memery

MEMERY FIELD GUIDE / 2027

What actually works in podcast marketing.

A research-led playbook for owned branded podcasts, paid podcast advertising and executive guesting.



30 success cases

30 failure patterns

3 growth models

Research synthesis by memery

WHY WE DID THIS

Podcasting is powerful. Corporate podcasting is often not.

We went looking for the patterns behind the shows, sponsorships and guesting programmes that worked - and the ones that quietly died.

We reviewed three distinct ways brands use podcasts: owned branded podcasts, paid podcast advertising and executive podcast guesting. Across those models, we analysed 30 success cases, 30 failure modes and the commercial trade-offs between each approach.

80%	average episode completion cited across the research base
61%	reported higher brand favourability after branded audio content
76%	of weekly listeners cited as taking action after an audio ad

A note on evidence. This report synthesises published case studies and secondary research. Reported outcomes are source-reported and have not been independently audited by memery. Treat individual metrics as directional evidence; the value is in the patterns that recur across multiple examples.

THE CASE FOR PODCASTING

Podcasting is no longer a fringe channel.

Audience reach is at record levels, ad revenue has rebounded strongly and video has changed what a 'podcast' looks like. The opportunity is real - but still uneven.

$2.86B

US podcast ad revenue in 2025

Up 17.6% year on year.

+17.6%

2025 podcast ad growth

Faster than the wider internet ad market.

58%

of Americans 12+ monthly

About 167 million people in 2026.

45%

of Americans 12+ weekly

Podcasting is now a habitual medium.

39%

of weekly consumers use YouTube first

Ahead of Spotify at 20%.

16% / 2%

share of media time / ad spend

Still materially under-monetised.

READ THE GROWTH CORRECTLY

2023 podcast ad revenue growth was only 5%, to $1.9B. The 2025 result is a rebound, not a straight-line trend. IAB's January 2026 forecast was +9.6% - a projection, not an actual. Edison also reports recent audience growth is being driven by the 55+ cohort while younger groups have been comparatively flat. And these audience/revenue figures are US data.

THE PRIMARY FINDINGS

Seven things the research keeps telling us.

01

Strategy before format

Start with the commercial job. A podcast without a clear job quickly becomes an expensive content habit.

02

Relevance beats reach

A smaller, tightly matched audience can outperform a bigger show with weak buyer fit.

03

Editorial value beats product pitch

The strongest branded audio teaches, entertains or reveals something useful. It earns attention before asking for anything.

04

Distribution is part of production

Recording is only half the job. Launch seeding, social cutdowns, PR, newsletters and sales use determine whether the asset compounds.

05

Consistency compounds

Single flights, sporadic guesting and early podfade all destroy the memory and trust audio is good at building.

06

Measure behaviour, not vanity

Listen time, qualified audience fit, brand lift, ROAS, referrals, backlinks and pipeline matter more than raw downloads alone.

07

The models can work together

Guesting can validate messages, paid media can scale them, and an owned show can consolidate category authority.

CHOOSE THE MODEL

Three different jobs. Three different economics.

The first decision is not what the show should be called. It is what role podcasting should play in the growth system.

Strategic Parameter	Owned podcast	Paid ads	Executive guesting
Primary Objective	Category leadership, customer retention, ABM pipeline influence.	Immediate customer acquisition, mass reach, direct response ROI.	Executive authority, backlink generation, high-trust relationship building.
Capital Investment	High ongoing production spend ($3k–$15k+ per month).	High variable spend (Media CPMs ranging from $18–$50+).	Low direct media costs; agency retainer fees optional.
Time Horizon to ROI	Slow (6 to 12 months minimum).	Fast (Immediate to 30 days post-flight).	Medium (3 to 6 months compounding).
Audience Ownership	Owned asset (Direct subscriber connection).	Rented reach (Lapses when spend stops).	Borrowed audience (Host trust transfer).
Brand & Creative Control	Total control over messaging and format.	Moderate control (Host-read flexibility varies).	Low control (Host directs final edit and structure).
Scalability Limit	Constrained by niche topical reach.	Highly scalable across ad networks.	Constrained by executive calendar availability.
Measurement Index	Listen Time, firmographic ICP matching, brand lift.	CPA, ROAS, promo code usage, pixel attribution.	Backlink volume, referral traffic, inbound deal lift.

