

MARKETING

Luxury tunes into podcasts to reach affluent early adopters

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Podcasts offer a way to reach consumers through audio. Image credit: Bang & Olufsen

By SARAH JONES

Storytelling is a central part of luxury brand building today, but some marketers are thinking beyond text or video to share their perspectives.

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A number of brands including Chanel and Harvey Nichols have developed podcasts, looking to the medium as a means of connecting with consumers over audio. While still a relatively new concept for marketing, podcasts offer an appealing audience for luxury brands.

"We're seeing luxury brands embrace podcasting because of the quality of listener," said Heather Osgood, owner of **True Native Media**, Morro Bay, CA. "Podcast listeners are affluent, well educated and early adopters of products. Podcast listeners are very loyal to the shows they follow.

"Podcasts offer brands the ability to tell their story, in a creative and very personalized manner," she said. "Listeners to podcasts quite literally have the voice of the brand in their heads.

"Brands have a unique opportunity to connect with listeners and build strong relationships with their potential customers by creating content that entertains, captivates and draws the listener into ongoing engagement."

Podcast popularity

According to Edison Research, podcasts reach a predominantly affluent, educated audience. Slightly more than half of podcast listeners are male, with those between the ages of 18 and 34 the most apt to tune in.

The audio content format is also growing in popularity. In 2017, the portion of monthly listeners rose from 21 percent to 24 percent. Additionally, four in 10 consumers have ever listened to a podcast.

While for the most part podcasts were streamed via desktop devices just five years ago, today about seven in 10 listen on a mobile device.

In addition to being plugged into audio content, the population that subscribes to podcasts is also more apt than the general population to be active on social media.

"The average podcast listener earns more and spends more than the average consumer," said Glenn Rubenstein, founder of [Adopter Media](#), San Francisco. "They're also early adopters who love to own the latest, coolest and best products in any category.

"Many of these listeners are also tastemakers and influencers in their own social circles."

A handful of luxury brands have taken note of podcastings' rise, creating their own streamable content.

Danish audio and video brand Bang & Olufsen's "Sound Matters" series looks at the sounds that make up daily life around the world. Future episodes of Sound Matters will explore all kinds of sounds that occur in the "noisy cosmos" ([see story](#)).

