



# State of Audio

What's Next &  
What Advertisers  
Need to Know

# The Playlist

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# Pure Audio

Advertisers who want to engage deeply with audiences are embracing Audio like never before. In our opening chapter, we take a closer at why Audio performs so well.

## Chapter 1



# Scroll. Tap. Swipe...

...then scroll some more. Our eyes are tethered all day to screens big and small, for everything from meetings to school to news and entertainment. No wonder so many of us are ready to give our over-strained eyes a break.

And what happens when you rest your eyes and open your ears? You engage. You connect deeply. As you ease into the comforting voice of a favorite host, the laughs and inspiration of a compelling podcast, or the joys of music, Audio goes straight to your heart and mind more than any other medium.

**It's no accident that Audio listening and ad spending are rising fast in this new era, new normal, call it what you like. Nothing has adapted to the 'new normal' as well as Audio.**

The power trio of integrated Audio — over-the-air (OTA) radio, podcasts, and digital audio — is delivering what consumers and marketers crave now more than ever: A meaningful connection.

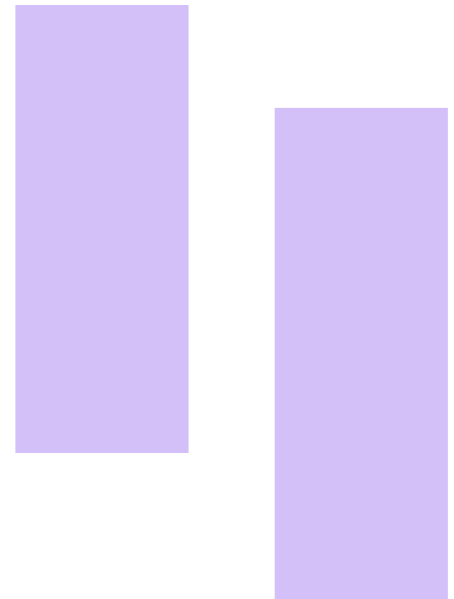
## Audio's Superpower

In the age of real-time measurement and insights, many advertisers are, for the first time, getting a true peek behind the curtain at what makes this medium tick: Why audiences are so drawn to personalities, stories, and music they can only access through their ears — and why Audio is performing so well for advertisers.

**New research affirms that Audio stirs emotion like no other medium.**

Via podcasts, sports, news, or music, the auditory-neuro sensory embrace draws us in, makes us feel — really feel! — and drives us to action. Personal Audio (the kind we enjoy alone through our earbuds, smart speakers, and talkable tech) is a bigger part of our daily lives than ever before.

Advertisers who want to turn the dial past simply reaching audiences to truly engaging with them are embracing Audio like never before. A closer look reveals why Audio performs so well. It all comes down to three key elements:



**Passion:** Sparked by influencers and hosts that audiences trust and can't miss

**Audience:** Scale you need with customized audience segments to target your brand's fans

**Measurement:** Advanced attribution platforms to help deliver on sales, web, and foot traffic goals

**Don't take our word for it. Let advertisers do the talking.**

**Audio ad spend rose 10.4% in 2020 compared to 2019. Podcast spending will hit a fantastic \$1 billion in 2021.**

Three Reasons To Stop Overlooking Audio Advertising, AdExchanger, 2021

What in the name of [Marconi](#) is going on? It's simple: Audio has kept all the emotion and impact it's always had while adding measurability and versatility that match the moment.





In a world where screen time has reached a new and sometimes uncomfortable peak, it's the ears, not the eyes, that have always connected most deeply. And it's the ears that are generating the most excitement and energy in media today."

**J.D. Crowley**  
Chief Digital Officer, Audacy



## Consumers are Turning Up the Volume

**The world was turned on its head in early 2020, and we all saw disruptive changes to our routines.** In the Audio space, we saw listening habits shift. In-home listening soared during the pandemic, boosted by a boom in smart speaker sales. Favorite playlists and podcasts became (like masks) a don't-leave-home-without-it essential on our daily walks and grocery store drives.

We're discovering every day what the new normal will look like. While it's hard to forecast the future, one thing is certain: Audio will remain our go-to companion, just as it has been for more than a century. And in the digital age, our favorite hosts, music, and news have proven to be the resilient, reliable outlet we need. We'll continue to enjoy our favorite content anywhere our earbuds take us.

Listening at home, on smart speakers, and podcasts surge

At home  
**+44%**

Smart Speakers  
**+43%**

Podcasts  
**+26%**

# The Power of Screenless

**If the thought of another Zoom meeting makes you scream, you're not alone.** Screen fatigue is real. We're all craving content we can enjoy without being locked in with our eyes. And that's the great thing about Audio — it moves with you wherever you go.

Think about this: Where are you when you're listening to your favorite podcast, finding great new music, or switching to the news? Usually, in hands-free mode – walking the dog, getting in some cardio, or trying a new dinner recipe. Yet, just because you're on the move doesn't mean that Audio isn't grabbing your full attention — just the opposite. Truth is, these kinds of screenless moments are the ones we look forward to all day.

So, what is it about Audio that captures our hearts and minds? It can be hard to put your finger on, but you know the feeling when you pop your earbuds in and, even briefly, shut out the outside world to connect to your favorites. We listen to our hometown sports personalities to get excited about the weekend, crank up our '80s tunes to feel nostalgic, and reconnect with our favorite podcast hosts to laugh. Audio just puts us in a good mood.

Researchers and neuroscientists have honed in on what makes us feel that way: **trust and immersion**. In 2020, Audacy's Insights team worked with the research experts at Alter Agents on **Audio Amplification: Defining Engaged Impressions** study using neurological analysis to understand how (and how much) various media platforms grab our attention and drive action.



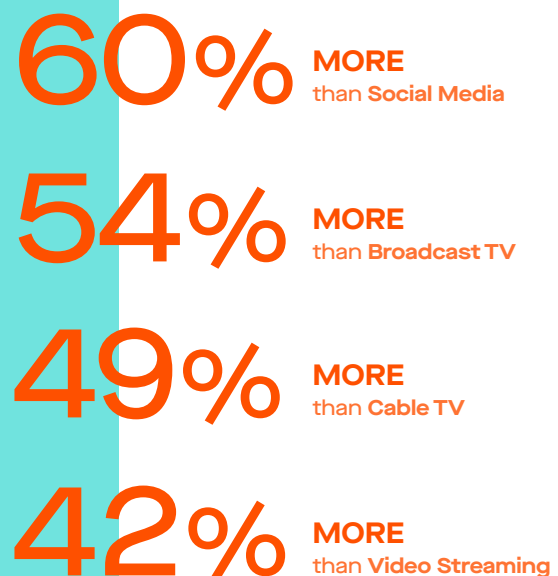
The heart and the brain are biologically connected. Neuroscience helps us determine how people respond to content and stimuli by measuring variations in heart rate. This measure of engagement is called immersion. And studies show that the more someone is immersed in content, the more they will recall and take action."

**Devora Rogers**

Chief Strategy Officer, Alter Agents

## Audio Listeners Pay Attention

When compared to screens, Audio commands a larger chunk of listeners' media time



Audio Amplification: Defining Engaged Impressions study, Alter Agents, August 2020

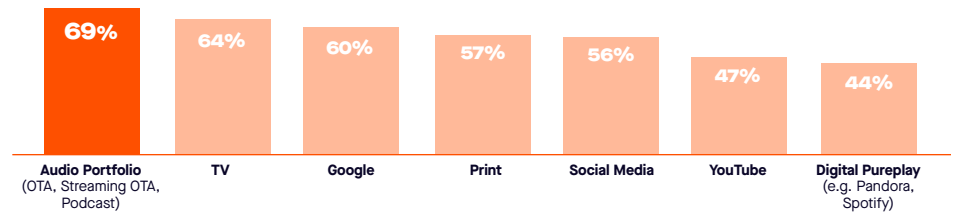
## Trust

Trust is at the core of human relationships. Trust means relying on the local forecaster to tell us if we'll need to shovel our car out in the morning. It means getting fun banter and useful info as we head into our fantasy football draft. And it means the guaranteed laughs from our favorite morning show. These are truly our “trusted sources.”

**Audiences trust the messages they hear from the voices they know. Host endorsements, whether live reads or as part of an ad, drive listeners to buy. A lot.**

Audio Amplification: Engaged Impressions Study, Alter Agents, August 2020

### MEDIA SOURCE TRUST



Audio Amplification: Defining Engaged Impressions study, Alter Agents, August 2020



I love the hosts of the radio stations that I listen to. They make the content what it is. They make my day half of the time, and they don't even know it!"

Radio listener,  
Audio Amplification:  
Defining Engaged Impressions study

## Immersion

Immersion is a blend of attention and emotional connection. That's why the power trio of integrated Audio is tops at driving immersive experiences, beating out even TV and social media. Audio can hit us in the heart, pique our interest, and “stop the hop” of fidgety media consumption by stopping us in our tracks (and sometimes in our driveways) with deeply connected experiences.

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Audio Amplification: Defining Engaged Impressions study, Alter Agents, October 2020

# Meeting Consumers in the Moments that Matter

With emerging formats and off-the-charts audiences, Audio has entered a new golden age. The popularity of podcasts and digital Audio, coupled with the steadfast reach of Radio, is opening new doors for content creators, listeners, and advertisers alike. But the trend to watch is how Audio is becoming part of our lives in exciting new ways, in new places, and on new devices that we couldn't have imagined even a few years ago.

## Radio Everywhere

If Radio is the older brother of digital Audio, it's also the big winner. Radio continues to command an audience at least twice the size of pure-play services or podcasts.

We're seeing a remarkable resurgence of radio listening in

the home, helped along by smart devices, Bluetooth speakers, and wireless headphones.

