

Podcast Pulse

2026

2026

MADE FOR THE MOMENT

2026



Acast

A word from Greg Glenday, **CEO, Acast**

The podcast industry is obsessed with formats and platforms. Audio here, video there, social somewhere else: all being compared and contrasted, rallied for or railed against.

Audiences don't think that way. They're invested in the creators they love, and they support them wherever they go. **Nine in ten** follow their favorite podcasters somewhere beyond the podcast itself. What they pick is simply whatever fits the moment or mood they're in.

The morning run. The busy train. The couch at the end of the day. Those twenty minutes of peace before bed. Podcasting might show up in any of these, all of them, or just one.

Podcasting is fluid. The platforms and formats are only the container. Fans have always known this: **two thirds** of American podcast consumers have started an episode in one format and finished it in another, and **three quarters** of them changed apps or platforms mid-story to do it.

Same fan. Same creators. Different mindsets, and different things a brand can usefully do in each.

What's new in 2026 is how different those moments turn out to be. We went deep on four of them here. There are more. These are the four where the data was loudest, and where the distance between one moment and the next tells a brand the most.

What holds across all of them is the thing podcasting has that almost nothing else does. People carry it into parts of the day where other media can't follow. And they go looking for it: **seven in ten** podcast plays are deliberately chosen.

That's the difference between attention you muscle your way into and attention you earn.

Meet a fan in one moment and you've met part of their day. Meet them across several and you've met the whole person.

This year's Podcast Pulse maps those moments, what happens inside each one, and what a brand gets for showing up.



:01 ↘ **The format argument is over**

Audiences settled the audio versus video question by not caring.
What replaced it is a question about moments.

:02 ↘ **Meet the moments**

Where each one happens, what people do inside it,
and what a brand gets for showing up.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

:03 ↘ **True in every moment**

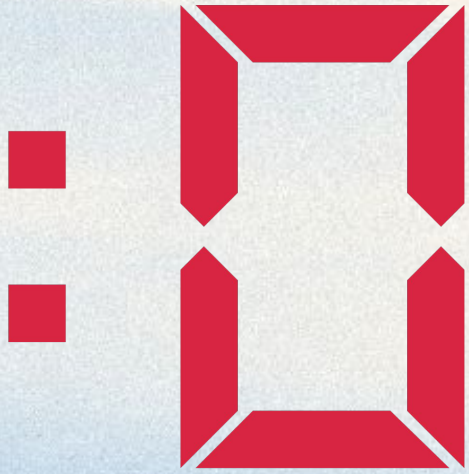
Trust, influence, humanity and value.
The things that hold wherever a fan happens to be.

:04 ↘ **Your brand in the moment**

What a moment returns, and why covering multiple moments
beats repeating inside one.

:05 ↘ **Why Acast**

Access a creator's entire influence ecosystem

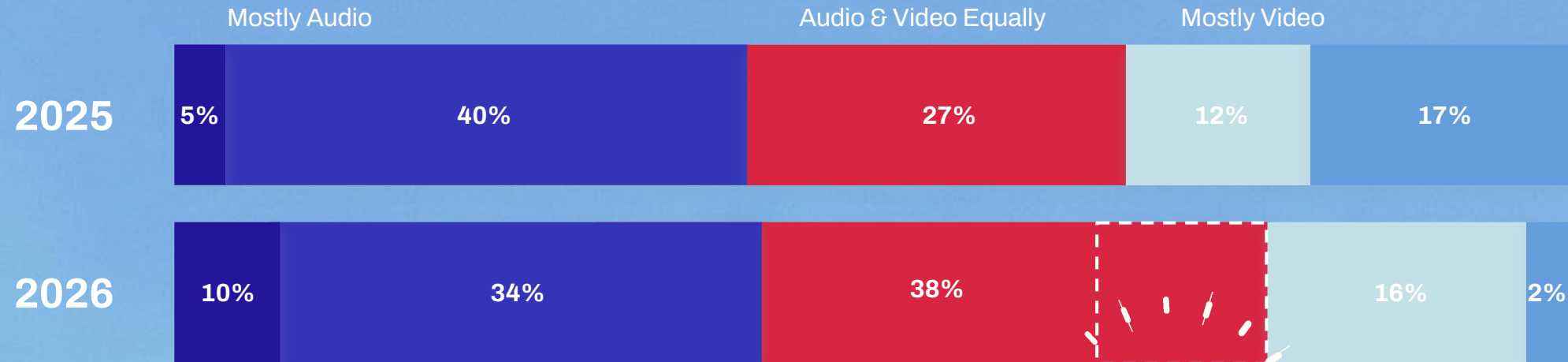


The **format** argument is over

Podcasting has an identity crisis that only the industry seems worried about. Questioning whether video or clips count, or if it's still a podcast without an RSS feed.

