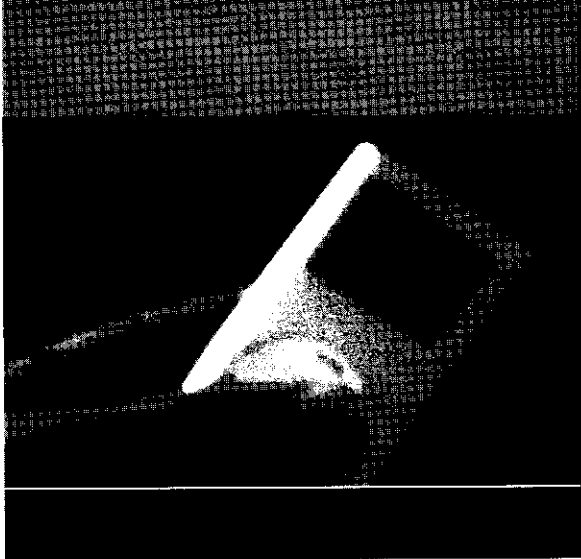


Reach Out and Podcast Someone

New Technology Can Help Your Business



Less than two years ago, an Internet search of the word “podcast” would barely cause a stir in a search engine. Today there are more than 30 million references to podcasting.

Podcasting is a technology whose impact on marketing and business has yet to be fully explored. Any business or organization seeking an innovative and creative way to market a product or service should consider podcasting.

“Podcast” is a term derived from the iPod, introduced by Apple in 2001. The wildly popular electronic device is now ubiquitous among younger demographics. To date, its primary use has been to download digital music files so the iPod, or any MP3, can be used as a mobile music player. Like amateur radio talk shows, podcasts give virtually anyone the ability to reach diverse but highly targeted audiences.

In current marketing, the trend is narrow-casting. Whereas traditional broadcasting emphasized getting a mass message out to a mass audience, podcasting can get customized messages to more narrow segments.

Consider how podcasting already is being used. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger uses a podcast to package and distribute his political speeches. Deloitte & Touche is a corporate sponsor of a Web site that uses podcasting to provide career advice.

GMFastlane is a branded podcast by General Motors that features segments from designers and product managers for Chevrolet, Pontiac and Cadillac.

Anyone with a microphone and a PC can become a modern-day podcaster and communicate to the world. The equipment and software is inexpensive. Your conference room or even your cubicle is your studio.

In much the same fashion that home movies shot on digital camcorders trespassed on traditional filmmaking, the radio era is about to explode as providers find inexpensive distribution channels for their products. For example, amateur disc jockeys are hosting alternative radio programs, aspiring authors are self-publishing their own audio books and some insightful organizations are recognizing the public relations benefits of podcasts.

Clark County’s Department of Comprehensive Planning became the first government entity in Nevada to launch a podcast as a component of its Yucca Mountain public outreach program. Nearly 500 people accessed its podcast in the first two weeks. It’s been so successful the county added additional podcasts on other interest areas.

“We wanted to find a way to reach residents who are more comfortable with the computer as their primary source of information,” said Public Information Officer Erik Muller. “The Yucca Mountain podcast gets

our message out to a more targeted audience segment, and it increases awareness of Clark County’s role in keeping the public informed about the Yucca Mountain Project.”

What can podcasting do for your business? First, it can help you meet your business goals by expanding your customer base. Second, if you don’t, someone else will. Competition is fierce. You need every advantage in today’s ever-demanding, customer-driven marketplace.

Finally, podcasting technology is not the destination, its part of the communication technology journey. The extent of the pod revolution will be determined by the supply of, and demand for, quality podcast content. Imagine a world where you can produce a daily podcast for your employees.

Remember to protect your organizational credibility by communicating in an honest, forthright fashion, because in the final analysis, it really won’t matter how we communicate if the public doesn’t believe what we have to say.

Podcasting’s potential is as limitless as our collective imaginations. Thanks to podcasting, we now have another medium that can help us retain existing audiences and attract new ones. ■

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