



The Podcast Production Business

Run the shows that busy experts cannot run themselves. Editing is the commodity; strategy and clips are the margin.

\$125-765

START LEAN

14-30 days

FIRST DOLLAR

75-85%

TYPICAL MARGIN

Is this your business?

Every consultant, coach, and B2B company wants a podcast, and almost none of them want the eleven hours of work that follow each recording. Podcast production turns that gap into \$500-2,000 monthly retainers per show: predictable, batchable, fully remote. The secret the editing freelancers miss is that the edit is the cheapest part of the job. Clients pay premium rates for the system around it: strategy, clips, publishing, and the consistency that keeps a show alive.

\$125-765

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$1,000-2,500

STANDARD BUILD

14-30 days

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

75-85%

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Yes, fully

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes, entirely

HOME-BASED

BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE CRAFTSMAN

THE STORYTELLER

2/5 difficulty

THE HONEST FIT TEST

You will spend your days inside other people's voices: cutting rambles, chasing guests, writing show notes for episodes you did not choose. If you need the microphone yourself, start a show, not a studio. If you like production systems, can hear a conversation's best 60 seconds on the first pass, and find shipping someone else's episode on time genuinely satisfying, this business stacks beautifully.

Who pays, and why now.

Podcasting crossed from hobby to business channel years ago: experts use shows to build authority, B2B companies use them to start conversations with prospects they could never cold-call, and every episode doubles as a content factory for clips, newsletters, and posts. The hosts are usually busy professionals whose hourly value makes editing absurd. An episode that takes them one hour to record takes eight to eleven hours to produce properly. That arithmetic is the entire business.

The defining disease of the medium is podfade: most shows die within their first dozen episodes, not from lack of talent but from the production grind nobody warned the host about. This is your real product. You are not selling edits; you are selling the system that gets episode 30 published with the same polish as episode 3. The client who understands they are buying consistency stays for years, because quitting you means quitting the show.

Know where the money sits. Solo experts and coaches pay \$500-1,500 a month and feel it. B2B companies running branded podcasts pay \$2,000-5,000 a month and book it to marketing without blinking, because one client sourced from a guest seat pays for the year. The work is nearly identical. The difference is who signs the invoice, which makes 'who do I serve' the highest-leverage decision in this playbook.

The honest constraint: raw editing is a global commodity, with overseas editors charging \$50 an episode and AI tools compressing the gap further. Compete there and you will race to the bottom with the whole planet. The margin lives up the stack: positioning and strategy, guest coordination, clip packages that feed the host's social channels, and analytics that prove the show is working. Editing is the ticket in the door, never the business.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
Coaches, consultants, and experts	\$800-1,500/mo per show	Authority, inbound leads, and zero hours in an editing app
B2B companies (branded shows)	\$2,000-5,000/mo	Pipeline conversations with guests who are prospects
Professional practices (legal, financial, medical)	\$500-1,200/mo	Trust content that compounds and stays compliant
Burned-out existing podcasters	\$500-1,000/mo	Their Sunday nights back before they podfade

PRODUCTION TIME PER POLISHED EPISODE

8-11 hours

Edit, mix, show notes, clips, artwork, scheduling, publishing: every weekly show generates a part-time job the host never applied for. You are selling those hours back to someone whose time bills at \$200-500. Framed that way, a \$1,250 retainer is not a cost; it is a raise.

Every dollar, before you spend it.

Clients record on their own gear, remote platforms capture the audio, and the production stack is software you rent for less than a gym membership. No studio buildout, ever: your product is the system, not the room.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
Laptop you already own	The whole studio; modern editing tools run in a browser	\$0
Editing software (Descript or similar)	Text-based editing cut production time in half; learn it deeply	\$15-50/mo
Remote recording platform (Riverside or similar)	Studio-quality capture for clients anywhere; you run the booth	\$15-30/mo
Podcast hosting account	Often on the client's card; yours exists for demos and your own feed	\$0-20/mo
LLC + business license	Your liability wall. See the legal page	\$50-500
Professional liability (E&O) insurance	You publish on someone else's behalf; cover the mistakes	\$25-50/mo
One-page site + domain	Three before-and-after audio clips, one button	\$20-100
Business bank account + bookkeeping app	Separate money from day one; future-you says thanks	\$0-15/mo
Lean total		\$125-765 all-in

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
Clip and caption tooling	Short video clips are the highest-margin deliverable in the stack	\$15-40/mo
Decent mic + interface for your own show	Your feed is your demo reel; sound like the product	\$150-300
Licensed music library (Artlist or similar)	Intros and beds without copyright strikes; never lift tracks	\$10-30/mo
Project management + client portal	Episode pipelines, approval links, and due dates clients can see	\$20-50/mo

THE RULE

Do not build a studio, buy a \$2,000 interface, or take a \$1,500 'podcast agency' course before client three. Hosts record remotely on gear they already own, and your margin lives in workflow, not hardware. The flashy studio is the trade's version of the financed trailer rig.

