

Podcraft, Season 15, Episode 2

Where Should I Place Ads in My Podcast Episodes?

Colin

Hey folks. Welcome to another episode of *Podcraft*. This is a show all about podcasting, from launching your show to monetization and everything in between. I'm Colin Gray from the podcasthost.com, joined as always by Matthew. How are you doing Matthew?

Matthew

Splendid, thank you. Fresh from *The Podcast Show* in London. We were down there just a few days ago, weren't we? So really good event.

Colin

Great to see everyone, wasn't it? There were so many old contacts, amazing to see some folk over from the US as well visiting the London show. Great to see some of that going on in the UK. Who did you catch up with?

Matthew

Who did I not catch up with? The only person I didn't catch up with, I kept talking about that, I really wanted to do this because you had all the big companies, Spotify, Amazon, YouTube. I was trying to get a hold of the YouTube guy, just so I could ask him to tell me a bit about the company, to pretend I'd never heard of them just to see if he would take me at face value and start explaining what YouTube were. [crosstalk]

Colin

Yao to be, what does Yao to be do? What [crosstalk]

Matthew

Like when I went to Liverpool and I'm asking all these scousers where Abbey Road is. Always goes down well, so.

Colin

[laughs] Oh, well. What are we doing on this episode, Matthew?

Matthew

We've got another great question. This time from Theresa or Teresa, I'm bad with names. Anyway, it's a voice question, so hear her name literally. This is a great question about the optimal placing of ads in your podcast. Will we just dive in and take a wee listen?

Colin

Go for it, fire away.

Theresa

Hi, all. This is Theresa Witreck from *Homeschool Mama Self-Care* podcast. I have a podcast for the last couple of years, but before the pandemic, so November 2019, I've done about 90 episodes. I've tried all sorts of different things. I am trying to place my commercials or my ads in the right spot so they're not annoying to my listeners, but they also help support the business that I'm creating.

I'm noticing from bigger podcasters, more established podcasters, more established people in either celebrity, or in healthcare, or wellness, that they typically have those ads, about five minutes into the podcast episode. What do you think? What is the right time to include an ad in the podcast episode? Thanks. Appreciate everything that you're doing. You have set my feet on the right path from the beginning. Most appreciated.

Colin

Cool. Thanks for that, Theresa. Yes, Matthew. Adverts. This is a good question actually. It's not something ever asked that often. Just where to put them and how to include them. I think there's a bunch of related stuff to this as well, isn't there, so it'd be good to go through all of this. Where do you want to start?

Matthew

First and foremost, so we've got a starting point of this question she's heard big famous and popular podcasts doing them around the five-minute mark. As a starting point, you might think maybe there's a reason for that, but as always in podcasting, there's the "it depends" factor, isn't it? Because obviously like a big thing that jumps out is podcast episode lengths could vary so much.

Some are literally under five minutes and therefore indeed five minutes in won't do for them. Likewise, you could be doing a hardcore history six-hour. We always use that an example, but literally nobody else does that do that? Six-hour episodes. As far as I know. You can't really just say five minutes is that good time, can you?

Colin

For sure. I think there's a few things go into this. There's no, as you say, exactly, there's no one right time, the mid roll, that's what they call it. Just to be clear, like there's generally three adverts that people will pay for in your podcast. There's the pre-roll, the mid-roll and in the post-roll.

The pre-roll tends to be right at the start of the show, whether it is actually literally the actual start of the show, or whether it comes within the first couple of minutes, just after your intro, perhaps. The mid-roll tends to come in the middle of the show. Traditionally it's in the middle. If it's a 20-minute show, it might be 10 minutes in, or if it's a 30-minute show, it's 15 minutes in. Then the post-roll is either at the very end, or just during outro.

Mid-roll is your classic 60-second longer ad. Pre-roll, post-roll will be quite short, maybe 15, 20 seconds 30 at the most. We're talking about the mid-roll general here, aren't we Matthew? Or you want to jump into all of them, see where maybe people should place all of those ads?

Matthew

Yes, I think there's a number of factors here. Like you're saying, the pre-roll, the mid-roll, the post-roll, there's some echo around that. There's an argument of whether you're pre-roll if you were doing one, should there at least be some content before that?

Colin
Yes.

Matthew
Was it Tim Ferriss's show back in the day that literally was a block of five-minute [crosstalk]- -

Colin
What do you mean back in the day? Right now. It still is.

Matthew
Does he still do that?

Colin
Yes, yes.

Matthew
Yes. I've not had that for a lot of years, but yes. You're not even getting an intro in the show is it just like [crosstalk] Trojan condoms.

Colin
[laughs] I know that he still does the ads because I listened to his show. I love his show. I don't know whether it's a bad thing or not, but it's just the way I went, so it's worth noting. I have in my Pocketcasts, I have in the settings, there's advanced settings where to start the show. I have it set for the Tim Ferriss Show to start at six minutes because I find that generally starts during his actual intro to the interview. Just every time I listen to the first show, I don't hear the first five minutes of it. I have no idea actually what he's doing.
I do know that there's still ads there because usually, that is jumping in straight to the intro, but he might have the actual intro music before that. He might have after it. I'm not even sure because I haven't listened to the first five minutes to the show in years. You listen to Overcast, don't you? Can it do it as well?

