

Podcast Advertising — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a launch-ready operating kit for buying podcast ads that can be measured. Work through each section as you plan a real campaign, filling the worksheets with your own numbers and using the checklists to vet shows and lock in trackable reads before you spend. The templates are editable planners for show vetting, CPM and media-plan math, a host brief and code register, and a blended attribution tracker.

Foundations: Why Podcasts Convert and How the Ads Work

Decide whether podcasts fit your offer and choose the right ad format, position, and insertion method.

Worksheet: Channel Fit Worksheet

Establish whether your offer suits a delayed, high-trust, no-click channel before committing budget.
Product or offer (one line)

Average order value or customer lifetime value (\$)

Is the purchase considered or impulse? (and why podcasts fit)

Can you sustain a multi-week flight on each show? (yes/no)

Single clearest offer and incentive for listeners

Verdict: is this a good podcast-advertising fit? (yes/no and why)

Exercise: Format and Position Decision

Choose the ad format and episode position deliberately, since they set both trust and price.

- Which format fits: host-read, announcer-read, or programmatic, and why?
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- Which position will you target: pre-roll, mid-roll, or post-roll, and what is the tradeoff?
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- Do you need message control (favoring announcer-read) or endorsement (favoring host-read)?
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- What is your beginner default for this campaign and why?
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Checklist: Insertion and Delivery Checklist

- Ask the show whether ads are baked-in or dynamically inserted (DAI)
- Confirm you can set flight dates and stop the ad if you need dynamic insertion
- Note the show's hosting or monetization platform (Megaphone, Acast, ART19, Libsyn AdvertiseCast)
- Decide whether back-catalog baked-in exposure is a wanted bonus or a risk
- Confirm what targeting, frequency capping, and reporting the platform supports

Show Selection: Finding Audiences That Convert

Vet downloads honestly, score audience and host fit, and choose your buying path.

Worksheet: Show Vetting Worksheet

Capture the evidence that proves a show is worth buying before you discuss price. Complete one per candidate show.

Show name and host

Average downloads per episode (first 30 days)

Are downloads IAB Tech Lab certified? (yes/no, by which provider)

Download trend over recent months (growing / flat / declining)

Audience match to your customer profile (demographics, interests)

Host credibility for your category (would the endorsement sound earned?)

Brand safety notes (tone, past topics, other sponsors)

Repeat direct-response advertisers present? (a performance signal)

Checklist: Pre-Buy Questions Checklist

- Requested the media kit with demographics, downloads per episode, and rates
- Asked whether downloads are IAB-certified and per-episode (not lifetime)
- Asked which brands advertise and which have renewed
- Confirmed the host will use the product or speak from experience for a host-read
- Sampled several full episodes, including how the host reads existing ads
- Confirmed available positions (mid-roll preferred) and formats

Exercise: Buying Path Decision

Pick the right door into the channel for this campaign and budget.

- Will you buy direct, through a network or marketplace, or programmatically, and why?

- If direct, which two or three well-matched shows will you start with?

- What do you give up (control, scale, or endorsement) with your chosen path?

- What is your plan to scale once you know which audiences convert?

Pricing, Negotiation, and the Media Plan

Run the CPM math, negotiate the terms that matter, and build a plan defended by an allowable CPA.

Worksheet: CPM and Spend Worksheet

Convert every quote into a comparable CPM and project spend. Leave calculated cells for yourself to compute.

Show name

Guaranteed downloads per spot

Quoted CPM (\$) or flat fee (\$)

Ad position (pre / mid / post) and format (host-read / announcer / programmatic)

Implied CPM if quoted as a flat fee (fee divided by downloads, times 1,000)

Number of insertions in the flight

Projected spend for the flight (CPM times downloads over 1,000, times insertions)

Checklist: Negotiation Terms Checklist

- Pushed for a mid-roll position even at a higher CPM
- Requested a true personal host-read, not a flat script read
- Agreed the number of episodes and flight dates for repetition
- Asked for a first-time or test rate and about discounted remnant inventory
- Secured a make-good clause for missed, misread, or omitted-code spots
- Requested an air-check recording of the aired ad
- Got the unique promo code and vanity URL written into the contract

Worksheet: Allowable CPA and Media Plan Worksheet

Work backwards from what a customer is worth so the plan is defensible. Leave derived cells blank to calculate yourself.