Clean from day one.

Podcast production looks legally sleepy until you remember you are publishing recorded conversations in public, set to music, on someone else's behalf. The risks are specific and cheap to prevent: consent, licensing, ownership, and scope.

- Form your LLC:** File in your home state, get the EIN free at irs.gov, open the business bank account. THE LAUNCHPAD Module Three walks every step.
- Production agreement with hard scope:** Episodes per month, turnaround time, revision limits (two rounds), raw-file retention period, and a 30-day out for both sides. 'One quick re-edit' is how a \$1,200 retainer becomes a \$600 one.
- IP and ownership on payment:** The client owns the show, the feed, the masters, and the clips once paid; you keep portfolio rights and your templates. The feed lives in their hosting account from day one: never make a client ask you for their own show.
- Guest releases, every guest, every time:** A standard release covering recording consent, usage in the episode and clips, and promotion. Several states require all-party consent to record; the release makes the question disappear before it exists.
- Music and asset licensing:** Intro music, beds, and stock assets licensed through your subscription accounts, documented per show. Unlicensed audio gets episodes muted, demonetized, or struck, and the strike lands on your client's brand.
- Confidentiality:** Raw tape is full of pre-edit candor: unreleased launches, names, numbers, and the sentence the guest asked you to cut. A confidentiality clause, and the habit of treating raw audio like medical records, makes serious clients trust you.
- Editorial liability basics:** You shape what ships. Flag legally spicy guest claims (defamation, medical or financial advice, competitor accusations) to the client in writing and let them decide. You are the producer, not the publisher of record: keep it that way on paper.

INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

Professional liability (E&O) at \$25-50 a month is the core policy: a published episode that should have been held, a missed correction, or a licensing miss are the realistic claims. General liability only matters if you ever record on location; cyber coverage can wait until you hold logins for a dozen client accounts.

WATCH FOR

The raw-file dispute. Months after a contract ends, a client will ask for raw recordings you deleted, or a guest will demand an episode come down. Set a retention window in the contract (90 days is standard), archive what you promised, and document takedown rights up front. Five lines of contract language beats every awkward email thread it prevents.

Requirements vary by state and city. Verify with your state, city clerk, and a licensed professional. Education, not legal advice.

Three doors. Real numbers.

Price by the month per show, not by the episode, and anchor with the middle door. Per-episode pricing invites comparison with \$50 overseas edits; monthly production makes you infrastructure. The ladder runs from edit desk to growth engine, and the margin climbs with every rung above the edit.

DOOR ONE	DOOR TWO RECOMMEND	DOOR THREE
<p>The Edit Desk</p> <p>\$500-750/mo <small>starter</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 4 episodes edited, mixed, and mastered ◆ Show notes and titles written for search ◆ Publishing and scheduling handled ◆ 48-72 hour turnaround per episode 	<p>The Full Production</p> <p>\$1,200-1,500/mo</p> <p>most-booked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Everything in The Edit Desk ◆ 8-12 captioned clips per month for social ◆ Guest coordination: booking, prep sheets, releases ◆ Episode artwork and promo graphics ◆ Monthly download and growth report 	<p>The Growth Show</p> <p>\$1,800-2,500/mo</p> <p>premium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Everything in The Full Production, video edit included ◆ Quarterly content strategy session ◆ Guest outreach pipeline run for the host ◆ Newsletter and blog drafts from each episode ◆ Priority turnaround and launch-week standby

PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Floor: \$500 a month per show. Below that you are an overseas editor with domestic rent.
- The launch package (\$1,500-2,500 one-time: positioning, naming, artwork, trailer, first three episodes) is the front door for new shows, and it feeds every retainer tier.
- B2B branded shows pay 2-4x what solo experts pay for nearly identical work. Hunt them deliberately.
- Sell quarterly commitments: shows need 12 episodes to find their footing, and so does your case study.
- Clips are priced as part of the package, never given away: they are the deliverable clients actually show their friends.

THE UPSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

The clip engine. Hosts judge the show by downloads, but they feel famous from clips, and clips are what their audience actually sees. Adding a video tier or doubling the clip package lifts a retainer 30-50% on workflow you have already templated. The edit keeps the client; the clips get you the referral.

