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Podvertising

1. The Lowdown

Podcast advertising or podvertising is different from traditional media. Unlike television and radio advertising, podvertising allows businesses of all sizes, and even individuals to reach their target markets. The Internet provides reach to consumers across multiple markets worldwide at low cost. Listeners turn to podcasting because they can freely download content and time-shift listening to when it is most suitable for them. Thus, podvertising allows marketers to target their niche audience, and results in less advertisement-avoidance. Users are unlikely to fast-forward through ads embedded in the podcasts they've subscribed to, and usually do not mind listening to a short message.

2. Why do I need to know about it?

Podcasting is here to stay, and so is podcast advertising. In fact, according to eMarketer, podcast advertising will increase by 400 percent by 2011. Podcasting as an emerging communications platform allows marketers to:

- Interact with their audience by encouraging participation via comments and Blogs.
- Deliver message at a 100% rate—podcast subscription is entirely opt-in and spam free.
- Engage audiences that are really interested in what you have to offer. They can only listen to one podcast at a time, unlike Web browsing.
- Narrowly target their audience by podcasting on specific topics.
- Measure exactly how many times their podcasts have been downloaded. Marketers can use podcasting for news updates and insights about a product/service, building relationships with consumers, brand building, public relations, business visibility and corporate communication.



How can marketers tap into podvertising?

- Sponsorships. Here, the sponsor pays the podcast producers to support the podcasts directly, and in return, the sponsor gets a spot on the podcast, usually a mention of their brand or product.
- Offer giveaways and promotions.
- RSS feeds. A podcast can be timed to be on your site at the same time



as a new product launch. When people search for your information on your new product, your podcast will be listed in the results. If a user likes what s/he hears, s/he may decide to not only listen but subscribe as well.

- Produce your own. Create your own podcast, featuring an audio infomercial, video demo for new products, audio/video press releases about your product, etc.
- Site or blog advertising. Podcast shows also have their own Web sites or blogs to publish episode notes and other information about the podcasts.

3. Marketing Case Studies

IBM

In August 2005, IBM made its first official foray into podcasting by launching a series of programs called "IBM and the Future of..." featuring its scientists and other staffers discussing topics like driving, shopping, banking, and urban planning. IBM drafted a podcasting policy similar to its corporate blogging policy, and released a tool for uploading audio files and syndicating them via RSS (Really Simple Syndication). As a result, 320,000 of its employees published their audio files internally. This lowered the company's phone bills and fostered more informal internal communication.

Bearing Point

Bearing Point used podcasting to promote a white paper and saw sign-up rates of over 30 percent versus a traditional 10 percent. This is a 200 percent increase over traditional marketing techniques.

4. The thing to remember is...

Although listeners are less likely to skip ads in podcasts they've subscribed to, podcast producers must be careful not to disappoint their listeners with an excessive amount of ads. After all, consumers are still in control, and unsubscription is just one click away.

To keep listeners engaged:

- Create short messages. A 15-second ad is better than a 30-second or 60-second spot.
- Make sure the message is engaging and relevant. Make sure your ad is targeted.
- High-quality content matters.

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