



Free Podcasts Launch Guide

Created by Blue Vineyard



So you're considering beginning the rewarding journey of starting a podcast. Now is the best time!



Hi, my name is Kahn Ellmers, and I want to help you launch your podcast.

This podcast launch guide will walk you through everything you need to know: what a podcast is, and how to plan, record, edit, and produce it, as well as publish and promote it.

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With the growth of digital media, podcasting has emerged as a powerful tool for communication. It offers an innovative way to reach and engage your audience.

Each section of this guide is designed to walk you through a specific aspect of the podcasting process, complete with practical tips and resources. We also provide a list of additional podcasting resources to further assist you in your podcasting journey.

My prayer is that your podcast will effectively change the lives of those who need to hear it.

We hope this guide will serve as a useful resource as you embark on your podcasting journey.

Let's get started!

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1. What's a Podcast?

Definition and benefits

Podcast shows are being widely produced as Audio and video mediums. Typically, it's consumed on digital media platforms (like YouTube or Apple Podcasts). The shows can be released in a limited series or as weekly episodes to which users can subscribe. The limits are endless.

The benefits of podcasting include its ease of access for listeners, the ability to cater to niche communities, and providing an intimate way to share content where listeners can engage at their own convenience.

Podcast shows are unique in that the listener seeks out the experience. It's both intimate and engaging. Let me explain.

1. Podcasting is intimate

Podcasting is considered intimate because it creates a personal connection between the host and the listener. The host's voice directly reaches the listener's ears, often via headphones, creating a feeling of a one-on-one conversation. This intimate connection can make listeners feel more engaged and invested in the content.

2. Podcasting is active listening

Podcasting involves active listening because it typically requires the listener's full attention. What makes podcast shows so special is that it requires a higher level of engagement to comprehend and follow the discussion or storyline. The listener often chooses to tune in, making the experience more attentive and deliberate.

Conclusion:

Your podcast needs to be intentionally crafted to identify with your audience.

Podcasting with intent

What will your creative approach be to engage your audience?

How could the deliberate and purposeful nature of podcasting consumption influence the content and format of your podcast?

In what ways could a podcast serve in your specific context?

2. Planning your Podcast Concept

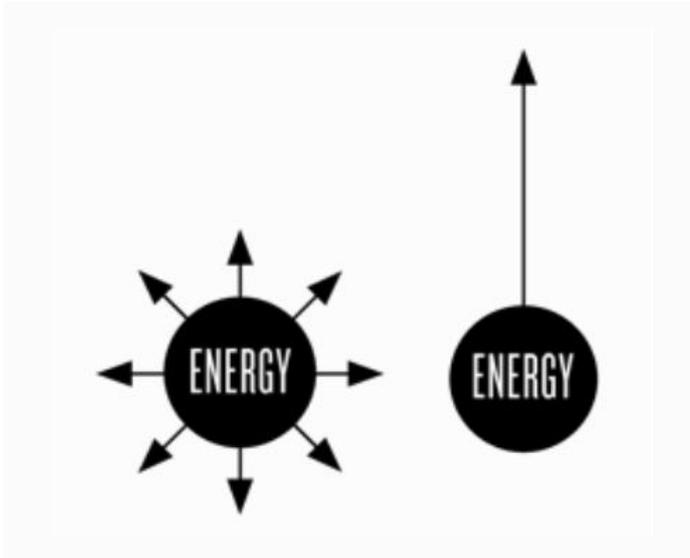
In our last lesson, I shared what a podcast is and the need for intentionality. This leads us to another very important topic. How to make a solid podcast concept plan.

In this class, we'll break down the foundational steps to create your own plan. We'll cover:

- 1. Developing your show idea**
- 2. Know your audience**
- 3. Choosing a podcast format**

Get ready to brainstorm! Grab a pen and paper... It's time to start outlining your podcast's vision.

1. Developing your show idea



Your Show Idea is the foundation of a successful podcast. It directs your creative energy and gives your podcast meaning and purpose.

