

Report on MiPA General Meeting—November 9, 2021 27 Participating on Zoom

Podcasting for Promoting Books



Josh Weber

Operations Manager of [Calumet Editions](#) and host of the radio program [Write On! Radio](#) and the podcast [AuthorView](#)

Chris Martin

Podcast host of [Getting Work To Work](#). Chris is a curiosity builder, filmmaker, podcaster, and storyteller

Josh and Chris discussed ways to build, run, and market a podcast. They, sort of, interviewed one another and answered questions from the audience.

Why Podcast?

Chris began podcasting in 2016 to better share his ideas. He has completed over 563 episodes. Josh, a relative newcomer with only 4 episodes so far, cited statistics that there are now 600 million blogs, 23 million YouTube channels, but only 800 thousand podcasts, so podcasts are easier to find and have potentially more impact, which is what attracted him.

Format for Podcasts?

Chris began by just having a structure with an intro, a main content section, and then an exit. He worried about how he sounded. At first Chris was hesitant about talking solo for more than 10 minutes, so on his 12th episode he invited a friend to join. Now they average 45 minutes to an hour. He lets the speaker know how long they have, never more than 1.5 hours. Sometimes having 2 invited speakers works well, so the host can just be a moderator or just dangle an interesting idea and let the guests go with it. Josh tries to include author short stories and to talk about their work and how they decided to write the book.

Editing After the Conversation

Josh used to spend 2 hours editing, but now it's down to 45 minutes, and Chris said the editing time depends on when the podcast is due out. Taking out the "ums" and other gaps is an example. Everyone has their personal filler words or sounds. But the ums sometimes blend into other words and the edits can be noticed. Both have loosened up their editing over time. Things which are especially annoying are the beeps from smart phones, keyboard clicks, or scratching on the table. The show doesn't have to be perfect.

Access and Archiving

One can listen to podcasts on apps like [Spotify](#) or hundreds more. There is usually a website associated with each where archived podcasts can be found. The direct RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed from a podcaster is limited, but older episodes can usually be found in the website archives. They can be tagged or categorized to make access easier. Chris' website is [Getting Work to Work.com](#) or [GWTW.co](#) or [chrismartinstudios.com](#) for his business website.

Podcast Production—Sound Quality

Sound quality is a focus, and Chris chose to use audio-only interviews. He thinks using Zoom or studio recording can tend to distract the host. For Zoom you have to convert to an mp3 file by stripping out the visual and also add any common intro or exit sounds. Josh uses [Camtasia](#). Chris uses [Zencastr](#). Chris claims Zoom audio is bad due to its compression, but not a lot of people can hear the difference. A more important factor is using a good microphone, not just the computer mic. Using wav files might require 300 Mb per person compared to 60 Mb for a Zoom file.

Podcast Production—Finding Speakers

In the beginning, Chris just went to friends, but now he has a canned email that he can send out. He now uses [Textexpander](#) for this. He has done pitches to PR agencies where 60 percent of his speakers come from. His issue is more about picking from the large number. He makes 3 lists: (1) OK guests who would say yes right away, (2) those who would be good if they agreed, and (3) ones who would be great if they could only be convinced.

Podcast Production—Planning for the Talk

Chris says, "I have the same opening and final questions for everyone. For the main central section I have a list of questions that I share with the speakers. The talk may drift off from these when a good subject comes up." Josh always reads the entire book that will be discussed. Sometimes he catches them off guard by what he brings up. Chris tries to read them, but sometimes the book itself can be bad, so he asks more about the person. It is okay to challenge the guest. Some gems will come out. The authors have some influence on the interview path but it is mostly the responsibility of the podcaster. Guests—don't write out and read your answers.

Building the Audience

For Chris, it grew rather organically—people shared when they liked the show. At first it was very slow and Chris once thought, *Is this worth it?* But one of his listeners sent him notes and listened to every show, which encouraged him. The key is having a regular schedule; Wednesdays and Fridays for him.

Josh uses Facebook and gets "Likes" that way to spread the word. At Calumet he had many authors come in, but didn't follow through much. Authors need to help by recommending the podcast to others.

