



www.NaturalBornPodcasters.com

7 QUESTIONS FOR NEW PODCASTERS!

When I help clients start their own podcasts, there are 7 questions that I ask immediately in our first session:

- 1) WHY do you want to start a podcast?**
- 2) How much time can you devote to podcasting?**
- 3) Do you currently listen to podcasts? (Which ones do you like? Why?)**
- 4) Who is your target listener?**
- 5) What format will your show have?**
- 6) How tech-savvy are you?**
- 7) What is your launch date?**

I'm amazed at how few soon-to-be podcasters take time to answer these simple questions. Doing so would make the podcasting journey a more successful one! I'll go into each of the questions in greater detail now, just as if we were sitting down together and planning your podcast!

QUESTION #1: WHY DO YOU WANT TO START A PODCAST?

To have a successful podcast, you must have the right reason for starting one. It has to be about more than just money, since it can take some time to monetize your podcast (but once it's rolling, your podcast can bring in a lot of clients and revenue for your business!).

The best podcasts have a very clear purpose, or mission statement, and not a

muddled one or one that tries to appeal to too many people. Your podcast's mission statement should be short, concise and give a very clear description of what your podcast will do and for whom. For example, here's the description for my podcast:

Natural Born Coaches is THE daily podcast for your coaching business! Host Marc Mawhinney interviews successful coaches 5 days a week to help listeners build stronger businesses!

This description gets the point across quickly. Anyone reading it can tell immediately that it's a daily show, with an interview-format and is specifically for people who own coaching businesses. There's no guesswork involved.

Being clear on your podcast's focus in the early stages will save you a lot of time and frustration in the future. Many podcasters get this part wrong, and have to go through an expensive (time and money) retooling shortly after they launch. This isn't to say that you can't shift focus down the road – podcasts can evolve to improve the experience for the audience, but it should be avoided early out of the gate so you don't lose momentum with your show!

QUESTION #2: HOW MUCH TIME CAN YOU DEVOTE TO PODCASTING?

It's a common mistake for new podcasters to underestimate how much time it takes to put together a (good) podcast! How many hours will it take? That's a difficult question to answer, but in my experience I've found that it takes about five hours per week to do a *weekly* podcast if you handle all of the duties without delegating (you can slap something together in less time, but the quality will undoubtedly suffer. To save considerable time with your podcast, check out www.PodAssist.com). Some podcasters only think of the actual recording time involved, and think it'll take little more time than that, but you have to consider all of the steps involved with putting together every episode:

- 1) Find/invite guests for the show (assuming you're doing an interview-based show ... a solo format will require more time for you to create the content)
- 2) Schedule/book the guests (*note: save yourself A LOT of energy and use an online scheduler, like ScheduleOnce!*)
- 3) Record the episode and any "bumpers" (ie: ones that announce the episode #) for the show
- 4) Edit the episode
- 5) Upload the episode to your podcast host (I prefer using www.Libsyn.com as my hosting service)

- 6) Upload your episode to your website/Complete “Show Notes” for your website
- 7) Market/promote the episode (on social media, to your email list, etc ... if you follow me on social media, you know that I do A LOT of promotion for my show!)

As you can see, there’s a fair bit of work involved for every podcast episode, and it will certainly take more than an hour or two a week to finish everything. But the good news is that with experience, and the proper systems in place, you will be able to fly through each of these steps as if it’s second-nature!

QUESTION #3: DO YOU CURRENTLY LISTEN TO PODCASTS? WHICH ONES DO YOU LIKE? WHY?)

Odds are that you listen to podcasts in the industry that you do business in, or are planning on doing business in. Listening to other shows in your target market is a great way to do research! Find five shows in your industry and listen to some episodes - pay attention and note what *you like* and *don’t like* about each of those shows (these opinions will help choose how you’ll do things with your podcast).

