



# THE DIS RUPT ORS

The Listeners,  
Creators and  
Advertisers  
Revolutionizing  
Audio

State of Audio

Explore State of Audio online



# LIS TEN ERS

The evolving listener  
habits driving new  
opportunities for  
brands and creators

## The best disruptors are listeners—the very reason we're all here, right?

They're the mixmasters of the new Audio cocktails that suit their time and their tastes. Shake up emerging technology, evolving habits, and exciting new content, add a tiny umbrella (optional), and you have the Audio listener of 2022: more passionate, more curious, more *there* than ever.

People aren't the only disruptors, of course. The Disruptor That Shall Not Be Named, the one that arrived in March of 2020, continues to make its mark as podcasts skyrocket and listening habits and locations shift.

### Podcast consumption continues to climb

# +95%

growth in monthly podcast listening

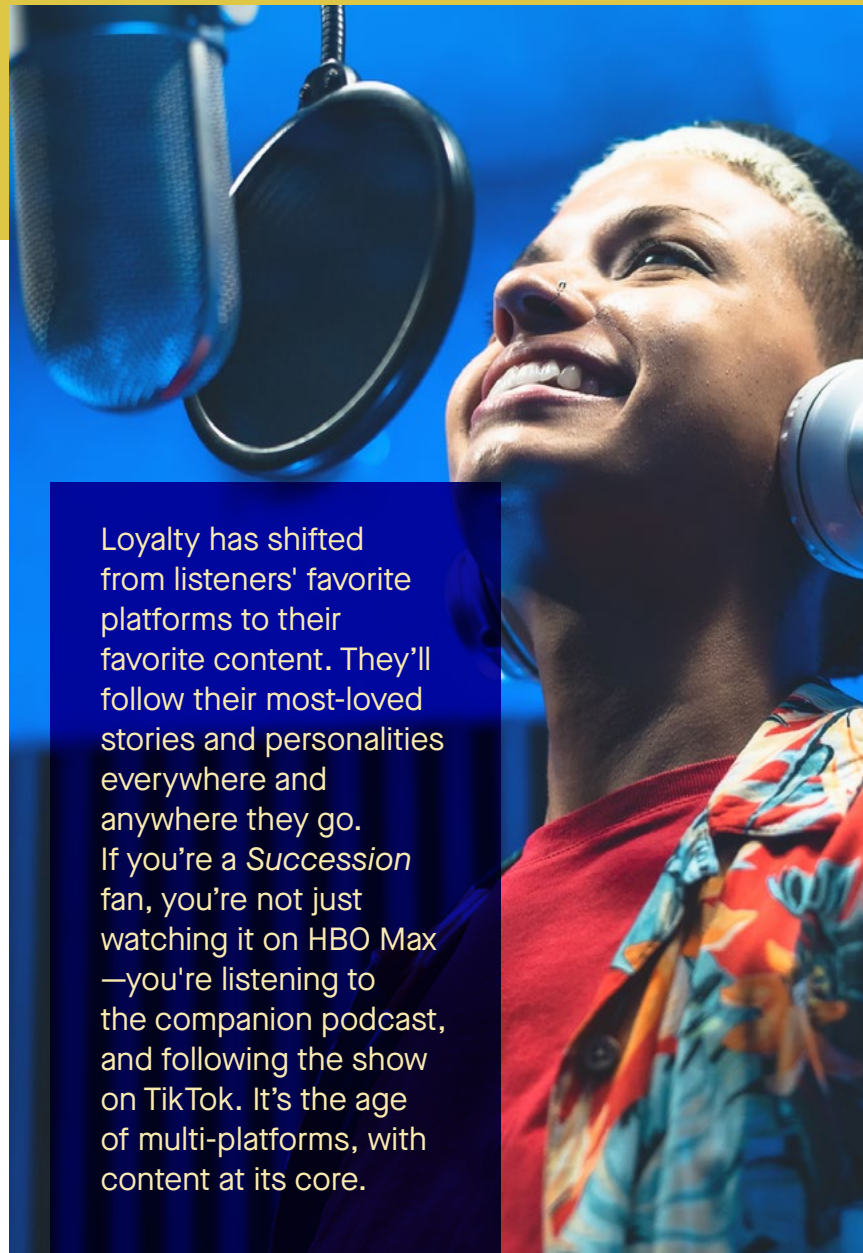
Edison Research, Triton Digital, Infinite Dial, 2021: 2021 vs 2016

### Listeners are following the content

# 47%

of Audacy's digital audiences are cross-platform listeners

Streaming: October 2021, Triton Digital, Google Analytics, comScore VMX, Podcast: October 2021 Pro Forma Combined Podcast Listeners. De-duplication using Edison Research Infinite Dial '21 factors



Loyalty has shifted from listeners' favorite platforms to their favorite content. They'll follow their most-loved stories and personalities everywhere and anywhere they go. If you're a *Succession* fan, you're not just watching it on HBO Max—you're listening to the companion podcast, and following the show on TikTok. It's the age of multi-platforms, with content at its core.



# May I have your attention, please?

**“Cutting through the clutter” has always been a major challenge for brands looking to connect with audiences. That challenge keeps growing as attention spans shrink and work and home life meld together.**

Think of mom presenting on a Zoom call while the phone chimes with new texts, and the kids and the labradoodle dash through the background, and a delivery guy rings the doorbell. Now that’s an attention challenge. And it can be rare for any medium to break through the noise and truly capture our attention.

So when today’s consumers want to break free of it all—for just 30 seconds or a whole amazing hour—they want to make a connection. They look for quality, authenticity, and flexibility—experiences that feel true and fit into their hectic schedule.

That’s why Audio is essential to them. Today’s listeners flow in and out of Audio all day, on whatever platform fits each moment: to be entertained by a favorite funny host, get lost in a true-crime drama, or catch up with the day’s breaking news. Nothing offers them quality, authenticity, and flexibility the way Audio does.

That’s the real key to engaging across over-the-air Radio, digital, and podcast platforms.

**It’s also why the rise of the cross-platform listener is arguably the consumer trend with the biggest opportunity for advertisers in 2022.**

“With the proliferation of podcasts, the Audio industry is seeing the rise of AudioX ‘super listeners’—OTA + podcast listeners who ravenously consume Audio across platforms.”

