

The 8 Step Guide to Podcast Marketing Basics

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Introduction

This guide was assembled in preparation for a briefing I did with the US Department of Health and Human Services, in concert with the CDC, NIH, HRSA, and a few other federal agencies. As my tax dollars go to pay for their new media efforts, I figured I'd post up a few recipes for podcast marketing here to help them get the most bang for my bucks.

I'll be using the Financial Aid Podcast as the example for the duration of this guide. To see the site in its full glory, visit:

<http://www.FinancialAidPodcast.com>

There's a lot more to podcast marketing and marketing in general than this short little eBook guide can offer. This guide is intended only to give you a broad overview of some of the basics of podcast marketing. I'm intentionally giving a miss to more complex marketing topics such as affiliate marketing, viral marketing, etc. because the basics need to be in place before you can do anything else.

This guide also assumes that you have a podcast, that you've already created at least one episode, and that you have a web site & blog to support your podcast.

Ready to get started?



Cover Photo Credit: [CC Chapman](#)

by Christopher S. Penn. Learn more at www.ChristopherSPenn.com on the web.

Is your podcast worth talking about?

Nothing can replace great content. No amount of marketing will improve your content, and if your content stinks, it doesn't matter what you do to market it, because you'll lose people just as fast as you gain them.

Your content has to be compelling, unique, and remarkable or nothing else matters.

In the words of marketing guru Seth Godin, your content has to be worth talking about, worth sharing, worth spreading or your marketing will be for naught.

Resources that will help:

- ◆ Presentation Zen, by Garr Reynolds
- ◆ Purple Cow, by Seth Godin
- ◆ Free Prize Inside, by Seth Godin
- ◆ Made to Stick, by Chip and Dan Heath



Is your podcast syntactically correct?

More podcasts are killed, broken, or otherwise unusable by bad RSS feeds. If you're producing a podcast, use Feedburner. Feedburner will automatically clean up your podcast's RSS feed, make minor corrections, and alert you to major corrections that need to be made for it to be accepted by most podcast listening software.

You can use your own brand, URLs, and everything with Feedburner so that if you choose one day to leave them, you don't strand your subscribers, but Feedburner is the bee's knees for podcast feeds. I recommend the options shown to the right for Feedburner's services.

On the web:

<http://www.Feedburner.com>

Feedburner is free to use.

↓ SERVICES

✓ **BrowserFriendly**
Make subscribing simpler

✓ **SmartCast**
Podcasting and iTunes settings

✓ **SmartFeed**
Ensure maximum compatibility

✓ **FeedFlare™**
Build interactivity into each post

Link Splicer

Photo Splicer

✓ **Geotag Your Feed**

✓ **Feed Image Burner**

✓ **Title/Description Burner**

Convert Format Burner

✓ **Content-Type Burner**

Summary Burner

Event Feed

✓ **Tickerize**

Amazon ID Burner

Can you find your podcast easily?

A podcast is not text or a document, so the usual rules for publishing text don't apply - you can't rely on Google to index your podcast audio and video files to make them findable in search results the way you can with a regular web page. Thus, **make your podcast obvious on your web site**. How obvious? *Painfully obvious*. If you have the ability and option to do so, dedicate an entire web site just to your podcast so that it's free from the distraction of other content that your organization, company, or agency wants to promote.

Consider buying a domain name that reflects the nature of the web site, such as FinancialAidPodcast.com. FinancialAidPodcast.com is a clear, unambiguous name that tells you exactly what the site is about.

