



MakeYourStory

A Collaboration of Purdue Libraries and School of Information Studies and
The Brian Lamb School of Communication

Episode 3: How Research Can Support the Success of Your Podcast

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SH: Hello and welcome *MakeYourStory*, episode three. Today's episode is about researching how your podcast fits into the podcast landscape and then marketing it. This series is a collaboration between the Purdue University Libraries and School of Information Studies and the Brian Lamb School of Communication. My name is Sarah Huber and I'm an assistant professor in the Purdue Libraries. Today's episode is going to be led by our co-host Dr. Annette Bochenek. Annette is an assistant professor in the Purdue Libraries where one of her liaison areas is entrepreneurship. She has one of our research marketing gurus. She manages the Hometowns to Hollywood blog in which she profiles her trips to the hometowns of classic Hollywood stars. She also hosts a film series by the same name. She has been featured on Turner Classic movies, A regular columnist for Turner Classic Movies, *Classic Movie Hub* and *Silent Film Quarterly*, her articles have also appeared in *Nostalgia Digest*, *The Dark Pages Film Noir Newsletter*, and *Chicago Art Deco Society Magazine*. Thank you. Annette thank you for leading this discussion.

AB: Thanks so much. Thanks for having me as sort of a, in a guest capacity in this time around.

SH: Yeah. I'm really excited about this topic. I think we all want to know how to market our podcast and get listeners, like this is such an important element to publishing your podcast.

AB: Absolutely. Yeah, it's so fun to just have a podcast to begin with and know what, what do you love to talk about, but it's even more fun when you have an audience to engage with. And I think that's, that's the aim here.

SH: With that in mind. Is there a way to research your idea to see if others are already covering it?

AB: Definitely, yeah. Well, one thing that definitely helps is just knowing what it is that you want to talk about. So once you're focused on a subject, you can really hone in on that and embrace that and, and move forward with it. But you'll definitely want to look into researching and seeing what is already out there. And probably one of, one of the more obvious moves is to see what podcasts already exist on the subject. So in the case of some of my interests, I'm really interested in like classic Hollywood, um, old, old films, that type of thing. And there are lots and lots of podcasts that are out there and available on the subject, which to me is still, it feels very niche. But once you go and look at the different types of podcasts

that are out there, you can see how each podcast and each host has their own sort of special twist on things. Like maybe they, their podcast falls into this broader array of old Hollywood or classic film, but they focus on maybe something in particular regarding the era.

Maybe they focus on a key women actresses, for example. Or maybe films from a certain year, even things like that are interesting to think about in terms of what you could potentially bring to the table. Once you settle on whatever your broader area of interest is going to be, and then think about what it is about your podcasts that is going to be different or special. And that's just one approach of many. You could also look for who your audience is in general, in terms of maybe doing a Google search and seeing what websites exist on the subject. Are there certain like websites or message boards that essentially sort of have the same base of people who are following maybe a certain area of interest that you're also interested in? Maybe there's fans of a certain, like, uh, like a film, for example. Uh, going with my classic Hollywood, uh, example once again, who are really engaged in, in a particular film or time period, uh, something like that.

So, uh, really, I, I think, uh, in terms of research, it can be as broad as looking to see what people are saying about your topic or area of interest and what's been published on it. Certainly, maybe what people are talking about on social media, in relation to the subject too, but also you could get into even more, more formal research and delve into different databases. So totally switching gears and looking at business, for example, you could look at what types of business podcasts exist. Are there certain industry related podcasts that exist, uh, and you can look into databases about different industries or do some market research and see what, what products or technologies are in Vogue and what people are saying about it. It's interesting.

SH: Okay. So you listed a number of things. One is just a good old fashioned search on the different podcast platform, like on a certain topic, typing that in and seeing what comes up. I like your, um, you know, looking at websites, just doing a Google search, seeing what websites are out there, blogs, different types of social media. What are people talking about. Also, what came to mind when you said that was, if you start getting involved in these, why not just ask people what they want to hear about, right? Like if you're on social media, maybe it's just a good opportunity to ask people what they want to hear.