For example, I once listened to a podcast that went on for over two hours. I LIKED that it shared some valuable content in that episode. But I DIDN’T LIKE that the show ran that long, which in my opinion is too long for that type of podcast (I discuss time options at greater length in my “Natural Born Podcasters” program, see www.NaturalBornPodcasters.com). It was so long that by the end of it I was getting bored! From that experience, I decided to make “Natural Born Coaches” a 30-minute podcast.

Take some time to listen to at least five other podcasts and use that research to help shape yours!

PODCAST TITLE (WHAT I LIKE ABOUT IT/DON’T LIKE ABOUT IT)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

QUESTION #4: WHO IS YOUR TARGET LISTENER?

Always keep your target listener in mind whenever making decisions regarding your podcast (before and after launching)!

YOUR TARGET LISTENER ("AVATAR")

Your "avatar" is a way to put a face (and even a name and more details) to the listener that you're going to be going after with your show. Successful podcasters use avatars to help them make decisions ... if you're considering making a change to something with your show, think to yourself; "What would my avatar think of this?". It doesn't mean that you're only going after the exact replica of your avatar, but it helps you stay focused on your audience.

However, the concept of an avatar can be fuzzy for podcasters. I've often been asked: "What's an avatar???". It helps for you to see examples of avatars in action:

- For "Natural Born Coaches", my avatar is Pat. Pat has just turned 40 years old and she's been working a 9 to 5 job in the same industry for almost 20 years. She's always been interested in personal development and has read many motivational books, so she'd like to start her own coaching business. Although she's been unofficially coaching friends and family for years, she has no clue on how to start as a coach or how to get paying clients for that business, so she listens to "Natural Born Coaches" daily!
- For "Entrepreneur on Fire", John Lee Dumas created an avatar named "Jimmy", who listens to his show while he drives to a boring corporate job that he hates. Jimmy wants to become an entrepreneur and that's why he's listening to that podcast. John has even incorporated Jimmy into some advertising for this show! (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7C3UiQdDrfM>)
- Nick Pavlidis ("Confessions of a Terrible Husband" podcast) shared with me his avatar, which gets very detailed!:

A 34-year old father of a 3-year old boy and a 1 year old girl. He hasn't worked out since his second daughter was born and is about 15 pounds heavier than his comfortable weight. He's lacking in sleep and is bumping up against a tipping point at work. He's senior and up for promotion. To get that promotion he'll have to put in a ton of time over the next year and change - even more than the 50-70 hours per week he's averaged for the last 7 years. He knows if he does that he'll miss 18 months of his kids' lives and his marriage might be over. He's been blindly working towards that "title" since he was a 17-year-old freshman in undergrad. Now he's SO close and not sure he can get over the finish line without sacrificing his personal and family health and sanity. And he's not sure he even wants to try. He needs a plan. And a wake-up call.

Have some fun creating your avatar ... Inderpal Singh did something unique and had his avatar drawn into a cartoon!



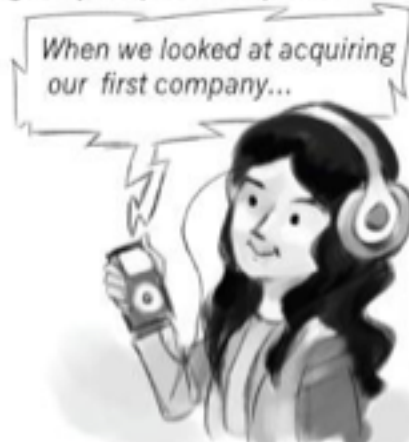
Will is a Director at a bank and has an MBA. He wants to start his own business, but feels like all the current material he reads is lacking depth.



Will comes across the actionable long-form pieces at the Thoughtful Entrepreneur



Simran's business is expanding. She's wondering if she should grow organically or acquire a local 5-person business.



Simran listens to a 20 minute podcast where the sole topic is a founder discussing their first acquisition



YOUR TITLE

The title of your podcast is important, so time should be spent on it. However, don't spend so much time that it keeps you from launching your podcast!

