



The

Buzzin'

Guide to

Podcasting



By Aaron Fletcher

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Contents

About Me	2
What's Podcasting and Why?	3
Listen	4
Topic	5
Goal	6
Host(s)	7
Content	8
Commitment	9
Equipment (1)	10
Equipment (2)	11
Recording	12
Uploading (1)	13
Uploading (2)	14
Making with Buzzin' Sounds	15
End	16

About Me

My name's Aaron Fletcher, I'm the owner and founder of Buzzin' Sounds Recording Studio in Cheetham Hill, Manchester. I've been working on music since I was 13 years old, starting out as a DJ, then moving into electronic music production before going to college to study Music Tech. It was there I truly had my first experience of being in an actual studio. Since then I've been hell-bent on being a sound engineer. I went to Uni studying Popular Music Production, then moved into my first job as a studio assistant in a little studio in Bolton. I was there as a volunteer anyway and spent over a year working with young, up & coming musicians on their careers and their music. I went freelance for a while, building my own studio in my garage and working a lot of live gigs. I was a regular shadow at Band on the Wall, even earning some paid gigs as an assistant on some of the more chaotic nights and some out of venue events. I also became an in-house engineer for a venue in Bolton and did some other gigs round Bolton & even Wigan. Then, my daughter came along and though I was doing good things, I took a step back from the music tech side to focus on a 'proper job'. I spent the next 2 years working back from my bedroom with some rappers and singers. Then in 2019, I came back properly and decided to go back in to music full-time. Over the years I've done everything from studio & live engineering, to event organising & planning, artist managing & development, PA setup, project management, audio for videos and voice over works. With a wide experience, I can offer many different services to suit you.

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What is Podcasting & Why?

The definition of a Podcast is: "A digital audio file made available on the Internet for downloading to a computer or mobile device, typically available as a series, new instalments of which can be received by subscribers automatically."

In many ways, it really is that simple. There's nothing extraordinary about Podcasts nor is there any secret formula to making a good one. A successful Podcast needs to have all aspects taken care of and needs people to put in the work. That's all it needs. As with anything else, if you half-arse it, it won't be very good.

2020 is one of the best years yet to start Podcasting. You can get good equipment at good prices and the demand is high for them. Thanks to the growing usages of VAs (Virtual Assistants) like Alexa, and the ease of listening when walking, driving etc. podcasts are right at your finger-tips (and at the tip of your tongue).

According to Ofcom: [1] in Sept 2019, 7.1 million people in the UK listen to podcasts on a weekly basis and half of those listeners have started listening to Podcasts within the last 2 years. [2] There's believed to be over 900,000 Podcasts worldwide and over 30 million podcast episodes.

By reading this e-book, I assume you're thinking about the idea of creating a Podcast. I'm going to walk you through everything you need to do, consider and know with regards to making a Podcast.



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Listen

If you want to start a Podcast, the best way to figure out what you like and don't like, what you want to do and don't want to do is to listen to other Podcasts. With so many Podcasts available out there, you will be able to find one on almost anything. Have a flick through the Podcast app on your phone and pick one that takes your fancy. If you like it and want to continue listening - think of why. What was good? What do you enjoy about it? If you didn't like it - why? What didn't you like? This will help you understand what you want your Podcast to be like by figuring out what you do and don't like.

Example:

When Dr. Dre decided to produce headphones, he (and a huge team of people) sat in a room for hours and analysed hundreds of other pairs of headphones to find out what goes into a quality pair of headphones. The same with cake makers making cakes, they research the market.



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Topic

The topic of your Podcast might seem quite obvious to yourself right now but, rather often the topic is initially a very broad subject. Refining your topic will help you start to plan your content and realise the direction you are heading in with your podcast. Start to have a think about what you want to achieve with your Podcast. Do you want to be an informant to your audience? Do you want to be someone that opens discussions between listeners or even industry peers/colleagues?

As I mentioned in 'Listen', you can find a Podcast on almost anything. Pretty much nothing is off the cards* and chances are if you have an interest, hobby or job that you may want to Podcast about, there are people out there that will want to hear it.

Example:

If you wanted to do a Podcast on Tech. That term is too broad and you could come up with a million different things you could be doing with the Podcast. If you want to be an informant and showcase your up-to-date knowledge within the industry, perhaps make your topic about the latest advancements in tech.

*When I say nothing is off the cards, some things are.
Obviously nothing illegal.