AB: Absolutely, yeah. What are they already listening to that maybe they, they love in terms of podcasts or whatever else they, they follow to, uh, to, to get that enjoyment or, uh, yeah, what, what they wish they could hear about, what stories they want to, um, to hear told.

SH: And then your business databases. That's interesting, especially at Purdue campus, there's a lot, um, in terms of making podcasts, podcasts about something people have made researching, what is in high demand, what is selling. You know those people out there, that's being talked about. That and how can you, how can you turn those things into stories? Not that things that don't sell really well don't have an interesting story.

AB: That could even be a more interesting story. Honestly, just the flops that are out there, it doesn't sell, but it has a good story behind it. Yea, but yeah, absolutely. Just about everything has, has a story behind it. Whether it's a failed or successful product or, um, something entirely outside of that, like technologies is one example too I think we're, we're always mesmerized by and discussing what's what's coming out. What's new, what's working, what's not for example. So yeah, there there's no shortage.

Yeah. And in terms of the different databases that are available to us, um, especially at Purdue, we have so, so many different databases out there, but in particular, some of the ones that'll really shine on this front are related to consumer research and market analysis. Uh, there is a whole separate entrepreneurship library guide and, and we can share this in, in the podcast notes here, but, uh, I did want to point out a few of the, the databases out there that might help you in terms of doing some

consumer research.

So if you're doing a podcast, maybe about a certain industry, or even a product, like say that the film industry, in my case, or even certain products. If you are an entrepreneur and creating a brand new product out there, you could delve in and do some research on, uh, the overall industry or, um, something, uh, tied more so to the market. And there are plenty of different databases in relation to that. Uh, as far as industry reports go, there's a really great one called IBIS World Industry Reports. Uh, that one focuses on providing you with, uh, just different reports tied to different industries. And, uh, it's a really nice one to have through because some especially, uh, major companies will, will pay big money to access information like this and being part of the Purdue community, uh, Purdue student body, you get access to this essentially because you, you attend Purdue.

So that's an awesome perk to have. Uh, and in addition to that, uh, in terms of more market related research and looking at, uh, what consumers, uh, you might have, I'd also suggest there's BCC Market Research. They have different market research reports, industry reviews, newsletters, et cetera. There's also a MarketResearch.com Academic, which instead of giving you full on industry report, it's still give you reports on given markets and kind of gives you a heads up on what that market looks like, how COVID has impacted the market since it's impacted everything. Uh, and, uh, getting a sense of, um, what, what the future looks like, uh, for, for a market as well. So, um, that's interesting always to, to look at, I think as you're, you're going about, uh, researching a consumer or a market, and also getting into who your competitors are as well. So who the key players are in a certain industry or a market as well. Uh, and then there's also, uh, finally a database called Business Source Complete, which I like for, uh, more so like news articles, uh, in relation to different, uh, industries and, and, uh, markets as well. Uh, but you can get some really current articles about what's going on in a given industry and read them in full. You can also access peer-reviewed articles that way as well. So you could do a lot of, um, really good credible research on that front. If you think about your podcast more so from a business perspective and think about who your consumer group might be, how you might want to target, uh, target them.

SH: Doing this research on your topic will not only give you a competitive edge, but it's just going to be interesting for you. And you're going to make informed decisions. You're not going to just be blindly hoping about the, about the audience and the topic.

AB: Absolutely, yeah. I really had, no matter what field you're in, uh, you always want to lean towards making evidence-based decisions and doing your due diligence, doing that research as part of it. Um, whether it's formally looking through databases or, um, just delving into some communities that you're a part of and then figuring out what, what it is people want.

SH: Okay. So if someone is already doing a podcast in connection with your topic, what's next? How do you respond?

AB: Yeah, it's, it can be easy to maybe be disappointed when you find out that someone's doing a podcast that's maybe along the lines of something that you were thinking about doing, but it's also a great way to open the door to different opportunities. You can maybe rethink what your, your approaches or, uh, in some cases, if you're comfortable, you could also reach out to the podcast host and see if there is an opportunity for collaboration. Uh, if you are maybe both really passionate about the same subject, uh, you could potentially be a guest on a podcast and, uh, maybe a wins once you rethink your podcast approach, too. That's a great way to, to promote both ways. I'm having that collaboration and appearing on one's podcast and maybe getting that, that host to appear on yours at some point. And that's definitely something that, that I've done in quite a few cases. I don't have my own like entertainment related podcast, but I listened to so many of them and the ones that really strike me and capture my interest. I tend to communicate to the hosts and it's led to appearances on the podcast, or just some, some really interesting correspondence too.