Audiences settled this a while ago by simply not caring.

Listen or watch? Increasingly, **it's both**



+11

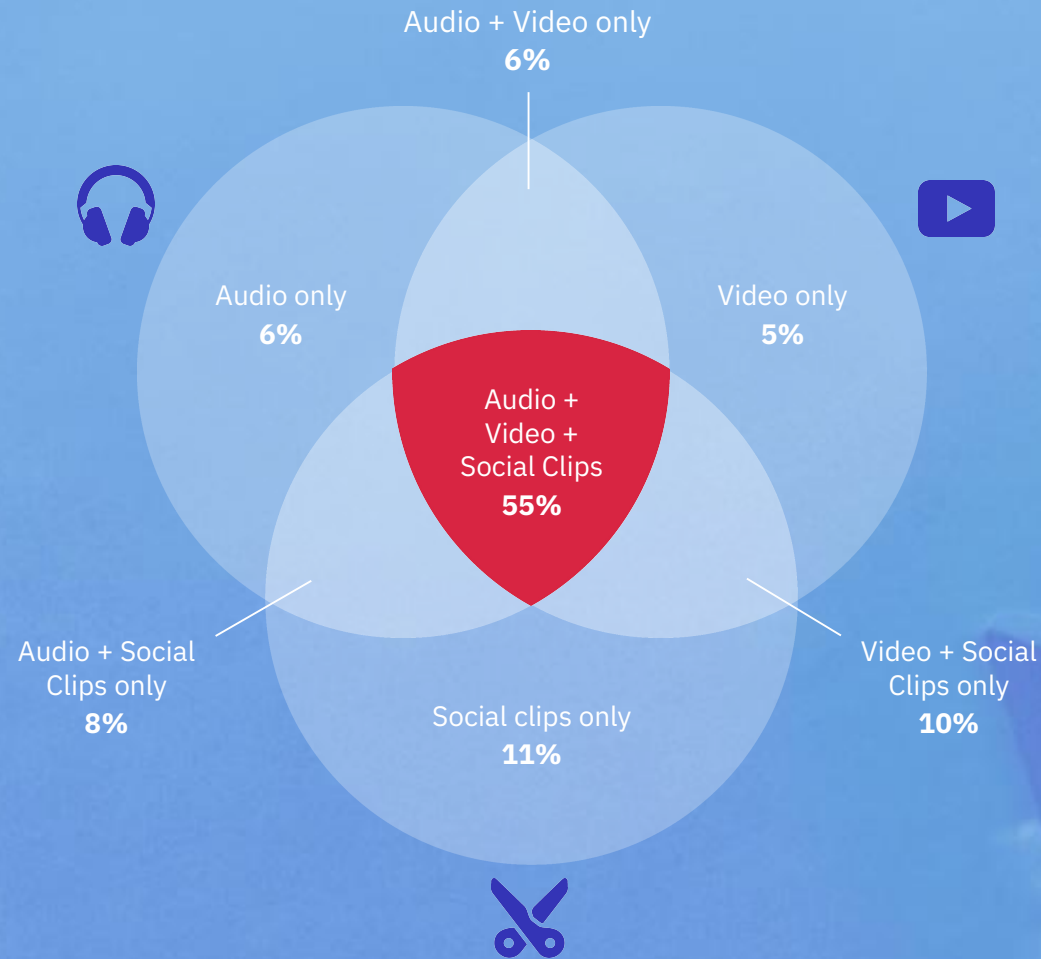
88%

now consume both audio and video, up from 78% last year

Why this matters

The extremes of “audio-only” and “video-only” are shrinking. Today’s audiences demand a mixed-format experience – making both channels equally essential for creators to prioritise.

78% of fans consume podcasts across at least **two formats**



Weekly Podcast Consumers Across Audio, Video & Social Clips



And there's still plenty of headroom for **growth**

Over the next few years, around half of global podcast listeners plan to consume even more podcasts across every format.

It's clear that podcasting's flexibility gives fans more choice and more ways to spend time with the storytellers they love.

49%

expect to **listen** to podcasts more often



48%

expect to **watch** more video podcasts



47%

expect to consume more **podcast clips**



The story travels, and so does the listener

63%

have started a podcast in one
format and finished it in another

75%

of them switched app
or platform to do it

WHY THEY SWITCH

35%

Convenience

34%

Got more interested
in the episode

26%

Moved from active
time to relaxed time

Why this matters

Podcasting lets fans follow the creators they love wherever the moment takes them. That's what a medium looks like when the audience, not the platform, decides how it gets consumed.



Turn Video Off and On
Switch between watching and listening
at any moment.

