

AWARENESS



CONSIDERATION



CONVERSION

STATE OF AUDIO

# FUEL THE FUNNEL

Activate Audio to  
drive better results

Audio holds the title as the undisputed leader of brand-building channels—working its magic with the one-two punch of massive reach + beloved personalities. But if you're thinking of Audio as just a top-of-funnel play—good for sparking a conversation but not driving conversion—think again.

**61% of marketers say improving full-funnel media investment is a high or critical priority over the next 12 months**

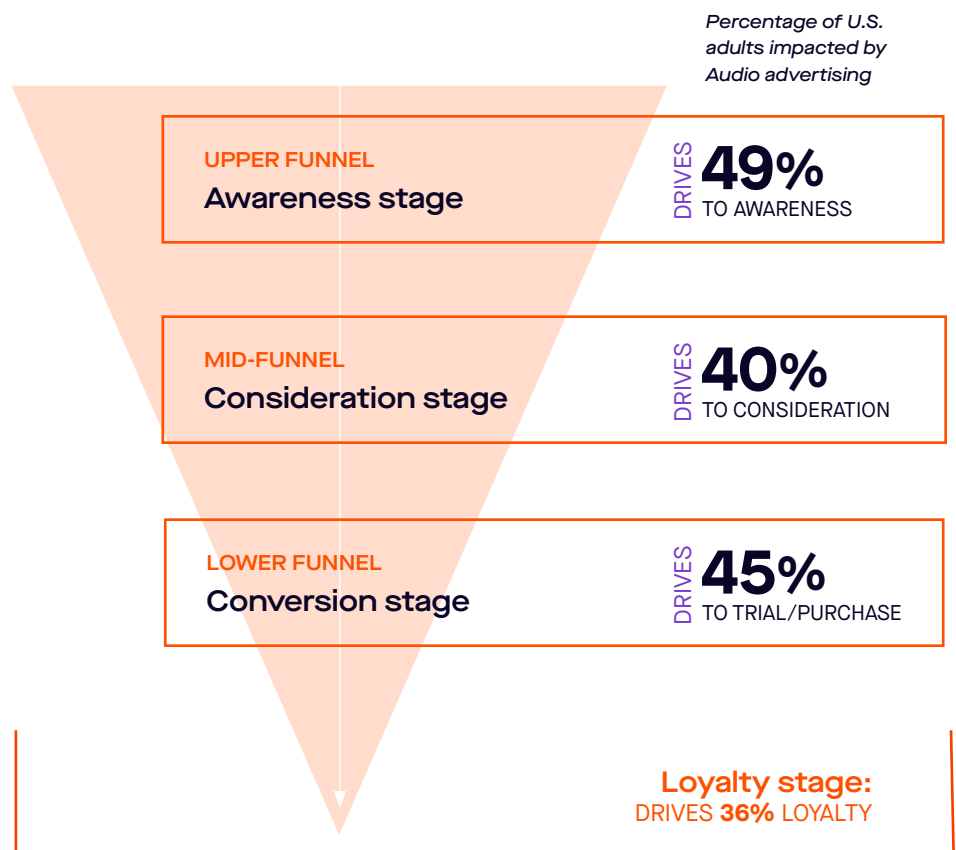
Source: Forrester Consulting, DAC-commissioned global marketers survey, September 2022.

#### So what does full-funnel Audio look like?

The shopper journey today has a whole lot of new twists and turns. But the fundamental stages of the marketing funnel are still effectively built around awareness (upper funnel), consideration (mid-funnel), and conversion (lower funnel), with a loop back around for loyalty and advocacy.

Audio continues to rule at the top of the funnel—spreading the word, driving reach, and building awareness—but in recent years, the game has expanded. Audio is now a multi-purpose platform. Thanks to precision targeting, authentic influencers, and advanced measurement, marketers are uncovering the best-kept secret in media—Audio's ability to drive impact at each stage of the funnel.

# The truth is, Audio moves the needle at every point in the funnel—from top to bottom.



What brands are seeing is that Audio's value proposition has evolved. Today, with our ability to target cohorts with such precision, Audio's value is no longer relegated to just the top of the funnel. The value proposition is now reach + frequency + precision. And marketers are deploying Audio at every stage of the consumer journey with great outcomes."