Think of it like a magnifying glass that focuses the sun's rays. It's going to help you harness your passion and ideas into a single, powerful beam. It clarifies exactly what your show is about. It therefore helps you to direct your creative energies.

I found this illustration in Eric's book, illustration of this point. "Making Noise". It serves as a perfect

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He said,

"In each circle, the same amount of energy is expended. On the left, it goes off in numerous directions. On the right, all the energy is harnessed in one direction and, as you can see, goes so much farther. Vision works the same way."

With that in mind, here are practical steps to uncovering your "Big Idea":



- 1. Identify Your Passion:** Think about what excites you, what you could talk about for hours without getting bored. Your passion often serves as a great starting point for your 'Show' idea.
- 2. Consider Your Expertise:** What are you good at? What topics do you have a deep understanding of or experience in? This could be anything from theology, counselling, leadership, to personal development or community building.
- 3. Research Existing Podcasts:** Look at popular podcasts in your area of interest. Identify what they're doing and how you can offer something different or better.
- 4. Define how your unique:** What will make your podcast different from the others? Your podcast needs to stand out. Do that with a unique segment or other audience hooks. (If you're stuck here, check out how other podcasts do it.)
- 5. Consider Your Audience:** Who are you trying to reach? What topics would they be interested in? What problems do they have that you could address?
- 6. Condense Your Idea:** Once you've gathered all this information, try to summarise it into a concise statement of no more than 10 words. This statement will serve as the guiding principle for your podcast.

Example: my podcast Adventist music's show idea is,

One Musician, One Song, in Under 30 Minutes

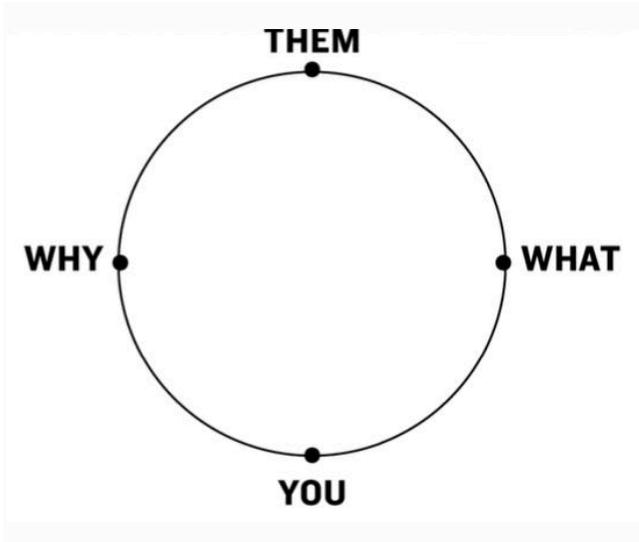
It's a podcast about the songs of Seventh Day Adventist Musicians. Unlike other podcasts, Adventist Music showcases one song from each musician and gives musicians the tools they need to be successful musicians. The hook is that each episode covers one story and is under 30 minutes.

Remember, your show idea should be engaging and reflective of the content you'll provide in your podcast. It's the first step in creating a podcast that resonates with your audience and stands out in the crowded podcasting landscape.

1. Developing your show idea

Linked to finding your show idea, is learning about who you want to reach. Understanding your target audience will dramatically shape your content and approach, ensuring your podcast resonates with the people you intend to serve.

Eric Nuzum, in his book "Make Noise," offers a powerful framework for this. He proposes four essential questions:



- **YOU:** Who are you? Your identity, passions, and experiences influence your podcast's tone and perspective.
- **THEM:** Who are you speaking to? Be specific! Define their interests, needs, and the challenges they face.
- **WHAT:** What do you have to say? What messages and themes align with your Show Idea and your target audience's needs?
- **WHY:** What impact do you want to have? How do you want to influence your listeners' thinking and actions?

Nuzum emphasises putting "THEM" (your audience) first. This fosters empathy and ensures your podcast truly connects with their needs and interests.