Your title will ideally meet a few criteria:

- It tells the listener what your show is about, who it's for, and it has your keyword(s) in it. For example, I knew that I wanted the word "coaches" in my title, so "Natural Born Coaches" works well with that ... people have an idea of what the show is about even before listening to it!
- Choose something that is easy to spell and rolls off the tongue (don't try to get "too cute" with it!)
- Make sure the domain is available for it. Although this isn't required, it will make it easier for people to find your show and for your marketing efforts.

There are exceptions to every rule – for example, one of my favourite podcasts is the popular, "Join Up Dots" with David Ralph. I've had the honour of being a guest on the show, and David was the special guest on the 100th episode of "Natural Born Coaches". At first glance, "Join Up Dots" is a confusing name (when I first heard it, I thought "What the heck is that show about?"). But once I became familiar with the show, I realized that "Join Up Dots" is a reference to a famous speech that Steve Jobs made where he talked about being able to look at our past and "join up the dots" to see how our experiences, however bad they may have been, lead to where we are today. It hasn't held back the massive popularity of the show, although David did tell me that if he was starting the podcast over again he isn't sure he would stay with the same title.

I was getting pretty frustrated with the naming of my podcast. I spent about a week compiling as many names as possible on pages in a yellow legal pad (I must have had a few hundred in there!) but nothing was sticking. I had a few that I really liked, but upon further investigation found that their domains weren't available so I kept brainstorming. I finally tried a method that got me to a name that I loved – "Natural Born Coaches" (ask me about this if we connect on Skype sometime and I'll tell you my secret method!).

QUESTION #5 WHAT FORMAT WILL YOUR SHOW HAVE?

You'll have to decide on the format for your podcast – namely the frequency of new shows and whether it'll be a solo show (with just you talking), an interview-based show with guests, or a hybrid one that mixes the format (some podcasts alternate between a solo show and interview-based).

The beautiful thing about podcasting is *the decision is all yours!* However, there are some important points to consider:

FREQUENCY

The more frequent your podcast is released, the better chance it has of getting traction. So if you only release a new show once a month, you'll have a tougher time finding your audience than if you release once (or more often) a week.

I caution against starting with a daily show. It's better to begin with a more manageable frequency and then increase that as you get more experience, than to start with a daily show then have to drop to a slower frequency if you can't handle the workload (because you risk losing listeners who became accustomed to a daily show).

I recommend to clients that they start with a minimum of a weekly show. If you have more time to commit, you can look at a 2 or 3 show per week schedule, but I wouldn't suggest starting with more than that. A number of podcasters start with a one show per week, and then bump that up after a few months of podcasting under their belts.

RELEASE DAYS

You should keep the release day(s) of your podcast the same. You want your listeners to know when it'll be released. Don't make them guess. Don't move the show around so that some weeks you release on a Monday, other weeks on a Wednesday, then Tuesday, then no show at all the next week and so on (you get the point!).

Consistency is very important for podcasting. Give your audience the peace of mind knowing that your show will be released at the same day (and same time) every week. I suggest choosing a day early in the week as opposed to late in the week (weekends generally see lower download numbers for all podcasts). Many of my clients go with Monday, some use Tuesdays, and I know a podcaster who picked Wednesday as his release day since his show is called "The Hump Day Podcast" (he's a dating coach, hence the title!).

If you're releasing your podcast multiple times per week, stagger the release days. So if you release twice a week, considering doing it on Mondays and Wednesdays, or Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you release three times a week, a great schedule would be Monday/Wednesday/Friday.

Also, set your release times to be at the same time every day. "Natural Born Coaches" is released bright and early (4:30 AM EST) every single day. My audience knows that when they start their day, the podcast will be waiting for them. Release early in the day, - don't wait until their day gets busy or in the evening, when some people are shutting down from technology and aren't thinking of podcasts!

SOLO VS INTERVIEW VS HYBRID SHOW

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these options:

SOLO SHOW

PROS - With a solo show, you have complete control. You don't have to worry about what a guest may say (yes, guests will sometimes say inappropriate things or be less exciting than you hoped they'd be!).