— PAUL SUCHMAN, CMO, AUDACY

# BIG AD ENERGY

## MEDIA'S IMPACT ACROSS THE FUNNEL

Savvy marketers are making the most of Audio's mix of Radio, podcasts, and digital channels by simply looking through the lens of results. Just like with any media partner, the question should always be—how well can it perform? When you line up your marketing campaigns head-to-head, who stands out as the LeBron James of paid media? And we don't just mean who has the popular household name—but who is earning that top spot through star-studded brand marketing and clutch performance?

### Audio vs the Rest

The Big Story? Audio's ability to convert compared to other channels—even powerhouse purchase drivers like social media, display ads, and online videos. Let's take a look.

### What Influences Consumers the Most?

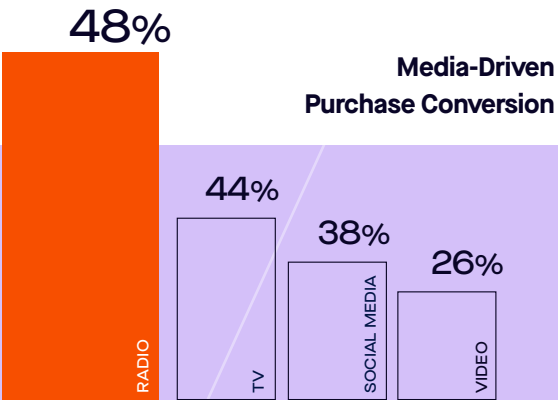
Media's Impact on the Consumer Journey

	Audio	TV	Display	Social Media	Search	Subscription Video On Demand (SVOD)	Video
AWARENESS	49%	49%	44%	40%	36%	31%	29%
CONSIDERATION	40%	39%	36%	35%	40%	25%	23%
CONVERSION	45%	44%	40%	38%	33%	28%	26%
LOYALTY	36%	32%	31%	33%	24%	23%	21%

Source: Nielsen, Commspoint Influence; Channel rankings consider cost and include U.S. MRI Simmons 2022 data; Audio = Radio ads, streaming Radio ads, and podcast ads.

### Radio Smashes Conversion Goals

Radio shines all the way through the funnel, driving 48% of us to purchase. That's way ahead of TV (44%), social media (38%), and video (26%).



Source: Nielsen, Commspoint Influence; Channel rankings consider cost and include U.S. MRI Simmons 2022 data; Audio = Radio ads, streaming Radio ads, and podcast ads.

Read on to see how three top brands use a full-funnel approach for awareness, sales, and measurability.

# UPPER FUNNEL

**Brand Awareness:  
The First Stop on  
the Shopper  
Journey**

## **Let's start at the top: the upper funnel.**

Investment in top-of-funnel campaigns has long been a media buyer favorite because of its long-lasting impact. Branding campaigns spark awareness and interest, create lasting impressions, and boost emotional connection and trust. And those effects don't easily wash off. Brands often see awareness campaigns paying dividends down the road through mid-and lower-funnel conversions.

The widest part of the funnel has always been a sweet spot for Audio advertising. The difference today is that top-of-funnel Audio is now done with even greater precision and effectiveness.



## CASE STUDY:

# Storytelling for the win: Instagram's "Discovering Our Identity" Gen Z campaign

Let's see how Instagram successfully used podcasts and streaming Audio to build its brand and make lasting connections.

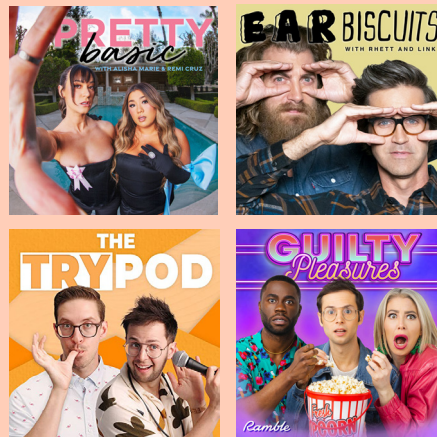
When Instagram wanted to increase awareness, affinity, and recommendations among socially conscious young adults and teens through its "Discovering Our Identity" campaign, our podcast hosts stepped up to their mics to help. Our powerful young influencers shared their own experiences in finding their identity—and inspired their loyal listeners to do the same. Our hosts also got the word out through their social channels to drive even deeper connections to Instagram.

Here's how we spread the word to millions of Gen Z listeners and followers!



