

ReadyTalk Whitepaper:

Podcasting for Business

Learn how this engaging communication tool can benefit your organization

You've discovered the fun and convenience of listening to podcasts — it's time to start thinking about ways that podcasting could benefit your organization. What kinds of podcasts could you do? What could they do for you? And what do you need to know to plan a podcast for your organization?

Count the Ways

Podcasting has become one of many ways companies can reach out to customers and investors — like blogs, news feeds, newsletters and other communications. Through iTunes, your company website and other channels, you can attract a growing audience for your podcasts.

The myriad options for putting podcasts to good business use include:

- Commentary
- Interviews
- Backgrounders
- Hot topics
- Media releases
- Event announcements
- Tips and tricks
- News updates
- Specialized industry news
- Investor news
- White papers or scientific research papers
- Conference session recordings
- Trade show updates
- In-house news or organizational updates delivered via intranet
- Training modules, enhancement or reinforcement
- Sales meeting information
- Product update information
- Policies and procedures communication
- And more!

Expand Your Reach

Podcasts represent one of the best ways to reach a wide variety of audiences. Here's why:

- **Automatic Delivery.** With no effort on the part of the listener, podcasting software downloads the latest news or programs automatically. Before podcasting became available, you could make a recording and put it on your website — but now people can automatically receive new programming without having to go to a specific site and download it from there.

- **Easy Publication.** Your content can be instantly distributed — simply copy the feed URL to iTunes, iPodder, Feedburner or your intranet. Podcasting allows individuals and organizations to publish (podcast) audio content that, once subscribed to, can be instantly distributed to thousands of interested listeners.

Find Your Voice

When you enter the world of podcasting, you're stepping into a realm where everyone can find their voice and broadcast their opinions to the world. Perhaps you, too, might feel the urge to become a podcaster!

Here's how to create a podcast in six easy steps.

- 1. Record.** To record your audio content, you can use:
 - A service like ReadyTalk to record your online audio and web content and save it in digital format.
 - A digital voice recorder with a plug-in microphone, or the microphone that came with your computer (although these recording options offer limited audio quality)
 - Professional microphones, audio editing and mixing hardware and software, and backup systems
- 2. Save.** Save your audio content in the form of a digital audio file. Use MP3 format to make your content readily usable by any of the popular portable digital audio devices.
- 3. Upload.** After you create and format your recorded file, you place it in the enclosure tag of an RSS 2.0 feed and upload the file to your website server. The only requirement is that the file be accessible through some known URI (a general-purpose Internet address). This file is often referred to as one episode of a podcast.
- 4. Feed.** You'll then acknowledge the existence of that file (or episode) by referencing it in another file known as the feed. The feed is a list of the URLs by which episodes can be accessed. Published in RSS format, this list provides other information, such as publish dates, titles and text descriptions of the series and each of its episodes. The feed may contain entries for all episodes in the series, but is typically limited to a short list of the most recent episodes.
- 5. Post.** Post your audio content to a Web server where you can store your audio files (your website or blog host can help you with this part). The location where the feed is posted is expected to be permanent and is known as the feed URL.
- 6. Promote.** Creating a podcast is only half of the work. Increase your exposure and recruit additional viewers or listeners by telling the world that your podcast is available. Some promotional ideas include:

Survey Says...

A recent survey of business and IT professionals on the emerging role of podcasts in business reveals that:

- Some 41 percent of respondents said they have listened to podcasts on more than one occasion
- 57 percent of frequent podcast listeners said their biggest challenge with podcasts is the scarcity of interesting content
- Nearly 60 percent of respondents said information on business or technology topics currently delivered as whitepapers or analyst reports would be more interesting as podcasts

- Graphics — Add a graphic to your website to let visitors know that podcasts and RSS feeds are available.
- Descriptive Content — Grab the interest of listeners by including keyword-rich information about the podcast content in the RSS feed.
- Press Releases — Distribute a media release about the podcast to media in your company's industry, as well as to free online press release directories.
- Podcast Directories — Tap a whole new audience by submitting your podcasts to the podcast directories, which contain podcasts that cover a wide variety of topics. For a list of podcasting directories, visit <http://www.podcasting-tools.com/submit-podcasts.htm>.

Because podcasting is a relatively new technology and not everyone understands or knows what podcasting is, be sure to include instructions on your website about how users can listen to your podcasts, and how your podcasts will help listeners.

That's it! When people learn that you've posted a fresh audio file, they can download that file to their computer or MP3 player and listen whenever — and wherever — it's convenient for them.

Make a Plan

Affordable. Easy. Accessible. Podcasting offers a powerful tool for reaching a wide range of audiences with your company's messages. Become part of this new way of communicating. It's time to plan a podcast for your organization!

Tips for Creating Great Podcasts

Be Interesting and Consistent

Don't turn off listeners who have subscribed to your podcasts! Interesting content that is consistently formatted will gradually increase your listening base.

Create a Community

Encourage feedback and dialogue with your listeners. Remember that your podcasts are for them, not you — so be sure to listen to their feedback and test their suggestions.