# Meet the AudioX Listener

AUDIOX LISTENERS ARE YOUNG DIGITAL NATIVES WHO ARE AHEAD OF THE CURVE.



**Move over, P1s!**  
The AudioX Listener is passing on the left.

Listeners who jump from Radio to podcasts and back throughout the day are blossoming into a valuable super-listener audience: the AudioX Listener.

These listeners come for the connection and the content (every bit of it, even listening fully through ads). They tune in for more hours per week. Their trust is sky-high. And they are ready for brand messages.

SKREW  
YOUNGER

## 60%

of Audacy's AudioX Listeners are Gen Z and Millennials

FINANCIALLY  
COMFORTABLE

## 67%

more likely to have household incomes over \$100K

HIGHLY  
EDUCATED

## 52%

more likely to have a college degree

## 41%

more likely to be smart speaker listeners

## 23%

more likely to be connected car drivers

## 30%

more likely to be fashion-forward

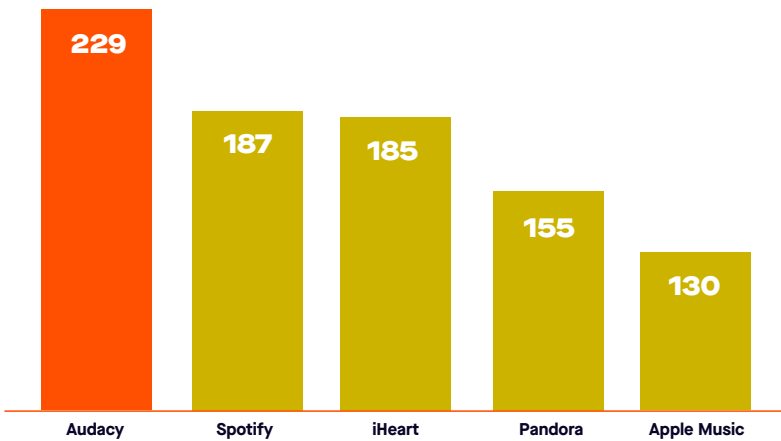
## 16%

more likely to be fitness enthusiasts

So where is the AudioX Listener? Audacy! We have the industry's highest concentration – ahead of digital pure plays and other broadcasters. Among U.S. adults, our listeners are more than twice as likely to be cross-platform super listeners.

### AUDIOX LISTENERS

Index of AudioX Listeners to Average U.S. Adults



2021 MRI Simmons Fall, USA Weighted by Population; Super Listeners = Listened to any AM/FM station via OTA & streaming, and listened to any podcast

And now for the kicker: These listeners are more affected by ads. That can mean big wins for advertisers.

RECALL

**33%**

more likely to recall brand messages

PURCHASE INTENT

**31%**

higher intent to purchase





# Who else is fueling the Audio boom?

## Today's trendsetters

AudioX Listeners aren't the only innovators driving new types of brand engagement. Meet three more groups with their foot on the gas.

Are you up on the latest TikTok dance hashtags? Or the '90s sunglasses craze? These folks are, and they listen... a lot. For these cultural enthusiasts, staying connected is key—they love live concerts and events, spend more than five hours a day on social media, and value local connections and unscripted, authentic content. Influencers are their beacons—and they are open to brand messages when done the right way.

## Zoo mers

**Gen Z listeners say their favorite podcasters “feel like friends.”**

How to Engage Gen Z with Audio, July 2021, Audacy and Relative Insights

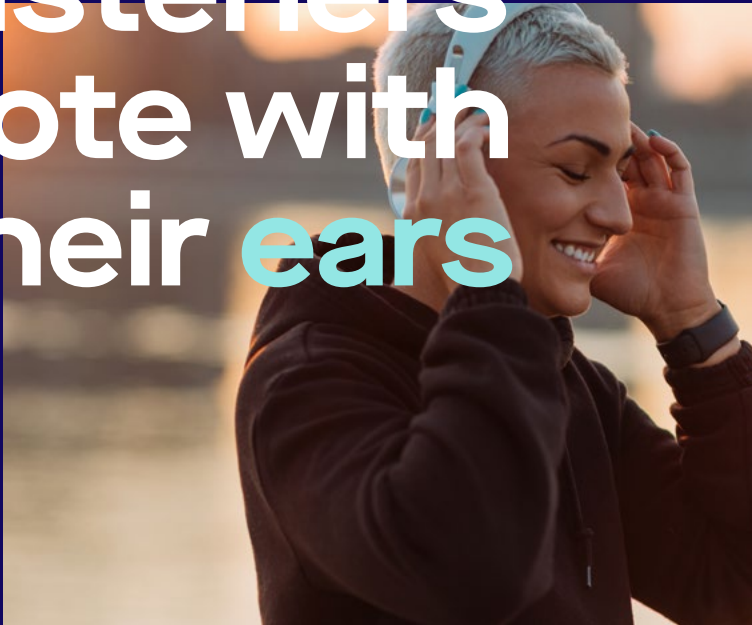
## Tech Wiz ards

These are the first-movers, the early adopters who push emerging trends into the mainstream. These platform-savvy types are likely to be using voice commands to chat with their cars, phones, and home speakers. For them, the spoken word is more than just a way to enjoy Audio: it's a way to control their environment.

Audio is fun and exciting and entertaining—hey, we know. But fans also come to Audio to be informed. Roman history? Vegan lifestyles? NFL betting lines? This group relies on Audio for up-to-the-minute information about things that matter to them. They're flocking to new podcast formats and driving snackable Audio trends. And when they find their influential voices, they're cool with a sprinkling of entertaining, relevant ads.

## Info Seek ers

# Listeners vote with their ears



## WHAT ARE LISTENERS CHOOSING?

Drawn to innovative content, personal connections, and ads that feel more authentic, listeners are showing us what they love through their consumption habits. Even subtle changes in their listening can fuel exciting evolutions in Audio for brands and creators.

**So how are listeners switching things up as they turn to their buds, pods, and speakers?**

# 1

## Never enough

Listeners know what they want and what they want is more Audio, right now. Their cravings for their favorite content can't be satisfied by a single source. That's why the listener numbers just keep going up—for broadcast stations, streaming online, and for online-only content.