SH: I especially like that idea that reaching out to the podcasts that you like and forming relationships, it doesn't have to be a competition. They did it, so I, now I can't do it. Potentially, if there's other podcasts out there on your topic, reaching out to people, there's possible connections and relationships there to host something together. Even if you, like you said, even if it's just one or two guest appearances people pick up on that, the listeners pick up on that connection.

You researched your idea. You've used our past episodes and resource page to make your podcast. Now you are ready to market it. Annette, can you give us some of your tips for marketing?

AB: Sure. So in terms of maybe looking for, for an audience, I think you, you might use some resources that you are already a part of. So if you may be, uh, do engage in a certain like community, whether it's like social media, maybe you're in a Facebook group that's really active or relating to whatever your interest is. That's a great place to start. And even so you can start with people even closer to you than that, like friends or family, if you have maybe friends who are like-minded in terms of what your interests are, and just slowly getting the word out there to them and seeing what feedback they can give you. Uh, and eventually that word of mouth will ideally spread. And, uh, certainly that that's one approach, but you usually do have to be a little more aggressive than that when it comes to finding an audience. Uh, you do have to, uh, promote yourself and be okay with, with self-promoting. Whether it's coming up with a quick elevator pitch, uh, just to explain to people what, what your podcast is and, and making them aware of that and promoting that. And part of promoting too is just really being present. Uh, whether it's, uh, present on social media or having a website, you want to have a way where people can engage with you and find you and contact you. Uh, and certainly the, the same for your podcast. Do you want to choose a platform for your podcasts that people can easily find, uh, and, and think about how you're going to brand yourself and, and remain consistent in that. And, uh, just unabashedly keep, uh, keep telling people about the podcast. Reach out to other podcasters as well. Uh, if you're looking for, for guests and another great tool too, is to think about your local community and who else is podcasting near you? A lot of times, especially if you're like near a major metropolitan area, there are podcasts communities, uh, that, uh, that are comprised of just different podcasters residing, relatively regionally, close to one another, and, uh, meeting up and talking about what they're working on and promoting their work that way.

SH: A few things come to mind. First I am a terrible self self-promoter. So I would always have to partner with someone, as I do with you. But it's a really good point. If it's outside of your comfort zone, this is something to either kind of grow and area to expand and grow, or again, this is where collaborations are really beneficial, you know, where people balance each other. I've heard that about, you know, a way to grow your podcast is liking other people's podcasts with similar topics. Find. Just literally just looking, you know, for podcasters in your area and connecting with them and this kind of word of mouth. It's almost like a, just a community that helps each other out in that way. And they're just interested.

AB: Yeah, absolutely. Uh, yes. So, and definitely I use like the elevator pitch idea as an example, uh, in terms of like the business world. Uh, where people have a very brief, like a couple of sentences that that quickly introduces who they are, what they're doing and like what, what they want you to know about them. So really thinking about at the crux of it, what is it about your podcast that you want people to know? What's like the most interesting part of it that you feel like people will connect with. Uh, and just being okay with, uh, having to present that many, many times. It's going to be part of your, your introduction. If you, you think about it sort of like your own little business that you're trying to cultivate and, and gain a following and a consumer base for essentially since your audience is basically your consumer. You may, you may or may not be making money off of your podcast, but in the end, you're, you're creating the product and people want to be able to consume it and enjoy it.

SH: Across what is there branding?

