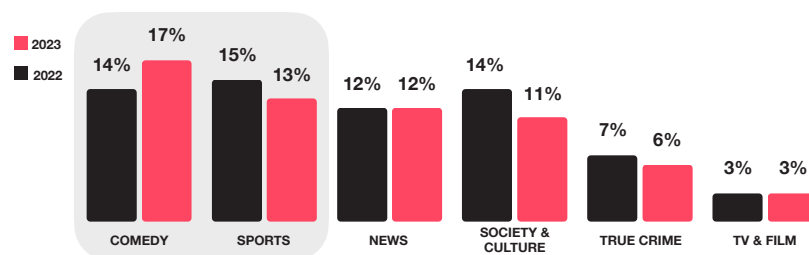
In the last three years, for instance, important advertiser categories such as Arts, Entertainment, & Media (+27%), CPG (+50%), and Retail (+80%) have seen accelerating growth in podcasting that reflects its increasing prominence as a channel for branding alongside its longstanding strength in performance marketing. Also, there has been a 250% increase over the last four years in the revenue tied to an array of other burgeoning categories including Energy, Home Improvement, and Pharmaceuticals that demonstrates the wide range of advertisers finding success in podcasting.⁹

For each of those growth stories, the plot revolves around the behaviors and attitudes of equally wide-ranging podcast audiences, whose boundless sets of interests and differing states of mind create an infinite canvas for creator and advertiser storytelling across podcasting's incredibly diverse content offerings.

This diversity of content includes a powerful 1-2 punch of Comedy and Sports as the two most consumed genres in podcasting – strengthening its role as a place where people can go to unwind, relax, and find entertainment – with News, Society and Culture, True Crime, Business, and Health and Fitness following close behind as the other top genres where podcast audiences go to gobble up content at ever increasing rates.⁹

IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, COMEDY & SPORTS OUTRANK NEWS IN PODCASTING AD REVENUE

PODCASTING AD REVENUE SHARE BY CONTENT GENRE



Source: IAB / PwC U.S. Podcast Advertising 2023 Revenue & 2024-2026 Growth Projections

Young, Diverse, and Packed with Buying Power

The overlap of podcasting's diverse content offerings with podcast consumers' diverse interests is, of course, a potent recipe for driving brand outcomes unto itself, but the good news about podcast audiences isn't limited to this attractive marriage of content and interests.

It also includes the extremely important fact that the audiences who are flocking to podcasting for its personally meaningful and entertaining conversations are comprised of some of the highest value consumers that advertisers are looking to reach.

At every turn of the audience prism, the view of podcast audiences is a beautiful sight to behold, starting with the beauty of youth. Podcast audiences are dramatically younger than the general population, with a median age that is ten years younger (39.9) than gen pop (49.1)¹⁰ and a mean age that is twenty years younger than TV viewers (58.7)⁸



And digging deeper into podcast demos, the numbers are even more eye opening, with 50% more 25-34 year old podcast listeners and 36% more 35-44 podcast listeners than in the wider population¹⁰ and 50% of Gen Z listening to a podcast at least once a month.¹¹

In addition, these younger skewing audiences are significantly more educated and affluent than the country at large, and they represent a much more multicultural audience base that identifies with podcast creators in ways that allow for brand alignment of the highest order.

49% of monthly podcast listeners are college educated (vs. 44% of the US 12+ population), and at every category of income from \$75k through \$250k+ per year, podcast listeners outnumber those in gen pop, with 37% more podcast listeners making between \$150k and \$250k and 48% more making over \$250k.¹⁰

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And when these educated and high earning audiences turn their attentions to podcasting, they do so with a powerful and accelerating interest not only in the diversity of genres described above but also in the diversity of podcast creators themselves.

Over 43% percent of podcasters are non-white creators¹³, helping to spur a five-year period of explosive growth from 2017 – 2023 in the number of African Americans (+110%) and Hispanics (+114%) listening to podcasts daily, with 147% growth in daily listening among women occurring over the same timeframe¹² and 54% of podcast listeners saying that podcasts provide far greater opportunities to hear from the diverse creators and storytellers who matter to them than other forms of media.¹³

Audience types	Likelihood of listening through Podcast ads
Local news seekers	+157%
Comedy enthusiasts	+147%
Spanish format aficionados	+116%
Business content seekers	+116%
Telecom switchers	+105%

Audacy Innovation Tracker, conducted on Suzy n=1,102, P18+, June 2024

Podcast Audiences Are Eager to Support Their Favorite Podcasters

One of the beautiful things to behold about young, multicultural, and highly engaged podcast audiences is how their passion for the podcasts they consume translates into receptivity to ads based on an active desire to support the creators behind their favorite shows.

