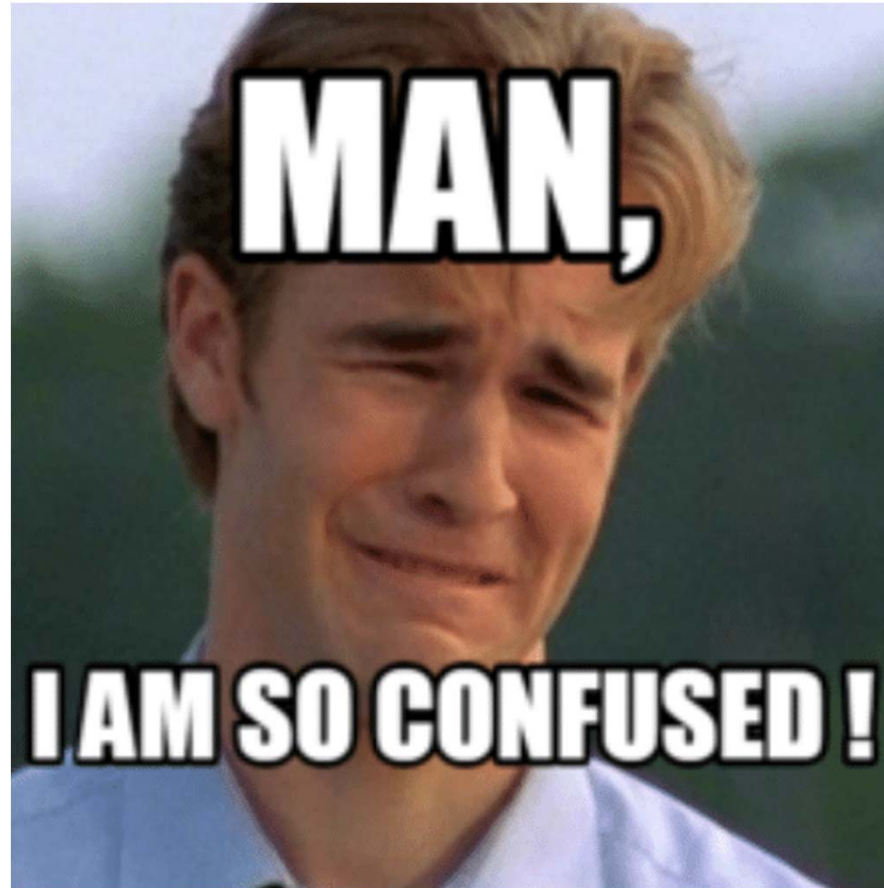


So You Want To Start a Podcast...

A presentation by Kristen Meinzer, Director of Nonfiction Programming and Host of By The Book for Panoply

Starting out
can be
confusing!
Where should
you start?
Begin with the
following
questions.



Question One:

Why do you want to start a podcast?

- Wrong answer: because everyone is doing it.
- Wrong answer: my friend Dave and I are really funny.



Question Two:

Who is this podcast for?

- Is it for your existing audience, as a way to increase engagement?
- Is it for new audiences? If so, who is that new audience? And why will they want to listen?
- Keep in mind that average podcasts listeners are between 18 – 44 and equally male and female.



Question Three:

What is the purpose of your podcast?

- Is it to serve as an advertisement for your brand?
- Is it an additional way for customers to access your content?
- Is it to raise the profile of your host?
- Is it to educate?
- Is it to create something beautiful and worth listening to?

Question Four:

What will your show be about?

- Think of what you'd want to listen to.
- Make sure your subject is something you won't lose interest in two months from now.
- Consider not just subject, but how you'll be approaching it.
- What will differentiate your shows from others covering similar subjects?

Question Five:

What is the structure of your show?

- "Fun banter" without structure is NOT fun, especially for new listeners who have no idea of who you are.
- Come up with segments, a gimmick, or some other way of shaping your show.
- Common structures include: interview show, cohosted chat, news reads, top five lists, advice shows, magazine style with segments.
- Limit the length to 20 - 40 minutes. The vast majority of listeners want it to be just long enough to get ready in the morning, commute, or exercise.

Question Six:

Who will be hosting your show?



Question Six (continued):

- Make sure your host(s) are authentic and enthusiastic. If they're not excited about the subject, the listeners won't be either. Obsession = fun to listen to!
- Consider having a dual-hosted show. Duos allow for tension, conversation, disagreement, etc. Duos also makes things easier for the show to go on if a host falls sick.
- Consider female and POC hosts. 82 of the iTunes top 100 shows have a white male host. That means male voices blend in with the crowd while female voices and POC stand out.

Question Seven:

What's appealing to listeners?

- Solid takeaways. People like conclusions and lessons from their content; give it to them!
- Vulnerability. Show failure and what you've learned. Be human.
- A mix of predictability and surprises.
- Outstanding sound quality. Nothing makes people hit the stop button like bad audio.
- Shows that come out on a regular schedule. Weekly at the same time is ideal.

Question
Eight:

How will you engage your audience?



Question Eight (continued):

- Give your audience lots of ways to get in touch with you: Twitter, Facebook, old fashioned email, etc.
- Ask your audience questions that they can answer and write back to you with. Make sure the answers have story built in. Listeners love assignments!
- Set up a Facebook community for your show if you haven't already. Have your friends comment in the beginning. Listeners will eventually follow.
- Have a podcast landing page on your website and make sure that every episode is there. There are still a large percentage of Americans who are intimidated by podcasting apps. Those people listen to shows on their computer by visiting a URL.
- At least in the beginning, write back to every single person who writes to you, and end each email saying "P.S. being a new show, it would be so helpful to us if you rated, reviewed, and subscribed in itunes as it helps other people find the show."

Question Nine:

How will you promote your show?

- Join all the networking groups: AIR (that's Association of Independents in Radio), Ladio, ShePodcasts, the New York Times Podcast Club, etc. Join them, network, ask questions, repeat.
- Pitch yourself to other shows. Pitch like crazy. Explain why you are the perfect guest for their show giving an example of what kind of segment you could be on.
- Invite guests onto your show who have large social media followings. Tweet out when they're on your show and make sure they do the same.
- Every time you're covered in the press, on a mommy blog, anywhere, thank those publications PUBLICLY on social media, copying anyone else notable mentioned in their piece (for example, anytime a press outlet puts By The Book on their "best of" list, I say "Thank you @XXXX for the kind shoutout, amazing to be in the same company as @Heavyweight and so many other great shows. When Heavyweight retweets it, it's free publicity.
- Mention repeatedly in your show that you need people to subscribe and rate your show in iTunes. That's the only way to get on the charts, sadly.
- Write stories about yourself on sites that won't pay you, but have big audiences, like Medium, Huffington Post, etc.

Question Ten:

How will you distribute your show?

- You can choose to distribute independently, using a service like Libsyn.
- You can choose being part of a network, like Panoply, where you have the option to for an advertising package and dynamic ad insertion.
- Once you've created your first episode (or episodes) you should submit your podcast to iTunes, which is where most listeners will search for it.

Question Eleven:

Do you have a team to help you?

- Podcasts require writing, editing, distribution, marketing, and ad sales (in some cases).
- Podcasts usually require far more work than people anticipate.



Final Thoughts

- Don't be overly ambitious. Yes, it sounds exciting to be the next Radiolab, but Radiolab has an enormous staff and each episode takes months to make.
- Don't try to be someone else. Ira Glass is great, but authenticity is more delicious, and only you can be you!
- You can do it! Just go in prepared, and be ready to do the work!