**Weekly listening**  
jumped by 7 million to

**176 million**

shattering 2020's  
all-time high

Edison Research and Triton Audio,  
The Infinite Dial 2021

**Average weekly  
listening time** rose a  
full hour, from 15 hours  
and 12 minutes to

**16 hours and  
14 minutes**

Edison Research and Triton Audio,  
The Infinite Dial 2021

**Total Audio  
(99%)**

outshines total  
TV viewers **(96%)**

**Radio (93%)**

reaches more than  
live+time-shifted TV  
**(90%)**

Nielsen NPower, Nielsen RADAR, Nielsen  
Total Media Fusion, Q4 2021

We're not the only ones noticing the increased love for all things Audio. Advertisers are responding with amped up investment.

**Audio streaming ad revenue skyrocketed  
by 59% last year, outpacing increases in  
video and search.**

IAB / PwC Ad Revenue Report, FY 2021



## 2 Me-time daypart

Forget time-honored dayparts: When it comes to Audio, "drive time" has given way to "me-time." Your own Audio prime time truly can be anywhere and anytime, behind the wheel, packing lunches, pumping it up at the gym—you name the place and time, and Audio is there for you.

## 3 Personalized ads

Here's the secret: ads don't feel like an interruption when they're something you're interested in. Most of us welcome ads for something we need or want to buy. Brands that take time to target each audience with the right creative will carve out a space where listeners feel like they're getting brand messages curated just for them.

## 4 Brushes with fame

When it comes to our favorite personalities and influencers, we want to feel like we're in the room where it happens. More connections. The latest gossip. We want to get closer to our heroes, and Audio makes it all possible. Devoted fans happily follow their favorite TV stars to podcasts, and their favorite TikTokers to Radio, to hear the untold stories, deeper conversations, and unfiltered behind-the-scenes gossip.



"It's about authentic connections. Our podcasts ... are continuations of the story and connections with the talent behind the shows. They are very authentic, and that's very intentional for us. We believe in [Audio] as a way to really expand the ways in which we can reach the consumer and serve them better."

JOSH WALKER, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, HBO MAX

# 5 Stories rule

**We love our hits, but it's not just about the music. Stories connect us.**

Our 2022 listeners love spoken-word content more than ever—local sports icons talking us through a heartbreaking playoff run, up-to-the-minute celebrity gossip from the voices we love, and podcast drops we literally schedule into our week. And the audiosphere is coming up with new ways to deliver. From scripted podcast originals to Audio movies with Hollywood production value, we're in a golden age of storytelling.

**22 million**

more people are listening to spoken-word Audio daily than just seven years ago

Spoken word's share of Audio listening has risen

**+40%**

over the last seven years, **8%** in the last year alone

**75%**

of the U.S. population listens to spoken-word content; **45%** listen daily

**Fans of spoken-word Audio listen**

**2 hours**

per day on average—that's nearly half of their total listening time

NPR and Edison Research, "The Spoken Word Audio Report, 2021; excludes Youtube for music"



Remember when The Disruptor That Shall Not Be Named ended live sports for months? And yet sports talk Radio and its trusted hosts didn't miss a beat. If anything, they were more popular and more beloved than ever. We found out again that sports followers aren't just in the game for the scores – they're there for the stories.

**Up next?**

Discover some of the exciting disruption brands are creating all on their own.

# AD VER TIS ERS

The playbook from  
trailblazing brands  
breaking through  
in Audio





# Welcome to the attention economy

**Disrupt—don't just interrupt.** That's how smart brands have shaken things up with Audio in the last 18 months. They've found inventive new ways to deliver authentic ad messages that flow with the story, sailing into open ears, minds, and hearts.

Let's look at how these most disruptive—and most innovative—advertisers are putting Audio to work for their brands. Want to be a disruptor yourself? That's why we're here. Read on!

Attention! Audio can  
be your new BFF

Finding your target audience is one thing; keeping their attention is another. Obviously, folks who hear and remember your message are far more likely to act than those whose eyes and ears are wandering.

In many ways, attention is the new gauge of value. Audiences are growing ever more fragmented, and TV inventory is dwindling. We're all on multiple devices all day and night. In this world, Audio can be your new BFF: brand focus facilitator. (Hey, we tried.) On every level, Audio is a high-powered engagement machine that grabs and holds consumers' attention like no other medium.

Audacy's **Audio Amplification: Engaged Impressions study** has shown that Audio is more immersive than linear TV and social media.





# While TV viewers go on mental mute, Audio listeners are all ears

## 61% of Audio listeners listen through ads

Time spent with Live+Time Shifted TV was down 11% from 2020 to 2021. That's a lot, but it's also no surprise, with so much TV and video viewing shifting to OTT subscription services and little nuggets on short-form platforms. And TBH, viewers aren't paying that much attention when an ad comes on.

### Only 19% of TV viewers actively watch TV ads

The most damning evidence? For the most part, viewers don't even bother to mute their TVs

anymore. They just put the ads on mental mute as they grab their phones. They are literally tuning out the ads.

But people stay tuned in to Audio ads. Audio finds listeners when they are fully immersed in the moment (and the Audio)—while on a run, behind the wheel, or taking some me-time in a bubble bath.

They're not mentally muting, they're leaning in. Those who listen all the way through are 8% more likely to recall the ad,

12% more apt to feel connected to the brand or product advertised, and show an intent to purchase that's stronger by an impressive 10%.

And just where are advertisers finding these precious moments with listeners? All Audio channels are not created equal. Radio consistently pulls in the lion's share of a listener's time—71%—making it the king of the jungle when it comes to audience reach. And podcasts still hold the title for fastest-growing Audio channel.