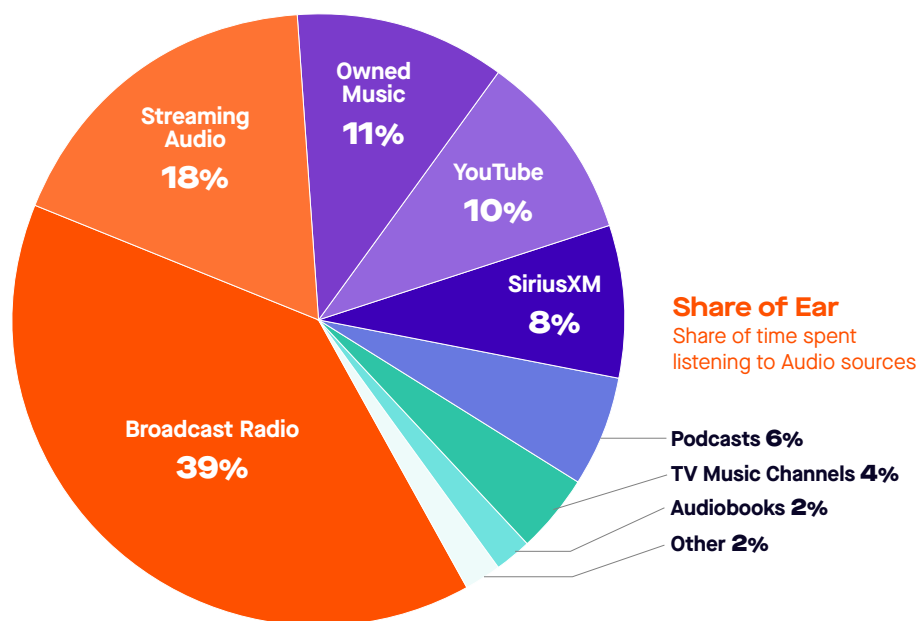
While tremendous audience reach has been a keystone of OTA radio, the fresh trends we're seeing with places and spaces are what have us (and advertisers) leaning in. Our favorite Radio morning shows, sports personalities, news

broadcasts and music have always had a place in our daily routines, often carving out a huge slice of our out-of-home entertainment.

As everyone gets more comfortable asking Alexa to "Play KROQ 106.7" or Google Nest to "Play KYW News Radio," at-home radio listening will continue to weave itself into our lives, driving the connections that we crave.

### WHAT'S ON?

**Broadcast Radio commands the largest chunk of Audio listening by far, at 39% — with streaming Audio coming in second at 18%.**



## Podcasts: Audio's Rising Star

### A Podcast for Every Passion

History buff or political animal? Budding chef or opera aficionado? Classic car fan or motorcycle rider? Podcasts have you covered. Podcasts are built around niche audiences that grow organically, with captivating hosts central to their success.

One trend we're seeing is a rise in shows around topics that genuinely matter to listeners' lives: health, politics, and education. The popularity of early podcasts like [Marc Maron's WTF](#) and, later, [Pod Save America](#) were no fluke: They signaled a rising trend of listeners turning to podcasts to elevate and educate themselves.

### Big Brands Take Notice

An astonishing 60% of podcast listeners take action after hearing a product advertised on a podcast.<sup>1</sup> Tremendous conversion rates from early direct-to-consumer (DTC) podcast campaigns have opened the eyes of big brands in CPG, insurance, and financial services. According to eMarketer, the tide is rising rapidly as brand awareness campaigns bring in more podcast ad revenue.

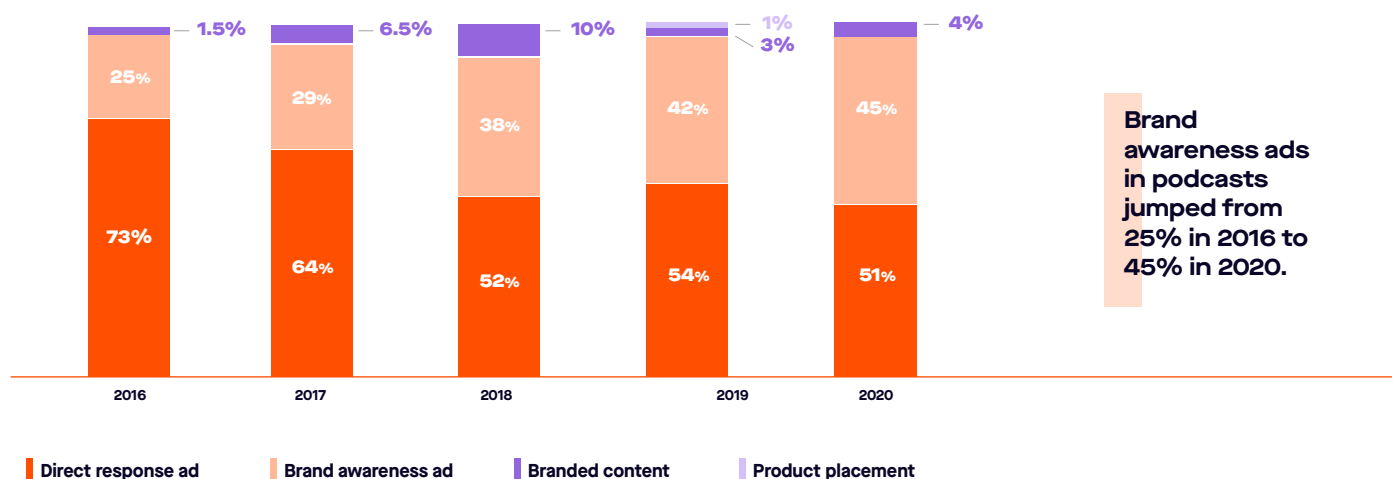
<sup>1</sup> Nielsen Scarborough Research, Market/Release: Podcast Recontact Study (Listeners only) 2020 Release 2 Total (May 2021)

74%  
OF MONTHLY PODCAST LISTENERS  
SAY THEY TURN TO PODCASTS TO  
LEARN NEW THINGS

60%  
TUNE IN FOR  
CURRENT EVENTS

Edison Research, The Podcast Consumer, 2019

### U.S. PODCAST AD REVENUE SHARE 2016-2020 by Campaign Type, % of total



Note: Self-reported advertising revenues represent the companies surveyed, less than 100% of the total podcast advertising market; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding  
eMarketer US Podcast Ad Revenue Share by Campaign Type, % of Total, May 2021.



## The quickest way to Gen Z's heart... is through their earbuds.

Podcasts are a powerful way to reach young audiences. Listeners tend to be more affluent and fairly open to in-pod ad messages. Less than 10% of podcast listeners skip ads. And, thanks to the strong relationships podcast hosts foster with their listeners, trust in podcast content — including ads — is sky-high.

TikTok and YouTube stars are getting into the podcast game, too, which helps explain why Gen Z listenership has risen 37% in recent months.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Audacy Engaged Impressions Study, October 2020

Monthly podcast listeners rose from 49% in 2020 to

**56%**

in 2021 among U.S. 12-34-year-olds.

Edison Research Infinite Dial Study, 2021

Here are some takeaways about Gen Z podcast listeners, courtesy of a September 2020 quantitative online survey by Whistle Wise and Audacy's How to Engage Gen Z with Audio 2021 study:

- They are affluent, with 43% more likely to exceed \$75k HHI
- They skew male, with a penchant for sports
- Podcasts are replacing TV as a way to enhance other activities
- 75% listen to learn something new
- They prefer shorter, unscripted, and off-the-cuff content over longer, scripted/organized content (71% vs. 29%)
- 83% say their favorite podcasters feel like friends

The precise and enthusiastic audiences that podcasts deliver are a critical part of today's Audio mix. But just as important is building connection through music discovery. That's the superpower of the third segment of Audio's integrated trio: Digital Audio.