Craft Your Audience Avatar

A great way to visualise your ideal listener is to create an avatar. Here's how:

1. **Picture Your Audience:** Use online images to find someone who looks like your target listener. Give them a name and background.
2. **Write Their Bio:** Describe their role, interests, and how they might discover your podcast.

Example Audience Avatars

A great way to visualise your ideal listener is to create an avatar. Here's how:



- **Tom** A 26-year-old K-12 teacher passionate about educating young people. He seeks fresh insights for classroom management and the latest technology updates.
- **Gary** is a seasoned businessman with over a decade of experience. He's a lifelong learner and leads a small team of experienced engineers. He frequently seeks the latest industry updates.

Take Action: Spend 10 minutes sketching out your own audience avatar. What's their name? What keeps them up at night? What do they hope to find in your podcast?



With a deep understanding of your Show Idea and who you're serving, let's explore how to best present your message through different podcast formats.

2. Decide on your podcast format

Your podcast idea is formed, and now the way you communicate it needs a format. Let's explore the main categories of podcast formats.

While there are endless variations of podcast forms, they can essentially be grouped into two broad categories:

1. Conversations:

1. Solo Commentary: You share your insights and thoughts directly with the audience. (Adventist History Podcast, Adventology)
2. Q&A/Interviews: You address listener questions, providing guidance and building rapport. (Seeking what they Sought, Viral Jesus)
3. Roundtable/Panel Discussions: Multiple voices bring diverse perspectives and create a dynamic energy. (3ABN Sabbath school, Aus Table Talk)

1. Storytelling:

1. Seasonal Narrative: A longer story arc unfolds across a season of episodes. (The Bible Project)
2. Episodic Narrative: Each episode contains a self-contained story or theme. (Frontier Missions Journal)
3. Multiple Narratives: Intertwining stories or perspectives for a rich, layered experience.

Choose a form that aligns with your unique situation and personality.

Choosing the Right Form

The best format for your podcast isn't a one-size-fits-all answer. Consider these factors:

1. **Your Message:** Is it best delivered through informal discussions or a structured narrative?
2. **Your Audience:** What kind of listening experience will resonate with them?
3. **Your Resources:** Can you consistently produce in-depth interviews, edited narratives, or is a simpler format more sustainable?

Remember, consistency and quality execution matter more than elaborate structures.



One last point, many people think that a podcast should be a set length for each episode. Some day it should be no longer than 7 minutes, and another podcast can run for as long as 1.5 hours. There is really no hard and fast rule here. The truth is that a podcast should be as long as it needs to be and no more. The length of your podcast is determined by how long you need to explore your topic, ensuring your listeners arrive at a meaningful destination.

Write a Podcast Concept Doc: Use our free [Podcast Content strategy guide](#).

Or reach out to me today [for a consultation](#).

Now that you have a strong grasp on form, you're ready to take your podcast from concept to creation! In the next lessons, we'll dive into the world of recording and editing.

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3. How to Record Your Podcast

Next, we'll dive into how you can record your podcast. There are loads of ways to make it work. Let's explore some key elements that will impact the quality of your final podcast. **The following may initially seem like a lot—but it isn't difficult, just comprehensive. And will help you through every step.** Make sure to refer back to it from time to time.

Where to record and the equipment you'll need

The technology we use depends on if your recording in person or remotely. Let's assume you're doing it remotely. Your setup will take advantage of the camera you normally use on your computer, as well as a USB microphone, to get a really great quality recording—much better than you see on Zoom or video conferencing. And it all works through a web browser.

