

Digital Resources Team: Guide to Podcasting

The following is a guide created by the Digital Resources Team to help you create a good podcast. It can help you structure your podcast and offers best practice as well as likely challenges you may encounter.

Opening Jingle

A short piece of music that cues the listener into which podcast they are listening to.

Introduction

Start by greeting the listener and then provide a brief introduction to yourself explaining who you are (name, role, relation to topic etc), the topic of the podcast (only brief), and who your guest/s is/are.

If you have multiple guests then it can be a good thing to point out if the guests are familiar with each other, work together etc, and if/how they represent different angles of a conversation or sides of a debate.

Introduction of guest/s

The guest/s can then introduce themselves, their name/s, job/s etc and why they are here to talk about the particular topic. If you have multiple guests then go in any order that works best. A friendly greeting to the listeners is always welcome.

Optional – Overview of how the conversation will play out

This is where you can talk about the topic a little and how you will approach discussing it i.e different categories you will break it down into, general ideas about what you will ask and talk about etc.

This gives the listener a good idea of what to expect and be interested about. If it works best to just go straight into the main overview or Section 1 then ignore this step.

Optional – Main overview of topic

This is where you start talking actual content and give a monologue about the talking points. This may be your position on the topic, a bit of background on the topic or any other interesting introduction/overview of the topic.

This section is only used if there is a bit of information that you want to provide to the listener separate from Question 1, although it can function as a long setup for question 1. It does not usually have any guest input. If guest input is needed, then you can skip this and move to Section 1.

Optional – Section 1: Main overview of section 1

If the topic is broken down into different sections, then this is the introduction to the first section. This functions the same as part 4, but on a more focused area. If there are no sections then skip this and just go straight to Question.

Question 1

You can then ask the guest the opening question on the topic. This is probably best to be a vaguer, more general question to introduce the topic.

Further Questions

Ask as many questions as you want. It is a good idea to get more and more precise/focused with each question, honing in on key talking points you wish to cover.

For the best podcasts though, it is usually best to try to steer the conversation by asking more natural follow up questions to whatever answers the guest provides. However, if a new area of interest opens up unexpectedly, this can be fun and interesting to explore. It will be up to you to decide to either go with natural flow or reign it back to the talking points. You will need to bear in mind the time/length of the podcast and how listeners will respond to these new sections. Some meandering off the expected talking points can be fun and interesting, but too much or down irrelevant areas can be off putting. It is advisable to take notes as the conversation flows so you can refer back to them to get back on track etc and for the conclusion.

It can usually be best to plan out your major talking points and send them as general ideas/concepts to the guest/s before the podcast and perhaps have some preliminary discussions. However, it is best to not provide them with the actual questions or discuss too in detail as then they will have a prepared stock answer that will not flow naturally as a conversation in the podcast.

It can be best to design your questions to have an interesting, slightly unexpected twist on them so that the guest/s approach the talking point from an interesting angle, however do not go too crazy as this will then stump the guest and create an awkward silence/pause as they struggle to think of how best to approach an answer.

The key to good podcasting is to try and create an interesting conversation that delves deep into the key areas with some interesting tangents occasionally sprouting off into new territory. It should not feel like an interview with back and forth question and answering. Because of this, short answers are not best and as the host you should also be contributing ideas to spin the guest/s off into new areas. The more guests you have however, the more interesting it can be to have them talk to each other. The best possible outcome is that the guests ask each other questions and talk between themselves with you facilitating the overall discussion bringing it back on topic when needed.

Optional – Section 2 and onwards

If the topic is broken down into different sections, then you can repeat parts 5-7 for each section. It is good to talk about how each section links together to each other and the overall topic.

If you have no other sections then you can skip to the next part.

Wrapping up

Ending a podcast can be difficult but you can take solace in the fact that it ideally should be difficult as the conversation should be flowing well. When you move towards the end

of the talking points/questions try to choose a point where you can naturally start to wrap up the conversation.

It can work well sometimes to ask a question that starts to finalize people's thoughts (this question can be provided to the guest/s in advance so they know to start finalizing).

In other times it may just work best to cut the conversation off at a decent point and say that you have run out of time etc and will have to come back to anything left hanging another time or listeners can find out in other ways (See next part).

Summary

Once the conversation is wrapped up, it can be best to provide a summary to listeners. You can refer back to your notes if you have made them.

Depending on the wrapping up part, it can be good to get each guest to contribute something to the summary, either their main take away or just any final thoughts.

If you have a final closing question to prompt this summary for your guests that you didn't ask in the wrap up, then you can also ask this now.

After you guest/s have said anything they wish to say it is usually best for you as the host to provide the final closing statement on the topic. It can work well to refer back to any opening question, or each question/talking point in general and look at where you have come from.

Try to not make the summary too long however as the listener has listened to it all as well. This should just be closing the loop you opening up at the start.

End of podcast/outro

To finish the podcast, you should thank the guests for coming and give them a chance to say goodbye/thankyou.

You can then tell the listener any extra information such as where to go to listen/watch more relevant content, where to find the guests information/work etc, and any information about yourself/your work such as websites, social media, or upcoming events.

If possible, you can then tell them when to tune back in and what will be being discussed next.

Finally, thank the listener for listening and say goodbye.

Closing Jingle

A short piece of music to close the podcast, usually a slightly different version to the opening jingle.



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