Make your podcast the only featured item on the site. Compare and contrast:



Podcast



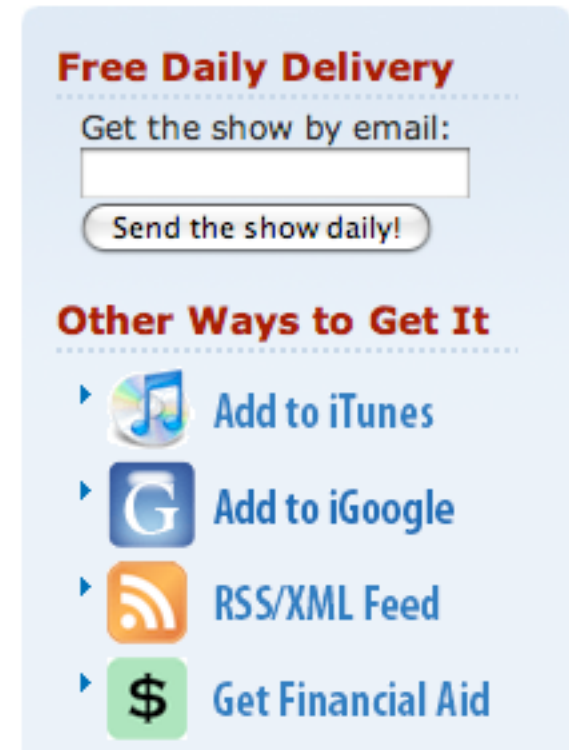
Can you subscribe to the podcast easily?

Not everyone knows what an RSS feed is, or what it does. Not everyone uses iTunes to watch/listen to podcasts. There are still plenty of folks whose interactions online are confined to browsing web pages and reading email. To get the most number of people to enjoy your podcast, provide as many options as practical for them to get your podcast.

Offer your podcast through iTunes, through Google Reader, with straight RSS for the tech-savvy, and by email for those who want to use their email software or service to be notified about new shows.

Feedburner, mentioned in the first section, offers a subscribe by email option that you can offer your audience.

As much as possible, work to **ensure that subscribing to your podcast is as close to one click as possible**. Do all the hard work on the back end, on the server, so that your audience has to do as little work as possible.



Is there a free sample?

Even with the multitude of options for subscribing to podcasts, not everyone will choose to subscribe. The best way to ensure that as many casual visitors to your web site subscribe as possible is to make each episode downloadable and consumable right on your web site.

Once a potential audience member visits an episode's page, they should see immediately obvious ways to **LISTEN NOW** or **WATCH NOW** with nothing to install or subscribe to. Immediate gratification and fulfillment helps greatly to get someone to commit to being a subscriber.


Give your audience members detailed show notes for each episode. This will help those who are skimming the web to quickly look at the content of your show and determine if it's right for them, and will also give Google a chance to read your site and make it findable in their catalog.

Audio and video plugins exist to **make your show literally one click** away from a listen or a view.

FAP822: Jobcast - how to interview well, unintended consequences

June 19th, 2008 | [Edit](#)

[▶ FAP822: Jobcast - how to interview well, unintended consequences](#)

Listen now: 

Student Financial Aid News

+ [Inside Higher Ed](#): The White House and Congressional negotiators reached a deal Wednesday night on war spending, including a plan to dramatically expand college assistance for veterans, effectively providing the cost of education at any public institution in veterans' states, the Associated Press reported. Details will be released today and apparently include some provisions backed by Republicans who feared that a package that was too attractive might discourage re-enlistments.

+ [NASFAA](#): "The nation's community colleges want the authority to deny some of their own students the right to take out a [federally subsidized loan](#). The colleges think that some students won't get jobs with salaries large enough to pay back the debt," The Chronicle of Higher Education reports. "Officials of the American Association of Community Colleges said this week that they were stepping up efforts to win enactment of legislation that would give their colleges the authority to reduce the amounts that some students could borrow under the [federal programs](#). The change is necessary because colleges now have no way to prevent a student from seeking a [student loan](#) that doesn't make economic sense, given the student's long-term job prospects, said David S. Baime, the association's vice president for government relations."

+ As a reminder, if your [federal student aid](#) doesn't meet your needs, you can investigate [private student loans](#) - but be careful

+ This kind of thing could inadvertently create a larger market for [private student loans](#) - beware of unintended consequences!

Are you marketing where your audience is?

Build it and they will come doesn't work any more in social media. There are just too many channels, too many options for someone to randomly stumble on your podcast. Today, marketing your podcast is about finding out who your audience is, where they congregate online, and letting them know about your show.