Of all the creators working in the Creator Economy today, podcast consumers rate podcasters the highest of any creator type when it comes to their openness to the ads they are presented and to their desire to show their support for creators.

Whether it's willingness to consider a product or service after hearing an ad, the amount of time audiences say they listen to all the ads they are presented, or the likelihood of someone making a purchase after encountering an ad, podcasting consistently ranks ahead of other creator mediums such as TikTok and YouTube.¹⁴

And on the key question of where podcast consumers make the most direct linkage between their desire to support creators and considering the products and services being advertised in the media they consume, podcasting outranks YouTube and CTV, with 69% saying that their opinion of a brand is more positive when they find out that it supports their favorite podcast and 52% saying that they will go out of their way to support the brands supporting those podcasts.¹⁴

That desire to consider or buy products and services from advertisers who invest their marketing dollars with podcast creators is a recognition of both the personal nature of podcast content and of the sincerity and hard work of the creators producing it, and a textbook example of podcast consumers' receptivity to podcast advertising is the deep loyalty and desire of National Public Radio podcast listeners to support their favorite hosts.

As an early leader in podcasting that launched its first podcast in 2015, NPR and its emphasis on producing deeply researched and reported news and culture podcasts has become part of the fabric of podcasting in a way that has helped to define the care, attention, and emphasis on delivering important and useful information for which the medium is known.

69% have a more positive opinion of a brand when it supports their favorite podcasts, and **52%** go out of their way to support the brands supporting those podcasts.

YOUR OPINION OF A BRAND IS MORE POSITIVE WHEN YOU FIND OUT IT SUPPORTS...

% AGREE. USED PAST WEEK



Source: The Ad Bargain: Attracting Consumer Attention in a Sea of Ads, Sounds Profitable - 2024

This dedication to creating meaningful content has resulted in 75% of NPR podcast listeners holding a more positive view of brands that support NPR, 82% taking an action because of a sponsorship announcement in an NPR podcast, and, with a broadcast lineup dominated by shows that are also consumed in podcast form, 68% of NPR broadcast listeners saying that they prefer to buy products or services from NPR sponsors.²²

"I love how they approached the whole series. It has been one of the most influential podcasts in my entire life, and it will continue to affect my life way past my listening." – NPR **"Body Electric"** podcast listener, fall 2023

Serve First, Sell Later

One of the best ways to think about the influence of podcasters upon their audiences and the halo effect it creates for advertisers is the way that “Financial Feminist” podcast host Tori Dunlap has described the value proposition that she believes she and her fellow podcast creators present.

Speaking on behalf of herself and the many other podcasters focused upon creating educational content that can create the kind of lasting impacts noted above for “Body Electric” listeners, Dunlap explained at the 2024 **IAB Podcast Upfront** that advertisers can expect outsized attention to their ads in podcasting because podcast consumers want to express their appreciation for the learning they do when they listen.

“We’ve always been focused on serving before you sell,” said Dunlap. “The nice thing about educational shows is that we’re providing value all the time to our audience, so when they get sold to, they’re less resistant to it because you’ve spent the full hour teaching them something that they haven’t learned before. So I think that service is really, really important.”

This emphasis on being of service to listeners is the *raison d’être* of the entire podcast industry, and the trust and feelings of friendship that build between podcast creators and their listeners is something on which creators and advertisers must continue to partner and capitalize when thinking about how to support growth moving forward.

At the prior year’s IAB Podcast Upfront in 2023, for instance, multi-hyphenate comedian-late night host-tv personality-podcast producer and host, Conan O’Brien, spoke to the intimacy and kinship with listeners that make podcasting special by pointing out how the long-form conversational format of his comedy podcast, “**Conan O’Brien Needs A Friend**”, results in his podcast audience friends knowing more about him than his friends in life.