Rule of thumb: own when you want a durable audience asset, buy when you want speed and scale, and guest when you want to borrow trust and build authority with relatively low media cost.

THE PUBLISHER MODEL

1. Owned branded podcasts

The organisation stops renting attention and starts acting like a publisher. The strongest shows build authority around an editorial premise adjacent to the product rather than turning episodes into product demos.

WHY IT WORKS

Deep engagement, category leadership, an owned subscriber relationship and a powerful multi-channel content engine.

WHERE IT BREAKS

High production intensity, slower return horizons and the ever-present risk of podfade when leadership expects immediate download growth.

MEASURE

Listen time, completion, qualified audience fit, brand lift, target-account engagement and downstream pipeline influence.

OWNED PODCASTS / CASE STUDIES

Ten case studies worth studying. 1/2

ZOE

ZOE Science & Nutrition
In-house and guest scientists breaking down nutritional research without hard selling products.

Result: Top-tier UK/US health charts; primary customer acquisition channel with converting discount codes.

Lesson: Educate on category complexity to qualify and convert ideal buyers.

McDonald's

The Sauce
Investigative narrative mini-series tackling their own 2017 Szechuan sauce supply shortage crisis.

Result: Reached #2 on Apple Podcasts charts; earned major organic press coverage (NYT, Fast Company).

Lesson: Self-aware corporate honesty creates immediate narrative appeal and press interest.

Basecamp

The Distance
Profiling private businesses operating successfully for 25+ years (barbers, hardware stores).

Result: Multi-season run; established as a primary touchpoint for SMB founder brand affinity.

Lesson: Express brand values through third-party stories rather than discussing software features.

General Electric

The Message / Life After
Scripted sci-fi narrative drama exploring alien message decoding with embedded GE tech concepts.

Result: Hit #1 on Apple Podcasts charts (2015); established the modern branded fiction playbook.

Lesson: Enterprise brands can reach massive consumer audiences through high-budget entertainment.

eBay

Open for Business
Practical narrative guide to launching small businesses, co-produced with Gimlet Media.

Result: Tens of millions of cumulative downloads; measurable increase in SMB brand favorability scores.

Lesson: Partnering with established podcast studios provides instant editorial authority.

OWNED PODCASTS / CASE STUDIES

Ten case studies worth studying. 2/2

McAfee

Hackable?
Mythbusters-style show testing cinematic cyber-attacks with real ethical hackers.

Result: Top 1% of global podcasts; 2018 Shorty Award winner for Best Branded Podcast.

Lesson: Frame brand value around demonstrating real-world user vulnerabilities.

Royal Bank of Canada

Disruptors
Revamped strategic audio magazine focusing on Canadian innovation, tech, and economic trends.

Result: 500% increase in listenership; consistently topped Canadian business podcast charts.

Lesson: Periodic editorial overhauls keep long-running corporate shows competitive.

Saje Natural Wellness

Well Now
Holistic wellness narrative series featuring health influencers and alternative health experts.

Result: 95% listen-through rate; scaled rapidly into top global health podcast charts.

Lesson: Precise alignment between audience lifestyle values and show topics drives deep loyalty.

Staffbase

Infernal Communication
Humor-driven explorations of internal comms corporate absurdities and operational hurdles.

Result: 90% consumption rate; achieved 10x anticipated first-season download targets.

Lesson: Humor and emotional empathy bridge global market entry for enterprise B2B SaaS.

Trader Joe's

Inside Trader Joe's
Direct behind-the-scenes access detailing product sourcing, tasting panels, and store logistics.

Result: Over 920,000 downloads across its first 10 episodes; maintained 5-star rating.