AB: I think like one is the consistency, uh, in the name of, for example. So, uh, for us, if it's the MakeYourStory podcast, I'm not going to go make business cards that say, like something different than that. Like, MakeYourStories, podcasts or something like that. Something like relatively, uh, uh, different. Uh, but, uh, yeah, I think, uh, thinking about branding too. It's, you know, with branding, I think of, of a visual, like, like a company logo, but I'm really starting from something more abstract than that, thinking about the podcast and what you're talking about, for example. Like if it's a more serious topic, uh, you're you're handling content that maybe is heavier. You're probably not going to come up with a visual or like a website that's, uh, like you, you know, like colorful and bright and, and it gives, it gives off the tone of something like much more lighthearted. So, uh, kind of making that connection between what you're talking about and then what you're going to be presenting to other people. And then, yeah, there is the case of, um, being consistent in terms of what, what your look is going to be like. For us, uh, for MakeYourStory, we have our, our logo there and that's going to be consistent across our, our website. Uh, if we were to make business cards, we were to have, uh, we would have that same logo echoed on there, uh, color schemes that would also be parroted onto the website as well. So trying to be consistent as much as you can. And then the case of, of my, uh, my other business, uh, Hometowns to Hollywood, for example, I try to be consistent in terms of the blog. So, uh, the, the blog that I write for it will say like Hometowns to Hollywood on it, there's a certain color scheme that's used. And then, um, I also have a Facebook and a Twitter and an Instagram, and I tried to mimic that same look that same feel and color scheme across those different platforms. So people who maybe didn't know that I was on a certain platform could recognize that like, oh yeah, that's Hometowns to Hollywood, that's Annette. And then they could recognize me and follow me in any of those formats as well. So that's really what, what I mean about branding. So formally in the business sense, but also thinking about it in a little, a little bit of an abstract way to, uh, with, with the, the spoken component of the podcast.

SH: Speak to that point about you being available to people reaching out to you. So are you saying you have contact information on your podcasts?

AB: Yeah. So, uh, really, uh, people being able to reach out to you as a great way to, uh, to grow your audience. Whether it's, uh, maybe you creating an episode that, um, was really interesting to someone or maybe meaningful to them, and they wanted to contact you. Maybe they know something that you don't, or maybe they have a story they want to share in relation to whatever you spoke about, or maybe they just want to send you a nice comment saying that they enjoyed it. I think for me as a writer in a podcast or two, and in this case, it's great to get feedback, whatever the feedback may be, if it's a compliment, constructive criticism, or someone even sharing, uh, what, what made that episode special to them, what their story and connection to the topic is. I love, love, love, receiving feedback like that. And just the comfort of knowing someone out there is enjoying what I'm creating. Uh, whether it's, uh, the podcast or writing or whatever the case may be. And one thing I'd, I'd I'd say is to maybe create a new email or like a professional email account that would be specific to the podcast. It's not mingling with, with your other email accounts. It's a great way to get publicity too. So if someone discovers your podcast and maybe they really connect with it, maybe they want to write an article about it or spread the word. And it's, it's easier to do when they have a contact person, a point of contact for whoever's creating the podcast. So, um, that's also a good part of it as well, but really, I think it all comes down to engagement.

SH: What is a realistic timeframe when you start a podcast to be getting listeners?

BH: You're going to want to start marketing, I'd say before you even release your first episode. So, um, getting, uh, those different parts in motion, like creating a website, uh, having your whatever podcast hosting site you're going to use, um having that ready. Having your branding ready to go, uh, is also a huge help. So, um, getting some of that work out of the way first is great. And it's, it's a great way to, before you even create a podcast, start to, to build an audience. So that's kind of where you can, uh, you

could maybe like tease people and say like, you know, coming soon, like, and new episode on such and such topic is coming out. That way you can build some anticipation for your podcast, but I'd say once you have your first episode released, that's when, when you should really start to gain momentum. So really sharing that episode aggressively through different maybe communities that you're a part of. If it's that podcasting group, or even a group that shares your similar interests or whatever the case may be, uh, being able to share that and just have your, um, your episode release just on the radar of, of different, uh, potential audience members and followers.

SH: Can you monetize a podcast? If so, how?

