TOOL | PODCASTING

Podcasts offer an opportunity to share ideas in an easily accessible manner, using storytelling and narrative audio to illustrate key ideas, reach new or expanded audiences, offer diverse learning approaches (e.g., for auditory learners), and make for a more compelling or high impact impression of some of the material.

WHY MAKE A PODCAST?

Podcasts can help community organizations extend their reach, engaging both new and long-term supporters, and bringing key issues to life. Given the work required, and the visible presence of an organization's brand, it is important to clarify the role of the podcast relative to the overall engagement strategy, as well as the intended audience. Both factors will help to articulate an ideal tone for the podcast.

Other key questions include:
- Ownership: Independent product? Organizational support? Organizational ownership?
- Number of episodes: Pilot vs. ongoing
- Podcast name (and remember to check that your final choices aren't already in use)

ASSEMBLING THE TOOLS AND TALENT

Will you work alone, or with a team? In addition to a shared vision, look for members that can offer expertise with regard to storyboarding, interviewing, potential transcription, editing and technical work, as well as marketing and promotion.

Equipment: Great podcasts can be made with bare-bones equipment. A good microphone is worthwhile, and can either be part of a recorder (e.g., Zoom H2N) or plugged directly into a computer equipped with audio editing software (e.g., Audacity, Adobe Audition, ProTools). Other key tools include:
- Recording space (small and preferably carpeted)
- Software for recording phone interviews (e.g., Call Recorder companion for Skype)
- Music (intro/outro) and rights
- Accounts on hosting platforms and podcast directories: SoundCloud and iTunes
- Marketing/promo materials

Promotional materials, while not required, can help reaching listeners. These include: a logo, podcast website, social media accounts, and an email address for listeners to contact you.

Time commitment: the time required to produce an episode will vary, depending on how tightly you intend to script your show, the amount of editing you want to do, and the length of time you set aside for interviews.

RESOURCES

- A quick "how to" guide to podcasting from Lifehacker, including equipment options, and a step-by-step guide to posting material: http://lifehacker.com/how-to-start-your-own-podcast-1709798447

- Making great sound: www.Transom.org offers excellent tutorials on tools and techniques

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I N S T I T U T E