Lesson: Transparency into company culture and product choices turns customers into brand advocates.

OWNED PODCASTS / FAILURE MODES

Ten failure modes to avoid. 1/2

1. Purpose Vacuum

What happens: Launching a show based on internal corporate novelty ("we need a podcast") without a defined KPI.

Commercial impact: Budget waste, team fatigue, and rapid executive cancellation within six months.

Do this instead: Establish a single primary business goal (e.g., pipeline influence vs. broad reach) before production.

2. Product Pitch Drift

What happens: Converting episodes into extended product feature demos and corporate press releases.

Commercial impact: Listener retention drops below 10% within the first three minutes.

Do this instead: Maintain an editorial premise adjacent to the product, keeping brand mentions minimal.

3. Premature Podfade

What happens: Ceasing publication around episodes 5–10 due to unrealistic short-term download expectations.

Commercial impact: Destroys brand reliability; leaves dead content assets online that signal project failure.

Do this instead: Commit to a structured 8–12 episode seasonal model with a defined strategic review point.

4. Broad Audience Trap

What happens: Structuring content for "anyone in business" rather than a targeted buyer persona.

Commercial impact: High production spend yields zero qualified inbound sales pipeline or sales alignment.

Do this instead: Micro-target specific roles, company sizes, and buying contexts.

5. Unseeded Cold Launch

What happens: Relying entirely on organic directory discovery on Spotify/Apple without media amplification.

Commercial impact: Zero initial traction, leading to stagnated episode download metrics.

Do this instead: Seed product launches through existing CRM lists, newsletters, and employee distribution.

OWNED PODCASTS / FAILURE MODES

Ten failure modes to avoid. 2/2

6. Asymmetric Promotion Budgeting

What happens: Allocating 95% of resources to audio recording and 5% to marketing and asset distribution.

Commercial impact: High cost-per-listen metrics and isolated audio assets.

Do this instead: Match every dollar spent on audio production with structured social and PR promotion.

7. Infinite Drip Fatigue

What happens: Attempting an open-ended weekly production schedule without seasonal planning.

Commercial impact: Host burnout, declining audio production quality, and inconsistent publishing dates.

Do this instead: Package content into distinct, themed seasons with scheduled production breaks.

8. Vanity Metric Dependence

What happens: Tracking overall download volume instead of qualified audience retention and Listen Time.

Commercial impact: Misleading performance data that fails to demonstrate actual commercial impact.

Do this instead: Measure consumption retention rates, firmographic matches, and brand lift metrics.

9. Executive Host Stiffness

What happens: Forcing senior leaders into scripted, unnatural interviews.

Commercial impact: Unengaging sound quality that alienates regular podcast listeners.

Do this instead: Hire experienced external podcast hosts or select charismatic internal advocates.

10. Siloed Distribution

What happens: Isolating the show from wider marketing campaigns, sales enablement, and internal comms.

Commercial impact: Missed opportunities to leverage episode audio across sales, onboarding, and PR channels.

Do this instead: Repurpose episode insights into whitepapers, social clips, and sales collateral.

THE SCALED REACH MODEL

2. Paid podcast advertising

Paid audio rents access to audiences that already exist. Host-read endorsements borrow trust; dynamic insertion adds targeting and scale. The commercial advantage is speed, but the spend stops working when the spend stops.

WHY IT WORKS

Fast scale, high contextual relevance, trusted host delivery and measurable direct-response potential.

WHERE IT BREAKS

Ongoing media cost, creative fatigue, attribution blind spots and brand-safety risk in poorly managed programmatic supply.

MEASURE

CPA, ROAS, brand lift, search lift, checkout survey attribution, promo codes and qualified traffic.

PAID PODCAST ADVERTISING / CASE STUDIES

Ten case studies worth studying. 1/2

BetterHelp

Goal: Direct Response & Customer Acquisition
Execution: Scaled host-read endorsements using vanity promo codes across thousands of mental health & comedy shows.

