

How brands can use podcasting to attract new business



By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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For our April radio and podcasting feature, I interviewed Deen Schroeder, Commercial Digital Executive at Primedia Broadcasting, who shares with us three key ways brands can use podcasts to attract and engage audiences and possible clients. He also shares tips on how to approach businesses and brands when trying to market podcasts.

■ ***Would it be fair to say that podcasting is still a new medium in the South African market?***

The truth is that podcasting is not a new medium in South Africa and there have been numerous independent podcast creators tinkering away and growing audiences. However, in the past five years, there has been a significant increase in podcast awareness and subsequent adoption due to viral sensations like Serial, Celebrity podcasters and Radio Stations making their content available for on-demand listening. This shift has seen significant podcast audience growth and these audiences have become attractive to brands as the next media frontier.

■ ***How can brands/companies use podcasting as a medium to attract new clients?***

There are fundamentally 3 ways that brands can use podcasts to attract and engage audiences and brands:

- *Ad placement within podcast*

This would be like placing a recorded commercial on the radio. However, the difference is that podcasts are less cluttered and are a high-intent form of media which means that there will be a higher recall on brand messaging. Ad units are bought and sold on impressions basis and can take the form of pre-rolls, mid-rolls or post-rolls. This is the most affordable way for a brand to engage with podcasts and reach very specific audiences that form around podcasts.

- *Podcast sponsorship*

Brands can associate with the content and the content creator. This may follow the same format as sponsorship of a radio feature, but the difference is that audiences develop deep connections with the favourite podcasts and the podcast hosts. There is trust that is built between podcast listener and the host, and through sponsorship, a brand can leverage that trust and build strong brand equity in that audience.

- *Branded podcast series*

This is the most exciting space for brands at the moment in the world of audio. A branded podcast series gives the brand an opportunity to share their stories in new and interesting ways that not only add value to audiences. The trick is to find creative angles and meaningful narratives that share your brand story. Brand stories also need to shift from, "What can I tell them about Me?", to "How can I add value through telling our story?"



Deen Schroeder, head of Digital Commercial at Primedia Broadcasting.



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■ ***How have you personally found brands' interaction with podcasting?***

As with all media, some brands get it right and win whilst others struggle. The brands that understand that presenter-read commercials in podcasts, work much better than any pre-recorded commercial and allowing podcasters to create their own content around the commercial message ensure better integration into the content. When it comes to branded podcast series, it is the brands that understand that podcasts can do a strong branding job provided that the content adds value to the listeners, is compelling and that it is delivered authentically.

■ ***Take us through some of the benefits of starting a podcast?***

You have the opportunity to tell your story in an uncluttered environment and building an exclusive and dedicated audience.



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■ ***How would you market a podcast to prospective advertisers or businesses?***

The audiences around podcasts have reached scale around the world and in South Africa. These listeners are highly engaged and highly responsive to advertising messages due to the uncluttered podcast environment and the high-intent listening behaviour.

- Podcast content is attractive to brands and advertisers, whether it is associating with compelling content or creating brand-led narratives around the content.

■ ***What do you think is key for brands to remember when connecting with audiences via audio?***

- Authenticity is often and overtraded term in marketing, but when it comes to podcasts it is crucial. Podcast audiences tend to be highly educated, discerning content consumers and they do not appreciate it when brands “invade” their spaces.
- Trust the Podcasters. When crafting a podcast or podcast strategy it is critical to find podcast creators and podcast consumers to assist in crafting compelling narratives, ensuring that they sound wonderful and offering audiences a truly unique listening experience.
- Podcasts are not radio programmes, even though radio programmes can be consumed as podcasts. Recorded one-on-one interviews may be the simplest type of podcast, but there is an entire soundscape experiment with. Podcasts can be cinema for the ears if produced well.

■ ***What are some of the trends you see happening in the industry, for 2020 and beyond?***

- Podcasts will start surging in South Africa in the coming year and this will be driven by content creators making amazing content and brands investing in high-quality podcast productions. These factors will drive audience growth and thus create a self-perpetuating growth and revenue cycle.
- In South Africa, we expect all radio stations to have dipped at least their toes in the podcast waters.

- Independent podcast creators will start emerging as their own media organisations.
- • The rise of new podcast companies that are built around the sole creation of podcasts. This is should be self-evident because as new media immerge and becomes mainstream, new media companies are born.



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What do you love most about what you do?

The challenge of finding new and interesting ways to craft content that is rich and engaging to attract audiences whilst always answering the core business and brand objectives for our clients. The business of podcasting in South Africa is new, and I am trying to make sure that we are constantly innovating of content offering and promotional strategies based on the best in class internationally.

What is next for you? Any exciting plans you can tell us about?

I was planning a trip to Australia and had planned to leave on 3 April, and due to Covid-19 any sort of travel is out of the question. In the coming months, I do, however, hope to attend international podcast forums to learn more from my peers from around the world. I would also hope to visit one or two podcasts companies that are based in the United States that are at the forefront of this brave new world of audio.

Connect with Schroeder on [LinkedIn](#) and keep an eye on our radio and podcasting [special section](#) for more in-depth coverage and interviews on the subject.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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