Here's the essential kit:

- 1. The Microphone:** While most computer cameras will work well, we recommend that you use an external USB microphone instead of your computer's built-in microphone. Here are a couple of our recommendations:
 - A Rode NT-USB microphone (very reasonably priced and great quality)
 - Or a Shure MV7+ USB microphone (more expensive, but the best quality USB mic)
 - Alternatively, either wireless (like AirPods) or wired headphone mic is acceptable if a dedicated mic isn't possible.
- 2. Pop shield/filter**
- 3. Headphones:** They will prevent delays in hearing and being heard, improve audio quality, and eliminate echo.
- 4. Your Computer is Key:** Any recent model laptop or desktop computer (purchased within the last 3-5 years) has the tech specs and power to do well for the recording.
- 5. Camera**
- 6. Software (For remote recording)**



Software:

For the recording, you'll most likely use a solution like SquadCast, Riverside, or ZenCastr. Simply schedule a time for the interview and send the links to your guests. Use a supported browser: Chrome (preferred), Firefox, or Microsoft Edge. Do not use

Incognito/Private browsing mode. Close all other apps and browser tabs, especially those that might use your microphone or camera.

Location:

Try to find a location that you can use consistently for recording your podcast interviews. If this is new to you or you'd like some advice, here are some factors that can help make your side of the recording look its best

Incognito/Private browsing mode. Close all other apps and browser tabs, especially those that might use your microphone or camera.

- **Choose a quiet room with minimal echo.**

If possible, turn off HVAC systems, fans, air purifiers, or appliances. Silence phones, notifications, and smart speakers in the room. If the room sounds "echoey," soft furnishings (curtains, rugs, pillows, couches) help more than people realize.

- **Lighting tips:**

Pick a location that's well-lit, but does not receive bright direct sunlight. Make sure any light is in front of you (shining on your face) or to the side. Do not pick a location with lighting behind you or directly above you. If you own a ring light or light cube to improve the lighting at your location, make sure it is set to be brighter than any room light or natural light in the space. Make sure to position this light just above eye level, pointing towards your face, slightly off-centre.

- **What is behind you matters:**

Make sure you are ideally a minimum of 4-6 feet away from anything behind you (a wall, shelving, or bookcases). Otherwise, it can look like you're pressed right up against the background.

Review what appears on your computer camera to make sure that any items or information seen is something you are comfortable being seen by the public.

Avoid cluttered or reflective backgrounds. Make sure to turn off any technology that blurs your background or puts a virtual background behind you. While these are fine in a business environment, they look terrible in a podcast recording.



- **Camera and monitor positioning:**

Make sure the camera is at eye level. If it is too far above or below eye level, it will not be very flattering! Frame yourself and adjust your camera distance/placement so your shoulders and the upper third of your torso are visible.

Make sure you position your camera and monitor so that when you're speaking, you're naturally looking toward the camera. Looking toward the camera helps create a direct connection with the audience. It's fine to glance at the screen when listening.

- **What to wear:**

In short, wear what makes you feel comfortable and presents your best self. With today's technology, much of the old advice people hear about on-camera appearances (such as don't wear stripes or patterns, etc.) no longer applies. However, you should remember that thousands of people will be seeing you, so you should present yourself well. Our host will be wearing stylish "business casual" clothing. There is no need to overdress or be formal.

That said, it is often a good idea to avoid white clothing, as many videos are subtitled and that can be difficult to overlay on top of white clothing.

- **And finally,**

Make sure to plug your computer into power before the session. Let others in your home or office know you're recording. If pets or kids are present, plan accordingly. If an interruption happens (and they do happen), we can easily edit it out, but it will be less stressful if others know you're recording.

Best Practices for Recording

Now that you've got your gear and space sorted, let's dive into the techniques that will help you capture great audio during your recording sessions.



Microphone Technique:

- **Speak Directly:** Aim to speak directly into the front of your microphone. Experiment with distance (usually about the distance of your thumb away) to find the ideal sound.
- **Minimise Plosives:** Those harsh "puh" and "buh" sounds can be distracting. A pop filter is your best defence, but also, be mindful of your microphone placement and speaking style.
- **Consistency:** Maintain a consistent distance from your microphone throughout the recording.

Reflection:

- Walk around your home. List three potential recording locations and analyse the benefits and challenges of each (quietness, potential for echo, etc.).
- If you haven't purchased gear yet, create a "starter" and a "dream" equipment wishlist. Research prices and write a note of the equipment you need.
- If you have your equipment, do several short test recordings, experimenting with microphone distance and placement. Listen back critically– what differences do you notice in your voice?

