Introduction

Why this book?

The marketplace is full of books about the technical side of podcasting. This book, however, will discuss another side of podcasting: The business side.

As you may have noticed, we're in what's been dubbed the "golden age of podcasting." Some have referred to a podcasting "renaissance." Whatever you want to call it, podcasting is hot right now.

Serial, an American episodic show launched in late 2014, has scaled unprecedented heights for a program of its kind. It's a radio-style documentary looking into the details of the murder of a high school student in Baltimore in 1999 and the subsequent conviction of her ex-boyfriend. Although produced on a low budget, the show has attracted more than eight million downloads as of this writing. More importantly, in our opinion, it has exposed a whole new audience to the concept of podcasting.

Recently, podcasts have become more accessible, thanks to smartphone apps that remove some of the friction from downloading and listening. The ability to listen in the car is a boon to podcasting as well, as commuters realize the benefits of podcasts: Press "play" at the start of your trip, "pause" when you arrive at your destination and then "play" for the next leg of the journey.

There are so many pieces to weigh: Rashmi's phone call to Mark. Vince's missing keycard records. Dari's movements on that afternoon in April. After 29 episodes, I feel like I'm no closer to figuring out who's really been taking my yogurt from the staff lunchroom.

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The focus on podcasting also shines a spotlight on podcast advertising. Will the success of *Serial* translate into increased business for MailChimp, the show's sponsor? According to *Adweek*[1], MailChimp saw an uptick in email signups during the advertising campaign, but they would not attribute new business specifically to the *Serial* ads.

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1. http://www.adweek.com/news/technology/now-nprs-serial-podcast-runaway-hit-mailchimp-reaping-rewards-161642

Advertising in the podcast is "about creating awareness," says Mark DiCristina, MailChimp's marketing director, in the *Adweek* article.

Anticipating a growing demand for podcasts, we've come together to write this book. It's geared towards the person who knows how to produce audio but is unfamiliar with the business of podcasting for clients. It's one thing to record and edit your own podcast show as a hobbyist; it's another matter entirely to create a podcast for a client, whether that's a corporate entity, a nonprofit, an educational institution, or something else.

This book is also aimed at professional communicators who have an interest in audio and who perhaps have taken a podcasting course or attended a podcasting conference or Podcamp, and who want to learn to integrate podcasting into their communications, whether inside an organization or for clients. Many of the skills you've developed as a communicator will help you to become an effective podcast producer.

We're also writing this book for those who may be swayed by the seemingly ubiquitous get-rich-quick podcasting schemes from self-described gurus, ninjas and experts – people who all but promise you a house on a beach in sunny Hawaii if you sign up for their podcasting program. "Special price effective for the next hour only! Buy now!"

We grew tired of seeing legitimate, professional podcasting services lumped in with offerings from these snake oil salesmen. Just search for #podcasting on Twitter, and you'll see what we mean.

Can you get rich podcasting? Of course, just as you can get rich by writing a book or by developing a unique chocolate chip cookie recipe or by producing a sex tape. But it doesn't happen often. More likely, podcasting will become a complement to your existing income stream, as it has for the authors of this book.

Why do podcasters produce podcasts? Some begin as hobbyists because they love the art and craft of audio. Scratch the surface of a typical podcaster, and you might find a former college radio DJ.

Others were members of the A/V club in high school, and now find themselves suddenly and unexpectedly cool.

In our experience, most people who podcast professionally do so because it works well as a communications medium. The warmth of the human voice right in your ears adds a personal dimension that's just not possible with text, photos, slides or infographics.

When Donna started working in audio in 2004, the medium was pretty much unknown amongst her clients. Some, however, were keen to try things like audio interviews or audio announcements by senior leadership. Of course, distribution was a problem back then, and some potential listeners were perplexed by the idea of sound. In fact, in some large corporations, computers didn't even have sound cards to play audio.

Fast forward to 2005, when podcasting became a real "thing." The ability to add enclosures to RSS feeds enabled people to distribute audio (and other types of files) within feeds. Then Apple added podcasting to its iTunes music software, along with a directory of podcasts.

