

Powerful Podcasting

by Penny Sansevieri

If you're looking for a shortcut to get your consumer to buy, it might be through their ear. Auditory response is one of the strongest senses we possess. Have you ever wondered why you can remember the tune of a song ("It's a small world") but can't remember an article you read in the paper just this morning? That's the power of audio. Sound is invasive, intrusive and irresistible. That's one reason why I'm always telling authors about the power of speaking engagements: sound sells. Many of us incorporate sound into our marketing plans through radio, but there's something even more powerful for you to consider and it's called podcasting.

If you've always dreamed of having your own radio show, your dream is about to become a reality. It seems only yesterday we were telling you about the power of blogging, but today we're looking at something equally, if not more, powerful. In its simplest term, podcasting is an audio blog and it's another exceptionally powerful way to spread the word about your book and message. Several years ago when Internet radio came on the scene authors were vying for airwaves on the Net. But while Internet radio is still going strong, it's also very expensive. Most shows cost upwards of \$800 a month, plus show hosts need to obtain their own program sponsors. Podcasting, on the other hand, is a fraction of the cost. Here's how it works.

Podcasting, just like blogs, sits on the Internet but instead of sitting in a written file, it's saved in an MP3 format that can be transferred to any mobile music device like an iPod. A podcast can also be subscribed to through RSS or syndication feeds. If this seems complicated, it's not, the entire process will take you about an hour to set up, if that, and once you do, you're off and running.

Most podcasts require an external mic on your computer, but I've started using a system through Audio Acrobat (audioacrobat.com) that will allow you to call into a pre-assigned number and record your podcast from anywhere: your office, your car or while on a trip! Then the audio file is saved into the system and sent out via their publication tools to a variety of "feeds," which in essence sends the audio blog out onto the Internet. Now you might wonder how someone will find you and your podcast. Well, you might be surprised. While your first recording might go unnoticed, your second and third will not. Here are some tips for getting the right podcast for you and then getting the world to beat a path to your audio blog door! Topic: First, you want to find a niche and ideally one that ties into your book or message. While topics on religion and gambling are two of the hottest podcasts right now, if your topic doesn't tie

into these it's best to stay away from them. Go online to iTunes, iPodder.org, or Podcast.net and see who's talking about your topic and what they're saying, then plan to be different!

Structure: So how will your podcast be structured and how much time should you plan to spend on a podcast? Truthfully, I'd recommend only 10 to 15 minutes. Unless your podcast is truly compelling or in an interview type format, listeners don't usually have the attention span to listen longer. Don't force people to listen to long-winded audios, cut right to the chase, share your information in tip-like, informative nuggets and you'll find listeners subscribing to your podcast like crazy!

Make a plan: If you decide to do this, try mapping out a few podcasts in advance and plan to offer your information on a daily or, at the very least, a weekly basis.

Setting up your podcast page: When you utilize Audio Acrobat for your podcast, you'll be able to include a link to your web site. Remember the idea behind the podcast is promotion, so the URL you send them to should reflect this. Ideally you won't want to send them to your home page but rather a page just for your podcasts. You can include a listing of prior "shows" as well as a way for them to sign up for future updates, your newsletter or perhaps a link to your book or store.

Chicklets and other geek terms: So what's a "chicklet?" Well, it's that little orange square that has the letters XML on it. You will click on that to subscribe to a feed. If you obtained your podcast through Audio Acrobat, these chicklets are created for you and you can just cut and paste the HTML into your web site or have your web designer do it for you. I copied the HTML language into my blog and let visitors subscribe that way. If you use another podcasting service, they should supply you with the language to create this on your own.

Syndicating your podcast: So if you're going to do a radio show, you'll want listeners, right? Now I mentioned that if you use a service like Audio Acrobat the system will send the feeds for you to about 16 services, which is great, but there's still more work you can do.

First, you should consider getting a syndication link on Feedburner.com. This way people can copy your link into their feed reader (we'll cover this in a bit) and get updated every time you add a new podcast. You can access this feed service at: Feedblitz (www.feedblitz.com).

Feed readers: If you've spent **any** time on the Net you've no doubt seen those little XML chicklets we mentioned earlier. When you click on them, it

takes you to a page of confusing text, but it's the link that you want to copy and paste into your feed reader. When we talk about syndicating a blog, this is what we mean. The reader you have really doesn't matter and there are quite a few to choose from, if you Google "Feed Readers," you'll pull a bunch of them up for you to try. I use SharpReader (www.sharpreader.com) and love it.

Podcasting, besides being a great promotional tool, is a terrific way for you to verbalize the passion you have for your topic. Go an inch wide and a mile deep with your message, offer helpful advice or spout your opinion. Be creative or controversial or a little of both. The bottom line is this: podcasting is not only fun but it's a great way to spread the message about you and your book. Use it correctly and you'll see even more readers beating a path to your door.

About the Author

Penny C. Sansevieri is a [book publicist](#) who turns authors into success stories. Get her free author marketing newsletter and insider tips at <http://www.amarketingexpert.com>