Names, not strategies.

The portfolio paradox is loud here: hosts can hear quality instantly, and you have no episodes to play them. So manufacture a body of work in 30 days: your own micro-show as the demo reel, founding clients priced for proof, and the podfade graveyard as your warmest lead list.

1 Your own micro-show first

Produce a five-episode show in your niche: tight edit, clean mix, clips, notes, artwork. It is your demo reel, your process rehearsal, and your answer to 'what have you produced?' Nobody asks if the client list behind it was paid.

2 Two founding shows at half rate

Offer two hosts 90 days of Full Production at 50% in exchange for a testimonial, a case study, and before-and-after rights. Discounted excellence buys a portfolio; free work buys clients who value it at exactly that.

3 The podfade graveyard

Search your niche for shows that stopped publishing two to six months ago with decent back catalogs. The feed is public, the guilt is real, and 'I can have you back live in two weeks without you touching an editing app' is the easiest yes in the medium.

4 Experts already making content

The LinkedIn writer, the YouTuber, the newsletter author in your niche: they have audience, opinions, and no time. A podcast is the content they already make, repackaged. Pitch the system, not the medium.

5 B2B companies in one vertical

Pick an industry and pitch the branded-show play: interview their dream clients as guests. One marketing director who gets it is worth four solo hosts, and the budget conversation is calmer at every step.

THE EXACT ASK

"Hi [name], I produce podcasts for [niche] experts. I noticed [show] has not published since [month], and your back catalog is genuinely good: episode [number] on [topic] still holds up. The grind that stalled the show is exactly what I take over: editing, clips, notes, publishing, the whole pipeline, you just record. I am taking two founding shows this quarter at half my normal rate while I build my public case studies. Want me to send a 90-second sample of what your last episode would sound and look like with full production behind it?"

THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

Two founding shows at 50% off Full Production for 90 days, in exchange for a testimonial, a written case study, and before-and-after rights to the audio and the download numbers. Day 91 they convert to full rate or roll off, and founding pricing retires publicly. Twelve published episodes with your name in the credits is the real payment.

Owned, earned, then paid.

Your marketing is audible: every episode you produce is a portfolio piece with a credits line. The engine is your own feed, clip-driven proof, and relationships in the rooms where hosts and marketing directors already gather. Paid ads make no sense in a business this referral-driven.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
Your own show	The demo reel that proves the product while building your niche authority	Publish on schedule, every week, produced to the standard you sell
Before-and-after audio clips	Thirty seconds of raw-versus-produced is the niche's half-washed driveway	Post one transformation clip per week on LinkedIn and your site
LinkedIn for B2B shows	Marketing directors who budget \$3,000 retainers live there	Publish build logs and client clips; comment usefully on niche marketing posts
Guest-side referrals	Every produced episode parades your work in front of a guest with an audience	Send every guest their clip package with your credit; one ask per show per quarter
Podcast and creator communities	Hosts gather to complain about editing; be the answer in the room	Join two communities; answer production questions generously, pitch never

FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- Raw vs. produced: 30 seconds of the same episode, before and after (the niche's best performer)
- What podcast production actually costs in 2026, and when you should not start a show
- Why most podcasts die by episode 12, and the system that prevents it
- One episode, ten assets: how a single recording feeds a month of content
- The branded podcast play: how B2B companies turn guest seats into pipeline

THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask at the monthly report, when the download graph and the clip reel are on screen: 'Episode 12 just outperformed your launch week. Would you share that in a review or a LinkedIn recommendation? I'll draft two sentences you can edit.' Host testimonials carry unusual weight because every prospect knows exactly how hard consistency is; ten of them make you the default in your niche.

One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: what one average show actually nets per month, and what a steady solo book of six shows looks like. These use the middle door at \$1,250 and real tool costs. No 'passive podcast empire' math.

ONE UNIT: ONE SHOW MONTH AT \$1,250	AMOUNT	A WORKING MONTH: SOLO, 6 SHOWS (STEADY STATE)	AMOUNT
Revenue	\$1,250	Revenue (mixed tiers)	\$7,800
Software share (editing, recording, clips)	-\$45	Software stack (editing, clips, music, portal)	-\$200
Payment processing (2.9%)	-\$36	Subcontract editor (overflow)	-\$500
Insurance + overhead share	-\$35	Insurance, phone, internet share	-\$160
Gross profit (12-15 hrs of batched work)	\$1,134	Marketing (communities, site, own show)	-\$130
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$306	Pre-tax profit	\$6,810
Yours, per show month	\$828	Tax reserve (27%)	-\$1,839
		Owner take-home	\$4,971

BREAK-EVEN

1 show

One founding retainer covers the entire lean startup cost in its first month, and your own demo show costs hours, not dollars. The constraint in this business has never been capital or even clients: it is workflow discipline, because six shows a month is a factory, and factories run on checklists.