## PODCAST INFLUENCER TAKEOVER

Custom episodes and social integrations reaching millions of followers.

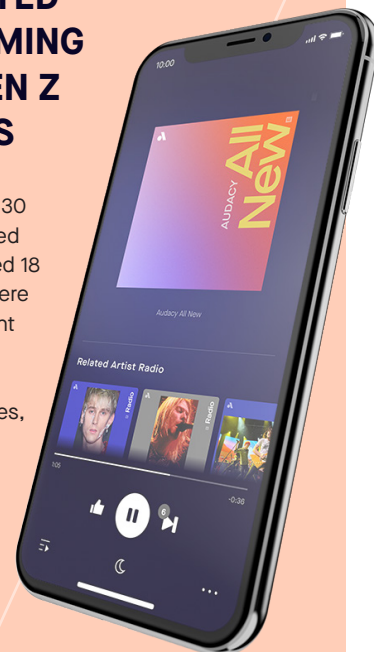


## PODCAST HOST READS

Reaching key audience segments on Audacy's podcast network.

## TARGETED STREAMING FOR GEN Z ADULTS

Our :15 and :30 spots reached listeners aged 18 to 24 who were entertainment enthusiasts interested in music, movies, and fashion.



Audacy's hard-working media helped Instagram break through—driving brand success, forging stronger connections with its target audience, and boosting awareness and affinity for the brand.

## UPPER FUNNEL

# Key takeaways

How to win at the top of the funnel

## 1 Radio is a reach machine

Reaching 95% of the U.S. population is no small feat, and Radio does it week after week. But it's not only a powerhouse for generating brand awareness and memorability—it also boosts the performance of other media by 17+%.

Source: Audacy, Audio Amplification: The ROAS Study, Neustar, May 2021.

## 2 Storytelling over CTAs

For brand-building campaigns, it's all about telling great stories. We're emotional creatures, and we like emotional stories. A campaign that warms hearts will give your brand staying power through the whole journey.

## 3 Podcasting at scale

Let's talk targeting at scale. Podcasts are well-known for delivering deep audience engagement by selecting specific titles. But more and more, we're seeing brands reach target audiences by starting with host read sponsorships, then adding addressable and programmatic cross-network buys for scale.



“

Host reads are the queen bee of podcasts, but you can bump up scale and efficiency with addressable and run-of-network ads.”

— SHIRIN PEYKAR, SVP,  
PERFORMANCE AD SALES, AUDACY





# MID FUN NEL

The Shopper's  
Consideration  
Stage

## **Mid-funnel is where consumers kick the tires.**

Consumers research, visit websites, and seek out reviews. They may even ask their smart speakers and digital assistants for advice.

For many brands, finding success at the consideration stage requires more refined targeting. With new data-driven advances, audience-based Audio buys go way beyond core demos to target interests, behaviors, psychographics, and even contextual settings. That makes it easier to find the 16-year-old baller in need of some new kicks, or the luxury auto buyer ready to hit the gas on that dream car.

## CASE STUDY:

# Hyundai drives off a winner with its integrated Audio campaign

Take a look at how Hyundai harnessed the power of Audio by putting Audacy in the driver's seat for its electric vehicle campaign.



Hyundai teamed up with Audacy for mid-funnel performance, looking to drive purchase consideration for its fleet's EVs and latest features. The results?

**+7.4 point lift in purchase intent**  
and an amazing 10.4 point jump in favorability among female listeners.

**How did we do it?** Auto brands traditionally enjoy high brand awareness and recall. The goal for this campaign was to go one step further and improve Hyundai's position among the consideration set for ready-to-buy auto intenders. For this year-long campaign, the Hyundai team got big points for using Audio's power to the fullest. Brands shine when they don't just pull one Audio lever, but come to the table with a total Audio strategy.

Our team positioned the Hyundai Audio plan with these integrated campaign elements known to drive success:

**Always on:** Hyundai's campaign ran consistently throughout 2022, ensuring strong frequency to stay top-of-mind for potential buyers.

**Total Audio:** This campaign took advantage of the trifecta of Audio platforms—Radio, podcasts, and streaming—maximizing reach among key audiences.

**Trusted voices:** There's a halo effect of trust that runs from a host to their listeners—Hyundai tapped into that trust with host reads, bumping up favorability for the brand.