Bit by bit, the public began hearing about podcasting, and clients started to understand podcasting and its capabilities. From the producer's point of view, an audio podcast can be an engaging addition to the communications or marketing mix. You probably wouldn't choose a podcast as the sole method of communication, but it can complement your website, newsletter, internal communications and social media content.

Benefits of the human touch of audio

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Let's run through some of the benefits of podcasting for podcast producers:

- The human touch of audio lends an intimate tone to the communication, enhancing engagement with your audience.
- You don't feel the pressure created by live radio.

- A podcast is relatively easy to produce compared to many other communication pieces, especially video.

- The episodic nature of a podcast attracts people who are committed to learning more, week after week (or whatever your frequency is) and can, therefore, build a loyal following.

- Once listeners subscribe to your podcast, they get your content automatically, which makes content distribution more straightforward.

- Within the corporate environment, employees enjoy hearing the voices of leaders whose offices are thousands of miles away and who can't often visit their sites.

- If you're trying to establish yourself as a thought leader, inviting people to listen to you can advance your cause.

- You can attract a wide global audience; we're often amazed at the geographic reach of the podcasts we produce.

- Podcasts can be useful promotional tools leading up to an event, because they can generate interest in and share insights from featured speakers and organizers. During an event, podcasts become another important piece of content to be shared. After the event, podcasts (both interviews and recordings of sessions) represent valuable content for those who couldn't attend in person.

- With proper preparation, the show notes (the text describing what's in the podcast) can improve your rankings in search results.

- Podcasts are the perfect type of content for the "long tail" of the Internet; many shows with evergreen content are downloaded years after they were produced.

Of course, there are many benefits for those who listen to podcasts too:

- You can digest useful information, for free, at a time and place of your choosing, because you can listen to a podcast

> anywhere at any time using a variety of devices, from smartphones to tablets to laptops and desktop computers.

- You can turn your commute and treadmill time into productive activities by learning from, or being entertained by, podcasts.
- After subscribing, you receive future podcast episodes automatically.
- It can be a joy to listen to a well-produced podcast.

Think of *The Business of Podcasting* as your guide to how to produce podcasts professionally for yourself and for your organization or your clients. We hope you enjoy reading the book and putting its advice into action.

P.S. Be sure to check out the companion website at http://thebusinessofpodcasting.com for the latest updates.

Who are we?

Steve Lubetkin

Steve has worked in corporate communications and print and broadcast journalism for more than three decades. In December 2004, he started The Lubetkin Media Companies and, in 2005, he began producing audio podcast programs for clients in the insurance, printing, commercial real estate and financial services industries. His audio and video programs have been honored with more than a dozen awards from professional communications and marketing organizations.

Steve has written and spoken extensively about the importance of podcasting in a corporate communications plan, including a 2006 keynote address at the 13th National Public Relations Congress of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines in Manila. In 2012, he was named a Social Media Star by the *Philadelphia Business Journal* for his work as a podcasting evangelist.

Steve is a former national director of the Public Relations Society of America and is a member of PRSA's College of Fellows. He is also a member of the International Association of Business Communicators and of several professional journalism organizations. He lives in Cherry Hill, NJ, near Philadelphia.

Steve's podcasting story

I got bit by the radio bug in high school. My dad worked at Fort Monmouth, the military base in central New Jersey where the U.S. Army had its training school for the Signal Corps, the unit that handled the Army's communications needs. The base taught photography, television and radio skills to military and civilian personnel from the U.S. Armed Forces and from our allies.

When I was about 12 or 13, my dad arranged for me to spend an afternoon at the mock radio studio where they trained Armed Forces Radio Service announcers and disc jockeys. One of the instructors taught me how to work the board, cue up vinyl records, and segue between them, interspersing station IDs and promos from tape cartridges. From that day on, I knew I wanted to be in radio.

At home, I created a studio of sorts in my parents' basement, recording make-believe radio shows using a reel-to-reel tape deck, a record turntable, and a Shure microphone. I played them back solely for the enjoyment of my best friend and me.