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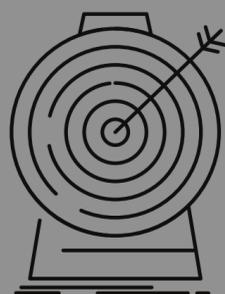
Goal

Every Podcast needs a purpose. The goals you set become the purpose of the Podcast and go onto shape the whatever you do going forward.

In the topic section, we spoke a bit about your goal in a rather broad sense when it comes to defining your topic. Now, like our topic, we're going to refine your goals and set some clear out-lined targets to meet and use to drive your Podcast. The listener is going to need to find value in your Podcast and that's why they come back and listen again. The goals you set can be both personal to you and for the listeners of the Podcast. Don't just set one broad goal, set a couple of more specific goals. Like SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-related).

Think:

What is the listener going to GAIN from the Podcast? How are they going to feel? What are YOU going to get after the Podcast?



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Host(s)

All Podcasts have a host. The host is the centre-point of the Podcast. The host needs to be able to tie the whole thing together. The host needs to be the one with the knowledge, the one that can bring the Podcast to life. Depending on content (we will discuss this later in the ebook) the host needs to be able to hold their own in an interview, stick to the topic & goals as well. Alongside the host, there's normally a co-host. It's totally up to you if you want to have a co-host but you need to choose someone that also has a huge knowledge on the subject and can add in where the host lacks. The co-host needs to bring something different. The relationship between the host & co-host is very important. They must be able to understand each other and bounce off each other.

Anecdote:

I can go out on a limb and say that the Podcast host is going to be you. If not, why not? This is you. Your idea. Your thoughts. Your feelings and YOUR opinions. Who better to talk about these things than you? If you are after a co-host, then choose someone you know. The host and co-host should be able to bounce off each other and engage the listener.



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Content

When you start planning what content you are going to put into the Podcast, look at the goals you set for yourself and your listener. What is the best way, via a Podcast, to achieve those goals?

Is it best to do interviews with other people within the community/industry of your Podcast?

Would you like to have a news section of the Podcast?

Are you able to do a Q&A with your audience?

It helps a lot to think about what your audience wants to hear and how they want to hear it. If you think of who they are, what they want to hear and how you want them to feel when they walk away (or turn the Podcast off) will not just give you ideas for segments of content, but also how you are going to fill those segments.

Anecdote:

When



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Commitment

How often do you want to release your Podcast? That question actually means - how much time can you commit to creating the Podcast? Before you get overly excited and commit yourself to 12 a day (ok, maybe you're not thinking that much - but still, take a minute and think), think about just how much demand would be required of you to put the Podcast together. It's very easy to get excited and want to release a Podcast a week or a Fortnight without necessarily realising just how much goes into creating each episode.

'Podburn' is a real thing, and it's when someone burns themselves out trying to Podcast too much.

Tip:

Don't start off and run before you can walk. Try to commit yourself to something like one a month, then get a good understanding of just how much work goes into planning and preparing a Podcast. If, after a couple of months, you believe you could comfortably release and record a Podcast more regularly then go for it.



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Equipment (1)

In the grand scheme of things, there are 2 things you need to do a Podcast in terms of your equipment.

- 1) Computer/Laptop
- 2) DAW (Digital Audio Workstation)
- 3) Mic (and interface)

1) There is no specific laptop or computer I will recommend, but I will say, be wary of the inputs on the device. If you have one of the more recent Macbook's without a USB or Thunderbolt connector (now running Thunderbolt 3/USB-C only) then you will need to get an adaptor.

2) A DAW, is (in simple terms) the software you use. Depending on how some of your content may be, you may want software that has some more features. But, most Podcasts are pretty easy to record and don't require much in terms of high-tech, so, free software is pretty good for most Podcasters.

My 3 recommendations for FREE Software are:

- A) Cakewalk
- B) Audacity
- C) Garageband

To use the software, you don't have to be a full on genius, sound-engineer. However, you may want to use some tutorials on YouTube to get an idea on your chosen software just to be sure.



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Equipment (2)

3) There are many different options for mic's that you can choose from. Some need an audio interface*. Some microphones don't need that. Each mic serves a different purpose for recording, a field recorder**, a USB microphone***. A 'normal' mic will need an interface. It totally depends on just how much you're willing to spend on your equipment and how portable it needs to be. The other option is hiring out a Recording Studio and they will take care of the equipment for you.

* An interface is a small device that turns a microphones signal into electronic data for your computer. Seeing as you can't plug a conventional output in a laptop, an interface will allow you to plug your microphone in, then plug the interface into your laptop to record and capture.