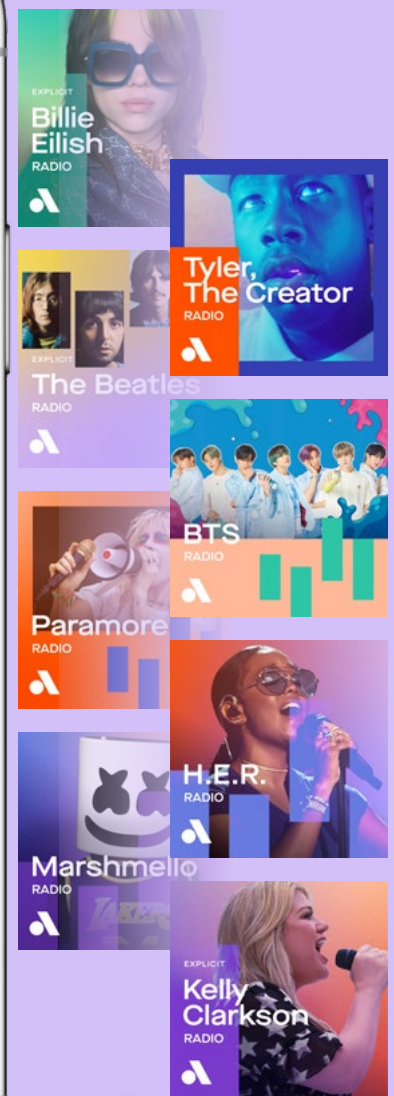
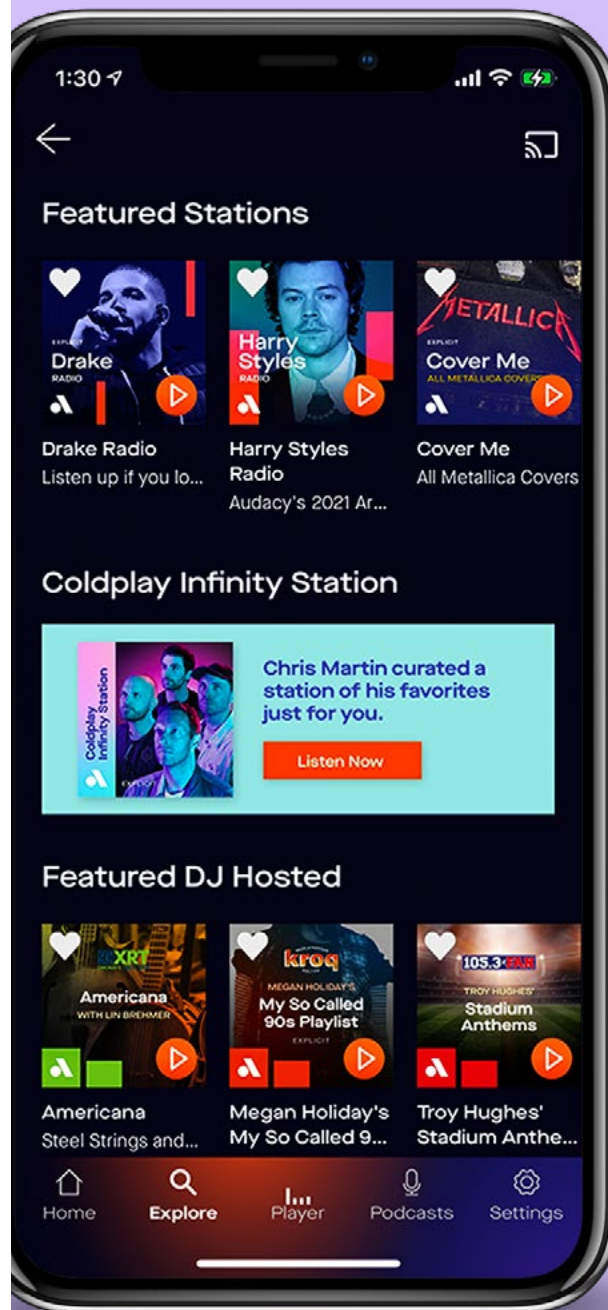
## Digital Audio: Sparking Connection and Discovery

Digital Audio brings unlimited possibilities for innovative, customized listening experiences. From the music that moves us — programmed by the artists themselves — to the power of sports favorites, our earbuds and smart speakers offer more content than ever to underscore our moments that matter.

### Next-level personalization: Programmed by fans, for fans

The human touch is back! Audacy has over 400 exclusive new digital stations curated by music lovers and artists. Our listeners get the personalized music they crave, curated by people they know and love.

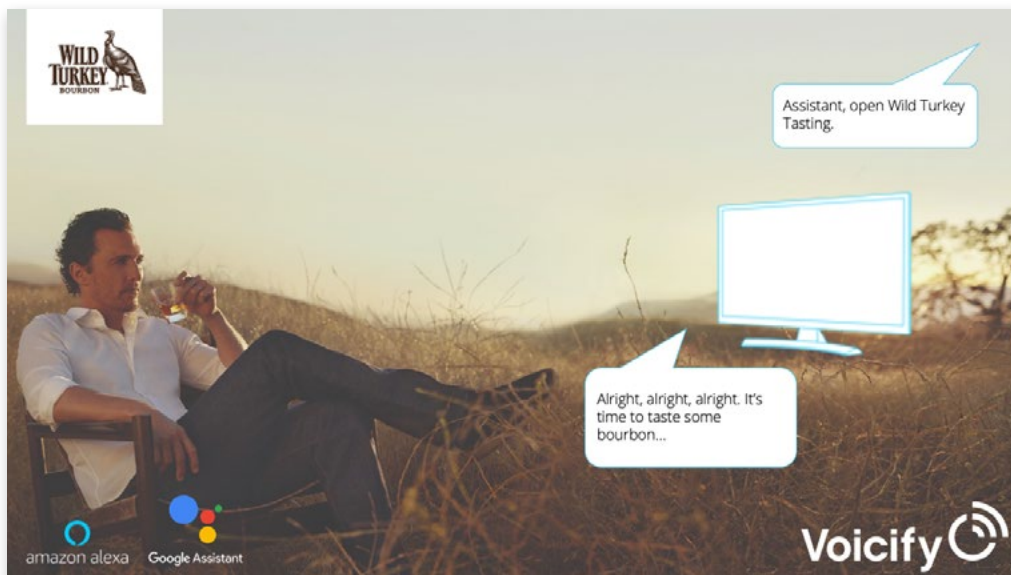
Influencers, celebs, sports icons, and hit-makers: Audacy listeners can cue up [Ed Sheeran's faves](#) in the car or our very own [Troy Hughes' Stadium Anthems](#) as they hit the gym or get ready for the big game. When it comes to moods, stations like [So Soft](#) and [Tailgate Crashers](#) match the moment with the perfect beat.



## Talk is the New Click

Not only is Audio consumption on the rise, but so is voice: We now increasingly access and control what we're listening to through voice commands via smartphones, smart speakers, and even smart earbuds. And now, brands can talk back to us.

Voice assistants that used to just play music or deliver the weather now offer interactive brand-to-consumer experiences. We're talking step-by-step recipes for mac and cheese or at-home Pinot Noir tastings. Brands are embracing the speaker-as-touchpoint phenomenon, adding voice-triggered ads to their Audio campaigns. That paves the way for some amazing new opportunities with shoppable Audio interactions.



33% OF AMERICANS NOW OWN A SMART SPEAKER.  
Edison Infinite Dial, 2021







## THE BOTTOM LINE FOR BRANDS

**Audio stirs emotion** like no other medium. It touches the passions of your audience and drives them to action.

**Audio is trusted** above all other media. More than TV, more than social media, more than Google.

**Audio is a fresh oasis** from scrolling and staring in a screen-heavy world. It's the place to be when brands need to stand out from the usual visual chaos.

**Podcasts are golden** for brands and marketers. They offer fresh ad formats and sponsorship options, and more than 90% of podcast audiences listen through ads.

### UP NEXT:

We'll look at how Audio audiences lean in and listen hard — creating truly engaged impressions that drive great returns.



# Don't just buy an impression. Make an impression.

Audience trust in on-air and podcast hosts is the magic that moves the needle for advertisers. In this chapter, we explore the power of hosts and influencers to reach listeners' ears, hearts, and minds.

## Chapter 2



# The Influencer Effect

Every marketer knows the value of hitching a brand to the hottest TikTok or Instagram influencers. Here's hoping those influencers prove as effective and enduring as the original influencers, the ones now winning hearts and minds of new generations:

## Audio Hosts.

Listeners engage more deeply with Audio, so host recommendations pack a more powerful punch with their audience. Local talent can crush it for brands, partly because they know their listeners so well. They live in our communities, root for our sports teams, and share our local experiences. Audience trust in on-air and podcast hosts is the magic that moves the needle for advertisers.

## Trusted Audio Influencers



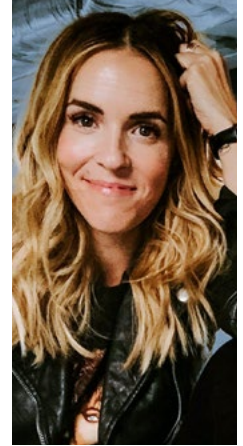
**DEMI LOVATO**  
SOCIAL ACTIVISM



**BOOMER ESIASON**  
SPORTS



**BIG TIGGER**  
MUSIC | POP CULTURE



**RACHEL HOLLIS**  
LIFESTYLE

## All Impressions are Not Created Equal

It's not how many eardrums your messages reach. It's how engaged those listeners are that's the secret sauce. Interest and trust in what the host says about your product determines whether listeners buy, tell a friend, and feel good about their purchase. Brands that tap into this model see tremendous ad performance when coupling their brand messages with influential Audio talent.

### Audacy's Influencers Drive Performance

Audacy's influencer-delivered ads exceed Veritonic's national benchmarks in driving purchase intent among listeners:

**NATIONAL AVERAGE:**  
**+12% INTENT**

**AUDACY INFLUENCER AVERAGE: +16%**

**+4 POINTS**

Audacy Influencer Impact Study, October 2020

### Listeners are Loco for Local

Audacy's local hosts outperform national media. Listeners tell us that when they hear a message from a local influencer...

**60%** **FEEL A GREATER CONNECTION**  
to a brand's message

**65%** **ARE MORE LIKELY**  
to pay attention to the message

**72%** **MAKE A PURCHASE**  
based on the recommendation of a local host

Audacy Influencer Impact Study, October 2020

## Case Study: Audio Influencers Drive Results for Mazda

**Campaign Goal:** Mazda's goal was to drive purchase consideration among auto intenders looking for a new vehicle.

**Solution:** Audacy created a talent endorsement campaign where local personalities shared their favorite features of Mazda vehicles with their listeners on air.



**Results:** Success! Among auto intenders, Mazda saw...

**+9.5%**  
IN BRAND FAVORABILITY

**+10.4%**  
IN BRAND CONSIDERATION

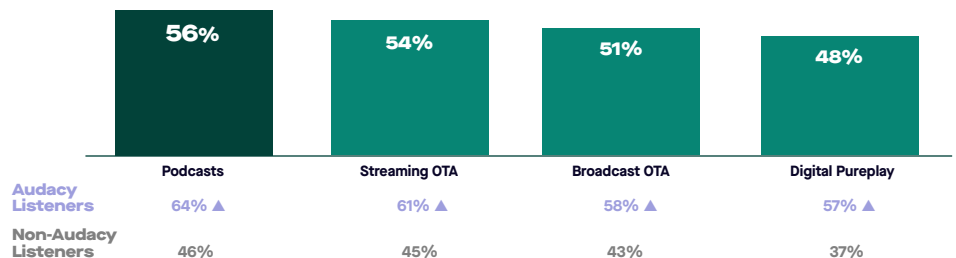
## Podcast Hosts are the Crown Jewel of Audio Influencers

Podcasts bring a new hotbed of influencers to the table. Among Audacy podcast listeners, 64% trust recommendations shared during the program — that's nearly 20% higher than listener trust in pure-play digital promotions. Podcasts are super sticky, too: Fans listen to every episode, and they listen all the way through to the end.<sup>3</sup>

And we're not just talking about host-read content, either; pre-produced ads inserted into programming also perform well for advertisers. Simply being associated with the trusted star of a favorite show delivers results like these.