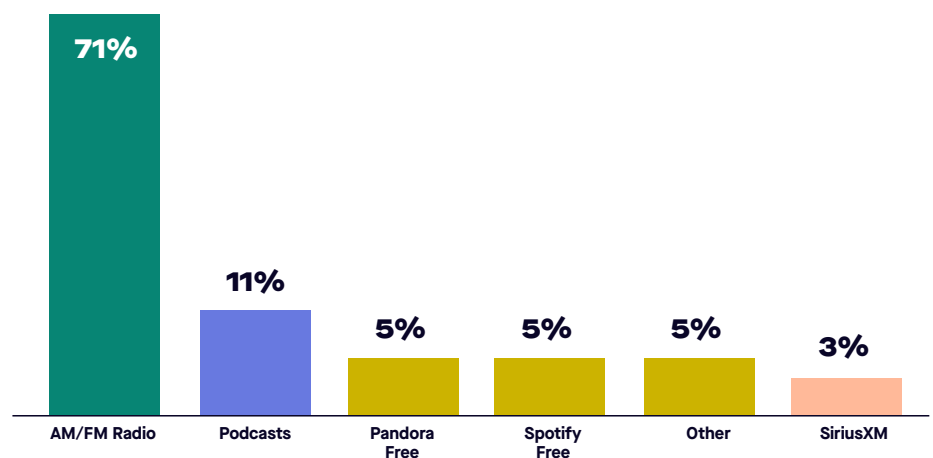
### WHAT DO VIEWERS DO DURING TV TIME?

**55%**  
grab their phones

**28%**  
go on their laptop

**24%**  
use a tablet

### AD-SUPPORTED AUDIO: TIME SPENT LISTENING



# Disruptor's playbook for advertisers

So passions are running high (in a good way) as listeners turn on and tune in their way. For advertisers in this new Attention Economy, the question becomes how to be part of that passion. What are the best ways to appear across platforms? How should we tweak our creative? How can we raise our podcast game?

In this section, we'll look at the strategies that disruptive advertisers are using to shake up their messaging and join users at their moments of passion.

## Working your Audio network

Disruptive advertisers have found two helpful ways to better take advantage of the Audio networks where they place media: they take a multi-channel approach, and they put passions first.

### TAP THE POWER OF TOTAL AUDIO

Gone are the days when Audio campaigns meant a single Radio or streaming buy. Smart brands are placing their bets on platforms that can engage audiences across multiple channels throughout their day.

Each pillar of the Radio-podcast-digital trifecta has its own superpowers, but together they become a Total Audio team that's winning big for brands. Buys that combine two or more Radio and digital channels have grown 20% since 2019.<sup>1</sup>

Plus this Total Audio approach has some pretty impressive payoffs. The cost to convert a new customer is 38% lower when advertisers diversify their Audio campaigns vs. single-channel Audio buys.<sup>2</sup>

It's no small feat to get a customer to sign up on your website or make a purchase. And Audio-first advertisers are finding that there's a quicker way to get there. Think of it this way: a conversion that costs \$100 to acquire on one channel only (like streaming or podcast) can be acquired for \$62 with a multi-channel approach. That's impact (and a lot of spare change too).

KEN LAGANA, EVP, DIGITAL  
SALES & STRATEGY, AUDACY

"We're seeing that digital Audio campaigns are working harder when a total Audio strategy is used—across the board—whether the goals are web visitation, sales, or brand lift."

Demand for Radio +  
digital is on the rise

**+20%**  
since 2019

See lower cost to  
convert with multi-  
channel campaigns

**-38%**  
vs. single-channel  
Audio buys

<sup>1</sup> Audacy Advertiser Campaign Analysis, 2019 - 2022

<sup>2</sup> Aggregate Attribution Analysis of 119 digital Audio campaigns from August 2020 through March 2022 compiled by Audacy's attribution partner Claritas.

# PASSIONS ARE THE NEW DEMOS

## CLASSIC DEMO TARGETING

Ideal for broad reach campaigns

**Age**

**Gender**

**Location**

**HHI**

## BEHAVIORAL TARGETING

Useful for consumers who've already indicated interest or are at various stages of the sales funnel

**Auto intenders**

**Job seekers**

**Website visitors**

**Shopping cart abandoners**

## PASSION-BASED TARGETING

Best way to reach engaged audiences that align to your brand and key customer personas

**Foodies**

**Fitness fanatics**

**Fashionistas**

**Digital nomads**

Women 18-34. Auto intenders. Prepaid smartphone shoppers. We can fondly salute these time-honored demos and behavioral segments, while also admitting that today's young listeners can't—and won't—be boxed in that way. To engage their fresh hearts and minds, you must focus on their passions. Savvy marketers can find tremendous opportunities for these new passion-based demos.

Listeners form IRL and online communities around the things they love and care about most, no matter how niche or wacky. From contour queens on the beauty scene to crazies for kimchi, younger listeners will "zone in" when they find you're right there with them.

Podcasts are where this trend is really taking off. Of course, it's a no-brainer to buy individual Korean food podcasts and shows that align with your kimchi brand. But brands no longer

have to sacrifice scale, thanks to the latest Audio platform innovations. Advertisers can leverage podcast networks across multiple shows and genres to reach their targets.

**In fact, with about 126 million monthly listeners projected for 2022, podcasts are the newest mass-reach channel.**

Analyst Take: The Outlook for US Podcast Ad Spending in 2021, eMarketer

# SHOUTOUT TO CPG INNOVATION

Disruptive ad tactics don't come just from newfangled industries. Some classic sectors are betting big on the dynamite of Audio. For example, we're seeing the needle move in new and exciting ways in consumer packaged goods (CPG). And this mighty category is really cleaning up when it comes to Audio campaign successes. That's due, in part, to the arrival of CPG Audio Sales Lift measurement, which is giving CPG brands the proof of success they need to make even bigger bets on multi-channel Audio.



## Measurable sales lift: skincare

What kind of purchase attribution can Audio bring to CPG brands? To find out, Audacy joined forces with Claritas and IRI. In a nutshell, we matched listener data from podcasts and digital Radio with shopper loyalty card programs for a leading skincare brand to measure actual sales lift. And the results of this groundbreaking study were impressive, showing a true lift from ad-exposed listeners. But this game-changing study has big implications for others in the retail space as well—proving the effectiveness of Audio to drive sales, and the ability to see where that share of wallet came from.

## First-of-its-kind CPG sales lift for leading skincare brand

Ad-exposed customer journey

### AD EXPOSURE

I hear a spot for sunscreen on the *Fly on the Wall* podcast

### PURCHASE

I purchase that sunscreen at Target

### IDENTIFY GRAPH MATCH

Using data from my Target loyalty card, my purchase is attributed to the ad I heard

### SWITCHER SUCCESS

# 5%

lift from non-buyer  
brands (switchers)

### KEY COMPETITOR SHARE

# 19%

of sales came  
from competitor



# Let's talk creative

How to produce ads that resonate and perform - top tips from our partner, Veritonic.