Start by doing a "buyer persona". Develop an idea of who is in your current audience and who you want to attract to your podcast. For your existing audience, ask them questions on surveys and polls to gather as much demographic data as possible. Create a composite profile or profiles of your audience, current or desired.

For example, the Financial Aid Podcast has a Grey Zone Student persona as one of its audience types. This is the college student or college-bound student who comes from a middle income family in suburban America. This student is between 17-21 years of age, from a household with a median income of \$50,000, and is too "rich" to qualify for financial aid that's purely need-based, but not "rich" enough to pay for college out of pocket.



The Grey Zone Student typically is academically above average, qualifies for a number of scholarships, but may not get them because they don't know that those scholarships exist. The role of the Financial Aid Podcast in the Grey Zone Student's life is to help build awareness of scholarships and grants, and provide student lending options to meet the cost of education. Grey Zone Students typically are involved in both MySpace and Facebook as online communities, with a leaning towards Facebook.

Knowing all of this from surveys, from analyzing existing mailing lists, and from anecdotal comments, if I want to increase the number of Grey Zone Students who listen to my show, I can use existing marketing tools to narrowly focus on them.

On the next page you'll see an example of demographic targeting on MySpace and Facebook to find "friends" for the Financial Aid Podcast who fit the Grey Zone Student persona, the starting point for social media marketing.

The 8 Step Guide to Podcast Marketing Basics

Browse Users

BasicAdvanced

Set Browse Criteria

Full NetworkMy Friends

Browse For:

☐ Women
☐ Men
☒ Both

between ages:

18 and 21

who are:

☐ Single
☐ In a Relationship
☐ Swinger

☐ Married
☐ Divorced
☐ Engaged

and are here for:

☐ Dating
☒ Networking
☐ Relationships
☒ Friends

located within:

Country: United States
Postal Code: 5 miles from 02169

photos:

☒ Show only users who have photos
☒ Show name and photo only

Personal Info:

Ethnicity:

☐ Asian
☐ Black/African
☐ East Indian
☐ Latino/Hispanic
☐ Middle Eastern

☐ Native Amer.
☐ Other
☐ Pac. Islander
☐ White

Body type:

☐ Slim/Slim
☐ Average
☐ More to love

☐ Athletic
☐ Little extra
☐ Body builder

Height:

☐ Between 3' 0" and 7' 11"
☒ No preference

Background & Lifestyle:

Smoker:

☐ Both
☐ No
☐ Yes

Drinker:

☐ Both
☐ No
☐ Yes

Orientation:

☐ Straight
☐ Bi

☐ Gay
☐ Not sure

Education:

☒ High school
☒ In college
☐ Grad school

Religion:

No preference

Income:

\$45,000 to \$60,000

Children:

No preference

Sort Results By: Recently UpdatedLast LoginNew to MySpaceDistance

I want to reach people between 17 and 21 years old in the United States who are in college.

≈ 5,119,280 people

Location: United States
EverywhereBy State/ProvinceBy City

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age: 17 - 21

Keywords:
(interests, favorite music, movies, etc.)

Education Status: ☐ All ☐ College Grad ☒ In College ☐ In High School

Colleges:
Major:
Year: ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior

Workplaces:
Relationship Status: ☐ Single ☐ In a Relationship ☐ Engaged ☐ Married

Interested In: ☐ Men ☐ Women

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Are you reminding people to share?

One of the easiest ways to attract new audience members to your show is to ask your existing audience to tell a friend about the show. Take the time in every episode to remind your audience of your web site and ask them to recommend the show to a friend or two. Encourage them to help their less tech-savvy friends get set up with iTunes, Google Reader, or the software/service of your choice.

Give people tools to share your show, such as graphics, text links, widgets, and other options.

Word of mouth is one of the best means of marketing your podcast, but you must be vigilant and persistent in **telling people what you want them to do and making it as easy as possible for them to do so.**

If you have a blog, podcast, MySpace page, Facebook page, or web site, I would so appreciate if you could help share the show. Here are some easy ways to share the show!