Result: Scaled into the world's largest online therapy platform via podcast advertising.

Lesson: Host transparency builds consumer comfort for high-friction health services.

HelloFresh

Goal: Customer Acquisition & CAC Reduction
Execution: Dynamic Ad Insertion combined with host-read discount codes across mid-tier lifestyle podcasts.

Result: Achieved sustained 4x+ ROAS while scaling customer acquisition.

Lesson: High-frequency promo code offers on contextual shows accelerate trial decisions.

Athletic Greens (AG1)

Goal: Brand Category Dominance
Execution: Long-form host reads on high-authority health, business, and self-improvement podcasts.

Result: Multi-million dollar ARR growth; built category dominance via audio influencer alignment.

Lesson: Extended host trial periods ensure genuine, compelling personal ad reads.

ZipRecruiter

Goal: Dual B2B/B2C Acquisition
Execution: Pre-roll and mid-roll sponsorships across high-volume news, business, and true crime shows.

Result: Established top-of-mind market dominance for both job seekers and hiring managers.

Lesson: Consistent presence across mass-reach categories builds broad market dominance.

Casper

Goal: Direct Response DTC Growth
Execution: Early adoption of host-read sponsorships with direct promo code attribution on entertainment shows.

Result: Scaled DTC mattress market share rapidly with high ad recall scores.

Lesson: Pioneer status in emerging channels yields lower early CPM costs.

PAID PODCAST ADVERTISING / CASE STUDIES

Ten case studies worth studying. 2/2

Squarespace

Goal: Long-Term Brand Awareness
Execution: Multi-year host-read sponsorships across independent tech, creative, and design shows.

Result: High share-of-voice retention across creative and entrepreneurial demographics.

Lesson: Multi-year campaign consistency builds strong brand recall within target verticals.

SimpliSafe

Goal: Direct Response Conversion
Execution: High-frequency mid-roll host endorsements integrated into true crime and news podcasts.

Result: Consistent positive ROAS; built a primary direct-to-consumer acquisition engine.

Lesson: Aligning security solutions with true crime content provides strong contextual relevance.

Mint Mobile

Goal: Market Disruption & Awareness
Execution: Humorous, host-read disruptor messaging across comedy and pop-culture networks.

Result: Low CPL metrics; contributed to accelerated subscriber growth and brand acquisition.

Lesson: Adapting tone to match the host's natural style boosts engagement.

ThirdLove

Goal: DTC Audience Expansion
Execution: Targeted DAI and host-read flights across female-skewing lifestyle and wellness shows.

Result: Reached 4.4x ROAS; outperformed traditional social display channels.

Lesson: Tapping into underserved podcast demographic niches yields high ROAS.

iHeartMedia CPG Campaign

Goal: Retail Lift & Purchase Intent
Execution: Multi-show host-read audio integration backed by broadcast cross-promotion.

Result: 32% lift in purchase intent; 61% increase in prospective purchase likelihood.

Lesson: Combining podcast host reads with wider media network reach boosts total impact.

PAID PODCAST ADVERTISING / FAILURE MODES

Ten failure modes to avoid. 1/2

1. Metadata Mismatch

What happens: Relying on unverified programmatic supply paths where creative tags mask actual ad categories.

Commercial impact: Ads run alongside inappropriate content, creating brand safety issues.

Do this instead: Implement supply-side AI metadata verification and curated show whitelists.

2. Repurposed Radio Scripts

What happens: Re-using 30-second studio radio or TV ad tracks for intimate podcast environments.

Commercial impact: Sounds jarring and artificial, causing over 80% of listeners to skip the ad.

Do this instead: Record conversational scripts specifically designed for podcast environments.

3. Single-Flight Abandonment

What happens: Running a single ad spot on a show without multi-episode frequency.

Commercial impact: Weak campaign recall and poor conversion performance due to low impression depth.

Do this instead: Book minimum flights of 3–5 episodes per show to establish message retention.