When I got to college, the first place I headed was the campus radio station, which agreed to try me out on the air, with the understanding that I would very quickly study for, and obtain, the FCC's Third Class Commercial RadioTelephone Operator License with basic broadcast endorsement, which would enable me to legally sign the walk radio station's transmitter log as the operator on duty.

I did my first full on-air shift at WMCX-FM on September 9, 1974. It was an amazing experience, getting to pick the music, run the board, and talk to that unseen audience (Although when I listen to the aircheck recording of that first, tentative step into radio announcing, it's painful after all these years!)

The following year, the station's music director, Lee Mrowicki, a club deejay who had strong connections in the Asbury Park, NJ, music scene from which Bruce Springsteen and other rockers emerged, landed himself a position voicing commercials at WJLK, a major AM-FM station on the Jersey Shore. Lee learned they needed a licensed broadcast engineer to produce public affairs shows on Sunday nights. He recommended me for that position, which mainly involved playing taped shows over the air, one after another, from 6 to 9 on Sunday nights. After a while, a weekend newscaster position opened up, and I started working in radio news on Friday and Saturday nights. From there I started doing fill-in shifts in news and production and learned a lot about commercial radio.

I stayed in radio for almost five years, including a memorable assignment in 1977, when another reporter and I became the first journalists to cover a rock concert with a portable computer. It was a Grateful Dead concert in Englishtown, New Jersey, and the *Asbury Park Press* newspaper sent us with a portable data terminal to file our stories. In addition to writing for the paper, I was also collecting audio interviews and sound from the concert that I fed back to WJLK, the radio station that the *Press* owned.

After I graduated from college, I needed to make a bit more money than the part-time radio gig was paying. I bounced between a retail sales job and a radio shift at a different station, but finally took a job in print journalism. That job lasted just nine months, until I was recruited into a public relations position with a company that I had covered as a reporter. I stayed in corporate PR for the next 25 years.

I tried to apply my broadcasting skills to the PR world, often using a portable cassette recorder to tape company events and trying to feed audio over the phone to the local New Jersey stations. Today, with digital recording, websites and social media, it is so much easier to distribute audio clips like this.

In the 1990s, I was working for a financial services firm, and we launched a telephone conference call series to promote the expertise of our analysts. I took the role as program host, and we formatted it like a

radio talk show. The analysts loved it and actually scheduled the calls around my availability so they could use me as the on-air moderator.

My corporate PR career came to an end in 2004, after the commercial bank for which I was doing PR was acquired by another bank, which was then was acquired by a larger one. After I spent a year mostly in limbo, the new owner reorganized, and I ended up on the outside looking in. It turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to me, because that's the moment I decided to set up my consultancy.

This was right around the time podcasting was becoming visible as the newest form of what we then called "new media." When I listened to podcasts, I was struck by how cool it would be to distribute those "make believe" radio shows I had been doing as a teenager. I also realized that many of the programs I was hearing were being created by amateurs who didn't know how to announce, edit or even manage volume levels in a recording. I decided to become proficient at digital recording so I could produce podcasts. I wasn't so interested in recording myself talking as I was in selling this service to businesses. I knew that to be convincing to corporations, a podcast had to sound as professional as anything you might hear on National Public Radio or the CBC.

That's when I began acquiring digital recording gear and software and reaching out to prospective clients.

In the past 10 years, my podcasting business has come full circle, back to my broadcast news experience. With the rise of online news organizations, the skills I've developed in podcasting have come back into play as I create audio (and video) news reports for several online news websites.

What can you learn from Steve's story?

The key takeaway from Steve's experience is that you need a combination of business skills to be successful as a professional podcast producer. You need the production skills to deliver a high-

quality audio program for clients that their customers and prospects will download.

You also need to understand how corporations conduct business and how they work with vendors. You also need to know how to manage the process through which all communications materials are created, reviewed by non-communications managers and lawyers, changed to conform to corporate standards, and actually delivered to the intended audiences.

There is much more to producing business podcasts than just putting a microphone in front of a corporate client and pressing the "record" button.