**Audience targeting:** Segmenting with key lifestyle groups drove efficiency in the media buy—ensuring Hyundai reached shoppers most interested in what the brand offered.

**For a bonus, creative testing:** Savvy marketers know that creative has a supersized impact on performance. Hyundai tested sonic branding, voices, and messages to bring the most effective ads to our earbuds.

## PODCAST HOST READS

Host reads across shows in key categories:

- Business & Finance
- Millennial & Lifestyle
- Sports

## OTA RADIO

National reach across Audacy networks A18+ and TWIN (Traffic, Weather, Information Network)

## ADDRESSABLE PODCASTS & STREAMING

Targeted A18-49 in three critical audience segments:

- Auto enthusiasts
- Tech-savvy buyers
- In-market auto shoppers

## Where did the campaign run?

With the help of Radio stations nationwide, 29 podcast hosts, and a targeted digital campaign, we introduced Hyundai's brand position to critical audiences in the market for a new car.





# MID FUNNEL

## Key takeaways

### 1 Audio is a precision machine

#### PRECISION AUDIENCE BUYS LIFT CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE BY 3-4X

Source: Pelino, J., Cross Channel Measurement in a Time of Data Collection Challenges, 2021.

Mid-funnel campaigns need a more targeted approach. Using first-party data and smart segmenting helps you optimize campaigns and reach the customers most likely to buy. And today's audience targeting takes many forms. Classic demos have made way for more sophisticated targeting.

- **Behaviors:** Job seekers, cart abandoners
- **Passions:** Fitness fanatics, foodies
- **Life Stages:** New parents, retirees
- **Contextual Targeting:** This emerging form of targeting involves intercepting consumers at just the right time, and is sometimes considered "moment marketing"—think Nike ads during workouts

### 2 Fire up the frequency

Staying top-of-mind is critical to stay in the consideration set. Research shows that engagement, attention, and immersion continue to climb even after 15 Audio ad exposures. More than any other medium—it's hard to reach a point of diminishing returns with Audio.

Source: Audacy and Spark Foundry, Content Peak Study, conducted by Alter Agents, 2022.

### 3 Plug into podcast platforms

Media planners moving to a multi-layer podcast strategy are winning—it's extremely effective for mid-funnel goals of brand favorability, consideration, and pushing towards purchase. Start with customized host-read sponsorships to keep interest growing, and layer on a scaled network buy.

### 4 Use ads that entertain and engage

Emotional resonance is key at mid-funnel. Don't be afraid to experiment with your creative. Tell a compelling story, introduce characters, or make your audience laugh. The more enjoyable the brand experience, the better your favorability and return.

#### DON'T TAKE YOUR MESSAGE FOR GRANTED. CREATIVE ACCOUNTS FOR 47% OF TOTAL SALES IMPACT, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN.

### 5 Tap into trust

Audio personalities and influencers are experts at building deep relationships with listeners. So use host endorsements to boost trust and favorability. In fact, when hosts read ads or endorse your products, those effects carry all the way through the funnel. After hearing host-read ads, 60% of us directly seek more information about that product.

Brand messages just land differently when delivered by someone we listen to every day. And when those people live in our communities and have tried the product themselves—you can't beat it.

Source: Audacy, Discovery Study, conducted on Ask Suzy platform, n=1,172, Jan 2023.



Where the Rubber  
Meets the Road

# LOWER FUNNEL

**At the bottom of the funnel,  
it's all about conversion.**

This is the decision phase—consumers are considering price, value, cultural fit, and comparing you to your direct competitors. Media planners are keenly aware that performance is priority down here at the narrowest part of the funnel. And today's Audio platforms hit the two-for-one sweet spot: high performance that's highly trackable.



## CASE STUDY:

# New Balance rolls out new TWO WXY v3 sneakers and sees killer ROAS

*Being able to optimize campaigns and measure attributed revenue is the pinnacle of using Audio as a full-funnel channel. Let's see how our friends at Mediahub put together a targeted podcast campaign that saw online sales skyrocket.*

When New Balance and agency Mediahub wanted to boost awareness and track sales of the new TWO WXY v3 basketball sneakers, they turned to Audacy.

New Balance relied on our sports podcasts to reach Gen Z hoops fans interested in both performance and standout trends. We reached young men and women nationally with producer reads—and the campaign also tapped into top NBA talent with the voice of Chicago Bulls star Zach LaVine.

