

# Importance of Considering Podcasts in the Media Mix



WHITEPAPER

## Executive Summary

Knowledge and usage of podcasts, especially among consumer audiences, has continued to grow, yet sponsorship opportunities for healthcare brands remain limited. As partners begin to integrate ad options into their platforms, brands should consider these programs to deliver messaging to engaged audiences and benefit from the strong relationships podcast hosts have cultivated with their followers. This whitepaper will review podcast consumption habits and the options available to pharma brands to incorporate this into their future media mix.

## Consumer Podcast Usage

Podcasts have surged in popularity over the last decade, largely powered by the mass increase in smartphone usage. With an estimated 98 million users having listened to podcasts at least once, and 57 million in the last month alone,

users have indicated that their listening habits are shifting, resulting in less time listening to AM/FM radio. Listening habits vary by age group, however; the majority of podcast listeners fall between ages 18-54, encompassing 72% of all podcast listeners. These consumers are likely to listen to an average of 5 podcasts per week, listening for an average of approximately 4 hours and 10 minutes. Teenagers and adults 55+ are less likely to listen to podcasts, 11% and 17% respectively.

But what makes podcasts so valuable to consumers? According to The Infinite Dial, 76% of listeners confirmed that the ability to listen to programs “whenever” was one of the most important factors, followed by the ability to listen to programs wherever they want. It also

gives users the ability to access content that is not available to them on other platforms. It’s no wonder 71% of podcast consumers are utilizing their smartphones/tablets/portable devices over their computers for this purpose, further validating that changing technology is directly impacting the way in which we consume media.



## Podcasts vs Broadcast Radio

As mentioned earlier, technology and podcasts are shaping users' listening habits, especially as it pertains to broadcast radio. As a result of listening to podcasts, 67% of users indicate that they are listening to less AM/FM radio overall, but still regularly use it as a source for keeping up-to-date with new music. Podcasts on the other hand, cover a variety of genres, from music to comedy and even healthcare, while having the ability to cater to very niche audiences. The audience base is typically loyal, as the user has the option to directly subscribe to a series they're interested in. Podcasts are also easily accessible via smartphone apps and desktop where a user can easily stream and/or download the files and listen at their convenience.

## Overview of NPP Opportunities

Historically, advertising within podcasts has been similar to that of radio, typically revolving around live and pre-recorded reads/sponsorship messages. These tactics continue to be popular options for brands, as the ads sound native and organic and tend to resonate more with consumers due to the established relationship between host and listener. It's important to note that the IAB-Edison Research Podcast Advertising Study also unveiled that after podcast listeners have been exposed to sponsorship messaging or advertisements on their favorite podcast, they're likely to either visit the sponsor's website, consider a new product or service, or gather more information about a product.

## Podcast Players in the Healthcare Space?

Select Podcast Partners in Healthcare	
Partner	Description
RadioMD	Consists of 14 shows dedicated to health, wellness, fitness and medical information hosted by experts in each corresponding field. Content is created and produced by RadioMD in partnership with organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Sports Medicine, the American College of Emergency Physicians, as well as others.
Cleveland Clinic Health Talks*	Cleveland Clinic health professionals speak to a variety of health topics determined by the educational committee, offering expert information to listeners. These are taped in front of a live audience, broken down into segments, and uploaded to the Cleveland Clinic website.
Cancer.Net*	Oncologist-approved content addressing topics such as cancer research, treatment, and coping, to help assist patients and their families and friends.
BlogTalkRadio	Podcast platform that allows podcasters to record and upload their own shows on a variety of topics. Health-related podcasts are led by physicians, researchers, personal trainers, and nutritionists discussing the latest health news.

**\*Note: Not all healthcare podcasts permit advertising at this time**

## Overview of NPP Opportunities

### (Continued)

- That being said, there are more opportunities beyond the standard host readings. Some NPP options available are summarized below:
- Live reads:
  - :15, :30, or :60 seconds in length
  - Embedded, living within the episode
- Pre-recorded messages:
  - Agency produced and/or host voiced
  - :15, :30, or :60 seconds in length
  - Either embedded within the episode or inserted during flight of the campaign
  - Geo-targeting, copy splits, DMA, MSA, National/Regional/Local buy capabilities
- Display:
  - Standard desktop and mobile
  - Contextual targeting, program targeting, sponsorships, mobile ID capture synced with information from third-party providers for targeting and re-targeting (not available with all partners)
  - Video units

- Unique programming:
  - Certain podcast partners can produce a podcast series on behalf of a brand and/or company
  - Posted to website via a widget
- Podcast licensing:
  - Certain partners do not have NPP opportunities available on their platforms, but are willing to license out their podcasts for brand distribution

## Measuring Success

Last but certainly not least, it's important to address the measurement of a podcast program. There are two ways in which tracking podcasts can occur: downloads and impressions (how many people actually listened to said program). Historically, the main KPI for podcasts has been the number of downloads a specific podcast garners during a specified timeframe.

Which, if any of the following actions have you taken as a result of sponsorship or advertising you have heard in the podcast you enjoy?

Visited a sponsor's web site	45%	Purchased a product or service	25%
Considered a new product or service	42%	Visited a store or location	20%
Gathered more info about a company or product	37%	Purchased or downloaded music	18%
Read a book	29%	Recommended a product or service to others	17%
Used a promotional discount code mentioned in podcast	28%	Attended a performance, cultural event or exhibit	15%
Watched a television program	27%	Switched to a different brand	9%
Seen a movie	26%	Purchased a product or service for your business	8%

To assist with this tracking, filtration processes can also transpire which removes false starts, human error, and electronic anomalies to provide cleaner download and impression measurement. Unfortunately, at this time, tracking impressions is not 100% accurate as most of the major listening apps do not yet have the capability to support third-party tracking pixels (Midroll, 2016). Furthermore, those that are able to accommodate third-party tracking only have the ability to measure that the podcast was consumed in some fashion when the ad has been digitally inserted, and are not yet able to measure how long the podcast was listened to or if an ad was specifically heard; however, crafting and distributing studies can assist in validating podcast effectiveness and lift.

Standard display programs within podcast platforms have more flexibility in measurement efforts. In addition to Viewability, Reach and Frequency would remain primary KPIs, while CTR and SVR would be considered a secondary KPI to help track overall engagement.

## CMI/Compas Recommendation

The current podcast space is extremely fragmented; however, is constantly evolving and gaining traction amongst the consumer community. As it stands, this tactic would be a potential fit for brands who have a strong desire for brand advocates or would like to incorporate educational initiatives through distribution of unbranded disease state information, playing off of the listener/host relationship. Adoption of this channel into the media mix should be considered as more healthcare partners begin to offer sponsorship opportunities for pharma brands.



Analyst:

**Samantha Bruzzone**

Senior Media Planner  
CMI Media

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