Working with corporate clients requires a level of diplomacy and tact that you might not need if your podcast is just you and your friends chatting about sports over a beer or two. You need to make your client's life easier, not more complicated.

Donna Papacosta

A former systems analyst, Donna Papacosta is a writer, speaker, consultant, podcaster and a part-time university instructor who helps people and organizations share their stories. A member of Silicon Halton, The Toronto Region Board of Trade and the International Association of Business Communicators, Donna is a native New Yorker who now lives in Toronto.

In September 2005, she launched one of the first business podcasts in Canada, Trafcom News, based on the URL for her business, Trafalgar Communications. (Ask her about how to name a podcast; learn from her mistake!) Since then she has produced countless podcast episodes for her own business and for clients, and has taught many people how to use audio, multimedia and social media effectively.

Donna runs workshops and speaks on communications topics at conferences. She also teaches Audio Journalism at Sheridan

College in Oakville, Ontario, as well as the Foundations of Digital Communications Strategy and Social Media course at the School of Continuing Studies at the University of Toronto.

Donna's podcasting story

Unlike Steve, I'm not a radio person. My first recollection of working with my voice was when my father, a professional singer, attempted to get me – at about age four – to speak into his reel-to-reel tape recorder. I still remember him lamenting, "She talks all the time, except when I hold up the microphone." Well, that's changed!

I started dabbling in audio in 2004 and took voiceover lessons, which was something numerous friends had recommended because they liked my voice. The lessons were a lot of fun, but I didn't want to abandon my main communications consulting practice and start auditioning. In addition, I was a single mom with two kids to support, so I started small. I combined my voiceover skills with my communications skills by offering existing clients audio clips or audio nuggets they could place on their websites. Some of these snippets were client testimonials, which often work nicely in an audio format.

When I discovered podcasting in 2005, I avidly consumed shows like *For Immediate Release: The Hobson and Holtz Report* and Adam Curry's *Daily Source Code*. Because I like to learn by doing (I built my first website back in the early 1990s), I launched my own podcast, *Trafcom News*, in September 2005. Yes, I now regret the non-catchy name, but I had no idea anyone was actually going to listen, and that the show would still be running almost a decade later. The show in the early days was often about podcasting, but branched out into interviews with guests and discussions about communications and social media tactics.

I did offer podcasts and audio content to existing clients, but needed to educate them first. This was 2006-2007, and podcasting was not as popular as it is today in the era of *Serial* and *RadioLab*. So I offered free webinars about podcasting and blogging (another "new" thing), which helped to raise awareness. Soon I was producing

audio projects as a volunteer for my local YMCA, which was a communications client at the time. These were part of a fundraising project to link donors with beneficiaries. For example, I interviewed a father who was unemployed but who was able to enroll his children in swimming lessons, thanks to subsidies provided by donors. A mom who was disabled, and had an autistic child described how happy she was to see her son flourish in recreational programs at the Y. In addition to traditional newsletters and other written content, the Y was able to reach out and share stories for the ear.

I talked about the success of these audio projects with my other clients via my newsletter, blog posts and general conversations, and soon they were asking for podcasts. Gradually, I began to take on more of these projects, including producing audio associated with events, as a way to build buzz beforehand and create rich content during a conference or meeting.

Then I came up with the idea, which seemed novel to me at the time, to offer conference podcasting as a discrete service. A few months after I uploaded content to my website about conference podcasting, I received a phone call out of the blue (thank you, Google) from someone at Autodesk Inc. in California. They are a large company that makes software for the architecture, engineering, construction, manufacturing, media and entertainment industries.

The folks at Autodesk were interested in producing podcasts before and during Autodesk University (AU), their annual user conference in Las Vegas that, in those days, attracted upwards of 8,000 people. Could I do this? they asked. "Of course!" I replied. I worked with the client to come up with a plan to produce remote interviews with key players in advance of the conference, and to schedule dozens of in-person interviews during the event, as well as "streeters" with conference-goers during AU. Some of these on-the-fly interviews were edited into testimonials to be used to promote the following year's conference.