1. Add a **text link** to your site - just copy and paste:

```
<a href="http://www.financialaidpodcast.com">Financial  
Aid Podcast Daily Free Internet Radio</a>
```

What it will look like:

[Financial Aid Podcast Daily Free Internet Radio](http://www.financialaidpodcast.com)

2. Add a **small graphic badge** to your site - just copy and paste:

```
<a href="http://www.financialaidpodcast.com"></a>
```

What it will look like:



3. Add a **Yahoo Easy Listener** to your site - just copy and paste:

```
<embed src='http://webjay.org/flash/xspf_player'  
width='400' height='72' wmode='transparent'  
flashVars='playlist_url=http://www.financialaidpodcast.co  
type='application/x-shockwave-flash'  
pluginspage='http://www.adobe.com/go/getflashplayer' />
```



Are you measuring your success?

Without a metric for understanding your progress, you won't know what marketing efforts are working or not working. Statistics for measuring podcasts can vary wildly, from visits to a web site to downloads of an episode to non-media metrics.

Whatever statistic you choose to measure on, it's more important to **pay attention to trends** than any individual, discrete data point. If you choose, for example, Feedburner subscriber numbers, are your numbers in a 30 day period going up on average or down? If you choose downloads, are episodes being downloaded more or less in a 90 day period? If you choose web site traffic, do you have more or fewer visitors over the last 30 days?

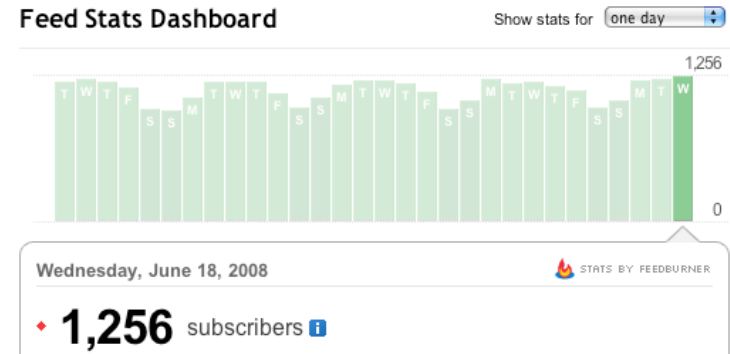
As much as possible, try to **focus on a metric that involves some form of commitment** from the audience, whether it's signing up for a mailing list or newsletter, buying a DVD, taking out a student loan, volunteering at an event, or whatever fits your business or organizational equivalent of a "sale" or "conversion".

Resources:

<http://www.Feedburner.com>

<http://www.Google.com/analytics>

<http://www.LibSyn.com>



About the Author

A visionary in new media with an intuitive sense for how marketing and community outreach should be done, [Christopher S. Penn](http://www.ChristopherSPenn.com) is the Chief Technology Officer of the [Student Loan Network](http://www.StudentLoanNetwork.com), founder and producer of the multi-award winning [Financial Aid Podcast](http://www.FinancialAidPodcast.com) internet radio show, co-founder of the groundbreaking [PodCamp](http://www.PodCamp.org) New Media Community unConference, and co-host of the [Marketing Over Coffee](http://www.MarketingOverCoffee.com) marketing podcast.

Mr. Penn has been called upon for expert information by researchers for the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Aid, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the US Department of Education, as well as having been highly sought after for conferences and private intensive seminars.

Mr. Penn has spoken before diverse audiences ranging from executives of major venture capital firms, to state Departments of Education heads, to aspiring college students looking to make their mark on the world. He travels around the world to present on new media topics, from Stockholm to Boston.

Mr. Penn has also been featured in many books, newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and the New York Times, magazines such as BusinessWeek and US News & World Report, television, and publications for his leadership in new media and financial services.

<http://www.ChristopherSPenn.com>
<http://www.FinancialAidPodcast.com>
<http://www.MarketingOverCoffee.com>
<http://www.PodCamp.org>



As seen in:



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