4. Unmanaged Creative Fatigue

What happens: Running identical ad creative continuously across a show's back catalog.

Commercial impact: Click-through and conversion rates drop significantly while CPM spend remains static.

Do this instead: Rotate ad creative copy and messaging angles every 3–4 weeks.

5. Reach-Over-Relevance Trap

What happens: Purchasing top-ranking shows based on overall downloads rather than demographic ICP fit.

Commercial impact: High CPM expenditure yields low conversion rates from non-buying audiences.

Do this instead: Target specific niche shows whose listener demographic directly matches target buyers.

PAID PODCAST ADVERTISING / FAILURE MODES

Ten failure modes to avoid. 2/2

6. Call-To-Action Friction

What happens: Including multiple URLs, phone numbers, or complex discount codes in a single audio spot.

Commercial impact: Listeners forget the conversion path, causing measurable response drop-off.

Do this instead: Use a single, memorable vanity URL or simple discount code.

7. Post-Roll Dump Placement

What happens: Buying cheap post-roll ad inventory at the end of episode content.

Commercial impact: Listeners turn off episodes before ads play, resulting in low exposure.

Do this instead: Focus media buys on mid-roll placements where listener engagement peaks.

8. Pure Promo Code Myopia

What happens: Evaluating campaigns solely on direct promo code redemptions without tracking search lift.

Commercial impact: Undervalues real performance, causing early cancellation of profitable shows.

Do this instead: Combine promo codes with IP pixel tracking, organic search lift, and checkout surveys.

9. Over-Rigid Keyword Blocking

What happens: Using blunt, automated keyword blocking across entire podcast categories.

Commercial impact: Excludes high-converting demographic pockets across news and true crime shows.

Do this instead: Use contextual transcript analysis rather than broad category exclusions.

10. Exclusivity Absence

What happens: Failing to negotiate category exclusivity clauses within sponsorship agreements.

Commercial impact: Direct competitors appear in the same episode break, diluting audience impact.

Do this instead: Contractually secure brand exclusivity within your operational category for every flight.

3. Executive podcast guesting

Guesting borrows an established host's trust rather than buying an ad unit or building a show from scratch. It can build authority, relationships, referral traffic and durable search assets - but executive time is the scarce resource.

WHY IT WORKS

Low direct media cost, high-trust long-form exposure, strong B2B relationship value and durable referral/backlink assets.

WHERE IT BREAKS

Executive time, weaker message control, limited scalability and poor results when outreach is generic or the audience fit is wrong.

MEASURE

Referral traffic, inbound lead quality, backlink volume, executive authority, category association and downstream deal influence.

EXECUTIVE GUESTING / CASE STUDIES

Ten case studies worth studying. 1/2

Tim Soulo (Ahrefs)

Focus: High-density guesting campaign focused on actionable, data-driven SEO techniques.
Where: 20+ marketing, SaaS, and entrepreneurship podcasts over a four-month period.

Result: Scaled word-of-mouth referral traffic; helped drive ARR past $100M without a sales team.

Lesson: Educational content sharing scales product adoption better than traditional sales pitches.

Nathan Barry (ConvertKit)

Focus: Founder guesting tour educating creators on the business value of email lists.
Where: Niche creator economy, blogging, and solopreneur podcasts.

Result: Accelerated ARR growth from $1M to $20M+ by directly acquiring creator accounts.

Lesson: Educating niche communities turns listeners into active software subscribers.

Rand Fishkin (SparkToro)

Focus: Product launch tour focused on zero-click searches and audience research methods.
Where: Top-tier digital marketing, agency growth, and martech podcasts.

Result: Drove thousands of free account sign-ups and paid subscriptions during launch.

Lesson: Position new software categories by discussing industry pain points on podcasts.

Russell Brunson (ClickFunnels)

Focus: High-energy storytelling on sales funnels, entrepreneurship, and digital marketing.
Where: Entrepreneurship, marketing, and business growth shows.

Result: Drove massive book giveaway conversions that fed direct SaaS software trials.