Looking a bit warily at the huge amount of work on my plate, I enlisted the help of a friend and audio genius, Victoria Fenner, who could assist with the editing. Using YouSendIt (I now use Dropbox), I

would ship files to Victoria each night from Las Vegas, and she would edit them to my specs and ship them back. The idea was to get the content online as soon as possible after recording. I also did a fair bit of editing from my suite at the Venetian (not a bad place to work). The days were long, but the work was a lot of fun, and I enjoyed interviewing some brilliant and creative minds.

I continued to work with Autodesk for a few years, producing podcasts, not just for AU, but also for their internal sales and marketing conferences.

My podcasting business continued to grow as I added a roster of projects for existing clients, then gained new clients who had heard about my podcasting offering and wanted audio for their communications. Messages from CEOs to employees, for example, were popular. At the same time, I continued to produce webinars and in-person presentations about podcasting, as well as paid speaking gigs about podcasting and other communications topics.

What can you learn from Donna's story?

- Start small. Learn your craft.
- Understand how clients could use podcasts in their communications.
- When you're ready, reach out to educate clients as to the benefits of podcasting. This would be easier today, thanks to the popularity of podcasting.
- Outsource when needed; if you take on too much, you can't do high-quality work.
- Be professional at all times, and produce the best work you can.
- Keep learning and growing as a podcaster.

A word about our cartoonist, Rob Cottingham

Rob Cottingham is a Vancouver, Canada-based speechwriter, communications strategist, comedian and off-and-on podcaster. His

cartoon *Noise to Signal* has run online for eight years, appearing on such sites as PC World, Consumer Reports and the CBC. Donna and Steve are delighted that Rob is part of this book.

Podcasting defined

One of the most frequent questions Donna hears in workshops and classrooms is, "What's the difference between a podcast and any old audio on the Web?" Very often, we see the words *audio* and *podcast* used interchangeably. Someone may put an audio clip on their site and call it a podcast.

Technically, they're wrong.

We are in favor of employing the power of the human voice to communicate wherever possible, but it's important to understand the terminology we're using. Here's how we define a podcast:

An audio podcast is a sound file that is published online as part of a series and has an RSS feed that listeners can subscribe to.

The key words are:

Part of a series (not just one sound clip) and

RSS feed.

Many podcasters offer an RSS feed, a link to their podcast on iTunes, a direct download of their MP3 file, and an HTML5 player so people can listen now or listen later. Of course, video podcasts also exist, but we're talking about audio here.

The PointCast Debacle and the Rise of RSS

To understand how the podcasting opportunity arose, it is helpful to know a little history of the Web.

In the mid-1990s, a company called PointCast Technologies came up with a great idea. You could download PointCast receiver

software and choose from a number of categories of news updates throughout the day. These updates included text, audio reports and video. Several times a day, PointCast would push out to your receiver a collection of news content for you to consume at your leisure. The receiver was offered for free, and the content was supported by an advertising model.

There was only one problem.

Every PointCast receiver received its own large chunk of news, no matter how many receivers might exist on a computer network. As a result, large companies started to block PointCast content from reaching their employees, and the model failed.

Dave Winer solved this problem with the invention of RSS (Really Simple Syndication) technology. Think of an RSS feed as a sort of shadow website, monitoring all your content. If something new is added, or existing content gets updated, the RSS feed updates as well. People interested in your content can take advantage of RSS feeds without checking back with their favorite websites.

The advantage of RSS over the PointCast model is that RSS is very "thin." It consists only of text code that uses links to refer to the Web location of the changed content; it does not deliver the actual content.

Winer and MTV veejay Adam Curry are mainly credited with Winer's breakthrough inclusion of an enclosure tag in RSS in 2001 that enabled users to point an RSS feed to an audio or video file. Again, the RSS file does not move audio and video files across the network. It just incorporates the URL where the files can be found.

By subscribing to an RSS feed, you get an alert when new content is available. By scanning multiple RSS feeds in a feed reader such as Feedly, you can quickly tell which of the websites you monitor has produced new content. You will sometimes hear people refer to "rich media." Rich media feeds are created when you add audio, video or an image to an RSS feed.