“I like podcasting because it’s more authentic. For example, last night I was headed to dinner, and this woman stopped me on the street, and she talked to me about how much she liked the podcast, and I said, would you like a selfie? And she said ‘no, I’m good.’ And I said, are you sure you don’t want a selfie? And she said, ‘wow, you’re just as needy as you are on the podcast!’ She wasn’t like, oh my god, it’s you, she was just like oh, it’s Conan. I hear him every day, and here he is being exactly that person with me on the street.”

As has been discussed throughout this guide, that feeling on the part of podcast consumers that podcast creators are exactly the person they feel they know and expect them to be creates opportunities for monetization by creators and advertising effectiveness for brand marketers that can’t be matched in other forms of media.

“When I’m out in public, I can tell which media channel is the catalyst for someone approaching me. The bro-approach (i.e., “Yo Dawg”) is made by fans of our videos. Someone who wants to engage in a sober, analytical discussion about the dynamics of streaming or the harms of social media reads the newsletter or my books. But someone who approaches me as if we’re good friends listens to the podcast. It’s similar to running into an old acquaintance you really liked, and who really liked you ... but you never had the chance to become good friends. The goodwill is evident.” – Scott Galloway, Host, “The Prof G Pod with Scott Galloway and co-host, “Pivot” podcast

Best Practices for Podcaster-Advertiser Partnerships

With that kind of goodwill baked into the DNA of the podcast creator-listener relationship, the question that podcast creators and advertisers need to ask one another is how to most effectively partner on the shared success that flows from the strength of those bonds with listeners.

The answers to this question will naturally vary depending on the individual creators, podcast networks, brands, and agencies involved, and there will be many custom opportunities for partnership that may not be covered here. Podcasting is an always evolving medium with never-ending ways of engaging in bespoke advertising campaigns to meet any advertiser need, so, as noted in [IAB's Podcasting Buyer-Seller Checklist](#), it is essential for buyers and sellers to never assume something can't be done and to over communicate with one another to find novel solutions to specific marketing challenges. That said, what follows is a good foundation for best partnership practices when it comes to leveraging the full power of podcast creator influence.



Take A 360° Approach

As alluded to above, the line between creator types has begun to blur, with podcasters deploying their influence more often in video and social channels more commonly associated with the Creator Economy, while influencers who got their starts in those media environments begin to branch out into the longer form, conversational channel of podcasting.

In terms of the latter part of that equation, one of the reasons that creators who started out focused on short-form video content have gravitated towards podcasting is that they see podcasting as a means of steadier, more dependable income in comparison to what they can earn producing short-form content because the long form authenticity of a podcast creates more opportunities to create bonds with audiences.¹⁵

This is the journey that Najaar took when transitioning from a Tik-Tok only influencer to one focused on her podcast, and it's a similar journey that many other short-form creators have taken alongside advertising partners who have embraced the opportunity to align with the deeper audience connections that podcasting enables.

Echoing O'Brien's comments, original short-form video influencer Cody Kolodziejzyk, who continues to produce short form content but who also co-founded the TMG Studios comedy podcast network with his "Tiny Meat Gang" podcast partner, Noel Miller, describes their decision-making process this way:

*"What makes [podcasts] different from any other medium is that you can get in these spaces where the audience knows something very particular about you, and then when you start to engage with a brand, the audience actually knows full well how it affects you as a person. It's very unique compared to just doing straight brand plugs on a YouTube video or on Instagram, and it's a very different relationship that you've developed with a brand."*¹⁵ - **Cody Kolodziejzyk**
Co-founder, Tiny Meat Gang podcast and TMG Studios podcast network

This transition from short-form creator to podcaster and vice versa has led to an important opportunity for creators and advertisers to leverage the quality of the relationship between podcasters and their audiences across the multiple touchpoints where podcasters are now interacting with their audiences.

These multiple touchpoints allow for a true 360° approach to partnership that enables creative collaboration across audio, video, social media, and live or virtual events that include brand advertising, sponsorships, and show integrations to satisfy brand awareness or conversion KPIs in a completely holistic and mutually reinforcing manner.

In this way, creators are not only delivering on the serve-first promise that they make to their audiences but also on creating unique opportunities to improve marketing outcomes for advertisers across channels, and strategy for podcast ad campaigns should take these 360° opportunities into account.

Strategically Tap The Power of Host Read Ads

One of the most important things for brands to keep in mind is how strong the halo effect of the trust that listeners place in their favorite podcasters can be regardless of ad format.

