

Marketers in Canada Turn to Podcasts for Brand Awareness

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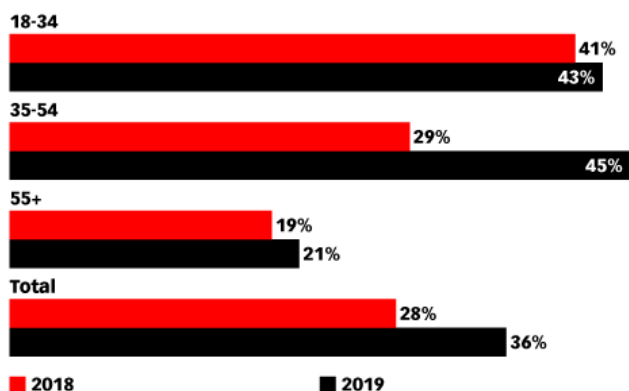
Paul Briggs

In Canada, podcasts are increasingly becoming part of advertisers' content marketing menu, and many brands are investing in podcasts to deliver branded or sponsored content.

And there's good reason for them to do so: According to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, about a third (29%) of internet users in Canada listen to podcasts. A May 2019 study from Edison Research and Triton Digital found that 36% of consumers in Canada listened to podcasts monthly in 2019, up from 28% in 2018. Roughly half (45%) of respondents ages 35 to 54 said they listened to podcasts monthly, compared with 21% of consumers 55 and older.

Consumers in Canada Who Listen to Podcasts Monthly, by Age, 2018 & 2019

% of respondents



Note: in the past month

Source: Edison Research and Triton Digital, "The Infinite Dial 2019: Canada," May 21, 2019

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Marketers who spoke with us for our latest report on content marketing in Canada said that successful podcasts start from a development process centered around content that steers clear of overt brand messaging, and instead aims to entertain or inform. Brands view podcast development as a top-of-funnel activity that helps cultivate an audience, as opposed to cause a spike in sales.

"Making your own podcast is more about brand awareness and positioning, building relationships with people and to get them to like you for making a fantastic show," said Steve Pratt, founder of Vancouver-based Pacific Content, a branded podcast production company that was acquired by Rogers Media in May 2019.

"We get audiences 85% to 95% of the way through a 25- to 30-minute [podcast] episode," he said. "That level of engagement is a huge reason why it's becoming a bigger part of content marketing strategy."

Pratt added that people turn to podcasts when they're not using their screens, a unique opportunity for meaningful engagement.

As the podcast genre matures, brands are gaining the confidence to make audio a key part of their content marketing mix. Accenture Canada, for example, has launched two podcasts in the last 18 months to provide in-depth content around two of its emerging practices: artificial intelligence and digital marketing. They believe the on-demand

nature of podcasts — vs. webinars and other scheduled events — plays well for a professional audience looking to garner insights while commuting or during downtime activities.

“It's an opportunity to connect our leaders and content to have a richer conversation with target audiences,” said Meg Sintzel, director of marketing and communications at Accenture. “Podcasting helps make the content informative, entertaining and snackable, so people aren't looking at 12-page white paper that we might have looked at a decade ago.”

Another approach to branding in podcasts is more of a sponsorship model. **“Three Trips Ahead”** — a podcast themed on travel planning — launched in early 2019 and features Maureen Holloway, co-host of Canada's top-rated morning radio show. Travel site Redtag.ca sponsors the podcast and inserts pre- and mid-roll ads.

“‘Three Trips Ahead’ was a show we wanted to make with Maureen, and we thought would be a natural fit for a travel brand,” said Jordan Heath-Rawlings, director of digital radio and podcasts at Frequency, which produces the podcast. “Redtag doesn't dictate the content, but that also means that they don't have to make the podcast. We go off and make it based on what we think our listenership will actually listen to. Every person that listens to that podcast is actively looking to travel, so when the pre- or mid-roll comes on, they want to hear about the deals that they offer.”

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Report by Paul Briggs Aug 13, 2019

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