Let's move on to the world of editing and production in the next class!



4. Editing and Producing Your Podcast

Introduction to Basic Editing Software

To get started with editing, you'll need the right tools. Fortunately, there are fantastic options available to suit every budget and skill level. Let's explore some popular software choices for your podcast:

Free and Affordable Choices

- Audacity: A basic free Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) offering editing tools like cutting, fading, normalization, and noise reduction. NOT VIDEO
- Reaper: An other free DAW. It has a lot of features for audio editing. NOT VIDEO.
- Descript, Alitu & Riverside: These text-based solutions are super flexible. It features transcription and text editing tools. Riverside caters to both local and remote recording alongside its editing features. Whereas Descript is linked to Squadcast, which is a remote studio service included in the subscription fee. AUDIO AND VIDEO

Advanced Options

- Pro Tools: This is the industry standard for pro audio production. However, it comes with both a steeper learning curve and a relatively high price tag. It's used in studios around the world for larger audio/video mixing projects.
- Adobe Audition and Premiere are two alternative options for audio and video editing.

The most important thing is to find a solution that works for you and your project. And if you get stuck, feel free to reach out for a free consultation. We can help steer you in the right direction.

How to Edit Your Podcast

Editing is where you transform your raw recordings into a polished, listener-ready podcast. Since every podcast is different, the process can be executed differently depending on the results you are after.

I want to share the essential techniques I use when editing an interview/conversational podcast. Start by importing your recorded audio/video files into your editing software. Then follow these steps:



- 1. Make a First Pass Edit:** Listen to the entire podcast from start to finish, fixing mistakes in the interview. Remove any mistakes, long pauses, or sections that don't serve the overall purpose of your episode.
- 2. Arrange Intro and outro + Segments:** You can add the intro music, and add a “hook” to the front of the podcast. (See below for more details) Then, add any transition sound effect between the segments of the podcast. This will improve the narrative flow, transitions between topics, and overall impact on the listener.
- 3. Mix your Audio Levels:** Make sure the volume is consistent throughout your podcast using Dynamics processing (Compression, and gateing) and EQ.
- 4. Noise Reduction (if necessary):** Editing software often includes tools to minimise distracting background noises like hums or hisses. Use them carefully – excessive noise reduction can make your audio sound unnatural.

Practical Tips:

- **Save Often:** Avoid losing your hard work due to unexpected issues!
- **Zoom In:** Zoom in on your audio waveforms for precise visual identification of sections to be edited.
- **Listen twice:** Preview your edits multiple times to ensure you've caught any lingering mistakes or awkward transitions.

Tip: YouTube offers a wealth of free tutorials on these and many other audio editing techniques. Search for channels dedicated to podcasting, music production, and your specific editing software for in-depth guides and demonstrations.

Adding Intros and Outros

Your intro and outro are your podcast's identity. and can be the first and last interaction you have with your audience. You want to create a memorable experience for your listeners. Here's how you can.

Finding Music

Royalty-free music websites like Incompetech, Bensound, and the Free Music Archive offer a treasure trove of tracks suitable for podcasts. Try searching for public domain music with the feel you're after. Always respect music licensing – even royalty-free music often requires clear attribution to the creator.

Here are some examples of feels you may want for your Podcast:

- **Happy**
- **Dramatic**
- **Emotional and Inspiring**
- **Uplifting**
- **Relaxing and Sparse**
- **Lofi and Chill**



Creating Intros/Outros

You have the option to outsource intro/outro creation or craft your own (We can help!). Choose music that aligns with the tone of your podcast and consider using a short voiceover to introduce your podcast's title and purpose. Remember, intros and outros should be short and sweet, creating anticipation for your content without delaying the core message.

Reflection

Consider these questions:

- 1. Music Match:** Think about the mood you want to convey in your podcast. What kind of music aligns with that feeling (upbeat, calm, dramatic, etc.)?
- 2. Intro Vision:** What's one essential element you want to include in your podcast's intro? Will it have music, a voiceover, or both?
- 3. Taking the Plunge:** Record an episode and try to edit it yourself.