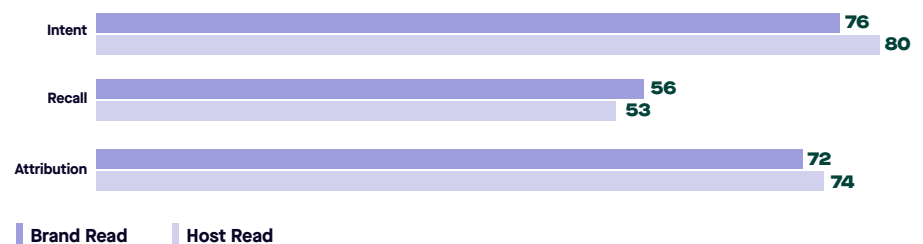
<sup>3</sup> Engaged Impressions Study, Alter Agents, August 2020

### AUDIO RECOMMENDATION TRUST<sup>4</sup>



Audio Amplification: Defining Engaged Impressions study, Alter Agents, August 2020

### SYNERGEY: HOST AND BRAND READS COMBINE TO CREATE THE MOST EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN



Veritonic – Audio Score



The host was talking about this type of cup holder, and they made it part of their podcast, and they made me feel like I needed that product.”

— Podcast listener, Audio Amplification: Defining Engaged Impressions study

“

Audio is the most engaging impression you can buy in media. Period. People are more receptive to receiving a message from someone they know and someone they trust. Only Audio can build these kinds of relationships.”

Ken Lagana

EVP, Digital Sales and Strategy, Audacy



# Killer Conversions

**Sales conversion** is THE most important metric for brands. And with Audio's newer advanced attribution capabilities, advertisers can now see what insiders have known for years: Audio drives sales.

AUDACY AUDIO CAMPAIGNS  
ON AVERAGE DRIVE:

**+68%**

LIFT IN SALES CONVERSIONS

Other **online metrics** are important too, of course. For industries like higher education and insurance that have longer sales cycles, the key to success may be online leads, form fills, or website visits.

AUDACY AUDIO CAMPAIGNS  
ON AVERAGE DRIVE:

**+44%**

LIFT IN WEB VISITATION

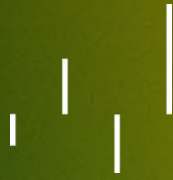
And it's not all about online. For sectors like retail, dining, and auto, **driving a customer directly into the store, restaurant, or showroom** is often the critical KPI. Audio delivers them all.

AUDACY AUDIO CAMPAIGNS  
ON AVERAGE DRIVE:

**+45%**

LIFT IN IN-STORE VISITATION





## THE BOTTOM LINE FOR BRANDS

**Listeners engage** more deeply with Audacy's influencers. Our influencer-delivered ads drive +16% lift in purchase intent (vs. Veritonic National Average of 12%).

**Think local** at scale to build impact. Audacy's local hosts outperform national media: 72% of listeners have made a purchase based on local host recommendations.

**Podcast hosts** are super-influencers. 64% of listeners trust recommendations they hear on Audacy podcasts. Podcasts are also super-sticky. Fans listen to every episode, and they listen all the way to the end.

**Audio ads drive sales.** Audacy campaigns create an average +68% lift in sales conversions.

### UP NEXT:

Where the rubber hits the road! We share our playbook for creative, audience discovery, segmentation, targeting, reaching the "unreachables," attribution, podcast measurement, and more. So go ahead — keep scrolling!



# Marketer's Playbook

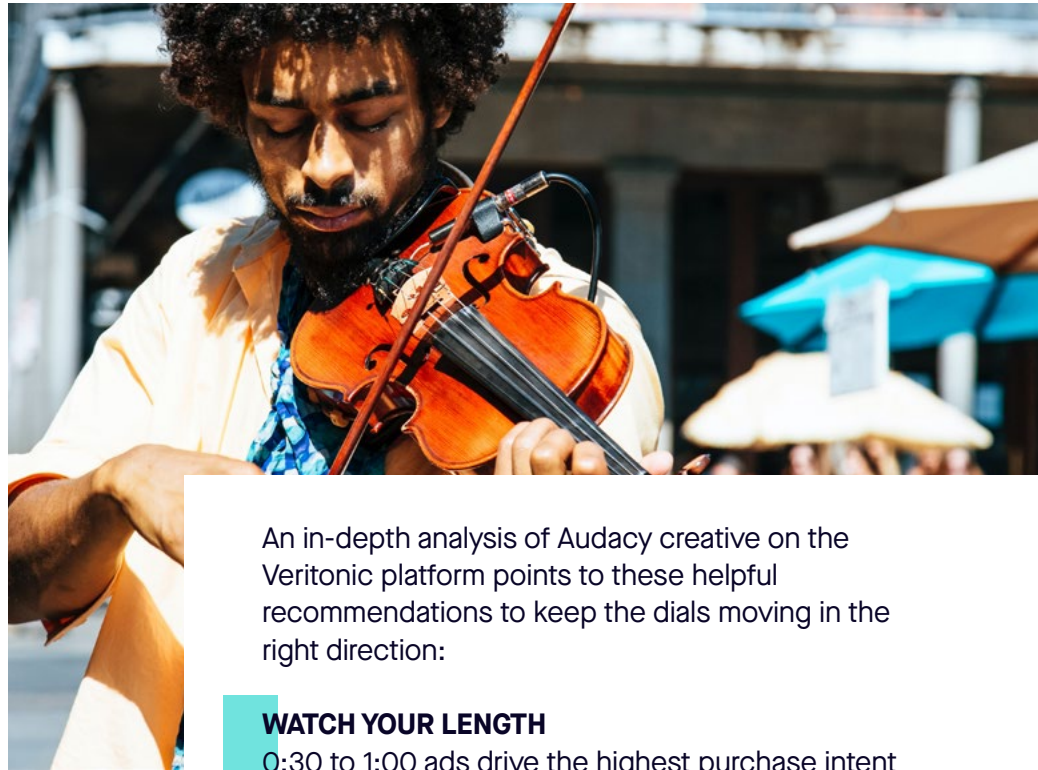
So, you're diving into the Audio revolution... excellent! But now what? In this chapter, we'll offer inside tips on creative, planning, and measuring, so you get great results.

## Chapter 3





# Creative That Captivates



**Fun part first: Creative.** Even with perfect targeting on the right platforms, weak creative means weak results. Put simply, your message matters. And developing compelling ads in the Audio space takes some know-how.

Veritonic's popular Audio intelligence platform suggests that creative choices can turn the campaign performance dials up or down in four key ways:

**Recall:** How memorable was the message?

**Intent:** How far did you move the listener down the sales funnel?

**Engagement:** How well are you keeping the attention of your listeners, and what specific script points are resonating?

**Emotional Response:** Did your listeners feel your message and brand is...?

Relevant	Likable	Trustworthy
Inspiring	Empowering	Boring
Relaxing	...?	

An in-depth analysis of Audacy creative on the Veritonic platform points to these helpful recommendations to keep the dials moving in the right direction:

## WATCH YOUR LENGTH

0:30 to 1:00 ads drive the highest purchase intent lifts, without significantly sacrificing engagement.

## TAP TALENT

Endorsements by familiar personalities drive higher trust and purchase intent.

**PRO TIP:** Have the host introduce themselves at the start of the ad. Intent, trust, and familiarity can drop if you wait until later.

## SET THE MOOD WITH MUSIC

The right music adds inspiration and power to your ad copy. Ads with music also drive higher purchase intent.

## PROFIT FROM THE POWER OF THE PROMO

Promos that are in sync with audience interests can significantly increase intent, likability, and trustworthiness.

## CONNECT DEEPLY

Narrative storytelling, particularly when paired with a live host read and some soft music, ratchets up awareness. It boosts positive emotional responses like empowering, trustworthy, caring, and likable.

Listeners get the warm fuzzies from local stories, community spotlights, and host reads.