Matthew
Yes, Overcast on the recent update and you could customize the start times of shows and end times as well, if you get just the same two minutes at the start. That's how we warm into the podcast. You really want to get those intros and outros, you want to mix them up. You want to make sure they're content rather than just generic, whether it's ads or intro music or whatever. Yes, I think that's a good aside. It's thinking about the bookends of your shows if you do the pre and post. The mid obviously, that's the basis of this question. How far into the episode do we look to do that?

Another factor here is what kind of ads are we talking about because they could be your third-party you've just edited and that's almost radio-style third-party ad. It's just for a sponsor or whatever, or it could be an ad for your own product, in which case it's going to be host-read, or you may be doing host-read ads for third-party products. If you're doing that, you hear some great examples of podcast hosts making them part of the content. It may be an anecdote or story about why they use this product. In which case the timing of it maybe isn't just so important because a lot of listeners that will pass them by the won't even notice it's an ad half the time, will they? They're enthusiastic about this thing. They pointed me in the direction of it.

Colin

Yes, absolutely. I'd always recommend host-read ads as well. You get the events or it's the dynamic ads that are inserted from elsewhere. I suppose there's a place for that. If you have a host that has a dynamic ad marketplace and you can earn a little bit of money out of it. I just don't think those ads work very well. They generally are not either not relevant to your show even if they've got category placement like you're a running show and somebody has targeted.

They generally can't be that specific at the moment. It'll just be a sports category. It might be bikes being advertised to runners or something like that. It's just making them relevant is quite tricky. There's just not a trust that's the whole thing about podcast advertising. It's like if you build it into anecdote like you're saying there, Matthew, we use-- I've got a Rode Podcaster mic right in front of me here. I've just recorded a video about that mic.

I can talk about the Rode Podcaster mic in the show and that can be considered an advert or a sponsor slot and Rode aren't paying me for that, but they could and you can work it in and say, "I like this product, I use it." We're being paid to advertise it but actually, I would probably do it anyway because it's part of what we use anyway. Those are the best ads, aren't they? They are read by the host. They carry the trust of the host and they're just built-in and it's not an aside.

Matthew

Talk me through what happened to Colin when we got together to do this episode we loaded up some call recording software. We had some issues. What did we do?

Colin

We jumped over to Alitu and just recording it in Alitu. Yes, for sure. We just jumped away.

Matthew

I thought you were going to do better with that idea.

Colin

[laughs] Okay. Yes, talking of which, so Alitu, we are recording. Yes, exactly. I mean, Alitu got a call recording tool in here. We are currently recording on the Alitu call recording which is our product, which helps you create your own podcast. If you want a seven day free trial, go over to Alitu.com, A-L-I-T-U.com, but yes, it just worked. The other tool we were using didn't recognize my mic the first time I could hear you and the next time around it didn't recognize your-- My headphones and you

could hear me, and it was all a bunch of nonsense and Alitu just worked. [chuckles] Well done. Good feet there, Matthew, that I didn't pick up very well.

Matthew

Yes there you go. I think as well if you are doing the prerecorded third party ads, then it's just a question of sensible positioning and I know that most tools or services that offer the dynamic ads will give you the choice these days to signpost where you want those to go.

I think you're looking at I mean, say for example, I've got an interview show and I've done my intro and I'm cutting to the interview maybe I'm going to stick it between those two segments I don't know it's where it's least likely to annoy the listener, but at the same time, if you've primed them up to keep listening, you've teased some, then you can maybe drop some of them because you know they're going keep listening. There's no real right answer there. There's a lot of considerations.

Colin

Absolutely. I think there's a couple of things to this here. First is where'd you place it? Do you place it early? If you have a 30-minute show, Theresa was asking, do you put it five minutes in? There's an argument for that because obviously for better or worse, even with good content, listenership drops off towards the end of the episode, because even if you're doing a great episode, some people will get distracted or some people will finish their drive and they'll stop and they might never come back to it or they might. Having it early, arguably will be heard by more people but the other side of that is if you put it late, you've built more trust and more value.

If somebody's been listening for 20 minutes, they're really enjoying it they're getting a ton from your show. Then when you read the ad, it's less annoying because they realize, oh, that's fair I'm happy for this to be-- I'm getting this for free. You've given me a ton of value so I'll listen to the ad. If it's so about your own product, then you're even more likely to buy it because you've built that trust. There's a couple of things there I think. The other part of that is actually if you're thinking about an ad being annoying if you're worrying about the ad being annoying and maybe you need to think about the kind of ad you're doing. I mean, how would you make an ad useful? You'll have heard many of examples of that Matthew. How would you make an ad actually useful? You advertise something, but it's equally useful to your listeners so it can't be annoying. How would you go about that?