An RSS feed is an essential ingredient in podcast distribution. You need an RSS feed for your podcasts to be included in the

Apple iTunes Music Store. Many other podcast players also expect podcasts to be distributed via RSS.

The easiest way to create an RSS feed, by the way, is through a blog. The WordPress content management system, for example, automatically creates RSS feeds for its categories, keywords and everything you post to the site.

Edison Research "Share of Ear" survey

In fall 2014, Edison Research, a New Jersey-based market research and polling firm, released its second "Share of Ear" survey of audio consumption habits in the United States. What makes the Edison survey unique is that for the first time, in 2014, streaming audio and podcasts were included among the media being measured. The results were both surprising and encouraging for podcasting.

Edison uses the traditional diary method of logging audio consumption by first identifying a statistically valid sample of about 2,000 Americans older than 13 and asking them to keep track of their listening habits in a written or online diary.

While this method depends heavily on the honesty and accuracy of the participants in writing down or posting their listening habits in the online diary, the major TV rating services have used this technique for decades, and it does provide a useful look at how people consume audio content.

From spring 2014 to fall 2014, the total share of podcast listening documented by the survey increased by 18 percent, Edison says. The research also indicates that podcast listeners tend to listen to more audio programs than other listeners. In its projections (which may be overly optimistic) Edison suggests that Americans are listening to more than 21 million hours of podcasts every day.

The subset of survey respondents who identified themselves as podcast listeners reported that they spend about 30 percent of their time listening to podcasts, followed by owned music (23 percent),

terrestrial (AM/FM) radio (21 percent), streaming audio like Pandora or Spotify (12 percent), TV music channels (nine percent) and satellite radio (five percent).

This research suggests that, because podcasts today are easier to download, they are getting a new lease on life from listeners hungry for unique content that fills their specific needs.

This is an opportunity for podcasting as a business, but it should not be overblown. Producing business podcasts is not normally going to be about going viral or getting tens of thousands of downloads. It is about producing content that helps businesses connect with clients and prospects in an engaging way that solves business problems. The fact that people who already listen to podcasts tend to listen to a *lot* of podcasts is what's important, and it is what makes them more receptive to good quality business content in a podcast.

The critical role of corporate content creation and publishing in a post-newspaper digital world

Over the past 30 years, the widespread availability of free or low-cost news aggregation on the Internet has led to a rapid and dramatic meltdown of the traditional advertising-supported printed newspaper industry.

This wrenching dislocation has meant the downsizing or even disappearance of local news coverage, particularly coverage of small- and medium-sized businesses.

There has always been a symbiotic relationship between the mainstream news media and corporate public relations practitioners, who often provide story ideas and resources to print and broadcast journalists.

But the reality is that businesses can't depend on that method of story development any more.

With the decline of print and broadcast journalism because of the rise of Internet news aggregation, it is more difficult for public relations practitioners to build long-lasting relationships with journalists who are experts in their particular industries. These journalists don't work as beat reporters much anymore. It is harder to get stories placed in mainstream print publications, and almost impossible to get ordinary business stories broadcast on radio or TV.

Frankly, it's also becoming increasingly clear that those venues are not the best place for stories about how businesses solve problems for their customers, because customers are finding those solutions through online searches.

Today, companies must become content producers, and audio and video podcasting can play a significant role in a company's content publishing strategies.

What's the *Yellow Pages*?

The simple fact is that small and medium businesses and nonprofit organizations cannot promote their services by sending out a press release announcing a new product. People under 35 rarely look at a print newspaper, yet companies continue to spend thousands of dollars on print advertisements that this demographic will never see.

Unless there is blood on the floor of your showroom or a member of your management team is being led out in handcuffs, *Eyewitness News* is not coming out to watch your employees packing gift baskets or greeting people with lollipops at the new branch office.