Lesson: Use free educational resources as mid-funnel lead magnets during appearances.

Hamish McKenzie (Substack)

Focus: Media revolution narrative touring to recruit independent journalists and writers.
Where: Journalism, media, tech, and publishing podcasts.

Result: Onboarded high-profile writers, accelerating network growth and content supply.

Lesson: Pitch broader industry transformation movements to attract creator partners.

EXECUTIVE GUESTING / CASE STUDIES

Ten case studies worth studying. 2/2

Amit Bendov (Gong)

Focus: Revenue intelligence thought leadership touring to establish a new SaaS category.
Where: B2B sales leadership, sales enablement, and RevOps podcasts.

Result: Established dominant category leadership, accelerating enterprise deal sizes.

Lesson: Executive presence on domain-specific podcasts builds enterprise software credibility.

Chris Walker (Refine Labs)

Focus: Challenging traditional MQL models and advancing "Demand Generation" principles.
Where: B2B marketing, demand gen, and SaaS growth podcasts.

Result: Built a multi-million dollar inbound marketing agency pipeline without outbound sales.

Lesson: Take counter-intuitive, highly opinionated industry stances to earn attention.

Joe Thomas (Loom)

Focus: Promoting asynchronous video communication for modern remote team workflows.
Where: Product management, future-of-work, and remote leadership podcasts.

Result: Scaled product adoption during remote-work shifts, driving viral product loops.

Lesson: Align executive guesting topics directly with macroeconomic workplace trends.

David Cancel (Drift)

Focus: Defining "Conversational Marketing" and opposing legacy gated lead forms.
Where: B2B technology, startup leadership, and product management podcasts.

Result: Created market category demand, scaling Drift to unicorn valuation status.

Lesson: Use guesting appearances to coin, define, and own new market categories.

Ivan Zhao (Notion)

Focus: Discussing modular productivity tools, workspace design, and building for creators.
Where: Tech, productivity, design, and software architecture podcasts.

Result: Fueled organic word-of-mouth growth and global user community adoption.

Lesson: Connect technical product design decisions to everyday consumer productivity benefits.

EXECUTIVE GUESTING / FAILURE MODES

Ten failure modes to avoid. 1/2

1. Mass Generic Pitching

What happens: Spraying standardized PR agency templates to hundreds of hosts.

Commercial impact: Instant rejection, damaged brand reputation, and blacklisting by podcast networks.

Do this instead: Research hosts individually, referencing specific prior episodes in tailored pitches.

2. Monologue Sales Pitching

What happens: Treating guest appearances as a continuous product or company sales pitch.

Commercial impact: Annoys hosts and listeners, destroying parasocial trust and lowering brand affinity.

Do this instead: Focus 90% of the interview on actionable educational insights, leaving products for closing credits.

3. Lack of Post-Show Nurturing

What happens: Treating the interview as a one-off event with zero post-recording follow-up.

Commercial impact: Loses long-term relationship value; host contacts never convert into B2B clients or partners.

Do this instead: Implement structured follow-up systems to nurture hosts into ongoing partners.

4. Audience Misalignment

What happens: Guesting on large podcasts that lack alignment with your target buyer persona.

Commercial impact: High executive effort yields zero qualified inbound business pipeline.

Do this instead: Qualify podcasts based on audience ICP alignment rather than raw download volume.

5. Technical Execution Failure

What happens: Executives joining recordings with poor microphones, background noise, or bad connections.

Commercial impact: Unusable audio tracks or poor listening experiences that hurt corporate credibility.

Do this instead: Equip executive speakers with broadcast-grade USB/XLR microphones and quiet environments.

EXECUTIVE GUESTING / FAILURE MODES

Ten failure modes to avoid. 2/2

6. Zero Amplification Support

What happens: Failing to share, promote, or link released guest episodes across brand channels.

Commercial impact: Damages relationships with hosts and limits potential reach.

Do this instead: Provide hosts with promotion assets and tag them across company social channels.

