

Why Podcast

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Susan Laird] Hi. Welcome to Gateway to Health Communication, a podcast for health communicators by health communicators. If you are working in public health at a federal, state or local level, in the private sector, or with a non-profit, this show's for you. I'm your host, Susan Laird.

[Susan Laird] Joining us today for our inaugural podcast is CDC veteran broadcast producer Charlotte Duggan. Charlotte, tell us, from your perspective, why are podcasts so popular?

[Charlotte Duggan] Susan, thanks for so much for having me. One reason they're so popular they're so popular is that the format is a really good fit for our busy lives. You can find a podcast on almost any topic you're interest in and many of them are short, less than 15 minutes. It's information and entertainment in bite-sized chunks right at our fingertips. And sometimes audio is preferred when someone is multitasking like driving, cleaning house, or shopping. In 2019, the number of podcast listeners increased a lot. More than half of the US population has listened to a podcast and about 150 million people listen to at least one every month.

[Susan Laird] What are some of the FUNDAMENTALS of podcasting? You know, the stuff people should think about before they even start?

[Charlotte Duggan] Well, there are several things to consider before creating a podcast. First, you have to know who your audience is. Who are you talking to. Is it teenagers, parents, seniors, doctors and nurses. Once you know who you're talking to you have to target your messages. What are the primary messages you want to communicate. They need to be clearly defined and focused on your audience. And the third thing that needs to be considered is the style of the podcast. Will it be an interview, like we're doing here or a solo ready by one person or a panel discussion. They're a lot of different styles and you have to decide what's going to be best for your particular topic

[Susan Laird] What I'm trying to get to here is, "What does it take to make it really good – something someone will want to listen to?"

[Charlotte Duggan] That's a really good question. Because, just because you create a podcast doesn't mean someone's going to listen. So, podcasts, even podcasts that are primarily for information and education need to be interesting and entertaining. You need to speak to your audience. You need to stay on topic. You need to be focused but conversational. It's a good idea to use a script, even if it's an outline but it's also important to be conversational. Many people call podcasting the future of storytelling. Tell a story whenever possible. People of all ages love stories.

[Susan Laird] What's the biggest mistake people make when they produce podcasts?

[Charlotte Duggan] Susan, it's really hard to pick just one. But if I had to pick one, I'd say no passion. You have to present your podcast in a passionate and enthusiastic way so your audience will be passionate and enthusiastic about your topic.

[Susan Laird] Thank you, Charlotte. Join us for our next podcast where we'll discuss a passion for science.

Thanks for listening to Gateway, a podcast for Health Communicators. If you have a topic idea for our show or a question, or would like to be featured on the show, email us at Gateway@cdc.gov.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.