A Beginner's Guide to Starting a Church Podcast

Why start a podcast?

As of 2019, 32% of the US population is consuming podcast content monthly, and 22% are engaging weekly. The average weekly podcast consumer listens to 6+ hours of podcast episodes.
And what's more, 80% of podcast listeners listen to the entire episode or most of the episode.

If your church doesn't yet have a podcast, you're missing a significant opportunity to connect with people in the 167 hours each week that they're not at your church. Don't assume this podcast should be a replay of your weekend message. Think outside that box. This type of podcast could help you extend the reach of your church directly into people's lives as they live it.

1. Podcasts fit into people's very busy lives—they can take your content with them wherever they are.
2. Podcasting is a more intimate medium and helps you build relationships with your listeners.
3. Podcasting gives you relatively quick feedback on the effectiveness of your content. If your content doesn't connect you will see it reflected in the number of downloads.
4. Podcasts are easy to start!

Getting Started

If you're unsure how to get started, we've created a guide to help your launch.

1. **Listen to 3-5 podcasts of a variety of genres for at least a month.**
    a. Don't just pick other church podcasts. Get a feel for what makes podcasting so appealing to a third of the U.S. population by sampling different approaches.
    b. Note which become your favorites and for what reasons.
    c. Take note of their marketing strategy: How do they encourage listeners to connect with them beyond just tuning into the podcast?

2. **Choose a general topic direction.**
    a. How to apply _____ (current series topic) to your life
    b. Helping parents build faith in their kids
    c. How to read and understand the Bible

3. **Choose a release schedule and commit.**
   a. Choose monthly, weekly, every other week, etc. Or, consider deciding up front to release a set number of episodes as a "season." This is common in podcasting, and it can help you build an engaged audience quickly by giving them the ability to "binge" listen.
   b. Don't over-commit and make it hard to meet your deadlines.

4. **Create a schedule for recording your episodes.**
   a. Record several weeks in advance.
   b. Give yourself margin to edit and create supporting material.

5. **Get some podcasting equipment and recording software**
   a. A computer or other digital recording device
      i. If you have a Mac, use the default recording application called Garageband. It's free and has built in podcasting presets.
      ii. If you're using another recording device you'll eventually need a computer to upload the podcast audio onto your host site.
   b. Microphones
      i. **The Blue Yeti** is a good quality USB microphone that requires no additional audio converter.
      ii. **The Heil PR 40** is a professional level microphone that does require an additional audio converter.
      iii. **The Shure SM7B** is another professional level microphone many podcasters use.
   c. Audio Converter (if you aren't using a USB microphone)
      i. **The Focusrite Scarlett** line is widely used by podcasters as a converter to get the audio from your microphone into your computer and on your recording software.
   d. Recording Software (if you're using a PC)
      i. **Audacity** is a free, open source platform that works nicely for podcasting.
      ii. **Adobe Audition** is a more powerful recording platform that requires a monthly subscription of $21.

6. **Record and edit your podcast**
   a. If you don't know how, hire someone to help. You can hire podcasting editors on both **Fiverr** and **Upwork**.
   b. The listening experience matters. If you want people to keep tuning in, invest in it.

7. **Upload your podcast to a hosting service.**
   a. **Libsyn** is one of the top hosting services and provides great support and data tracking to help you gauge the effectiveness of your content.
   b. **Soundcloud** has both free and subscription based hosting available for podcasters.
   c. **Simplecast** is another option for podcasters who need options like a themed website for their show and a wide platform distribution.

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8. **Launch your podcast, learn from the data, and create helpful content.**
   Great content is key and takes time to create. Results will be tied directly to the strength of your content.

Bonus Ideas

- Create some artwork that matches your church's brand to use on podcasting platforms like iTunes and Stitcher where they feature cover art.
- Make sure you use a pop filter in front of your microphones. They eliminate the loud pops when you enunciate your P's and B's.
- Connect with other podcasters in your area or online. Share what you're learning.
- Create a simple plan to give listeners a way to engage with you up front—a landing page with a form to opt-in to an email list that fires off an email when new episodes are released. Or a social media handle to follow and instructions for how to engage in the conversation. Make your plan up front so you can point your listeners to it in your audio recordings.