## 1 Test. Rinse. Repeat.

Leading Audio advertisers have discovered that creative testing shows you what's working—and fast. That can change how you think about launching campaigns. We've asked Veritonic, the Audio research and analytics experts, to offer some recommendations for how to test and adjust your creative for maximum impact.

The most effective testing starts *before* the ad goes on the air. Let's say you're promoting a new organic dog food. The ad copy sounds great, it's fresh and informative, and you're sure it will knock it out of the park. But you'll need to rely on more than just your gut to make sure this campaign will please listeners. This is where pre-flight testing comes in.

With the right analytics partner, you can now get creative insights from targeted audience segments within as little as a week. You'll understand how each Audio asset measures in terms of trustworthiness, energy, relevance, likeability, uniqueness, and more—and can use these data points immediately to optimize your creative. And remember, creative testing can happen at any point during your campaign, not just pre-flight, so you keep getting the great insights you need to make informed decisions.

These test runs will quickly help you figure out what sticks, and what doesn't. Ground your creative choices in data, and you'll be using your best stuff every time. Guaranteed.

SCOTT SIMONELLI, CEO, VERITONIC

“Marketers are increasingly utilizing creative testing for their Audio assets, and for good reason. Creative testing and Audio measurement (brand lift, attribution, etc.) are the fastest and most important tools for ensuring the efficacy of Audio campaigns.”

## 2 Ad variety is key

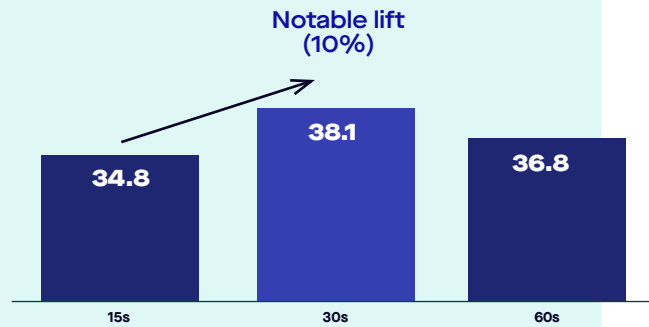
Don't be afraid to have more than one favorite.

We've found that **between two and four creatives work best** for high-impact, aggregate campaign results. Think of it as the drive-in diner approach: Some people want onions or mayo on their burgers, some don't. Some listeners will respond to a “with-onions” version of your message, while others will prefer it without.

Use your larger share of ear to weave in variations that deliver the same overall message in slightly different formats, so your frequency and spend can work harder as a whole.

**:30 ADS  
SIGNIFICANTLY  
IMPACT BRAND  
RECALL**

Veritonic Audio  
score: recall



Audacy Ad-Length Study, conducted by Veritonic, December 2021

### 3

## Which ad length is just right?

Ah, the age-old question. Chocolate or strawberry? Pikachu or Snorlax? :15, :30, or :60 ad spots? We can't help you with the first two, but after testing with our friends at Veritonic, we can say that the **30-second spot is the top dog** as it relates to finding a balance between duration, effectiveness, and spend. These spots are long enough for listeners to feel they have enough new information to take action, but not so long that they zone out.

Of course, spot-length results vary by topic and intent. 15-second ads are a big hit for retail. As a general rule, you may want to go longer when launching a new product, and shift to shorter ads when you're well-known and want to gain frequency. But overall, the sweet spot remains with the 30-second ad. A mere half of a minute can result in a whole lot of conversions.

### 4

## The metric you're missing: emotional resonance

People *think* about what they see, but they *feel* what they hear.

Audio is everywhere. It's an unobtrusive companion medium that can be easily consumed at any place and time given its screen-less nature. An increasing number of advertisers are utilizing the medium's ability to intimately connect with listeners to foster stronger emotional resonance to their brands, and ultimately increase conversions.

Data from a recent study found that if listeners feel as though your Audio is trustworthy, relevant, and likable, chances are they will be more likely to make a purchase.

Of the assets tested within the study:

The top 50% of assets with the **highest relevance score** on average scored 15% higher on intent

The top 50% of assets with the **highest likeability score** on average scored 12% higher on intent

The top 50% of assets with the **highest score for trustworthiness** scored 4.6% higher on intent

The bottom line is this: don't be afraid to experiment with your Audio creative to build emotional resonance.

**Tell a story**

**Introduce characters**

**Infuse humor to make your audience laugh**

The more enjoyable and relevant the experience is with your Audio, the better your recall and return will be.

And of course, promotional ads still play a big role. Variety and a balanced campaign are key.



# Podcast primer

Winning strategies from podcast advertising pros

# 1

## Understand how podcast listeners feel about your ads

Now that many brands have some podcast advertising experience under their belts, leading advertisers are looking to supercharge those campaigns with next-level brand partnerships.

Does the popularity of podcast partnerships equate to ROI? That's the right question to ask—and yep, it sure does. Here's why.

### TRUST IS SKY HIGH

Listeners have a whole lotta love and goodwill for advertisers who support their favorite podcasts. Among avid podcast listeners:

**64%** appreciate podcast advertisers for supporting their favorite podcasts

**49%** believe that hosts use the products mentioned on their shows

**Looking to reach younger listeners?**  
**50%** of Gen Z and younger Millennials tap into podcasts

Edison Research, The Infinite Dial, 2022

### LESS SKIPPING, MORE STORYTELLING

Podcast listeners come for the content—all of it.

In a recent study, only **12%** said they regularly skip ads. Compare that to the **65%** of people who skip online video ads!

Edison Research: Podcast Super Listeners Report, Dec. 8, 2020 and CNBC/IPG Media-brands' Media Lab.

### RECALL RINGS TRUE

Can an Audio ad really deliver recall the same way that visual ads can? For sure!

**86%** of people who frequently listen to podcasts say they recall ads on podcasts more than any other channel—even more than on social media.