## Right moment, right message

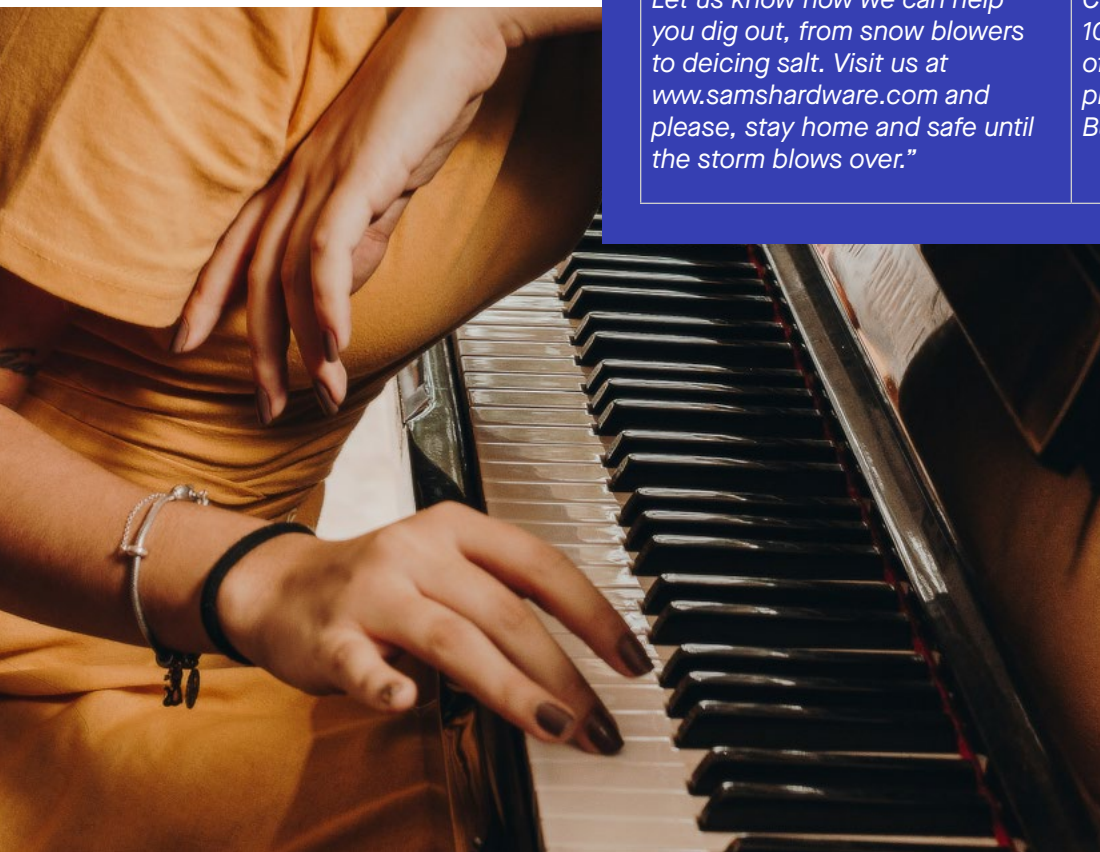
Audio is agile. Advertising messages can hit your listeners' ears at just the right time and place: Gearing up for a weekend of yard work, getting hunger pangs close to lunchtime, or carting the kids to soccer practice.

Dayparting still works wonders, but today's dynamic, trigger-based creative lets you speak to what's happening in the listeners' world right now. Are they waking up to a perfect sunny spring Saturday? Tell them about the garden sale at the big-box hardware store. Did the hometown team just win the championship? Send them to the restaurant down the block for a limited-time celebratory beer or free order of fries.

### DYNAMIC CREATIVE

A few creative variations will make your messages hyper-relevant and effective in any moment. Let's take a look at three options each for weather and sports triggers:

WEATHER	SPORTS
<b>All clear?</b> Run your standard creative:  <i>"Sam's Hardware has everything you need to help you deal with winter weather."</i>	<b>Not game day?</b> Run your standard creative:  <i>"Angela's Pizza serves hot, fresh pies with the best-quality artisanal ingredients right to your door in 30 minutes or less."</i>
<b>Storm coming?</b>  <i>"The storm's a-brewin', so hurry on down to Sam's Hardware for everything you need to survive the squalls. Shovels and salt, snow blowers and space heaters... And don't forget to check your antifreeze."</i>	<b>Game on?</b>  <i>Hit a home run with your game-time eats from Angela's Pizza — delivered in 30 minutes or less. Call before the seventh-inning stretch, and we'll throw in a side of Angela's homemade garlic knots, fresh from the oven."</i>
<b>Storm is here?</b>  <i>"As the snow flies, Sam's Hardware is open and making home deliveries on a limited basis. Let us know how we can help you dig out, from snow blowers to deicing salt. Visit us at <a href="http://www.samshardware.com">www.samshardware.com</a> and please, stay home and safe until the storm blows over."</i>	<b>Game won?</b>  <i>"The Cubs brought it home, and Angela's Pizza wants to help you celebrate our hometown heroes! Come on in, call, or click before 10 p.m. tonight to get a free liter of Pepsi products with every large pizza or bucket of crispy Buffalo wings."</i>



## Pod-portunities

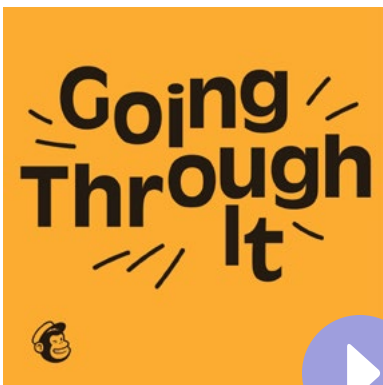
Podcasts continue to offer new breakthroughs for advertisers. A new wave of innovative podcast advertising options is going way beyond friendly host mentions to weave brands and products right into the show — in tune with the theme and integral to the story.

The best news of all? The powerful results are easy to measure.

### Branded Podcast Series

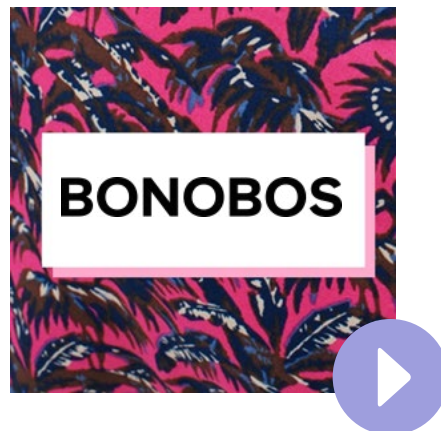
Brands can get behind the microphone by creating their own podcast series. Develop a podcast around themes and conversations that connect your brand to listeners' passions, and you'll knock it out of the park.

For instance, the “Going Through It” podcast, created by Pineapple Street Studios for Mailchimp, is an organic way for the brand to deepen its relationship with audiences. Arguably the most successful podcast advertiser ever, Mailchimp decided to turn its focus from advertising in podcasts to creating a standalone show that resonates with entrepreneurs, marketers, and small businesses — the people their products serve. Each season features a different host interviewing a series of bold-faced names about overcoming challenging moments in their lives or careers.



### Narrative Ads

These pods-within-a-pod are self-contained documentary-style ads that run within shows. Most listeners don't skip them because, well, they don't sound like ads. It's a fresh way for your brand to engage and entertain. Check out this captivating Bonobos long-form narrative micropod, inserted directly into a podcast.



### Full Episode Buyout

Here, brands work with popular podcast hosts to create full-length episodes. As a shining example, Clinique partnered with Lena Dunham to create an entire branded episode that kicked off season two of the star's “Women of the Hour” series. The episode was an ideal fit for Clinique's #DifferenceMaker campaign, which features inspiring women sharing their own stories and missions.



Brands are participating in podcasts in ways that feel natural to the audience... by incorporating their brand directly into an episode or series, with hosts that align to their brand image.”

**Jenna Weiss-Berman,**  
Co-founder, Pineapple Street Studios



## Sonic Identity

Movie heroes have their own musical themes. Shouldn't your brand? A sonic identity is just that: A quick few-note mnemonic hook or a full jingle that plays under your ads to set your brand's vibe and values. A good sonic identity connects with listeners' emotions to boost brand familiarity and recall. A sonic identity is almost a must-have for the screenless experiences that command an ever-growing slice of the listener audience.

As you ponder a sonic identity for your heroic brand:

### Think about multiple

**touchpoints.** Your sonic identity should work in all kinds of listening scenarios, so your library should have several creative variations. For example, a short mnemonic snippet can acknowledge a listener's voice command on a smart speaker. Longer versions can underscore an ad or even be used as hold music on smart speakers or customer service calls.

**Include your brand's name in sonic logos.** According to our friends at Veritonic, Audio logos that include the brand name resonate with listeners at a 29% higher rate.

**Find sounds your brand can own.** A hummable melody, nifty percussion hit, an everyday sound (think of a plane taking off or change jingling in your pocket), or a human sound like a person going "Hmm!": The sky's the limit when it comes to Audio signatures! Careful not to go overboard — avoid over-use of soundscapes and sound effects that may annoy listeners after repeated exposure.

**Learn from the best.** [Farmers Insurance](#), [McDonald's](#), and [Intel](#) have been winning at the sonic branding game for a long time. According to Veritonic's latest Audio Logo Index, newer entrants Oreo and Bob's Furniture are hitting all the right notes. Another great example is AutoZone, whose sonic brand soared to number 12 this year after pivoting to a full musical slogan. This is the screenless future, as sonic creative shoulders more (or all) of the brand identity work.



Creating a powerful sonic identity has never been more paramount for marketers. As brands compete for consumers' attention, screenless interactions are emerging as some of the most engaged brand-to-consumer opportunities. In this voice-driven space, the way a brand sounds will become one of the most important elements of branding over the next decade."

**Paul Suchman,**  
Chief Marketing Officer, Audacy

# Discover Your Audience

**Come out, come out wherever you are**

**You know who your customers are... and likely your prospects and your competitors' customers, too. So, how do you reach these critical audiences with Audio?**

First, remember that Audio can bring you custom audiences across all platforms — broadcast radio, digital Audio, and podcasts. Targeting can be as granular as you want.

Also, one Audio campaign can reach very different segments. Think Walt Disney World reaching millennial moms and their kids



**Audacy uses  
16,000+  
attributes**

**to profile listeners  
and create custom  
audience segments.**

with ads featuring Disney princesses and magical parades. But with a few tweaks to the audience profile, Disney also reaches empty nesters by talking up the Food & Wine festival, five-star dining, golfing, and poolside cabanas.

Third, you can have scale AND custom reach. Targeting a suburban millennial parent who drives a crossover and has a third grader? Good news: You can get your custom audience without sacrificing scale, especially if you partner with a multi-platform Audio publisher with a national network. As they say — have your cake and eat it, too.