Customer value (average order value or lifetime value) (\$)

Share of value you will spend to acquire (%)

Allowable cost per acquisition (\$)

Expected conversion estimate per show (conservative)

Projected cost per acquisition per show (\$)

Total test budget across two or three shows (\$)

Reserve budget held to scale the winners (\$)

Exercise: Host Brief Draft

Write the short brief that makes a host-read trackable and on-message.

- What is the single most important benefit to lead with?
 - What exact promo code and vanity URL must the host say (easy to spell, no numbers)?
 - What personal angle or use of the product should the host mention?
 - What phrases or claims must be avoided for legal or brand reasons?
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Attribution: Measuring a Channel With No Click

Stand up code, vanity-URL, pixel, and survey tracking, then turn the signals into a renew, scale, or cut decision.

Checklist: Attribution Setup Checklist

- Created a unique promo code per show (never shared across shows)
- Created a vanity URL per show (e.g., yourbrand.com/showname) that redirects to a landing page
- Confirmed code and URL are easy to say and spell, with no numbers or ambiguous words
- Instructed the host to repeat the code and URL at least twice
- Confirmed the code and URL appear in the episode show notes
- Installed a pixel-attribution provider (Podscribe, Chartable, Podsights, or Claritas)
- Added a how-did-you-hear-about-us survey question with a named podcast option
- Set up tracking of direct traffic and branded search for the spike test

Worksheet: Blended Attribution Worksheet

Pull every signal together per show so you judge a blended result, not code redemptions alone. Leave calculated cells blank.

Show name

Code redemptions

Pixel-attributed conversions

Survey mentions of this show

Spike-test observation (direct traffic / branded search after the episode)

Credited conversions (your reasoned total, avoiding double-counting)

Spend on this show (\$)

Blended cost per acquisition (\$)

Exercise: Renew, Scale, or Cut Drill

Turn the blended numbers into one verdict per show against your allowable CPA.

- How does each show's blended CPA compare to your allowable CPA?

- Has the flight run enough episodes to read fairly, given recall and back-catalog lag?

- Which shows scale, which renew with a tweak, and which get cut with no path to improve?

- For renewals, what new angle or offer will refresh the host-read against fatigue?

Checklist: Ongoing Optimization Routine Checklist

- Maintain a per-show ledger of spend, credited conversions, and CPA over time
- Pour budget into proven winners that beat the allowable CPA
- Keep a steady cadence of testing new shows as audiences shift
- Refresh host-reads periodically with new angles, anecdotes, or seasonal offers
- Re-brief hosts and re-confirm codes and URLs each flight
- Review codes, pixels, and surveys together, never in isolation

Your Action Plan

1. Confirm fit: the offer is considered, has enough customer value, and can sustain a multi-week flight
2. Choose the format and position: default to a host-read mid-roll for a first campaign
3. Build a shortlist of two or three well-matched shows and vet each on downloads, fit, and host suitability
4. Confirm downloads are IAB-certified and ask whether ads are baked-in or dynamically inserted
5. Convert every quote into an implied CPM and compare against benchmark ranges
6. Set an allowable cost per acquisition by working backwards from customer value
7. Negotiate mid-roll position, a personal host-read, a multi-episode flight, and a make-good clause
8. Create a unique promo code and vanity URL per show and write a clear host brief
9. Install a pixel-attribution provider and add a how-did-you-hear-about-us survey question
10. After the flight, judge each show on a blended CPA from codes, pixels, and surveys, then scale winners, renew the marginal, and cut the rest

