Sara Lebow
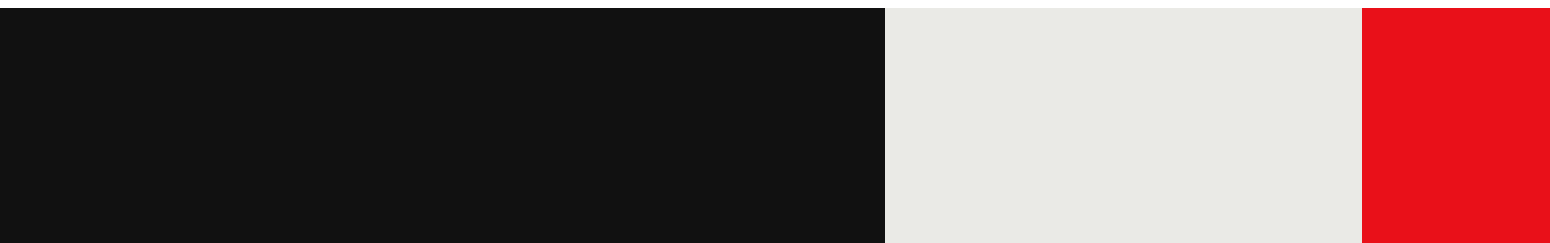
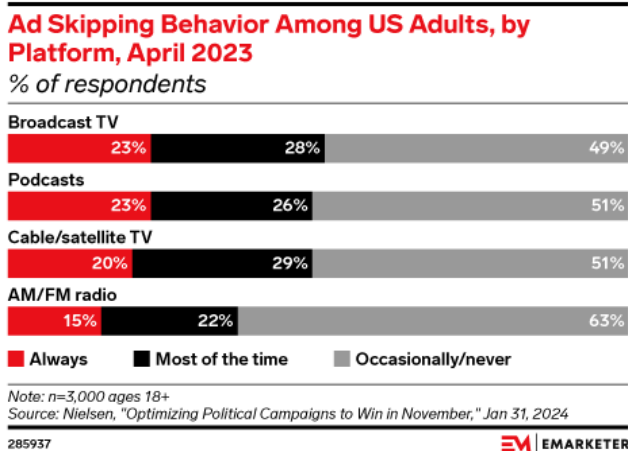# Exclusive data: What's changing in podcast advertising?

**Article**

If it feels like podcasts have more ads, that's because they do, according to data from our exclusive KPI partnerships. Podcast ad spend is increasing, and with it podcast ad load is on the rise. This year, US podcast ad spend will reach $2.28 billion, per our forecast. That's a growth of 15.9% over 2023.

**Podcasts have more ads.** The average US podcast episode is 9.1% ads, up from 6.0% a year ago, per Q2 2024 data from Magellan AI.

- The genre capturing the largest average ad load is true crime, at 17.2%.

- That puts true crime ahead of the next most ad-heavy genre, society and culture, for which ads take up 12.9% of the average episode.

- Unsurprisingly, ads tend to make up a greater percentage of podcast episodes that are around 15 minutes. Ad share decreases as podcast length increases.

Consumers aren't necessarily listening to those ads. Some 49% of US adults say they skip podcast ads most or all of the time, according to Nielsen.

**Ad Skipping Behavior Among US Adults, by Platform, April 2023**
% of respondents

| Platform | Always | Most of the time | Occasionally/never |
|---|---|---|---|
| Broadcast TV | 23% | 28% | 49% |
| Podcasts | 23% | 26% | 51% |
| Cable/satellite TV | 20% | 29% | 51% |
| AM/FM radio | 15% | 22% | 63% |

Note: n=3,000 ages 18+
Source: Nielsen, "Optimizing Political Campaigns to Win in November," Jan 31, 2024

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**The top-ranked 500 podcasts capture almost half of all US podcast ad spend.**

- 46.0% of US podcast ad spend went to the top 500 podcasts in Q1 2024, according to Magellan data. That's up from 37.0% in Q1 2023.

- 30.0% of ad spend went to the next 2,500 ranked podcasts, which is the same share as in 2023.

- 24.0% of ad spend went to lower-ranked podcasts, down from 33.0% in 2023.

For advertisers, the safest option for reaching a wide audience may be sticking with the most listened to podcasts. But advertisers with smaller budgets or with products they are targeting to a niche audience may find less expensive ad spots on podcasts with smaller audiences.

**Podcast ads are increasingly a top-of-funnel medium.** The majority of podcast ad spend (54.0%) is going to brand awareness ads, but a sizable share (44.0%) goes to direct-response ads, per Q2 2024 data from Magellan AI. Just 2.0% goes to tune-in ads.

That breakdown has changed in the past year, when 46.0% of podcast ad spend went to brand awareness ads and 51.0% went to direct response. This could be part of a greater pendulum swing toward upper-funnel marketing.

**Most podcast ad practices haven't changed much in the past few years.** Ad length and position trends have not shifted much.

- 59.0% of podcast ads are between 30 and 60 seconds, according to Magellan AI.
- Most podcast ads (53.0%) play mid-show, but pre-show and post-show ads are still common, making up 27.0% and 18.0% of podcast ad placements, respectively.

*This was originally featured in the EMARKETER Daily newsletter. For more marketing insights, statistics, and trends, subscribe here.*