## **REALLY? OTA?**

**Yup! Broadcast radio reaches more Americans than TV. Audacy broadcast stations have millions of listener profiles that match a robust identity graph. We know where our listeners shop, what cars they drive, what they watch on TV, and who they're rooting for in the playoffs. That's why radio is more relevant than ever.**



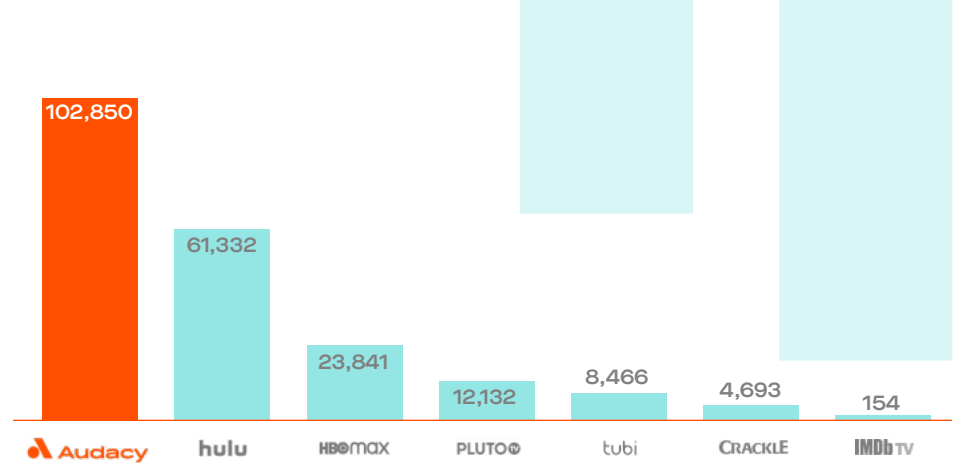
## The Unreachables

Cord-cutting has made it harder to reach people through TV. 33% of all U.S. TV households are going without cable or satellite. Nearly 50% of millennials and 57% of married Gen Z'ers have cut or shaved the cord. A lot of TV viewing has shifted to ad-free Streaming Video On Demand (SVOD) platforms like Netflix and Hulu.

What to do? Reach these unreachable through their ears. Audacy over-indexes in reaching cord-cutters, with an audience that's bigger than the top three SVOD services combined.

### WIN THE STREAMING WARS WITH AUDACY

Audience Reach (000)



Nielsen NMI, November 2020, All Dayparts, NMI Digital

## Slice and Dice

Once you know the attributes you're hungry to target, make a trip to the Audio buffet. At Audacy, we can carve and serve your messages just about any way you want. We match listener profiles to third-party behavioral insights, so you can reach audiences based on...

### Who they are

Broad demographics help you reach the largest pool.

AGE • GENDER

### What they like

Audience lifestyle and psychographics help you reach the ideal persona.

FITNESS FANATIC • DIY-ER • ADVENTURER • POLITICAL WONK  
LUXURY LIFESTYLER • TRAVEL ENTHUSIAST

### How they spend

Nothing says "I really get you" more than understanding where and how you like to shop.

AUTO INTENDERS • GROCERY HABITS • ONLINE SHOPPING  
FAVE RETAIL BRANDS • QSR AND RESTAURANT DINING

### What they listen to, watch, and search for

Want to know what moves people? Look to the music and TV shows they love, and what they search for online.

MUSIC FORMATS • TV SHOWS • PODCAST FAVORITES  
WEB AND MOBILE HABITS • LIGHT TV VIEWERS AND CORD-CUTTERS

### Lookalikes

Audience mapping lets you target listeners who match your existing customers already in love with your brand.

### Audience Match

Get your data on board! Pair your customer set with Audacy's listener dataset.



## Audience targeting in action: DIY-ers

Here's a look at a typical do-it-yourselfer. They love sports, Target shopping, and the Beatles!

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Income:  
\$125k

### SHOPPING HABITS

Shops at Target: 125  
Uses Scott's Lawn  
Products: 119  
Spends \$2k a year on  
home improvement: 156

### MEDIA BEHAVIOR

Watches ESPN: 108  
Listens to Digital  
Audio: 123  
Listens to ALT  
Radio: 132

### EXPECTED LIVE EVENTS WITHIN A YEAR

Make a Major Home  
Improvement: 120  
Retire: 147  
Buy a New Home: 128

# Measuring Up

## Show me the money. And web visits. And foot traffic.

**Every marketer needs to prove they get results. And every marketer also knows that attributing outcomes to different marketing touchpoints can be less than straightforward. The rules that apply to digital or TV advertising don't always apply to Audio.**

The good news is that all Audio is measurable — Radio, Digital Audio, and Podcasts alike. The brand lift and conversion reports that became standard practice with digital media are now available for Audio, so getting a real grip on cross-device attribution and ROI is clearer than ever.

Here are the answers to the five measurement questions we hear most often from our advertisers.

## 1 I'm using a promo code - isn't that enough?

Without knowing who definitively heard an ad, marketers have a really difficult time measuring the impact of their advertising. In the past, vanity URLs and promo codes helped track campaign success. These approaches are still helpful, but limited. Vanity URLs can miss a ton of conversions. And for most marketers, the goal is to attribute conversions to each advertising tactic that had an impact.

### TOTAL WEB VISITS

#### Codes vs. Pixels

A recent Audacy-Claritas study shows that vanity URLs captured less than 13% of total web visits directly driven from ad-exposed audience.

2020 Audacy-Claritas Audio Impact Study

Pixel-Matched captures 100% of ad-exposed web visitors

Vanity URL captures 13%

**Vanity URLs Missing 87% of Ad Impact for Audio Campaign**

## Pixel-based measurement captures all ad-driven conversions

Audacy uses pixel-based measurement to match listeners to behaviors they took after they heard an ad. This means digital actions like visiting a website or making an online purchase. It works for actions taken in the real world, too, like walking into a retail location.

In a nutshell, it works like this:

### Pick your partner.

Before running your campaign, identify a measurement partner to set you up with first-class campaign results. Our go-to measurement partner is [Claritas](#); choose a vendor who matches your goals best.

### Match the exposed audience.

Tracking pixels are placed on Audio ads and advertiser web pages to match ad-exposed listeners to customers who purchase or visit online. You can link across devices at the individual or household level, and also keep track of listeners who visit the site later on — even on another device.

### Measure your results.

Find out how well your campaign performed by tracking who visited the target site, created an account, bought something, or filled out a form.

## 2 What about OTA radio?

As with any digital channel, streaming Audio is the easier side of the equation to measure. But leading Audio publishers have cracked the attribution code for on-air campaigns as well. How so? With the mountain of audience data towering over successful radio stations. Let's not forget about the highly engaged audience that regularly interacts with their favorite stations. As a result, one-fifth of our listeners take traceable actions — like fans calling in to talk to their favorite sports host, texting to win concert tickets, or listening from their smart speakers.

These listener touchpoints are then onboarded into the digital world, becoming a large and representative audience panel. Large-scale first party data is exactly what's needed to measure ad effectiveness and track listener behavior, from website visits to store walk-ins and purchases. Our sizable audience panel makes your OTA results much more predictable and measurable.

OF AUDACY LISTENERS  
LEAVE AN IDENTIFIABLE  
TOUCHPOINT.

20%



### 3 Are Audio conversion results worth the wait?

Audio listeners are primed to take action... just not always immediately. Remember, a lot of people listen when their hands might be busy — like when driving a car, lifting weights, or taking their dog for a walk.

Audio ads can absolutely drive behavior (like purchases and web visits), but Audio isn't a click-based medium. That means last-click measurement isn't a reliable fit for campaign success.

What should you be looking at instead? Focus on view-through (or, in our case, "listen-through") measurement to capture that time-delayed conversion. The top measurement partners map ad-exposed audiences to a robust identity graph to connect the conversion dots later that day, the next day, or even the following week.

**It takes  
2.4 days**  
on average for Audio  
ad listeners to take  
an action.

Audacy-Claritas Aggregate Attribution Analysis,  
2020 - 2021

### 4 Are podcasts trackable, too?

Some advertisers seem to think that podcasts are more like an offline channel — impossible to measure without a call to action using a vanity URL or promo code. Well, with the right tools and partners in place, you can measure podcasts, just like with digital advertising.

The same conversion pixels we mentioned earlier make it possible to link podcast ads to web visits and related actions (like filling out a form or buying something) and also to measure lift in brand perception and purchase intent. They work for host-read spots, too, which we already know move listeners to action.

**60%**

of adults 18+ reported taking  
action after hearing an ad in  
a podcast.

Nielsen Scarborough Research Podcast Recontact  
Study, Release 2, May 2021

Categories like consumer packaged goods and insurance have quickly caught on, with podcasts driving positive shifts in brand recognition and purchase intent. GEICO and Progressive rank among top podcast advertisers, with the insurance category increasing spend in podcasts by **83%**.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Magellan AI Podcast  
Advertising Analysis, 2020



## 5 Which metrics matter?

With mountains of data for every last bit of your campaign, you can track online and offline metrics and match your business goal to the right KPIs — whether you're going for conversions or brand building. Do you want to increase sales leads? App downloads? Foot traffic? Your campaign goals will determine which metrics are most important to you.

Let's look a little deeper at how KPIs that align across your entire media spend can help you make “sound” decisions about your ad dollars. Recent advances make it easier to measure when Audio listeners are likely to take action, turning more impressions into conversions. Here are some metrics in your arsenal:

- **Foot traffic:** Measure brick-and-mortar visits with geofencing.
- **Web conversion:** See how many listeners come to your website, and what they do when they get there.
- **Sales conversion:** See how many online and in-store sales are spurred by your ad.
- **Brand lift:** Learn how your ad moves the awareness and favorability dials.
- **App downloads:** Measure ad-to-app conversions and downloads.