Announcer reads and pre-produced creative are extremely impactful and cost effective methods of harnessing the intimacy of podcasting that can perform as well as and sometimes even exceed the performance of host read ads, especially for upper funnel KPIs.

Note: Host read ads and producer read ads work better together, with each format driving different metrics that can help to elevate results across the funnel. For example, host-read ads have been shown to deliver stronger purchase intent (+4pts) than producer-read ads while producer-read ads can drive stronger familiarity (+5pts) than host-read ads. This complementary effect of using recorded ads to scale alongside host-read ads is important for brands to keep in mind when partnering with podcast creators.¹⁶

That said, the ability of podcast creators to bring their own voice to brand storytelling is an incredible skill that can help to power the responsiveness of audiences to advertising messages across all ad types. More than 85% of podcast listeners say that they enjoy hearing host-read ads, and the partnership opportunities that flow from this affinity for authentic expressions of brand values are profound, **so adding host-read components to a podcast ad campaign is an important consideration for creators and advertisers to discuss.**

To return, for instance, to the themes often discussed on “It’s Me, Tinx” and “Call Her Daddy”, the ability of a podcast host to personally connect with and comment upon subjects such as mental health creates meaningful opportunities for brand storytelling, as the online therapy powerhouse BetterHelp has known and acted upon with great success for many years.

By partnering with podcast creators across the entire podcast ecosystem to address the rising cultural awareness of and dialogue around mental health, BetterHelp has been able to promote its mission of making professional therapy more accessible, affordable, and convenient, and having hosts put the importance of professional therapy in their own words has been a very big part of their storytelling process.



It was in this spirit that “2 Bears, 1 Cave” co-host, Bert Kreischer, approached a host read ad that perfectly captures how the influence of podcast creators supercharges the impact of podcast advertising to drive growth for BetterHelp and the many advertisers finding success in the medium. **Following the episode in which this ad ran, BetterHelp saw a 40% jump in ROAS on “2 Bears, 1 Cave” that has remained in place ever since,** and it is this level of performance that makes podcast creators such an important part of the Creator Economy.

"If you're new to buying podcasts, it just works. It works for any number of KPIs that your brand is trying to achieve. And that's because you're essentially marrying the power of endorsement with on demand capabilities. So it's a powerful channel. And the trust is so deep in podcasts that internally we have even seen entire audience segments that traditionally don't convert well [convert]." - Brittany Clevenger, Senior Director of Growth Marketing - BetterHelp



Podcasting Empowers Brand Storytelling at Scale

Regarding podcasters' importance to Creator Economy marketing, another very important thing for brands to keep in mind is the earlier discussed overall receptivity to ads on the part of podcast consumers.

As mentioned in reference to the dentsu/Lumen Research attention measurement study, the net effect of podcasters' serve-first ethos is consumers being more attentive to all forms of podcast content and ads than they are in other forms of media, and the broad reach and attractiveness of podcast audiences allows creators and advertisers to leverage that level of attentiveness for brand storytelling at scale. Recognition of this ability is why many advertisers have long tapped into podcasting's strength as a creator-based marketing medium, and the success that podcast advertisers are experiencing is driving some impressive industry wide trends.

61% of all 2023 revenues came from brand awareness ads, branded content, and other brand mentions.

Last year, IAB found for the first time in the 9 year history of its annual IAB/PwC Podcast Advertising Revenue Report that a majority of industry revenue was attributable to brand building rather than direct response advertising. This important shift resulted in 61% of all 2023 revenues coming from brand awareness ads, branded content, and other brand mentions that reflect the growing interest in podcasting among larger, brand awareness advertisers looking to meet cross-funnel goals, with profound implications for creator-brand partnerships in the space.

In a recent partnership with Acast's "Cat and Nat Unfiltered" podcast to highlight its Self-Esteem Project, for instance, Dove worked with the dynamic podcast duo to discuss the challenges of parenting teenage daughters contending with unrealistic beauty standards thrust upon them by social media. The partnership took the form of [a bonus episode of the podcast](#) that was coupled with an [Instagram post](#) speaking to the benefits

of detoxing social media feeds and following positive influences for young girls and women, producing an important opportunity for Dove to connect with consumers in a meaningful way.