AB: You definitely can. It is, it is harder to do since I'm, there, there are a lot of podcasts out there. And a lot of different ways to, to think about potentially monetizing them. Uh, for one, uh, you can go the route of ads, which, uh, is a point of contention, I think for, for some podcasters versus their audience. Uh, on the podcast or side of things, it's essentially sort of a sponsorship, uh, different companies will pay you for promoting, uh, their, their product, their service as an ad within your podcast. But on the audience side of things, how excited are you to hear an ad? So, uh, that's a, that can be an issue in some cases, but it is a means of monetization. If you are open to that, um, having essentially available ad space is one way to go about it. Um, another way that I tend to like a little more is sort of like a, this almost crowdfunding aspect. Um, I'm really big on, uh, using Patreon. I see a lot of different, uh, independent artists, uh, using that, uh, format to try to get some financial support for whatever creative work they're doing, whether it's blogging, podcasting, or getting some sort of a creative project off the ground. That's also a really nice way to engage with your followers and maybe give them some say in some of the content that you are creating that like I know for a Hometowns to Hollywood, uh, I'm on Patreon there. And, uh, it's interesting to set different, like benefit tiers and, uh, to see what people choose in terms of how they want to contribute and what it is they want to see come of, uh, maybe my blog or presentations that I do. Um, so some of my tiers are something as simple as just a thank you, or maybe a shout out to promote some of their work, or in other cases, some of the higher tiers are, um, them choosing a celebrity or a classic film of their choice and me writing about that. Uh, so that's an interesting way to again, engage directly with what their interests are, and also kind of come back and see if you can monetize that way. And sometimes in some cases when growing an audience, especially, um, you might think of spending those funds that, that you might get for, um, for a podcast. Whether it's, uh, purchasing ads on Facebook or Instagram, whatever the case may be, and maybe setting up your podcast as, as a business of sorts and in that way, and using those funds to hopefully get you more or listeners, uh, along the way. Uh, yeah, kind of a long-winded answer, but there, there are opportunities to monetize it, but pros and cons to each certainly.

SH: No, that's interesting. I didn't know a lot about Patreon until when the pandemic first hit and so many artists were out of work because they were live performers. They started, um, you know, performing from home through, you know, Facebook live or YouTube live. I asked a number of musicians, what is the best way to support them? And I've heard over and over, you know, buy albums directly and find ways to support them. You don't have to reach everyone, but if you find a couple you like, or one that you really like, use a platform like that to, to support them. And, and you're right, and you can give feedback about what you want to hear and you can build this relationship with them and it's a direct way to support them.

AB: Yeah. I mean, you're certainly not limited to Patreon. There's a lot of other platforms that are similar to that. I think a, another one I see quite a bit is one called Buy Me a Coffee. So I, with Patreon, sometimes artists don't like to, uh, to have to be responsible for like mailing out perks. If they elect to do that, um, Buy Me a Coffee instead of having people contribute a monthly, like rate, like a monthly subscription, essentially to whatever it is that you're producing, Buy Me a Coffee, lets you, uh, pay a one-time kind of flat fee to support the artist. So yeah, and I, I do, uh, contribute to some other Patreons out there. They all actually happened to be the do podcasts as well. And there's some fun perks that, that come with that too. I know a with one of them, they do a Patreon exclusive podcast too. So it gives me like twice the podcasting fun to listen to than I would normally have. And, and you know, you, in the end,

you're, you're supporting an artists that you really like.

SH: Thank you so much, Annette. You gave us a lot of valuable information on how to research our topic, um, and see how it fits in the podcast landscape as well as how to ultimately market it. Listeners check out the entrepreneurship Libguide that Annette talked about. That'll be listed right below this podcast and be on the lookout for our next podcast, which will come out at the end of March. Annette, can you tell us about that?

AB: Yeah. This podcast is going to focus on the use of sound as a way to enhance story telling. They'll talk about the use of ambient sound to really put you in the moment for a story. And I think what makes this a particular set of guests really cool is that they're familiar with podcasting and they do an old time radio style podcast, meaning that they, they perform it live, but they also perform the sound components live as well. So these are the fully artists for a particular podcast. It's called LIVE, Locked Into Vacancy Entertainment, and they'll share with us some of their creative ways of using sound to really make a story come alive. And, uh, talk to us about the cool ways that they actually produce certain sounds and get us to believe that that we're hearing one thing versus them using, um, other objects and items that are totally the other.

SH: I'm looking forward to that discussion. So thank you again, Annette. And we'll be back in March. Thanks for having me.