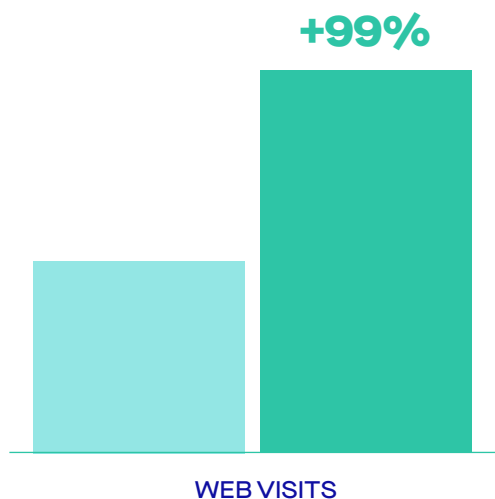
It's important to consider your brand's industry and price point when measuring performance. It will be easier to drive a purchase for bubble gum than a BMW. Check out our industry conversion guides from our joint Industry Trends in Streaming Audio & Podcast Performance study with leading measurement partner, Claritas.



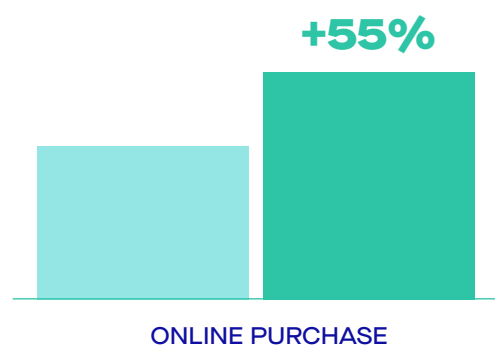
# A Sound Bet

Smart planning, smokin' creative, and analytics that prove it all paid off. So, where do you put your Audio ad spend? The question isn't about choosing digital Audio, podcasts, or OTA — it's how to reap the benefits of a total Audio strategy. Rather than just checking the Audio box on your media plan, we hope we've got you thinking about an Audio-first strategy. Research shows that your ad budget will work harder and go farther with OTA and digital Audio working together in a total Audio approach. How big of a difference can this make for your brand? This big:

## WEB CONVERSIONS: Per 1,000 Impressions

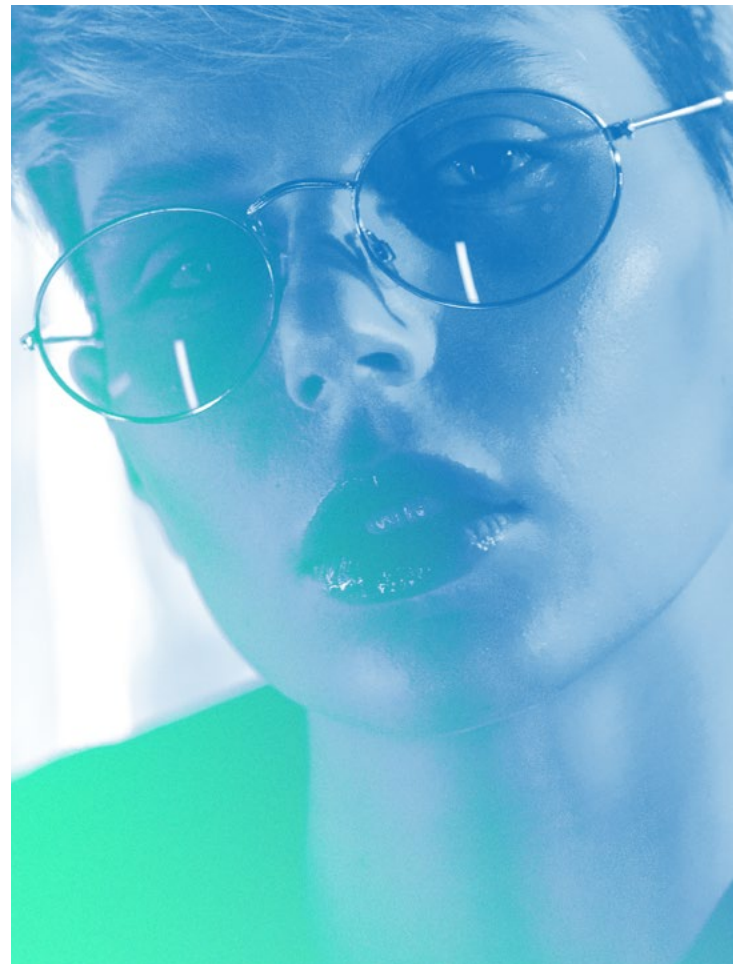


## SALES CONVERSIONS: Per 1,000 Impressions



■ Digital Audio Only
 ■ Digital Audio with OTA Running

Audacy Total Audio Attribution Channel Study, 2021



“

Digital Audio campaigns work harder when broadcast Radio is turned on, whether the goals are web visitation or sales. It's a competitive advantage.”

Dan McKinney,  
VP, Data & Analytics, Audacy



## THE BOTTOM LINE FOR BRANDS

**Audio is flexible enough** to deliver scale and custom targeting in the same campaign.

**Try dynamic creative** to reach audiences with messages that really matter in the moment.

**A sonic identity**, like a few-note hook or a melody, will ring your brand's bell for listeners every time they hear it.

**Measurement matters.** Audio attribution today is so much more than promo codes; tools like advanced pixels let you chart total campaign success.

### UP NEXT:

We peer into Audio's future, from connected cars and interactive ads to screenless shopping and cookie-less advertising. Let's hear what tomorrow's forecast sounds like.





# The Watch List

Audio of the future is coming. In this chapter, we share the trends shaping the landscape of listening.

## Chapter 4



# We've entered an era of liberated content.

## That freedom goes both ways –

It's easier than ever for consumers to search, discover, shop, and listen in on every kind of device... and almost as easy to create, share (and advertise on) a remarkable array of content.

**What does that mean for the future of Audio? Let's take a look at the trends on our radar.**

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10

## The Perfect Storm: Voice + the Cloud + 5G

Voice commands, the limitless power of the cloud, and 5G speed now work together to bring us even complex content in nanoseconds, turning information into action.

It starts with your voice. Say the word in your kitchen and bring milk and groceries to your door — no screen or keypad needed. The Internet of Things (IoT) connects us to our home, our car, and almost every interest imaginable. When you're low on milk, you can re-order with a simple sentence.

When the tread on your front-left tire is going bald, your car will alert you and find you the best deal on a new tire within a five-mile radius.



**When you mash up voice, 5G, and the cloud — with voice as the interface as opposed to a screen or a search engine — the world is your oyster.”**

**Tim Murphy**  
EVP, Corporate Business  
Development, Audacy

You can see the possibilities for marketers who embrace voice and the IoT to reach your customers when they need you, instantly answer their questions, and offer them frictionless experiences. 5G means your brand can help make customers better informed and improve their lives in countless ways — and they'll love you for it.





## Say What? Brands That Talk Back

Remember when Twitter and Instagram were growing, but brands weren't on board yet? That's where we are with smart speakers now. About 85% of brands still haven't embraced smart speakers, even though their customers are waiting for them there. Consumers want brands to speak up with the info and functionality they need, just as they do with a classic web search.

Today we can talk to voice assistants embedded in smartphones, speakers, TVs, wearables, and appliances, allowing us to speak to some of our favorite brands. And smart speakers as standalone voice assistant-enabled devices continue to fly off the shelves.

Brands like Sonos, Google, Amazon, Apple, Bose, and others are capitalizing on consumers' desire to have more than one smart speaker in their lives. By the end of 2021, 34% of homes will have three or more smart speakers.<sup>4</sup>

Music, weather, and dad jokes: Those were the early go-tos for smart speakers and their curious listeners. But today's voice users have more fun and get more done by calling up step-by-step recipes, getting product recommendations, and asking to crank up the air conditioning as they join a virtual wine tasting. Smart speakers aren't just a part of our lives: **They're becoming a way of life.**

4 Edison Research, Infinite Dial, 2021

## And for tomorrow's users? Still more Audio love.

Long-form chats with Alexa or Google Assistant will be common (think of Tide telling you, step-by-step, how to get the red wine stain out of your shirt after that virtual tasting). Better still for brands will be the rise of shoppable Audio.

**Leading brands are already using voice interaction to create fun, engaging campaigns:**



Get a guided whiskey tasting at home, hosted by the legendary master distillers Jimmy and Eddie Russell.



Hungry? Alexa shares three recipes that match the ingredients you have in your kitchen.



Anxiously awaiting your new order? Keds lets us track our orders as we keep an eye out for delivery trucks, all with just our voice.



## (Voice) Shop 'Til You Drop

Users know and love “add to my cart” behaviors already, so it’s no surprise that 20% of adults add to their shopping cart and 9% purchase products directly through smart speakers.<sup>5</sup>

Machine learning makes shopping by voice easier and chattier for all parts of the sales funnel. That includes searches, customer service, and the transaction itself. No wonder consumers have a higher opinion of voice-enabled ads than other ad types.

**Consumers who have come across voice ads find them to be...**

**38%**  
LESS INTRUSIVE

**39%**  
MORE ENGAGING

...than TV, print, online, and social media ads.<sup>6</sup> (Wow!)

