

Podcasting Guide & Checklist

As a virtual assistant to online entrepreneurs who like to podcast, I've researched and experimented with multiple podcasting hosting providers, editor tools and processes.

Today, I have the joy of hosting a podcast of my own so I understand even better how the whole process comes together.

And you know what? It's a whole lot easier than you might think!

Here I'm boiling down what I know in a big-picture, time-saving guide for aspiring budget-minded podcasters who want a simple way to just get started.

Enjoy! – Kristen Iaffaldano

Note: I may receive commissions when you click my links and make purchases. However, I only share tools I use or have researched and can confidently recommend.

Tech Holding You Back? It's Okay to Keep it Simple.

Good news! All you really need for creating a podcast is a **mic** for quality sound, a **host** to store and share your podcast to all the directories and an **editing tool** to make podcast creation and refinement easy and professional-sounding. Easy as 1-2-3!

Top Tech Recommendations

1. **BLUE YETI MIC.** Hands down, the Blue Yeti is the most recommended USB mic I've seen for beginners and veterans alike. And my own experience has been top-notch. It's affordable, too (just in the \$100 range).

Tip: To eliminate background noise, speak to the side of the mic (not the very top), 6 to 10 inches away. Also, turn the "gain" knob way down and use the mic in cardioid mode.

[Link: Blue Yeti Mic](#)

2. **BUZZSPROUT.** Every podcast needs a host and this one is quickly becoming an industry fave at a reasonable price. And I absolutely love that you're able to submit your podcast to all the popular directories with the click of a button. Buzzsprout is like Libsyn, only more user-friendly and with more podcast marketing features. You can go with the free plan, but you'll likely want the lowest paid plan which is about \$12 a month.

Buzzsprout will send you a \$20 Amazon gift card during your second month of hosting when you purchase through my link.

[Link: Buzzsprout](#)

3. **ALITU.** When I discovered Alitu, I cried for joy. Well, almost! I've been searching for a drag and drop editing tool like this for a while. Record directly into the editor or upload different audio segments and then drag them around exactly where you like. You can also fade intro and outro music with the click of a button. Alitu also has a free music library.

Tip: Sign up for Buzzsprout to get their members code for 50% off Alitu your first three months.

[Link: Alitu](#)

THE BIG PICTURE

These six phases give you a solid overview of every step you'll need to take — in the best order — to make your podcast a reality.

Phase 1: The Plan

1. Determine your topic and desired audience. Be sure to choose something in your expertise that you enjoy sharing with others.
2. Determine your title. Keep it short with keywords. Don't try to get too clever. You want your audience to see at a glance exactly what they can expect from listening.
3. Determine your format and style (will you collaborate with a co-host, go the monologue route or will you interview guests regularly?). One of the advantages of including guest interviews is giving extra rich content to your your listeners as well as exposing your podcast to the wider audience your guest provides. If you

from WorkingUpward.com

don't quite feel ready for interviewing guests, that's okay. Remember, the key is to just get started.

4. Determine your episode length and publishing frequency. Do you want daily 15 minute episodes, weekly 30 minute episodes or bi-weekly hour-long episodes – or another combination that works better for you? Once you decide, stay consistent! In most cases, consistency is more important than frequency or length.
5. Determine if or how you will monetize your podcast. Two of the simplest and easiest ways to monetize at the beginning is to promote a product you already own or sell (such as an online course) or to share an affiliate link to a product or service you know and love. By the way, [Buzzsprout](#) has recently launched an affiliate service as part of its hosting plan, making monetizing your podcast especially easy to do.
6. Determine your episode structure (your audio segments and what order they go in). Types of segments include teaser, intro, advertisements, listener feedback, Q/A, request for reviews, outro and more.
7. Brainstorm your first 100 podcast topics. This will ensure your topic has longevity and you know you have plenty to talk about. You'll also feel extra motivated to just get started!
8. Set an official launch date, keeping in mind that you should have at least three episodes published by then so new listeners can get a solid feel of what to expect from your podcast.

Phase 2: Prepare

1. Listen to podcasts regularly yourself to see what works for others. Note what you like and what you don't like.
2. Choose a microphone. I like the [Blue Yeti](#) for its affordability and ease of use. It's one of the most popular starter mics out there and I can see why.
3. Choose your podcast host. Libsyn is one of the longest-standing ones out there, but [Buzzsprout](#) has everything Libsyn offers for the same price with extra benefits: it's incredibly user friendly and comes with marketing tools to help you spread the word about your podcast.
4. Choose your editing software. If you're on a really tight budget and consider yourself a techie, go with Audacity or GarageBand included with your Mac. They're both free. I pay for [Alitu](#) to save time and it's worth it for me.

