

EPG BRAND ACCELERATION

PODCASTING BEST PRACTICES AND SOP

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PURPOSE:

Create a standard set of procedures for all EPG editors to create the best quality and most engaging podcast episodes. Please follow the policies and recommendations below when creating a new podcast or recording new episodes. Reach out to Reba Zatz (rzatz@epgacceleration.com) with any questions.

PREPARATION

Launching a new podcast

When developing a new podcast, be sure to answer these questions:

- Who is the intended audience? Consumer, or trade?
- What format should episodes take? Will there be regular segments?
- Will there be guests in every episode? Some episodes?
- Will this be a limited series or a long-running show? What is your episode frequency?

Workshop ideas with your publication's editorial team and Reba during the development process.

Conduct research on competitive podcasts or others covering your industry. Note what works for them and what doesn't work, and what you like or don't like about their formats. Be sure to find a point of differentiation that will make your podcast stand out.

Create a list of at least 6 podcast episode topics and 6 potential guests (if you're having guests). This will help clarify whether there's enough material to support the podcast long-term.

Choose what type of show format you'll use (or a mix):

- Interview
- Round table / panel
- Solo host / co-host
- Storytelling (longer format)
- Repurposed content (i.e. interviews from events)
- Video podcasting

Record a minimum of 2 test episodes, which are not intended to air but will help nail down the format. Ask Reba and/or a content director to listen in during the recordings to offer feedback.

Work with Reba to choose intro/outro music and create a standard introduction and sign-off for each episode (including a reminder to like/follow/share/subscribe).

Plan to record AT LEAST 3 episodes before the first one goes live, and always keep a backlog of few unaired episodes “in the can” to account for production lead times.

Ongoing podcasts should release new episodes monthly at a minimum. Long-term goal should be at least 2x/month for an established podcast.

Preparing for an episode

As the podcast host, keep these best practices in mind:

- Use a condenser microphone and headphones (Don't have a condenser mic? Bernie can order one for you)
- Record in a quiet, distraction-free space
- Turn off notifications on your laptop and turn sound off on any devices nearby

Once a guest confirms they'll participate, be sure to:

- Confirm the recording date/time and method (zoom, Teams, etc...)
- Provide an outline of the episode topic (NOT a script), and a list of potential questions
- Share the “Getting Ready” document with them, which will emphasize the most important preparation tasks
- Ask them to wear headphones
- Remind them to use a quiet, distraction-free space
- Ask them to turn off notifications or sound on any devices nearby
- Ask them to test and troubleshoot their equipment in advance

If this is a SPONSORED EPISODE, pay extra attention to the above and be sure to test, test, test. Audio quality and conversation flow are even more important when working with a client. It's never a bad idea to remind your sales manager and the sponsor's PR/communications rep about these best practices well in advance so the sponsor speaker is prepared.

PRODUCTION / RECORDING

If you have a guest, always let them do most of the talking. Ask them open-ended questions to keep the conversation going. Tangents and stories are okay, but limit them and always come back to the topic to drive the conversation forward.

Create a natural pause in the conversation about half-way through the episode for an ad break. You can say something like, “we'll be right back after these short messages” or something to that effect. That will indicate to Reba where to insert the ad break.

Check your sound before EVERY recording.

POST-PRODUCTION

Once your recording is finished, upload the following to Reba using your podcast Teams channel:

- Audio as a .mp3 or .wav file
- Description of the episode (2-3 sentences, i.e. “On this episode of XYZ we sit down with GUEST to discuss TOPIC”). Don’t spoil the episode, but provide enough info to entice listeners.
- Episode title – shorter is better
- Relevant links: Any social media profiles associated with the guest, link to a previous episode if it’s a repeat guest, etc...

Consider embedding a podcast player in your digital edition or on your brand’s website.

Always share a link to each episode on social channels.

Getting Ready For Your Recording Session

We're looking forward to welcoming you on the _____ podcast! We want your experience to be as smooth as possible, so please review the following tips and tricks before recording day.

Recording Environment

- Choose a quiet, distraction-free space.
- If recording from a shared space (office, home, etc.), make sure to let others know that you will be recording audio.
- Turn off any notifications on your computer as well as any devices that could emit a noise during the recording session.
 - If recording a video podcast, double-check the surroundings that will be visible on camera. A blank wall is most ideal, but a neat, organized space is also acceptable.

Audio Equipment

- To further ensure that any environmental noise will not be heard in the recording, it's strongly recommended to use headphones. Make sure to set this as your audio output device before recording.
- It is strongly recommended to use an external mic. Most commercially available headphones have them built in (Beats, AirPods, etc.) or an inexpensive external mic could be used. Make sure to set this mic as your input device before recording.
- A sound check should be conducted for both the podcast host and guest before the actual recording begins.
 - If applicable, also check wifi signal on both ends. A poor signal can potentially affect recording quality.

While Recording

- It's okay if it isn't perfect! Things like "um's" and "ah's" can be edited out in post-production. It's also okay to pause and start over with a talking point.
- Relax! It's a conversation with questions, not a formal interview.
- Have fun! We're excited to have you on the show and hear what you have to say.