Audio and podcast ads: a quick-start guide

How Australian businesses can advertise on streaming audio and podcasts: the main ways to buy, writing a script that works, and measuring the results.

Audio advertising covers ads on streaming music services, digital radio and podcasts. People often listen while doing something else, such as driving, exercising or working, so audio reaches them at times screens can't. Podcasts in particular can feel personal, especially when the host reads the ad.

The main ways to buy

- **Self-serve streaming ads.** Some streaming services let businesses create and run audio ads themselves. Spotify launched its self-serve Ad Studio in Australia in 2018, letting businesses upload an ad or have one made from a script, then target by things like age, location and listening habits. Check the current options and minimum budgets directly with the platform.
- **Audio networks and broadcasters.** Australia's commercial radio companies and podcast networks sell ads across their own streaming and podcast catalogues. You usually deal with a sales team or buy through an agency.
- **Podcast host reads.** You sponsor a specific podcast and the host reads your message in their own words. These can work very well when the show's audience matches your customers.
- **Programmatic audio.** Agencies can buy audio ads across many publishers through buying platforms, similar to programmatic display or screens.

Before you start

- **Be clear what the ads are for.** Audio is good for awareness and for products people can remember and look up later. It's less suited to complex offers.
- **Pick the right shows or audiences.** For podcasts, the fit between the show and your customer matters more than raw download numbers.
- **Ask how listens are counted.** Podcast measurement varies between networks. Ask whether figures follow an industry standard and what they include.

Writing a script that works

- **One message.** Listeners can't scroll back. Say one thing clearly.
- **Say your name early and again at the end.**
- **Make the next step easy to remember.** A short web address or a simple search ("search Blend Data Strategy") works better than a long URL or phone number.
- **Write for the ear.** Read it aloud. Short sentences, everyday words.

- **For host reads,** give the host the key points and let them use their own words. Authenticity is the point.

How to measure results

- **Use a unique offer code or web address** for each show or platform, so you can count responses.
- **Ask new customers how they heard about you.** A simple question at checkout or on your enquiry form picks up listeners who don't use the code.
- **Watch branded search and direct website visits** during the campaign compared with before.
- **Compare like with like.** Judge audio on what it's good at, not against search ads, where people are already looking to buy.

Common mistakes

- Cramming too much information into a short ad.
- Choosing podcasts on size rather than audience fit.
- Running a single short burst and expecting lasting results.
- Having no way to tell which sales came from audio.

Where Blend can help

If you're adding audio to a mix of other channels, we can help you set up the codes, survey questions and before-and-after comparisons that show whether it's working. Get in touch, or start with the free Data Maturity Assessment.

This guide is general information, not professional advice for your situation. Read it online and find more free guides at www.blend-datastrategy.com/tools.