** A field recorder is a handheld device you can carry around with you, that has built in storage to record on to. All you have to do is export your recordings using a cable or memory card (depending on recorder). You will often see reporters/journalists with them.

*** A USB mic is exactly what it says on the tin. A microphone with a USB output, meaning you can just slot the mic into your USB slot on your laptop/computer and go.



Recording

You're at the fun bit. The bit you've been waiting all this time to do. Before you start, you've come up with your content plan, you and the co-host are ready, know the flow of the Podcast, the direction and what you want to say. The guest(s) - if you have them - have been briefed and you're good to go.

Create a sheet for you and the co-host to read through and have in front of you. It should contain notes on your guest(s), the specific topics and content you have in the Podcast and some ideas on how to pull it back if the Podcast starts to go off-track.

Remember these points to get you through:

1) This is a pre-recorded Podcast, it's not live. Do not worry if you mess up, say something you shouldn't or go slightly off-topic initially. Editors will be able to cut out anything that goes slightly wrong.

2) For the first few episodes, plan to take double the time of the Podcast. If you plan on having your Podcast be 30 minutes, plan to take an hour. This acts as a buffer for you if the conversation goes off-track or a particular piece of content takes longer than you originally planned. If you keep to your original time, great. If you don't, you're ok. At least you've still got your guests and they don't have to run off, same with you and your co-host. The last thing you need in your first few podcasts is to be having really good conversations and segments then need to rush the last bit to keep within your time limit.



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Uploading (1)

Uploading your Podcast is relatively easy as a process, but choosing how and where to upload it can be difficult. You can find Podcast hosting platforms such as Buzzsprout, PodBean and Libsyn that will host the Podcast for you and upload it directly to Apple, Spotify, Google and more, providing you with the links and analytics. These platforms have different pricing schemes with different benefits. Anchor is another that is absolutely free to use. However, you get very limited rights over your own Podcast.

There's also sites like YouTube & SoundCloud. Now, I can guarantee without a shadow of a doubt that you've heard of and use YouTube. If my dad does, you do too. Trust me on that one. SoundCloud is a Music Industry leading audio platform used by everyone from singers, rappers, bands, radio stations, DJs and more. It's a platform dedicated to hosting audio. Both of these are FREE at the point of use and allow you to upload your Podcast. YouTube needs video in the background to be uploaded (this can be done via adding an image to the audio in a basic video editor).

Uploading (2)

Recap:

Buzzsprout, PodBean, Libsyn & other specific Podcast hosting platforms:

Pro's: Uploads to all major Podcast sites

Con's: Requires paid accounts to host. Varies depending on length & frequency of uploads.

Anchor:

Pro's: Uploads to all major podcast sites, free to use.

Con's: Limited rights over your podcast, very tough to get sponsorship.

YouTube:

Pro's: Unlimited & free uploading, widely trusted platform worldwide

Con's: Requires video background, doesn't have option to listen in background unless on computer.

SoundCloud:

Pro's: free at initial point of use, widely trusted and recognised platform.

Con's: paid version after 2 hours of audio.

Podcast with Us

Buzzin' Sounds will help you with your Podcast from start-to-finish. We work with a great team of people to help make your Podcast a huge success.

To start with we offer FREE one-hour consultations to turn your idea into an actual podcast.

We work with a fantastic content creator & podcast manager, Jennifer Banks. Jen has worked with the BBC and others working on pre-recorded, audio based broadcast content. Jen can help you write out plans, scripts, liaise with your guests and produce the content for you should you need it.

We have a top facility to help you record your podcast in a professional setting, as well as an engineer who will be with you and edit your podcast for you.

We can create a Podcast intro/outro for you.

We work with a fantastic graphic designer who can create branding for your Podcast, which includes artwork, a logo and social media graphics.

We work with a brilliant marketing aid who can help you market your Podcast on social media, and also build your PR. Our prices and packages are tailored to you and what you need. We can help you get it off the ground, help you organise it, or literally take you from start to finish.



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End

I hope you found this useful and helped you to turn your Podcast dream into a reality. It's important to remember that, while there's a lot to do, to think about and work that goes into the Podcast - enjoy yourself. Have fun. If it's not fun, if you don't enjoy yourself, don't do it. If you need any help or to talk further then feel free to get in contact with us at Buzzin' Sounds. We're happy to help!



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THANK YOU FOR READING!!!

If you would like to contact me, you can do so using the
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*Thank
you*

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