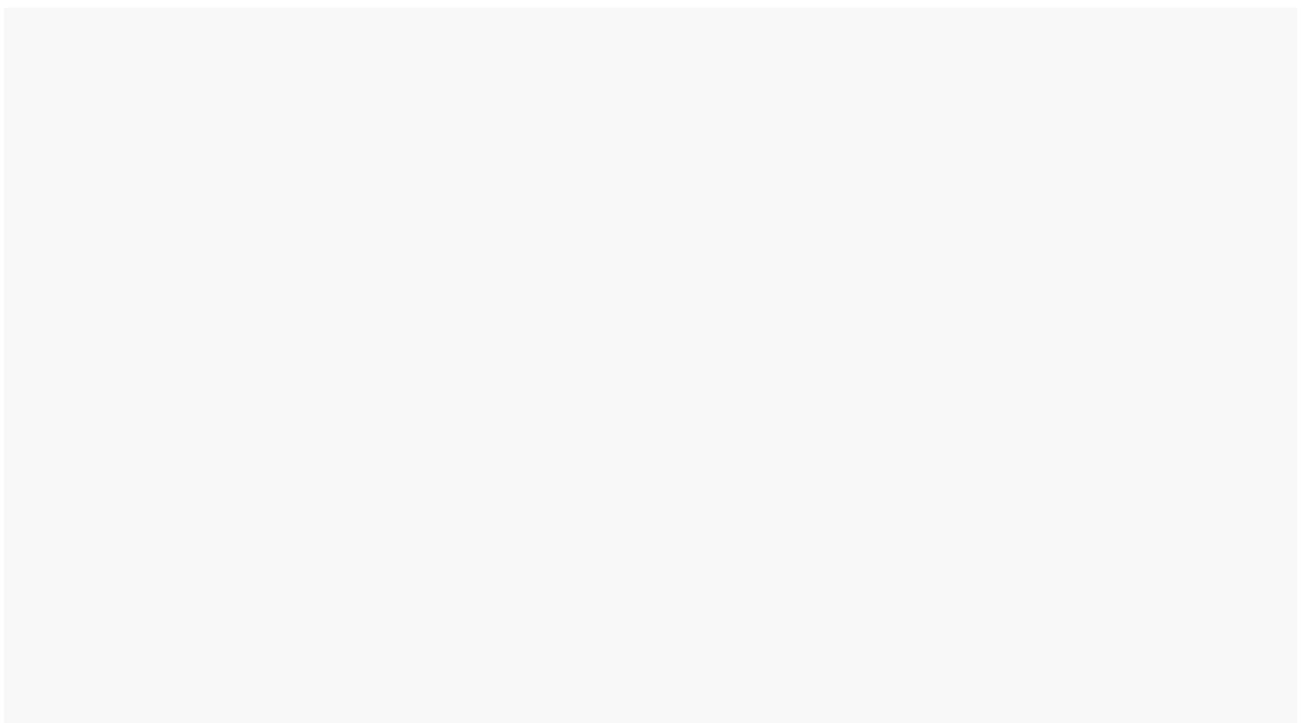


Bang & Olufsen's Sound Matters. Image credit: Bang & Olufsen

Since it started in 2016, Sound Matters has created 17 episodes that cover topics as diverse as music's impact on the body and synesthesia. Hosted by Tim Hinman, editor of Third Ear, the series is available via Soundcloud and iTunes.

Rosewood Hotel & Resorts' The Carlyle is bringing travel enthusiasts into its world through modern entertainment with an uncommon take on lifestyle content.

The hotel has launched a new podcast that touches on all things travel and stories surrounding the famous hotel. Television personality Sara Gore and filmmaker Matthew Miele are the hosts of the new podcast, entitled "Last Night at the Carlyle, which features a variety of guests who have stayed or lived at the property ([see story](#)).



Sneak peek of our inaugural podcast. Fashion icon, @imisaacmizrahi, talks party etiquette and so much more. Coming March 15th to @itunes. Don't miss it. Basta people, Basta! #LNATC #Episode1

While many of the luxury brand podcasts are ongoing, other efforts have been more temporary series.

During its month-long pop-up at Colette last fall, Chanel produced a bi-weekly podcast.

Hosted by fashion journalist Daphn Hzard, the podcast invited friends from film, literature, music and dance to participate ([see story](#)).

British department store chain Harvey Nichols teamed with creative cosmetic platform Beauty Papers for a podcast featuring some of the biggest names in beauty. "The Beauty of Vanity Now" asks icons including hairstylist Sam McKnight and makeup artist Val Garland for their takes on current beauty topics.



Promotional image for Harvey Nichols' podcast. Image credit: Harvey Nichols

Like Chanel's podcast, Harvey Nichols' content collaboration will be a limited run.

"Podcasting is still a relatively new medium," Adopter Media's Mr. Rubenstein said. "If done correctly, it presents an opportunity for companies to produce content authentic to their brand that can also connect with an audience."

Listening in

The way in which podcasts are consumed is unique, as consumers can choose to listen immediately or download a show for later.

When a consumer sees a brand video on social media, but is unable to watch at the time, their only option is to try to remember to return to view it later. However, with a podcast, followers can choose when they would like to consume content, saving and listening when it fits their schedule.

Consumers can also subscribe to ongoing content, allowing brands to establish an ongoing auditory relationship.

"There are a few steps brands can take to incorporate podcasts into their content marketing strategy," True Native Media's Ms. Osgood said. "A good first step is selecting podcasts with strong brand alignment and booking interview slots on these shows. Podcast interviews provide a free opportunity for brands to see the power of exposure on podcasts.

"Next, planning advertising campaigns with podcasts is a great step," she said. "Host-read endorsement ads on podcasts that target the brand's potential customers is an excellent tool to measure the effectiveness of podcasts as a marketing vehicle."

For brands looking to create podcasts, entertaining storytelling is key.

"Don't produce an infomercial," Adopter Media's Mr. Rubenstein said. "Focus on content that's relevant for your niche that will attract your target audience, and always build around that.

"The brand messaging should be secondary, and tied into the content whenever possible," he said. "Storytelling is important – whether it's a product, service or experience, excitement is contagious and if you can make the story personal it holds much more weight than scripted ad copy.

"This is why host talent also matters. Brands value traditional podcast ads because they're able to leverage the connection a host has with their audience, and transfer the host's excitement to pique the audience's interest. When you can partner with an established podcast host to launch your podcast, they bring their existing audience to the table."

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