7. Destination Friction

What happens: Directing listeners to generic homepages rather than custom show landing pages.

Commercial impact: Conversion rates drop as listeners fail to find offer details mentioned in the episode.

Do this instead: Build customized landing pages featuring host welcomes, mentioned resources, and targeted offers.

8. Sporadic Non-Compounding

What happens: Participating in isolated, infrequent interviews separated by months of inactivity.

Commercial impact: Fails to build persistent momentum or sustainable search presence.

Do this instead: Execute guesting campaigns in concentrated 3–6 month flights to build compounding market reach.

9. Host Perspective Friction

What happens: Contradicting show norms or ignoring the host's established interview style.

Commercial impact: Awkward interview chemistry that produces unengaging episode content.

Do this instead: Listen to multiple previous episodes to adapt to the host's tone and interview format.

10. Lost Backlink Equity

What happens: Failing to confirm that hosts include live website backlinks in their show notes.

Commercial impact: Misses opportunities to gain high-authority domain backlinks for organic SEO.

Do this instead: Provide hosts with pre-formatted bio blocks containing direct links to key resources.

THE INTEGRATED MODEL

Do not choose one forever. Sequence them.

One of our clearest findings is that audio works best as a system rather than a single isolated tactic. A practical maturity path is to use guesting to test the message, paid media to scale what resonates, and an owned show to consolidate authority.

PHASE 1

Executive guesting

Validate themes, sharpen points of view, learn which audiences and shows respond, and build early authority without heavy media spend.

PHASE 2

Paid distribution

Put proven messages into trusted host environments and scale reach across the niches that have already shown audience fit.

PHASE 3

Owned podcast

Move from renting attention to owning the conversation: build a subscriber asset, host the category and use guests strategically.

MEASUREMENT

Downloads are not the strategy.

MODEL	SIGNAL	QUESTION TO ASK
Owned	Listen time / completion	Are the right people staying with the content long enough for the brand association to form?
Owned	Qualified audience fit	Do listeners map to target customer, account or stakeholder groups?
Paid	ROAS + CPA	Does spend produce incremental commercial response, not just cheap impressions?
Paid	Search + survey lift	Are listeners converting later through branded search, direct traffic or post-purchase attribution?
Guesting	Referral + backlinks	Does the appearance create durable traffic, authority and discoverability?
All models	Brand lift / pipeline	Is audio changing familiarity, preference, recall, qualified demand or deal progression?

Measurement principle: use more than one attribution method. Audio is often consumed while people are driving, walking or exercising, so the conversion may happen later through search or direct traffic. Promo-code redemption on its own will often understate the channel.

THE PRACTICAL CHECKLIST

Before you spend a dollar on podcasting.

01

Can you state the primary commercial objective in one sentence?

02

Do you know exactly who the audience is - by role, need, buying context or community?

03

Would the editorial idea still be worth listening to if the brand name disappeared?

04

Have you chosen the right model: owned audience, rented reach or borrowed trust?

05

Is at least as much thought going into distribution as recording?

06

Have you committed to enough frequency or a full season to build memory?

07

Does the host, show or guest mix genuinely match the audience you need?

08

Are you measuring qualified attention and commercial behaviour, not just downloads?

09

Do you have a repurposing plan for social, email, PR, sales and search?

10

Have you defined the review point before launch so the team knows what success looks like?

THE TAKEAWAY

Make a good podcast strategy. Not just a podcast.

The research does not point to one winning format. It points to disciplined choices: the right job, the right audience, a genuinely valuable editorial idea, enough distribution and a measurement model that reflects how audio actually influences behaviour.

Need help applying this?

memery helps organisations develop podcast strategy, show concepts, production models, distribution plans and measurement frameworks - and can produce the content as well.

memery.agency

Method: we synthesised published examples across owned branded podcasts, paid podcast advertising and executive podcast guesting, then compared 30 success cases, 30 failure modes and the commercial trade-offs between the three approaches.

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