Edison Research: Podcast Super Listeners Report, Dec., 2020

**And the best part?** Six in 10 avid podcast listeners say that podcast ads directly impact their buying decisions.

# 65%

have purchased a product or service from a brand they heard advertised

Edison Research, Super Listeners, 2021

# 2

## Become part of the story

Brands that are ready to branch out beyond the pre-roll and host read are finding the unicorn. The ad that doesn't sound like an ad. The ad that listeners are actually interested in hearing about. The ad that touts products they haven't encountered before. Powered by innovative brand/host partnerships, these native ads are skyrocketing in popularity because they humanize brand messages with expert voices that have already earned listener trust. And what brand wouldn't want to be part of that story?

So, just how are brands getting into the act? Check out these brand activations that are climbing in popularity.

- Product reviews and unboxing
- Specialized brand segments
- Custom episodes
- Interview segments and topical discussions



“Brands are letting go and becoming more trusting. They’re testing to find the right mix of voices. And they are learning that impressions don’t automatically equate to sales. More critical is caring about the personalities behind the content, the quality of listeners, and alignment with shows to create the right brand fit.”

AGNES KOZERA, CO-FOUNDER, PODCORN,  
AN AUDACY COMPANY

# 3

## Not just quantity. Go for quality.

Size may matter, but it isn't everything. A big celebrity show could be great for brand awareness, but testing with lots of long and mid-tail creators who are experts and influencers in the brand's field will help drive results. Brands can spin gold when messages, paired with the right voice and the perfect content, leverage the strong tie between hosts and their listeners.



## 4 How Macy's does it: the power of influencers

Who's getting it right? Macy's is, for one. This classic retailer is one of America's most recognizable brands, in part because it has always found ways to remain relevant with younger demos.

Macy's has advertised on Audio for decades and has now expanded into influencer partnerships to reach younger audiences and drive meaningful connections... and action.

Around key shopping holidays, Macy's partnered with podcast stars like Emma Chamberlain, who personally curated gift lists that her audience could shop with at the retailer. She promoted the lists on her podcast and amplified them to an even wider audience through her popular social media channels.

Emma Chamberlain's  
gift list



“There’s so much power in the podcast personalities. We’ve partnered with Emma Chamberlain... She’s so unbelievably influential and has a lot of power with Gen Z, especially our shoppers, and we’ve seen it in our results.”

KRISTY CARRUBA, DIRECTOR OF  
AUDIO STRATEGY & PLANNING, MACY'S

# What does this mean for brands?

**Listeners identify with Audio.** When you've "found your people" on a Radio show or a podcast, you're engaged and inspired and primed to take action. Disruptive advertisers are changing their approach to make the most of these more engaged listening opportunities.



To sum up

**Tap the power of Total Audio.**

Message on multiple channels to reach listeners throughout their day.

**Play to their passions.** Think less about classic demographic groups, more about fans and where they gather.

**Use podcasts for emotional connections.** They have a special power to connect with listeners. And try working with influencers and others whose emotional connections can drive listeners to action.

**Try variety—and test.** Use different messages to reach your multi-channel listeners, and keep testing to learn what moves them the most.

## Up next?

**The third set of disruptors: content creators.** Dive into the evolution of the influencer, new channels, and new formats in the era of hyper-personalized content.



# CRE AT ORS

The next generation  
of influential voices  
hitting our earbuds

Chapter 3



# Grab the mic & go

Of course listeners and advertisers aren't the only ones contributing to the Audio boom. True disruption comes from those who are reinventing the very nature of what ends up in our ears: the creators. They're changing things up, reeling in passionate audiences as they revolutionize with new formats, fast-trending topics, and evolving listener behaviors. With a low barrier to entry and an increasing listener appetite for unique experiences, here are the new influencers grabbing the mic.

## Star-powered pods

For the past few years, there's been an influx of movie stars, comedians, legendary journalists, and social media personalities flocking to the mic. And why, you ask?

It's simple: they've found that Audio builds deeper relationships with their fans. After all, there's only so much you can do with an Instagram post. But a 30- or 60-minute podcast? Audio lets them go deeper with fans as they share first-hand accounts, behind-the-scenes tea, and their own secret sauce. They're discovering that the way to the heart is through the ears.

# +40%

of respondents want more podcasts with YouTubers and influencers

Nielsen / Acast Survey; respondents include U.S. podcast listeners

### AVERAGE MEDIA SEGMENT

PODCASTS **39**  
minutes

YOUTUBE VIDEO **12**  
minutes

TIKTOK CLIP **15-45**  
seconds





## The revolutionary Radio influencer

Radio personalities have long been a part of our daily lives. But now these influential hosts are taking a multi-channel approach, giving us fans more places to connect, engage, and be entertained.

- **Many of our favorite Radio hosts** have their own podcast.
- **It's easier and easier to watch our local sports gurus on Twitch or YouTube**, as they tap into established audiences and take advantage of the discovery tools on these platforms.
- **And popular music hosts are all over social media** – customizing their approach to meet their favorite fans where they are.

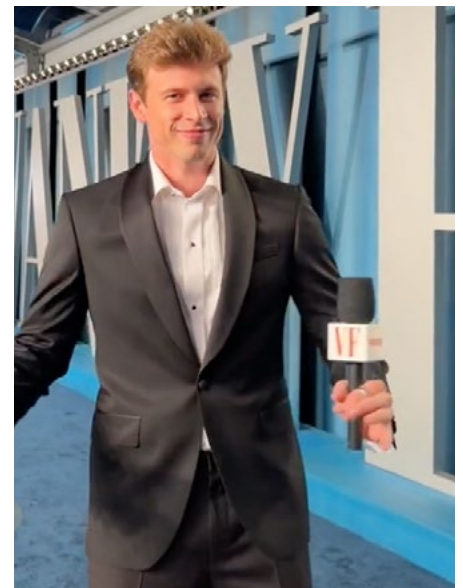
## The rise of the micro-influencer

While big names are always big draws, we're seeing another interesting disruption: creators with mid-size and small audiences are playing a strategic role in the influencer world. Caribbean cruise experts, Disney vacation pros, cyclists, and pet behaviorists have all become micro-influencers who drive tremendous loyalty. Sure, big stars are exciting and aspirational, but micro-influencers are seen as "people like me." The halo effect is real for brands that can connect with such loyal audiences. And the bonus? These hosts can be a lot more accessible to work with.