Illustrative figures at typical market rates; your market, prices, and costs will differ. Run YOUR numbers in the One-Page P&L from THE LAUNCHPAD, Module Six. Remember the 25-30% tax reserve on every dollar of profit.

Pre-decided, so motivation is never consulted.

WEEK ONE: FOUNDATIONS

- LLC filed, EIN issued, business bank account open
- E&O insurance bound; certificate saved
- Editing and recording stack chosen and learned
- Niche chosen; your micro-show planned and episode one cut
- Production agreement finalized: scope, ownership, retention

WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- Micro-show episodes 2-4 produced; feed live
- Podfade list of 10 stalled shows in your niche built
- Two sample re-productions cut from public episodes
- Founding offer pitched to 5 warm contacts
- Episode pipeline checklist documented end to end

WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- First founding show signed; recording calendar set
- First client episode produced: edit, notes, clips, publish
- Guest release and prep-sheet templates in use
- Second founding show closed or pipeline at 10 warm
- First before-and-after clip posted publicly

WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- First monthly report delivered: downloads + clip reel
- Testimonial and referral asked at the report
- Launch package productized and priced for new shows
- Founding pricing publicly retired or final spot announced
- Month-one P&L done; pick one growth lever for month two

DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 2 founding shows in production, your own feed live, and 5+ warm conversations. Yellow: one show and silence: your samples are too generic, so cut a re-production of a specific prospect's own episode and re-run week two. Red: zero clients despite 25+ real asks: your proof is not audible enough. Spend two weeks making the micro-show undeniable, post three transformation clips, then return with sound instead of promises.

How this business fails, and how it grows.

THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✕ **Competing with \$50 edits**
Raw editing is a global commodity and AI is compressing it further. If your pitch is 'I edit podcasts,' you have entered a price war you cannot win. Sell the system: strategy, clips, publishing, consistency.

- ✕ **Per-episode pricing**
Pricing by the episode invites line-item comparison and feast-famine months. Monthly production retainers make you infrastructure, smooth your income, and quietly include the work clients forget to count.

- ✕ **No scope, endless re-edits**
'Can you cut one more thing' multiplied by four episodes a month will eat a retainer alive. Two revision rounds in writing, extra rounds billed. The fence makes the friendship.

- ✕ **Taking shows with no reason to exist**
A host with no niche, no goal, and no audience plan will podfade no matter how good your edit is, and the churn lands on your revenue. Ask 'what is this show for?' before quoting; decline vanity projects kindly.

- ✕ **Skipping releases and licensing**
An angry guest, an all-party consent state, or one lifted music bed can take down a whole catalog. The boring paperwork takes minutes per episode and prevents the only disasters this business produces.

THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 **The niche network**
Own one industry's shows: the production studio for real estate, for law, for fitness. One booking pipeline, shared guest pools, templated formats, and referrals that travel through the industry's own conferences.

- 2 **The B2B studio**
Move the book toward branded company shows at \$2,500-5,000 a month: strategy-heavy, budget-stable, and judged on pipeline instead of downloads. Six B2B shows out-earn fifteen solo hosts with half the client management.

- 3 **The pod of pods**
Contract editors handle the cut from your checklists; you keep strategy, client calls, and quality. Fifteen shows, three contractors, and your week becomes reviews and relationships. The studio, without the studio.

YOUR FIRST HIRE

A contract editor at show five or six, taking the first-pass cut and caption work from your documented pipeline. Editing is the most templatable third of your week, which makes it the correct first delegation, and it is your systems test: if your episode checklist cannot get a stranger to 90% of your cut, the factory is still in your head, and a business in your head is a job.

THE STAIRCASE CONTINUES

The playbook is the map. The machine is waiting.

Everything this playbook describes, Epic Advisory Group can build with you: the brand, the cinematic website, the entity, the engine. Describe your idea to the Launch Engine and see your business real in about sixty seconds, free.

- The Launch Engine: your idea, built free, in about a minute
- THE ASCENT: Founder Edition: the eight-module course
- Launch-in-a-Box: entity, brand, site, and first campaign, one flat price
- Growth, capital readiness, and the path to the public markets

"There is no right age. There is only the decision."



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