"Taking a multichannel approach to the Dove Self Esteem Project campaign with the 'Cat and Nat Unfiltered' podcast and the show's Instagram page enabled us to harness both the intimate host-to-listener connection of podcasting as well as the viral nature of social media. Working with Acast on this campaign, we experienced the team's deep and widespread marketing knowledge, talent relationships, and technical expertise needed to seamlessly execute multichannel campaigns that delivered phenomenal reach and resonance for the Dove brand." - Laura Douglas, Dove Marketing Lead at Unilever



In another example of brand building through natural alignment with contextually relevant content, Lexus formed a partnership with Roman Mars, the podcast creator behind SiriusXM Media's "99% Invisible" podcast, in which they collaborated on a three episode arc of [special episodes](#) built around Mars' desire to share "on location guides to the design features and cool architecture in the cities I love." By working together on travel-oriented content, Lexus and Mars were able to showcase not only the features of the Lexus GX but also SiriusXM satellite radio in a seamless and integrated fashion.



"99% Invisible prides itself in coming up with cool ways to create episodes our audience will love in collaboration with our advertising partners. We start with a foundation of trust and goodwill and build something together that serves our audience and our brand partners at the same time. Our recent work with Lexus was a real triumph in this regard. It was amazing to watch the Lexus team see and appreciate what we were making and have them commit more and more to the project in every way as it went along." - Roman Mars, Creator & Host of 99% Invisible

Note: Branded podcasts are an increasingly effective way for brands to leverage the storytelling abilities of podcast hosts. 86% of branded podcasts result in a lift in affinity for the brand responsible for the podcast, with an average lift of 8 points. 65% of those who listen to a branded podcast say they would listen to another one, and 61% say that a branded podcast makes them feel more favorable towards the brand, making branded podcasts another important consideration for marketing in the Creator Economy.¹⁷

Audio's Emotional Intensity + Innovative Tech Cement Podcasting's Place in the Creator Economy

With all the talk and consideration of podcasters' cross-platform influence, it can be easy to forget that one of the most influential things about podcasts within the context of the Creator Economy is the ability to consume them in audio form at any time throughout the day, without the need of a screen and with the built in power of audio's special ability to command attention and create feelings of intimacy.

Audio generally, and podcasting particularly, are forms of media that are perfectly suited to presenting hyper-engaged listeners with content that aligns with times of day and mental states associated with elevated levels of attention and receptivity. When looking, for instance, at the daily rituals of consumers, commuting to work or school, going for walks, and having "me time" are all highly correlated with audio consumption, with having "me time" ranked as the number one reason that audio consumers say they listen.¹⁸

In podcasting's case, this personal experience of me time with creators is dramatically amplified by the neurological effects of listening that results in a 27% jump in emotional intensity and 38% higher average memory encoding on the part of listeners who are exposed to podcast ads when compared against their reactions to social video ads,¹⁹ all of which feeds back into the high levels of attention measured in the dentsu/Lumen Research study.

When combined with the diversity of both content and audience composition in podcasting discussed above, this powerful alchemy of audio's neurological impacts and podcasters' ability to earn the attention of audiences produces unique opportunities for audience targeting via ad tech commonly used in the wider digital marketing community.

The personal experience of me time with creators is dramatically amplified by the neurological effects of listening that results in a **27%** jump in emotional intensity and **38%** higher average memory encoding on the part of listeners who are exposed to podcast ads.



When sitting down to strategize about podcast ad campaigns, podcast publishers and advertisers should therefore prioritize the use of both 1st and 3rd party data to identify and address the right audiences for that campaign, and they should pay close attention to the best ways to align a particular campaign's messaging to the relevant dayparts and daily rituals of those audiences to maximize impact.²⁰

The list of audience insights and measurement vendors who can facilitate and optimize this kind of targeting and dayparting in podcasting is long and growing longer every day, and the accelerating pace of tech innovation in podcast brand safety and suitability scoring is enabling rapid and





nuanced evaluation of podcast transcripts to give marketers the visibility they need to confidently invest in well aligned and suitable content.²¹

Taken together, the immersive qualities of audio alongside the scale and addressability of podcast audiences and the power of the medium's two-way connection between creator and listener makes podcasting the ultimate tool in the Creator Economy toolkit. Compelling hosts, well served niche topics and interests, engaged communities of fans, and ad messaging that is integrated into the content experience create an unmatched opportunity for creators to monetize their work and a truly unique offering for brands to drive outcomes within the Creator Economy