Also, you don't have to worry about anyone else's schedule. Want to record a show at 3 am? You don't have to convince anyone to join you at that hour – you can turn on your computer and click “record”. Guests often have to reschedule their interview (sometimes at the last minute), which can cause havoc to your schedule.

CONS – You'll have to do a lot more content creation with this model. Unlike the interview format, where minimal research may be required and as a host you'll often take a backseat to the guests who will talk the majority of the time, with a solo show you're responsible to “fill the air” with your voice and content. I've talked with solo podcasters that find the pressure to continually create content to be very stressful, so keep this in mind!

INTERVIEW BASED SHOW

PROS – You'll have less content to create. Once you choose some standard questions to ask (or jot some down while researching), your work is pretty much done on that end. And you won't have to talk the whole time ... in my experience, I talk about 1/3 of each of my shows, and the guest talks the other 2/3.

It can be easier to grow your show with this format too, since your guests will share their episode with their networks. Part of the reason “Natural Born Coaches” has grown quickly is that I have five guests who are eagerly sharing their shows every single week. If I had just one guest a week (or no guests, with a solo show), it wouldn't have the same growth opportunities.

I also like this format because of the relationship-building that it allows for. I've made great connections with the coaches that I've interviewed for my podcast – I've done joint ventures with some and some have even become clients. I wouldn't have that these same opportunities with a solo show!

CONS – You'll have less control with this format since you can't control what a guest will say. You'll also be dealing with guests mixing up their schedule and not showing up at the agreed upon time (rare, but still happens) and it can be tricky to schedule

shows at times.

HYBRID SHOW

PROS – You get to “mix it up” and that helps to keep things interesting. You can inject more of your own voice (with your solo episodes) but keep the advantages of an interview-based show (including the relationship-building that comes from that).

CONS – It hurts your consistency somewhat. Listeners may enjoy one of your types of shows more (the solo or the interview episodes) and tune out of the others, making it difficult to grow your audience!

SHOULD YOU HAVE A CO-HOST?

Having a co-host can help give a podcast more energy as the two of you can banter back and forth. The problem with having a co-host is you have to coordinate your schedules to record, which can be difficult with busy lives. If you do take on a co-host, make sure he/she is as committed to the podcast as you are!

QUESTION #6: HOW TECH-SAVVY ARE YOU?

You don't have to have a computer science degree or have years of editing experience to podcast. That being said, it helps to have base-level knowledge like the ability to upload files and familiarity with WordPress (my preferred method for podcast websites).

It's easy to get overwhelmed at the thought of what has to be done to podcast, but if you don't want to spend the time and energy handling all of that, hire someone like PodAssist (www.PodAssist.com) to take those tasks off of your plate.

QUESTION #7: WHAT IS YOUR LAUNCH DATE?

This is another question that has no right answer, but my preference is to launch as quickly as possible. I've seen too many podcasters delay the launch of their podcast waiting for “just the right time” or to do more research, and what was supposed to be a one month launch takes six months, a year, or even longer!

It's best to move quickly to get it launched before doubts from the “little voice” in your head take over. There will never be a perfect time to launch a podcast, so don't worry about it and just launch. The world will never hear your voice if you don't get

started.

When picking your launch date, choose one that's close enough to encourage action to meet it, but not too close that you won't be able to have a good launch campaign (I help my 1-on-1 podcast coaching clients with their launch and I help drive people to iTunes and the§ other places during launch week to get them off to a good start!).

***ANSWER THESE 7 QUESTIONS AND YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY TO HAVING A
SUCCESSFUL PODCAST!***

Do you want to take your business to the next level by using the power of podcasting? Let's book a time to chat and discuss ways you can do it! You can book a free strategy session with me at <http://meetme.so/marcmaihinneychat> or email Marc@NaturalBornCoaches.com. For more information about my 1-on-1 podcast coaching, visit www.NaturalBornPodcasters.com.