## The results? A slam dunk.

New Balance cemented its place in the minds of competitive athletes and trendsetters as the brand that gives them the edge on and off the court. The campaign delivered across all targets and national goals. And, most important, online orders soared, resulting in a

**342%  
return on  
ad spend.**



**new balance**



**New Balance continues to focus on a full-funnel marketing approach.** By leaning into Audacy's Audio platform, podcasting portfolio, and sports talent, we had the opportunity to authentically connect and engage with listeners to drive desirability, consideration, and ultimately sales for a new product line, which was successfully proven out with Audacy's Audio attribution study."

— JACQUELINE DAVIS, MEDIA SUPERVISOR, MEDIAHUB

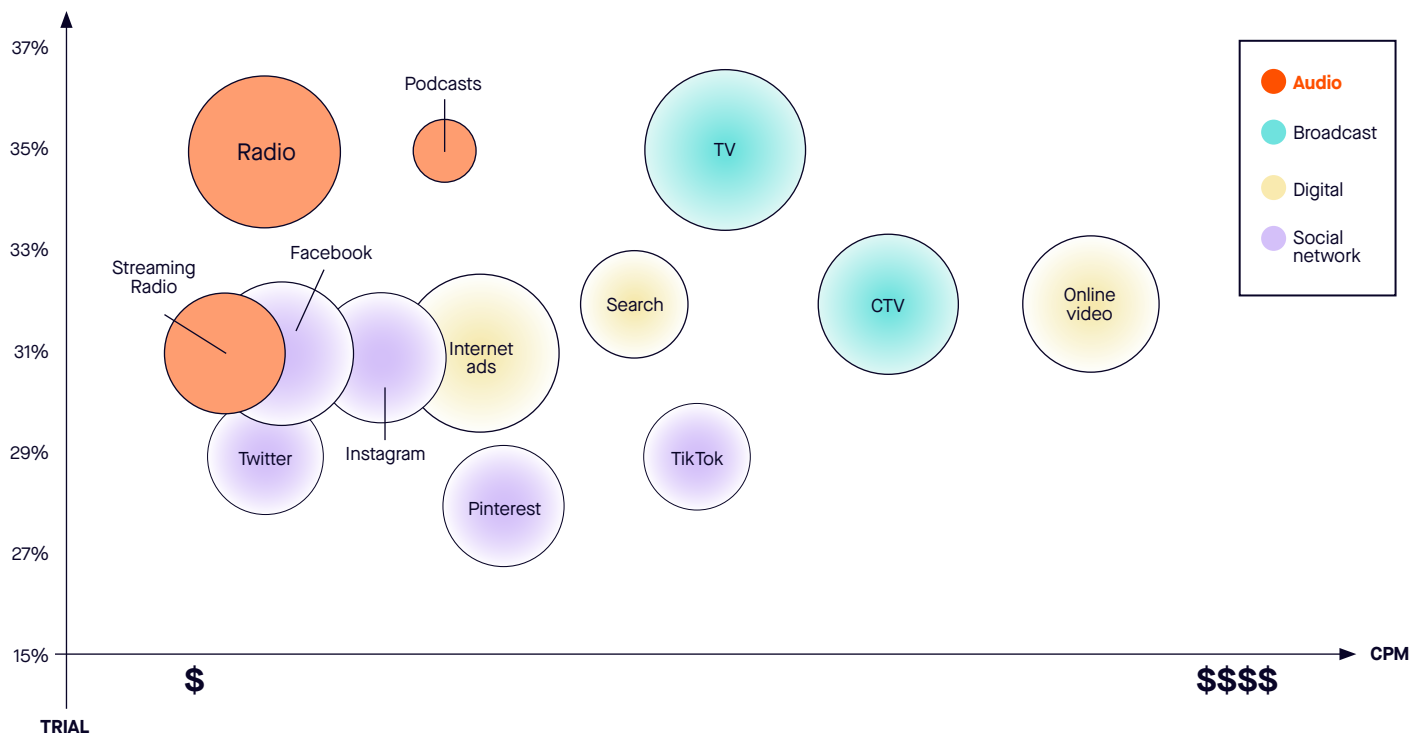


# HONE IN ON CHANNEL EFFICIENCY

It's no secret that media planners today are looking for **performance, combined with efficiency**. TV audiences keep shrinking. Digital CPMs keep rising. Meanwhile, Audio just keeps converting—faster, smarter, and more accessible than the rest. Audio keeps the drama in our spicy true crime podcasts, not in your media buy.