Phase 3: Create

1. Create or outsource your podcast cover design. I used [Canva Pro](#) to design my own but you can outsource your design through a site like [99Designs](#). Your cover art needs to be 1400 px by 1400 px and should be eye-catching. Text should be minimal and easy to read.
2. Write a compelling yet brief summary of your episode to use in podcast directories like Apple, Spotify and iHeart Radio. I know [Buzzsprout](#) makes it easy to publish to all the popular directories and podcast listening apps.
3. Outline or script your first 3 episodes. If you think well "on the fly" an outline is your best bet. If you can sound natural reading a script (a rare gift) and prefer that, then definitely go that route.
4. Write and record your standard intro, outro, and if you like, advertisement scripts.
5. Create a "waitlist" sign-up page to share with your friends, family, business customers, etc). This builds excitement and gives you the accountability to stick with your plan and get your podcast out there!
6. Record your first episode in QuickTime (Apple) or the Voice Recorder App (Windows) or directly in Alitu. Don't worry about it sounding perfect. The more you get used to hearing your voice, the more comfortable you'll feel.
7. Build your first episode by importing your primary audio files, sound effects and specific segments such as advertisements into your editing tool.
8. Edit your first episode. Again, this can be done through free software like Audacity or GarageBand or through a paid service like Alitu. Editing at its most basic includes taking out "ums" and "ahs" (unless you want to keep those in for a more conversational tone). I recommend starting with basic editing and learning advanced editing techniques as you go. Again, your first priority is to just get started!

Stage 4: Leverage

Stage 4 is all about leveraging your website to support your podcast.

1. Create a podcast-centered website (like [WorkingUpward.com](#)) or at least dedicating a landing page to your show. It helps your most engaged listeners learn more about you and your purpose.
2. Create show notes (I do these as blog posts). These can be brief, containing only links mentioned in the episode or longer with complete outlines, a summary or entire episode transcription.
3. Create episode related online resources you can share with your listeners like cheat sheets, PDF summaries and in-depth "how to" guides. Offer these free resources in exchange for your listeners' email addresses to grow your email list while also serving your audience.

4. Create special pages for affiliate resources (if you monetize). For example, if you sign up as an affiliate for XYZ mattress company, create your own web page with your own branding why you recommend XYZ and then direct listeners to yourdomain.com/xyz.

Stage 5: Launch

1. Upload your first 3 episodes to your [hosting provider](#). It's okay if your episodes are out there in cyberspace before your official launch. Someone may stumble across it, but it's not likely until you start promoting it and it gets some traction. Also, some directories take a few days before publishing – especially Apple – so I recommend publishing a week ahead of your launch date.
2. Generate social media excitement before you launch. Use a tool like Wavve or the basic one included in Buzzsprout to turn audio file teasers into social videos.
3. Email your podcast waiting list regularly beginning at least a month before launching. Be bold in creatively requesting reviews and offering giveaways in exchange for launch participation.
4. Announce your live podcasts on your selected launch date.
5. Celebrate and enjoy your accomplishment.

Stage 6: Keep Creating

1. Stay consistent in publishing your podcast episodes. The easiest and most effective way to do this is to block out the time you need to plan and record your podcast every week and mark it on your calendar. Another great way to stay consistent is to batch your podcasting tasks. For example, outline several podcasts at a time or record several podcasts at a time.
2. Constantly look for ways to improve your content and strategy. The world of podcasting is still evolving and you need to grow with it!
3. Routinely request feedback and encourage engagement for your listeners so you can keep creating relevant and helpful content.

Ultimate Podcasting Checklist

- Determine your topic and audience.
- Determine your title.
- Determine your format and style.
- Determine your episode length and frequency.
- Determine if or how you will monetize your podcast.
- Determine your episode structure.
- Brainstorm your first 100 episode topics.
- Set a launch date.
- Choose your microphone.
- Choose your hosting provider.
- Choose your editing software.
- Create (or outsource) your cover art design.
- Write a brief summary of your podcast to include in directories.
- Create a sign-up page to generate excitement.
- Outline or script your first 3 episodes.
- Script your standard intro, outro and at least one advertisement to use on a regular basis.
- Record your first episode audio segments (intro, outro, advertisement, request for reviews, teaser and primary content).
- Build and edit your first episode.
- Create a podcast-centered website or landing page (optional).
- Create show notes for first episode. Note: If you opt out of a dedicated website or landing page, you can add your show notes to your public podcast page included with your hosting plan.
- Create episode-related online resources.
- Create affiliate pages.
- Upload first episode to your hosting provider and follow the instructions.
- Generate excitement through emails and social media posts.
- Launch with at least three episodes, an announcement and lots of sharing on social media.