## No Radio personality has mastered the game better than Audacy's very own Bru aka @BruOnTheRadio

Who else could turn saying random words on-air, given to him by strangers on TikTok, into a viral trend?

It's about doing what Radio hosts do best—understand their audience, and give them ways to connect on a deeper level. Bru gives his fans a behind-the-scenes look into the world of Radio and finds unique ways for audiences to directly participate in the fun. And when the dad-joke-slinging, self-proclaimed "CEO of Radio TikTok" gets to interview major celebrities, head to Coachella, appear in a Netflix series, or even host an Oscars red carpet, he takes us fans and his millions of followers on the journey with him.



# Today's Audio trends: what's on and when?

## Snackable content to satisfy your cravings

Audio is flexible and portable. That formula works for both creatives and listeners who meet and bond in a way that suits their own busy schedules, without a heavy infrastructure or commitment.

### Live Radio on-demand

**14 million adults** listen to catch up and other podcasts from AM/FM Radio stations.<sup>1</sup>

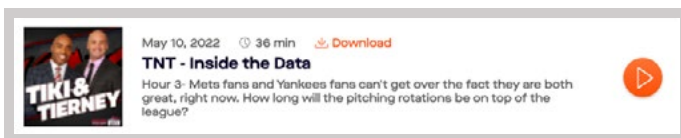
Time-shifted broadcasts long ago changed how we watch TV, and it's caught on in Radio. Listeners wait to tune in to their favorite hosts and topics when they can give them their undivided attention (which they do!). On days when listeners don't have time for a whole show, condensed recaps, interview segments, or funniest moments are just the ticket.

### The dailies

Listeners love a daily treat of fresh, snackable content. These shorter and more frequent "micro-podcasts" are social, shareable, and perfect for sampling, to discover content and talent you'll love. And it's a great opportunity for brands to chat with consumers daily and scale up campaigns over a week's time. Look for this trend to grow alongside longer-form content.

TIM CLARKE, SVP, DIGITAL AUDIO CONTENT, AUDACY

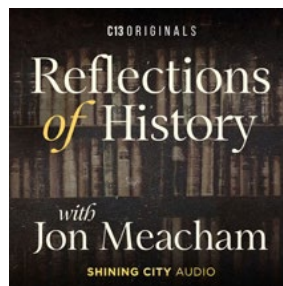
There's a huge opportunity with the way people are fitting our content into the way they live life. It's about giving fans more access to brands and talent they love, on the device they want, and the timeframe they want."



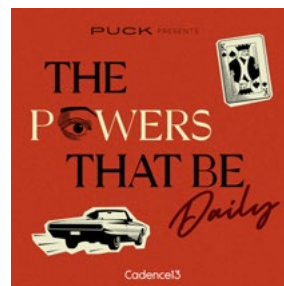
Radio shows made available on demand for consumption on the device of choice



Spotlight on the people, power, and politics of Washington, D.C.



A daily history lesson from Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and #1 New York Times bestselling author, Jon Meacham



Bringing listeners inside the four corners of power in America: Wall Street, Washington, Silicon Valley, and Hollywood



## What's the story... behind the story?

Storytelling drives all the programs we love. Every community has its stories and its storytellers, its lore and its rhythms, and its inside jokes.

### Behind the scenes

With apologies to *The Wizard of Oz*, fans are encouraged to “Please PAY attention to that man behind the curtain.” Listeners can geek out with behind-the-scenes tales from the stars, creators, coaches, or even lawmakers who were in the room where it happened. Fans stay plugged into their passions and clamor for even more.

The storytellers at HBO Max are working with Audacy’s Pineapple Street Studios to “extend the emotional experience” for fans of its groundbreaking original programs like *Chernobyl* and *Succession*. These podcasts take listeners behind-the-scenes for stories and insights from the cast and crew of the HBO shows everyone is talking about.

### Documentary-style stories

Speaking of fans: there’s still no fan like sports fans. And they want the game that surrounds the game. Podcasts give them all the action that they crave as they relive championship-winning plays, leaps, kicks, spins, and shots, and hear the inside stories from legends and champions.



“Our viewers tell us that, more than with any other streaming platform, they want to discuss and dissect HBO Max programming with friends and family to extend the emotional experience after finishing an episode.”

JOSHUA WALKER, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, HBO MAX



Audacy’s new podcast studio, 2400Sports, is the creative home to Audacy’s sports digital Audio content. The first 2400Sports podcast, *The Run*, gave fans a deep dive into the Chicago Cubs’ historic march to the 2016 World Series championship, their first in 108 years. And, in partnership with Major League Baseball, Audacy will work with all 30 clubs to develop podcasts that’ll get fans stoked. The studio has launched titles like *Inside the Monster* in partnership with the



Boston Red Sox, and *Beat the Streak Daily: Inside the Hits*—a daily official companion podcast to MLB’s popular fantasy game.

# The next wave of creators

A wave of content creators is sweeping through Audio, bringing the excitement of new perspectives and new audiences with them. Today's creators have the advantage of being the next generation of voices. In Radio and podcasts, influential hosts are taking the lessons learned from the hitmakers that came before them.

Let's look at some disruptive creative archetypes who are moving the needle.



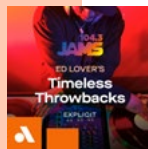
“Content creators are being really smart about knowing exactly who their audience is. We’re getting pitches from talent who are very sure about their brand identity and their community. They’re coming with a much stronger POV... ‘this is exactly what I want to do and who I am and who I speak to.’”

LIZZY ROBERTI, HEAD OF PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS, AUDACY'S CADENCE13



ED LOVER

## The Throwback King



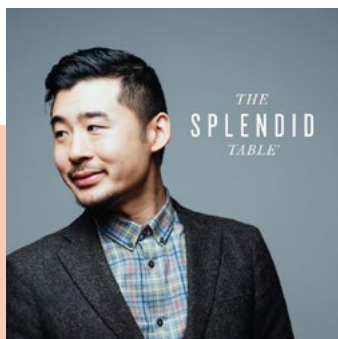
Practically everyone loves a throwback escape, especially when led by voices that took us there “back in the day.” There’s nothing like old-school jams and hearing the lore that made the hits we came of age with.