Getting on Podcasts to Talk About Your Book

Before trying your own podcast, start by going on other people's podcasts. Try to be very outgoing to make listeners want to know more. Don't judge the success on the first couple of tries. A lot depends on the interviewer.

Reading excerpts from your book is not a good way to directly monetize the work, but it could be used to market the book. Tell engrossing stories—that's what people want to hear.

Defining Your Market

Josh started by talking about hybrid publishing, which he is involved in.

Chris sought out creative people like himself, freelancers, and entrepreneurs. He thought, *What can I share about what worked for me or about mistakes I made?* A long list of memories emerged.

Does a Short-Term Podcast Make Sense?

If you are going to do it, make it long term, unless you are famous. It takes a while to build an audience. Chris recommends aspiring to an “infinite” podcast (but no one buys that). Better to start with a 12-episode season (say 4 podcasts a month for 3 months). Then, if it works well, have a season 2, and you might pick up some sponsors. You will then know if it is worth the effort and can show how it fits into a sponsor’s business.

How Can You Find Podcasts For Authors?

Josh said for a specific topic, UFOs, he went to Spotify and looked for that category, and found tons of podcast on that subject. Then he reached out through many contacts and got about 5 podcast speakers.

Chris said to just search for podcasts and then insert the subject matter. He also suggested [PodMatch](#) as a good technique.

Can I Turn Videos I Have Done into a Podcast?

Josh said absolutely, just convert it to a .mp3 file.

Podcast Tools

- Chris uses Adobe Audition for production, and for inserting intros and outros. He writes notes for the interview in [AI-Writer](#) and then uses [Grammarly](#) to be sure it sounds good and he does the artwork in [Photoshop](#). He exports the podcast to an mp3 file, which most exporters require. Don’t use wav files which are not compressed.
- Josh uses [Camtasia](#) for video and audio editing. [Audacity](#) is another option or [Hindenburg](#) (which is used for audiobooks and is more expensive).
- Another amazing tool is [Descript](#) which transcribes an audio file to text, which can be edited, and then it puts it back into audio form. If you are just starting out, try Descript.
- Another option is [Searchie.io/podcast](#), which will do transcriptions that can be used on your website or blog. Also [otter.ai](#) will do transcriptions.
- Have a great logo if possible. Chris’ was based on Frankenstein or Mad Scientist. These have many uses—coasters, stickers, etc. The name of the site is also very important.



- Having good music for intros and outros is important. Josh uses [Audio Jungle](#) (royalty free) and Chris uses [Artlist.io](#) (a subscription service for \$200 per year)
- USB mics you can buy today are very good. You should spend about \$200 for a Shure mic (don't spend \$400). You can get directional mics so only sound from one direction can be heard. Zoom makes a recorder as well. A mixer might be useful for more than one speaker. Don't buy a Yeti mic.
- Chris has something called Creativity Lab where he puts out a newsletter. Josh is trying a new service called [Audry.io](#) which is a way for podcasters to collaborate. The pairs can, in effect, sponsor each other.
- Chris doesn't list his podcasts on social media much.
- Monetization is difficult because you don't know exactly how many are listening. Sponsors expect thousands of listeners. It's a rather random process.
- Hiring an editor to do the editing might take a lot of money. The decision depends on the podcaster's technical competence. Both Josh and Chris do their own. Watch YouTube videos to learn how.
- An aspiring author might want to join [Toastmaster](#) to hone their skills.

Publishing Tools

Chris uses WordPress with a plug-in called [PowerPress](#) from Blubrry (\$40 per month for 500 Mb). This creates all the RSS feeds. Josh uses [Buzzsprout](#) which is a simpler service (which lists the podcast on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, Pandora, Amazon, etc. (for \$12 per month for 3 hours of content)). Anchor and Spotify also have good publishing tools.

Workbook

Chris has a workbook called *Develop Your Podcasts* that anyone can order for free. Send an email to Chris@chrismartinstudios.com to request. You may have doubts about podcasts or life in general, but try out new experiences, and look for the good results. It will strengthen your ego and will.