Many young business managers moving into positions of leadership have never used the *Yellow Pages* to find a company's services. These future executives know only one way to find solutions to their business problems, and that is to use a search engine like Google. If your business does not show up in the first page or two of Google search results, you will not be in the running to win the business.

If you do show up high in the Google results, your website had better have content that showcases your firm's expertise, because another vendor is just a mouse click away.

To get to the first page or two of Google, you might try buying Ad Words, but for popular words, that can be expensive.

You might also hire someone who bills himself as a search engine optimization (SEO) expert. Just remember that Google hires Ph.D. mathematicians and computer scientists by the boatload. Do you really think you can fool an algorithm-based system whose experts are tweaking it nonstop every day?

The only really reliable way to get to the top pages of a Google search is to create high-quality content that will earn high rankings from Google when it indexes the page. Today, Google gives a much higher score to pages that are updated frequently and contain rich media (meaning photos, audio and video).

It's important to include appropriate keywords and other metadata with your content on your website. However, recent and continuing changes in Google's search ranking algorithm penalize some optimization approaches for gaming the system.

Retailer J.C. Penney felt Google's wrath a few years ago when a search engine optimization firm it hired used rule-breaking techniques to enhance Penney's visibility in Google search results, known as black-hat optimization. When Google discovered this tactic, it not only adjusted the algorithm to penalize the technique, but it also put Penney search results in a penalty box for a month by programmatically pushing them to the bottom of search result lists.

The bottom line: High-quality, rich media content scores higher with search engines. You'll become more visible in search results more quickly if you create compelling, original, rich media content like video and audio podcasts, and online presentations and blogs, and if you update this content frequently.

Google and other search engines give higher scores to pages that are frequently updated (like blogs), or that have rich content (photos, videos, audio, RSS feeds) and lots of hyperlinks (blogs, podcast show notes pages, etc.) to other sites and resources.

That's why organizations need to understand that "one-and-done" strategies for audio and video will fail. You can't make just one podcast episode or one video and check off that box on the social media consultant's checklist. Successful podcasting for business requires a commitment to a continuing series of programs.

Tell me a story

More than 40 years ago, Don Hewitt, executive producer of *60 Minutes*, capsulized the news magazine show's approach to explaining complicated issues. His four-word formula, "Tell me a story," became the model for compelling television drama in real-world situations. That's the formula you should be using for your podcasts, too.

Forget about reading a news release into a microphone. This is about long-form journalism like *60 Minutes* or a National Public Radio feature story in sound.

Who has stories to tell?

Organizations as varied as insurance companies, banks, professional associations and trade groups have recognized that telling their stories is essential. At the same time, your clients might need hand holding when it comes to designing podcast episodes with punch. Amazingly, some will ask you to produce a podcast series for them, even if they don't listen to podcasts themselves. We suggest you gently encourage them to listen to others' podcasts, both in their niche area and outside it, to get an idea of how different producers put their shows together. They should make notes about what they like and what they don't. What kind of voice do they want to put out there? Authoritative,

helpful, fun? You wouldn't design a website without knowing what a website looks like, right? It's the same for a podcast.

Just as a writer can improve her skills by reading great writing, a podcaster can strengthen her abilities by listening to great audio. Make a point of subscribing to well-produced podcasts and continually discovering new ones.

Let's suppose your client wants to publish a podcast that will be easy to listen to, with valuable information and compelling stories. This sounds like a tall order, but with a little planning and a lot of energy, you can help them make it happen.

You likely will not reach the lofty heights of *This American Life, Serial* or *RadioLab* – all outstanding podcasts – but that's OK. We can all learn from the techniques they use.

Here are some tips for creating great audio content:

- Be sure there actually is a story to engage listeners, not just a laundry list of "to-do" items.
- Be sure to book the right guest; a renowned expert may not be a talented storyteller, so be sure to conduct a pre-interview to evaluate his skills.
- Outline the content in advance so you know the points you want to cover and how the story will flow.
- Record high-quality audio; give your listeners the gift of pleasing sound.
- Edit, edit, edit so the podcast episode contains only the best bits.
- Don't be afraid to kill an episode if it's not good enough.

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