

# Why the Conversational Power of Podcasting Is the Future of Advertising

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## Medium's simplicity drives engagement

It's been fascinating for me to observe how marketers and content creators in the past few years have become obsessed with being a part of "conversations"—conversations between platforms and brands, between [brands and consumers](#). I wonder, what are we talking about when we talk about conversation within the **advertising** context?

Before there was user data and complicated ad-tech-acronyms, conversation was simple, it was people talking. Mouths, words, ears and responses. Any definition beyond that is an artificial innovation. The concept is, and should be, as delightfully simple as it is powerful. Conversations have a way of [drawing us in](#). They keep us at the table long past our bedtimes, they stick with us for years and they leave us satisfied, but even more eager for the next conversation.

Podcasting is the digital medium built on the power of conversation. Although undoubtedly with a genesis in the American radio tradition, there are none of the literal bells and whistles of shock-jock morning radio, nor the pressure to deliver impact in 3-minutes-or-less: Listeners are [engaging with podcasts](#) for 20, 30, 40 minutes—sometimes longer—at a time. The lack of strong scripting creates a spontaneous flow, which leads listeners to repeat these conversations to their peers, their friends and their families, creating their own versions of the discussion and making new connections.

Communal viewing of a season premiere can most definitely lead to similar conversations, but only in podcasting is the conversation about the conversation—meaning an intrinsic continuity of the content that lives and evolves in the mind of the listener.

And, perhaps most importantly, today's listener is smarter than ever. It's no coincidence that the rise of ad blocking is contemporary with the rise of podcasting. The savvy modern consumer demands quality and authenticity. Podcasting [has thrived](#) under the pressure to offer that, eschewing the safety of over-editing or misdirection through transience or smoke and mirrors. The best conversations depend on a mutual respect of the other party's intelligence: Podcasts respect consumers intelligence and [work hard](#) to gain that respect from them, especially if they

expect them to be listening for the long haul.

Although the technology that made display and video **advertising** so insightful and data-driven is now coming to podcasting, it is indeed podcasting's relative lack of complication that has laid the foundation for this trusted conversation. But podcasting has never pretended to be something else. And as consumers get savvier and have more and more options available to them, authenticity and transparency will become more and more important.

The 2016 [IAB Podcasting Upfront](#) was held this week, and from the buzz it generated, it seems that brands and advertisers are now rightfully setting their sights on the medium. Of course, their eyes follow the eyes (or ears) of the millions of consumers who have already joined the podcast conversation, which is the vanguard of media and **advertising's** journey to the promised land. Podcasts sit comfortably at the nexus of authenticity, storytelling and conversation. This combination has been promised for years in all other forms of media. The delivery of this promise has been questionable at best.

But for almost a decade now, quietly chugging along in the background, podcasting has consistently served as a medium for some of the most intriguing and forward-looking brand integrations and delivered on forming the [personal connections](#) that other media is still promising. Many formats purport to "speak" to the consumer, but I refer you to the definition of conversation. We have a foundational, powerful media in podcasting, and the future holds unimaginable possibilities.

People are listening, more and more frequently and for longer and longer. For brands and advertisers, now is the time to join the conversation, if you haven't already.

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