**Check out how Radio, streaming Radio, and podcast ads compare with other platforms in terms of conversion success and CPM:**

Media Channel Efficiency





## LOWER FUNNEL

# Key takeaways

Here's how to raise the volume when listeners are ready for action:

### 1 Be a Total Audio champion

A multi-platform Audio strategy is one powerful way to drive conversions. Advertisers see 1.5X the return on ad spend when digital Audio is combined with over-the-air (OTA) Radio.

**+1.5X ONLINE PURCHASES  
PER 1000 IMPRESSIONS**

Source: Audacy Total Audio Attribution Channel Study, 2023. Digital conversions were measured using Claritas web pixels to identify ad-exposed listeners who took action on the client's website compared to digital Audio-only campaigns.

### 2 Lean into your values with a clear CTA

Now is the time for your creative to focus on the “what’s in it for me.” Make your offer direct and irresistible. And don’t forget the clear call-to-action—tell them where they can buy, and how to take advantage of your unbeatable promotions.

### 3 Ubiquity is key

Ubiquity is Audio’s biggest edge in the lower funnel. Audio travels with consumers all day—hands-free and screen-free, creating moments where display ads simply can’t play. When a biker hears their favorite podcaster talking about her favorite limited-time burrito bowl, that bike route may well divert to that QSR. And it often does.

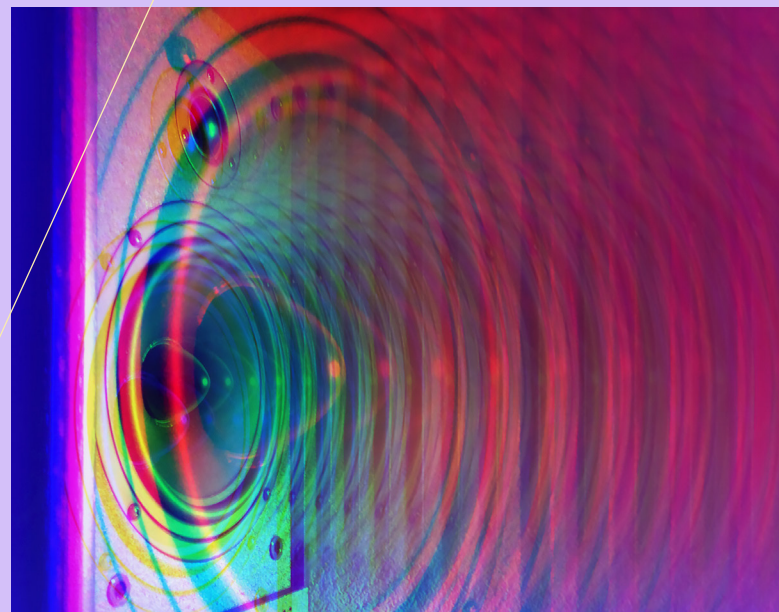
### 4 Power up the podcast host reads

The power of the pod is tough to deny when it comes to driving purchase. And the intimacy of the host read is still one of the most significant conversion drivers for performance advertisers. Not to mention, these hard-to-reach podcast listeners are increasingly unlikely to hear your brand’s message anywhere else.



The explosive growth in podcasting we’ve seen over the last five years has more or less been fueled by direct response advertisers. DTC brands paved the way and proved the way for other industries that have now joined the party.”

— KEN LAGANA, EVP, DIGITAL SALES & STRATEGY, AUDACY





# BEYOND THE FUNNEL

Keep the  
Momentum Going

Of course, conversion isn't the end—it's only the beginning.  
You need to re-fill the funnel, and measure your success.



# DRIVING LOYALTY

Filling the funnel helps drive brand loyalty, repurchase, recommendations, and social engagement among your loyal fans to keep them—and their friends—coming back to you. Audio has two ingredients for a healthy “re-fill the funnel” plan—influencers and loyalty.

## The Influencer Effect

Not only do influencers drive action, but they can also help consumers feel happy and confident about their purchases, boosting chances they'll repurchase.

### AMONG NEW TREND OR PRODUCT SEEKERS:

**SEVEN OUT OF 10 FEEL HAPPIER AFTER BUYING THE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THEIR FAVORITE RADIO AND PODCAST HOSTS RECOMMEND.**

Source: Audacy, Discovery Study, conducted on Ask Suzy platform, n=1,172, Jan 2023.