5 eMarketer, What Activities Have US Smart Speaker Owners Done on Their Smart Speakers?, August 2021  
6 Adobe Consumers Find Voice Ads ‘Less Intrusive’ Than Others According to Adobe Report, Adweek, 2019



**The ability to layer in conversational commerce via smart speaker is something that we’re really excited about.”**

**Ken Lagana**

EVP, Digital Sales and Strategy, Audacy

## How voice interactions measure up

The data-driven insights gained from smart speaker interactions can be pretty cool, too. In addition to basic info like session totals and time spent, you can get metrics like:

- The phrases people use most often to find your brand
- How quickly people pick up the skills needed to work with your app
- Details on WHY people abandoned their session, not just when
- Activations across digital channels
- Incremental sales

## Digital Audio and podcasts can be shoppable, too

These screenless Audio exchanges don’t stop with smart speakers. Interactive Audio ads also work great through sound-enabled apps, putting digital radio and podcasts into play.

**U.S. voice commerce will grow to over \$80B annually by 2023**

Juniper Forecasts \$80 Billion in Voice Commerce in 2023, voicebot.ai, 2019

**Global smart speaker revenue will grow to \$35.5B by 2025**

statista.com

**These analytics are quite useful as you tweak and optimize your interactions with shoppers** (not to mention brand engagers). That’s one reason why we expect voice commerce to be the next major disruption for online retail. Increasingly, the digital shopper experience will look like this: Speak, buy, and wait for the doorbell to ring with your purchase — no scrolling or clicking needed.



# 4 C 1 3 F E A T U R E S

## Long-form Storytelling Is on the Rise

How are these changes in technology affecting content? Quite nicely, we're happy to report. New and reimagined formats are making more room for super-immersive stories. Tales that go directly to hearts and minds give brands exciting new options for brand ownership and product placement.



With C13Features, we will bring cinematic storytelling to the world in a brand-new experience--'movies for your ears.' We're executing an innovative and ambitious vision of excellence across all sides of production, with world-class creative partners and exceptionally talented actors. 'Treat' and 'Ghostwriter' will thrill listeners and leave them on the edge of their seats."

**Chris Corcoran**

Chief Content Officer, Cadence13  
and Executive Producer, C13Features



**Coming soon to a podcast near you:** C13Features is the new scripted audio movie division of Cadence13. With an ambitious vision of creating feature-length, one-episode, scripted audio movies with mainstream appeal, high production value, cinematic sound, top-level casting and character development, movie-like marketing campaigns, and unique distribution models, C13Features has a blockbuster-style creative approach geared towards the masses. Marketers have a thrilling opportunity to integrate their brands into these movie-like aural experiences.

### Treat



Written by Nathan Ballingrud with Babak Anvari and Lucan Toh of Two & Two Pictures, with Best Case Studios signed on to produce, "Treat" tells the story of a seemingly perfect American town that turns to a mysterious Piper to help it recover from social turmoil. When the town falls behind on its payment to the Piper, a trio of teenagers must unlock the secret of his powers.

### Ghostwriter



Written by Alix Sobler, "Ghostwriter" follows Mara's character Kate Michaels, a writer who is offered work ghostwriting a new novel about a mysterious killer. As she collaborates with the idiosyncratic billionaire behind the project, she finds herself growing dependent on him and sure that something isn't right. C13Features has partnered with Best Case Studios to produce the project.

## Cookies Crumbling

A lot of behind-the-scenes changes are coming to audience targeting and measurement. Privacy control rests more in the hands of users, thanks in part to Apple's iOS 14.5 update and Europe's GDPR rules. Chrome is putting an end to third-party cookies (albeit now delayed until 2023), which is a massive deal for digital advertisers. Brands are hankering to find effective ways to advertise in this shifting world order.

**But for Audio publishers like Audacy, it's not such a seismic shift.**

Why not? Because publishers like Audacy have millions of **first-party data** profiles ready for brands to activate, built on deep, authentic listener relationships groomed over many years. Our world has always been cookie-less because we tap into a robust, holistic identity graph that offers a clear view of consumer preferences and shopping habits without resorting to sneaky tracking codes. It works! And no one is trying to outlaw it, either.

Audacy will continue to lean into partnerships with leading data management platforms like LiveRamp, Neustar, and Quantcast to stay in the lead when it comes to audience segmentation and attribution.



**Savvy brands will continue to undertake new ways to measure consumer data from their first-party information. At Audacy, we're not worried about the changes on the horizon. Instead, we're excited about the future."**

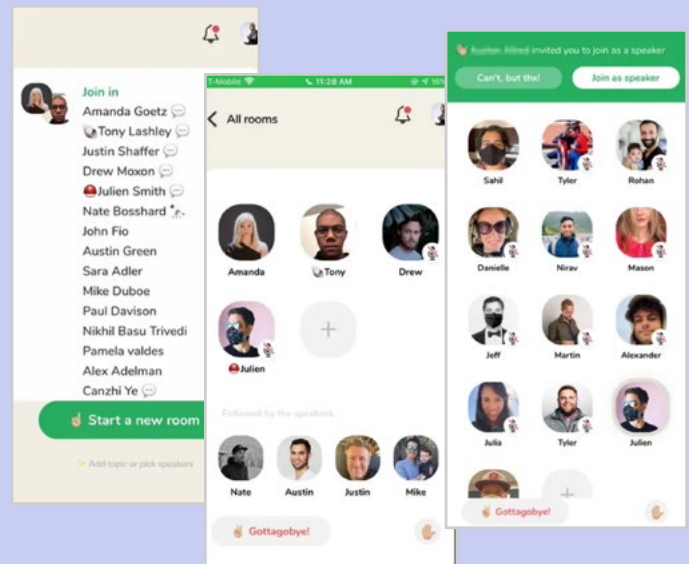
**Dan McKinney**, Vice President,  
Data & Analytics, Audacy

## The Sound of Social

Remember that screen fatigue we discussed in Chapter One? As if on cue, social Audio is taking off, making ears perk up and giving a rest to weary eyes.

Social Audio is like having an all-in-one town square, water cooler, and auditorium on your phone — except you access it with your voice and ears, not your eyes. You can get the gang together for a gabfest about the latest hit movie, meet stars during celeb-hosted chats, and ask real-time questions to a panel of experts during a convention.

Social giants like Twitter and Facebook have been in on the game for a while, along with new Audio kids on the block like Clubhouse. Features like Twitter Spaces and Facebook Live Audio Rooms are also striving to seize the moment.



Clubhouse interface (source: medium.com)

The real testament to Audio's staying power is the way people turn to it when they crave those most human of experiences: Community and connection. Today's listeners are also participants, sharing their own voices and creating their own new Audio communities. Social Audio platforms are still discovering what works best for users and what monetization opportunities may surface down the road. We're keeping an eye on this growing social media category to see where and how brands can fit in and engage with their audiences. We suggest you keep an ear to the ground, too.



## Content Still Rules

Great content is great content, whether it comes from your cheery drive-time radio host, a favorite whodunit podcast, or a helpful brand with a right-on-time solution.

Top-quality Audio can be produced almost anywhere, which is why a world of new content creators is changing listener habits and pushing into new territory. That's also a good move for brands, which can play with new Audio formats and technologies without breaking the budget.

Over time, the how and where of devices, streams, and platforms will matter less and less. Content will be THE focus, consumed by eager audiences in more ways than we can dream up. That leaves marketers with a wonderful challenge: To keep up with fast-moving listeners and deliver the brand messages that serve them well.

Audacy delivers the beloved influencers and local hosts who rock listeners' worlds every day.

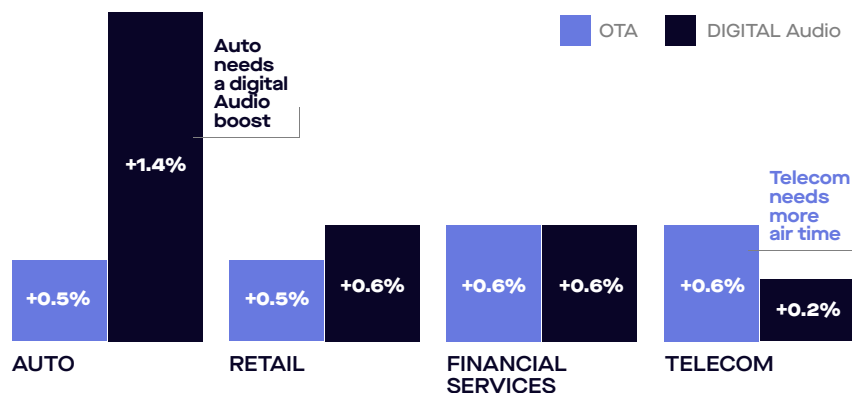
# Audio Means Business

## So, have you switched up your media strategy to ride the sonic wave?

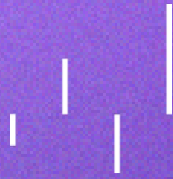
As audio advertisers have seen time and time again, audio drives performance like no other medium. It converts listeners to customers and consistently overperforms in ROAS. In our fast-changing aural landscape, podcasts and other streaming audio are rising fast, even while traditional, local radio holds firm with trusted hosts from coast to coast.

That's why more and more brands are turning to audio not just to reach their audiences but to engage with them, and transform them into active and loyal customers.

Audacy delivers beloved influencers and local hosts who rock listeners' worlds every day. Those voices and their programming deliver the goods: Scale, custom targeting, and measurable results that help your campaign meet and beat aggressive KPIs.



Source: Audio Amplification: The Return on Ad Spend Study, Neustar, May 2021.



## THE BOTTOM LINE FOR BRANDS

**Voice + Cloud + 5G** is creating new worlds of opportunities for your brand through voice commands, interactive devices, and frictionless commerce.

**Smart speakers** are everywhere. Roughly 34% of homes will have three or more by the end of 2021.

**Shopping by voice** is growing. Voice commerce will be an \$80B business in America by 2023.

**Cookies are crumbling.** As privacy controls and third-party cookies evolve, advertisers are looking to platforms rich in first-party data, audience targeting, and identity mapping... in other words, **Audio!**