Matthew

Again it's the anecdote or the personal story. The host-read aspect. Again, over the years I've heard many, a good fiction podcasts who had a lot of fun with their adverts because they've been able to do it in story. Remember *Wooden Overcoats*? That one for a mattress, which is the most cliché type of thing you could advertise on a podcast like socks, but they did it really well. They had the main character talking about, he was getting such a bad sleep and then he bought this thing. I know fiction podcasts are a bit unique in that sense, but there's loads of like-- Podcasters are creative. There are creative ways to do your ads.

Colin

Absolutely.

Matthew

Aside from just I've been given these files and I'm just going to play them, just going to edit them in.

Colin

I always think an example of an early company doing this or a company doing this early on was Gimlet. Gimlet did really good ads because what they did was they used their-- they were a bunch of journalists and review and interviewers and they knew how to get good content out of people. When somebody sponsored them, they'd go and actually interview somebody from the company, and they'd either get some funny stories from that person so that it was an ad, but it was entertaining.

I think they got advertised by, or they advertised with MailChimp for a while and they just went and interviewed a bunch of the MailChimp staff and they got some great stories. They'd mention MailChimp, they'd say, "You work for MailChimp. What happened in the MailChimp mailroom the other day?" They'd tell a story and it would just be funny. It would barely mention the product apart from the fact that it was somebody from that company.

The other approach is actually to interview them and get some good content. If we were sponsored by somebody from the podcast industry, maybe a mic manufacturer, for example, we could go to that mic manufacturer. We could interview them and get their top tip for mic technique or for set up or for preparing their episodes or something like that. If your advertiser's relevant, if it's something that's relevant to your audience, then so often you could get some really good content from that person, bring them on the show, and actually, suddenly it becomes useful. It's an ad, but it's actually useful to people so it's less likely to skip. I like that approach.

Matthew

I think is well, long term. A lot of us get caught up and or make certain assumptions. We have ads in the show to monetize the podcast but you could think long-term maybe you'll be in a position where you don't want or need ads. Again, this comes down to what you're actually selling to the listener, whether it's your own products or services, or whether it's somebody else's.

If it's your own stuff you're pushing them to, you may be just looking at doing your call action, which is really a post-roll, I suppose, but is still in the content. It might just be something that you've delivered that a really good episode and then towards the end, you're going to bring up something that you're running or that you're selling or that at the time, and you can talk about that a wee bit. That is an ad, but it isn't at the same time. It's a call action. The lines are a lot more blurry there.

Colin

Yes, yes, totally. Yes, exactly. That is a great way to go to have your own stuff because suddenly, the trust passes over, even more, you can recommend somebody else's product, but it's still going to go ahead and buy somebody else's thing, but if it's yours, then yes, the advert-- It's barely an advert. It's just like this is someone else I'm doing. If you liked my podcast, [here's something else we do](#).

If you like [this podcast](#), if you like [Podcraft](#), and we have a community, [Podcraft](#) community. Go and find that on Circle or if you like our podcast,

go and try Alitu. Alitu is our podcast maker. We made it to help people make their podcasts based on the advice that we give on this podcast. Yes, I think it works well.

Matthew

Yes. Just going to give a shout-out for podcasting.

Colin

Oh yes cool.

Matthew

For our podcast [unintelligible 00:16:48] [Homeschool Mama Self-Care](#) podcast. I think the website is capturingthecharmedlife.com but we'll put obviously the links in that in the show notes as well for this very episode. Yes, been great to see all the questions that have come in that we're going to be dealing with on this season. There's obviously still time to submit your own too, which you could do at [thepodcasthost.com/answers](#), and that be great to hear from you.

Colin

Good work. Good work. Yes. Thanks very much for that, Theresa. Good question. Hope we covered it well, if you have any follow up questions, pop them and you can send them over to that link that Matthew just read out. Talking about adverts, post-roll ad if you do want to check out Alitu, you want an easier way to make your podcast that does call recording, sort your recording, helps you edit your show, does all the audio cleanup, from noise reduction to leveling all that stuff, episode builder that you can slot in the ads really easy. Ain't it, Matthew? Nudge, nudge.

Matthew

That genuinely is the thing for that. I use Audition and just because I use Audition all the time. It's my default but because we're recording Alitu, I wouldn't have to go and do all the stuff that I usually do. All the compression and noise reduction, that all just happen for me, but I would still pretend I'm slaving away at the keyboard. [crosstalk] I don't know some sort of soft toy keyboard now go and have a cup of tea.

Colin

[laughs]

Matthew

That would be more useful to me anyway.

Colin

Didn't want to see but you know. [laughs] If you want to go and try Alitu, go over to [A-L-I-T-U.com](#), [Alitu.com](#) You get some of the free trial. You can give it a shot. All right. Thank you, Matthew. Good question answered.

Matthew

Yes. Thanks, Theresa, for getting that in. [unintelligible 00:18:33] catch you up on the next one.

Colin

Indeed. All right. Thanks for listening. We'll talk to you next time.