## The Mystery Mavens

True crime has us hooked, and storytellers are diving in deep with great mysteries, like *Gone South*, *S1: Who Killed Margaret Coon?* More than three decades since former prosecutor Margaret Coon was stabbed to death walking her dog in one of Louisiana’s safest and most affluent parishes, the case remains unsolved. Documentarian and C130Originals’ host Jed Lipinski takes listeners on a deep dive into the mysteries surrounding the murder as he tries to crack the case.





## The Magician

You don't always have to see it to believe it. For those who thought topics like cooking shows and beauty segments could only be enjoyed through visual mediums, podcasts say.... "Voilà"... or "Abra Kadabra".... Or just "Hold my beer." Podcasts like *The Splendid Table* and *Borderline Salty* go beyond YouTube and Instagram to connect with fans on an even deeper level—through their ears.

## The Blockbuster



The surprise disruption here is the return of classic storytelling, with star-studded full-length podcast movies. This new format took no time at all for audiences to latch onto. C13Features' out-of-the gate productions *Treat*, starring Kiernan Shipka, and *Ghostwriter*, with Kate Mara and Adam Scott, both reached #1 on Apple Podcasts in the fiction category.



## The Sage

Listeners crave advice from sages like Oprah. Podcast hosts such as globally renowned thought leader Glennon Doyle engage with listeners to learn what matters most to their listening community.

## Disruptors: a virtuous circle

Creators make content with passion. Listeners use the latest tech to soak up the sounds they crave. And advertisers serve up relevant, custom messages that are guest stars in the story, not interruptions. That's a virtuous circle with listening at its core.

The sky's the limit for brands that embrace new formats and foster influencer partnerships with surgical precision. When brands find and speak to their "characters" and blend into the story, the modern Audio ecosystem doesn't feel disruptive at all. It feels natural. It feels like what we've been waiting for. Plug in, tune in, log in, and you'll find (and measure!) eager ears at a scale that'll make a difference for your brand.



## Up next: the future

Audio in the metaverse, and immersive Audio that takes your experience to the next level.

# THE WATCH LIST

The trends we're  
keeping our eyes...  
and ears on

# Let's get phygital

The winds of change are blowing even harder in 2022. What's in the forecast?

We see those winds pushing the physical and digital realms ever closer together into a new “phygital” realm. In this world of the metaverse, NFTs, and web3, listeners will find immersive experiences that let them lean even farther into the intimacy of Audio.

Will Dua Lipa's avatar speak with you, personally, inside your favorite metaverse festival? Maybe. Performers and omnichannel influencers are already participating in this new world. Some have found they can energize their fans with NFTs that offer insider access, and pop stars offer them as an actual piece of music history.

## Consumers and brands are DTD (down to digitize)

However far your brand is on the road to web3, your listeners are farther. They're dressing up avatars to attend holographic staff meetings and building dream homes in virtual neighborhoods. 83% of consumers believe that digital brings people together—and 81% say that a brand's virtual presence is just as important as its “real-world” presence. Would you like to be part of the soundtrack, live experiences, or shopping sprees of their new virtual lives? You can—take it from early entrants like Bacardi, Pepsi, Budweiser, as well as your favorite ad agencies.

Things like direct-to-avatar virtual goods and blended virtual/physical liminal spaces are busting out of art exhibitions and into brand hubs and business centers. Brand-initiated NFTs promoting purpose with blockchain technology, creator ownership, and democratized music are on the rise with no signs of slowing down.

“The next big frontier in the Audio ecosystem will be the exciting new advertiser opportunities opening up with web3 capabilities, from immersive Audio and metaverse experiences to community building, and connecting fans to their favorite personalities.”

LARA WACHS, VP OF MARKETING, AUDACY

**93%** of global consumers agree that technology is our future

**81%** think that a brand's digital presence is as important as its in-store presence

**63%** say attending a digital concert is appealing

New Trend Report: Into the Metaverse, Wunderman Thompson Intelligence, September 14, 2021

Winds of change – or a blast of fresh air? Either way, brands have exciting opportunities to join consumers as they sail those currents into the metaverse. Is your brand DTD? If so, try the medium that flows with consumers seamlessly on their journey, today and tomorrow, in worlds physical and virtual: **Audio.**



# You're soaking in it: immersive Audio



The pandemic sent many of us to a two-year “time out” in our living spaces, so it’s no wonder that our physical and digital worlds have begun to merge. Audio will continue to be a companion, entertainer, and essential player for people on that journey.

Sounds that were once the domain of IMAX theaters or complex virtual reality headsets—the roar of spaceships blasting overhead or the crunch of footsteps in the snow—are now a standard part of Spatial Audio tech. Spatial Audio, also known as 3-D Audio, pulls listeners much more deeply into their movie, podcast, or game.

Podcast creators, Audio advertisers, and leaders of the metaverse will continue to tap into cinematic scores and sound effects to intense new levels with the power of immersive Audio. Instead of feeling like a sideline observer, spatial Audio brings you there. While the metaverse will remain a central breeding ground, consumers will see spatial Audio worked into their everyday lives.

Savvy brands are already keeping pace with robust sonic Audio strategies and immersive ad testing to hook consumers on a deeper level.

REGGIE SHAH, SR. DIRECTOR OF  
RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS, AUDACY

“Immersive Audio experiences have incredible power and deep impact as the listener moves through the sound, and the sound moves through the listener.”



# The bottom line for brands



The new AudioX super listener is here—taking cross-platform listening to new levels. Be sure to connect with these audiophiles when they're most engaged, and reap the benefits of a 33% increase in brand recall.

Audacy Ad-Length Study, conducted by Veritonic, December 2021

## LIS TEN ERS

## AD VER TIS ERS

Keep pace with disruptive marketers leveraging the full power of Audio. Lean into integrated Audio strategies, pull the emotional strings with your creative, and embrace influencer partnerships.

Tap into the Audio trends listeners are clamoring for. Our favorite Radio hosts and content creators are leading the way with snackable bites, mesmerizing stories, and behind-the-scenes access.

## CRE AT ORS

## THE WATCH LIST

Stay on top of today's fast-growing trends so you're ready for the future of Audio.