**HOST-READ ADS DRIVE 53% OF US TO RECOMMEND THE PRODUCTS TO OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.**

Source: Audacy, Discovery Study, conducted on Ask Suzy platform, n=1,172, Jan 2023.

## Leader in Loyalty

When it comes to driving loyalty and advocacy, Audio rocks. No other media channel comes close.

### AUDIO IS:

**9% MORE LIKELY TO DRIVE LOYALTY THAN SOCIAL MEDIA**

**12% MORE LIKELY TO DRIVE LOYALTY THAN TV**

**71% MORE LIKELY TO DRIVE LOYALTY THAN VIDEO**

Source: Nielsen, Commspoint Influence; Channel rankings consider cost and include US MRI Simmons 2022 data; Audio = Radio ads, streaming Radio ads, and podcast ads.

Trust plays a big part, fueled by the almost unbreakable connection we have with our favorite shows and hosts.

### WHY DOES AUDIO WORK SO WELL? AMONG NEW TREND OR PRODUCT SEEKERS:

**91% trust Radio**

**89% trust streaming Radio**

**84% trust podcasts**

Source: Audacy, Discovery Study, conducted on Ask Suzy platform, n=1,172, Jan 2023.

# KEEPING UP WITH THE KPIs

**Audio drives tremendous results, but you won't know that unless you have the right attribution tools at your fingertips.**

For brands that want to ace Audio measurement, follow these steps for every stage of the funnel, and **measure like you mean it.**



With the ability to now tie ad exposure within Audio to site conversions and sales, Audio will continue to play a critical role in our media mix when we're looking to not only drive brand awareness but also when we are looking to measure lower-funnel metrics."

— KATIE MAZZOTTA, MEDIA PLANNER, MEDIAHUB

## UPPER-FUNNEL OBJECTIVES

Build awareness and describe who you are and what you have to offer.

**KPIs:** BRAND AWARENESS AND RECALL

**Measurement Tool:** Brand Lift Study

**How it Works:** Survey ad-exposed listeners and control groups to see how ad exposure impacts awareness, recall, and favorability.

**Our Measurement Partners:**

*Kantar Millward Brown, Nielsen, Dynata*

## MID-FUNNEL OBJECTIVES

Motivate listeners to learn more about your products, research, get more deeply connected to your brand, and ultimately move closer to buying.

**KPIs:** CONSIDERATION AND FAVORABILITY

**Measurement Tool:** Brand Lift Study

**How it Works:** Just like with upper-funnel measurement, brand lift studies are used to measure favorability and how likely you are to consider buying.

**Our Measurement Partners:**

*Kantar Millward Brown, Nielsen, Dynata*

**KPIs:** WEB VISITATION

**Measurement Tool:** Web Lift Study

**How it Works:** Another way to gauge growing interest in your brand is by evaluating web visitations—for both AM/FM Radio and digital Audio.

**Our Measurement Partners:**

*Analytic Owl, Veritone, Claritas, ArtsAI*

## LOWER-FUNNEL OBJECTIVES

Bring your potential customers all the way to action. Here you'll focus on a clear call to action to make it easy for listeners to make a purchase, visit your store, or download your app.

**KPIs:** SALES, RETURN ON AD SPEND

**Measurement Tool:** Sales Conversion

**How it Works:** Online attribution will measure when listeners exposed to your ads buy online. You can even track individual order sizes, page visits, and button clicks.

**Our Measurement Partners:**

*Claritas, ArtsAI*

**KPIs:** APP DOWNLOADS

**Measurement Tool:** App Conversion

**How it Works:** Pixel-based measurement shows you the entire journey of your ad-exposed customers. Track app downloads, app engagement, and first-time deposits.

**Our Measurement Partners:**

*Appsflyer, Branch*

**KPIs:** IN-STORE VISITS

**Measurement Tool:** Foot Traffic

**How it Works:** For brands looking to drive customers directly into your store, foot traffic studies are used to geofence your retail locations and report on ad-exposed listeners who walk through the door.

**Our Measurement Partners:**

*Claritas, Reveal Mobile, Foursquare*





**Head to [StateofAudio.com](https://StateofAudio.com)**  
for more campaign examples,  
live ads, and tips  
from Audio  
pros.