TARGETING

- ☐ Consider show or episode level content categories/genres.
 - ☐ What kind of 1st party identity attributes and 3rd party contextual data targeting is available?
 - ☐ Confirm publishers' data onboarding process and providers.
 - ☐ Are device graphs and audience panels available to increase incremental reach?
 - ☐ Which data partners are preferred by buyers?
 - ☐ Is the inventory available programmatically?
 - ☐ Private Marketplace (access to premium inventory in a closed auction)
 - ☐ Programmatic Guaranteed (direct access to premium inventory at a fixed price)
- ** LEVERAGE PROGRAMMATIC BUYING ****

Although not yet widely available via open exchange, audience and content signaling in the podcast space enables programmatic contextual targeting similar to other digital channels.
- ☐ How will brand safety & suitability criteria be applied/implemented?
 - ☐ GARM Brand Safety and Suitability Framework
 - ☐ IAB Content Taxonomy
 - ☐ Custom inclusion and exclusion criteria (topic, sentiment, genre, show names, host data, keywords)

[IAB Podcasting Buyer-Seller Checklist](#)





Endnotes

- 1 The Creator Economy Opportunity – Where Authenticity Meets Impact, IAB - 2023
- 2 A New Era of Influence, MAGNA Media Trials | Vox Media - 2023
- 3 The Infinite Dial 2024, Edison Research - 2024
- 4 Cumulus Media and Signal Hill Insights' Podcast Download – Spring 2024 Report
- 5 Audio Attention, dentsu + Lumen Research Attention Economy Study - 2023
- 6 Culture Next 2023: Top Gen Z Trends, Spotify Advertising
- 7 Nielsen Podcast Benchmarks Update, 2024
- 8 The Safest Bet - The State of Podcast Advertising, Sounds Profitable – 2024
- 9 Podcast Ad Revenue Report, IAB / PwC – 2024
- 10 Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, Rel 2, 2023 (USA+) Adults 18+ vs Monthly Podcast Listeners
- 11 GenZ Podcast Listener Report, Edison Research – 2023
- 12 Edison Research, “Share of Ear,” Q4 2017 vs. Q4 2022
- 13 SiriusXM Media, Podsurvey Podcast User Study, Q1 2024, n=4,688 Podcast Listeners 18+
- 14 The Ad Bargain: Attracting Consumer Attention in a Sea of Ads, Sounds Profitable – 2024
- 15 “Why TikTok and Other Short-Form Creators are Prioritizing Podcasts”, Ad Age – 2023
- 16 The Power of Talent Reads in Podcasts, Gumball, Art19, and Signal Hill Insights - 2024
- 17 2024 Benchmark Report: Branded Podcasts, Signal Hill Insights
- 18 Rituals Targeting, Opportunity in the Everyday, Audacy – 2023
- 19 Your Brain on Podcasts, Neurolab/Wondery – 2019
- 20 Podcasting Buyer-Seller Checklist, IAB – 2023
- 21 Digital Audio Measurement Guide, IAB - 2022
- 22 NPR Podcast Sponsorship Study via NPR Listens panel among 450 NPR weekly podcast users, July 2024





Acknowledgements

Contributors:

Ad Results Media
AdLarge Media
Audacy
Barometer
BetterHelp
Cumulus Media
Dax/Global
Dove
Dentsu
GroupM
Harmelin Media
Hearts & Science
Horizon Media
iHeartMedia
Lexus
Libsyn Ads
OMD
Publicis Media
Sirius XM Media
Soundrise
Spotify
Veritone One
Wondery
YAP Media

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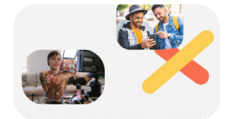


Additional Resources:

[IAB/PwC U.S. Podcast Advertising Revenue Study 2023: Drivers, Strategies, and Tactics for Growth](#)



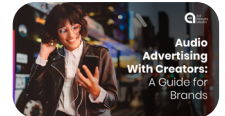
[The Creator Economy Opportunity: Where Authenticity Meets Impact](#)



[Sirius XM Media 2024 Podcast Trends Report - Creator At The Core](#)



[Ad Results Media - Audio Advertising With Creators: A Guide For Brands](#)



[The Ad Bargain: Attracting Consumer Attention in a Sea of Ads](#)