5. Distribution and Launch Strategy

Infrastructure and Visibility

Podcast distribution is the systematic process of hosting audio files and syndicating them to global directories. Without a robust distribution strategy, your content remains inaccessible to your target audience. Establishing this infrastructure ensures your message is delivered reliably and professionally across all major digital platforms.

Successful distribution relies on three core technical pillars:

1. Hosting and RSS Management

A podcast host is the dedicated server where your media files are stored. Its primary function is to generate an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed. This feed acts as the permanent digital address for your show, communicating automatically with platforms like Apple Podcasts and Spotify whenever a new episode is published.

When selecting a host, prioritise three factors:

- **Bandwidth and Storage:** Ensuring the platform can handle your episode frequency and file sizes.
- **Data Analytics:** Access to IAB-certified metrics to track listener growth and demographics accurately.
- **Integration:** The ability to push content to multiple directories simultaneously.

2. Directory Syndication

Directories are the consumer-facing interfaces where users discover and subscribe to content. While the host stores the audio, the directory provides the access point. For maximum visibility, a podcast must be manually submitted to the "Big Three" aggregators: Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Amazon Music.

Syndication is not instantaneous; most directories require a review period. A professional launch requires that these connections be established and verified before any public promotion begins.

3. Metadata and Visual Identity

Metadata—consisting of your artwork, titles, and show notes—serves as the primary driver for search engine optimisation (SEO) and listener conversion.



- **Artwork Requirements:** To meet industry standards, artwork must be a square (1:1 aspect ratio) between 1400x1400 and 3000x3000 pixels.
- **Show Notes:** These provide the textual context for the audio. Effective shownotes include a concise summary, time-stamped segments for navigation, and clear calls to action (CTAs).

Conclusion:

The technical execution of your launch is a direct reflection of your organisation's professionalism. A seamless distribution setup removes barriers to entry, allowing your audience to engage with your message without technical friction.

Your Podcast is now ready to upload. What's next is to simply start sharing about it!

Popular Podcast Hosting Platforms

- [Acast](#)
- [Spotify for Creators](#)
- [Buzzsprout](#)
- [RSS.com](#)
- [Podbean](#)
- [Captivate](#)
- [Simplecast](#)
- [Transistor.fm](#)

Reflection

Which hosting platform provides the specific analytics necessary to measure the impact of your ministry's goals?

How will you optimise your show notes and metadata to ensure your podcast is discoverable by those searching for your specific topics?

Does your visual identity (artwork) meet the technical specifications of major directories while accurately representing the tone of your content?



6. Additional Resources

Planning & Strategy

The PATH Framework (The Podcast Host):

thepodcasthost.com/planning/how-to-start-a-podcast/

- A methodology focused on Purpose, Audience, Topic, and Hallmark to ensure long-term sustainability.

Search Everywhere Optimisation (Neil Patel):

neilpatel.com/blog/how-to-start-podcast/

- Essential guide for making your show discoverable via AI, YouTube, and traditional search engines.

Podcast Business & Legal Setup (Sprintlaw):

sprintlaw.co.uk/articles/how-to-start-a-podcast/

- Critical resources for protecting your show name, logo, and intellectual property.

Marketing & Community

Canva Visual Suite: canva.com

- An all-in-one design tool with AI "Magic Studio" for creating cover art and social media clips.

Castmagic: castmagic.io

- An AI tool that instantly turns your audio into show notes, summaries, and social media posts.

Podcast Movement Community: podcastmovement.com

- The largest industry hub, now merged with Sounds Profitable for better monetisation insights.

Books & Mastery Courses

'Out on the Wire' by Jessica Abel: jessicaabel.com/podcast

- The definitive guide to narrative storytelling and production.

Podnews: podnews.net

- A free daily briefing that is essential for staying updated on the latest tech and trends.