0:04

Turn Video Off

1x

15

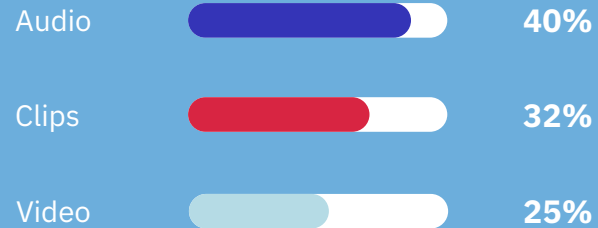


30

Audio owns the morning. Video owns the night. Clips own the lunch hour.



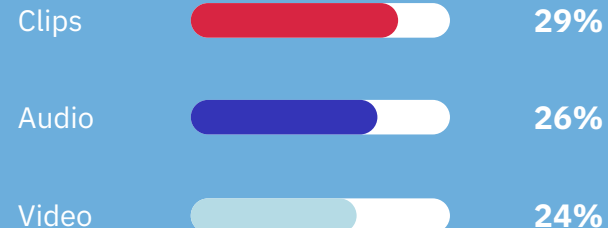
MORNING



Audio is comparatively strongest earlier in the day.



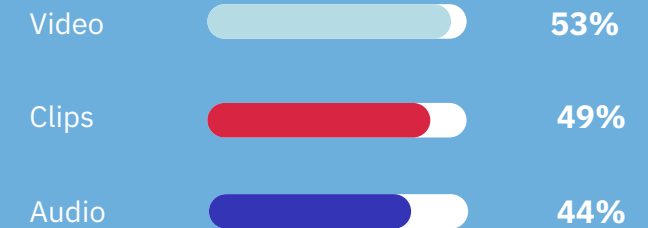
MIDDAY



Clips take the lunch hour from both long formats.



EVENING



It flips after dark. The screen comes back.

Different **moments** call for different **genres**

Why this matters

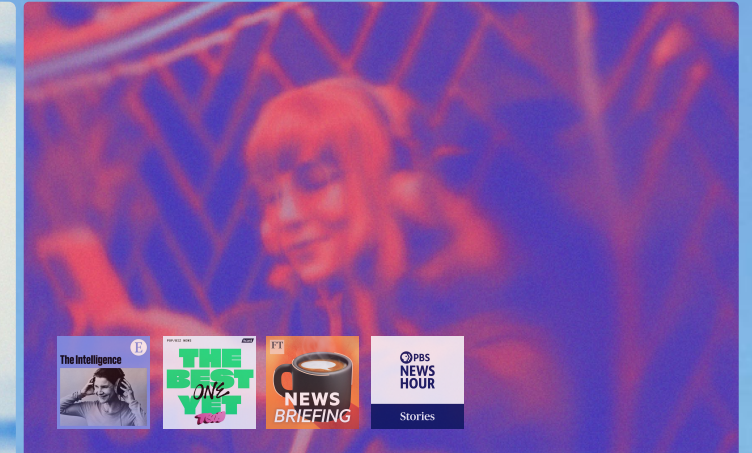
What we're doing shapes what we're most likely to listen to.

For advertisers, that offers a contextual opportunity to target audiences that are in the activity that's relevant to your brand. Or layer in contextual language in your ad creative.



While exercising

Advice and self-help **382 index**



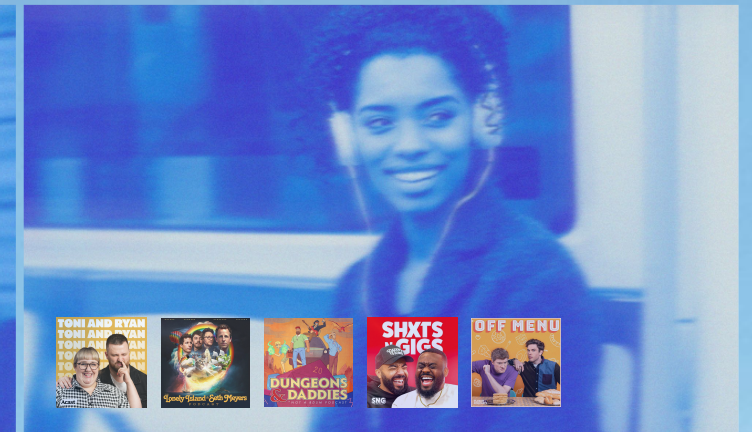
While scrolling

News and politics **254 index**



While working or studying

History **220 index**



While on public transportation Comedy **221 index**



Meet the **moments**

If the format isn't what people are choosing, something else is. It's the moment they're in. What their hands are doing, what their eyes are free for, and who else is in the room.

There are more than four. These are the four where the data was loudest, and where the distance between one moment and the next tells a brand the most.

Meet the moments, meet the **whole person**

Nobody's mix is the same. Buy one moment and you meet part of a day. Buy across them and you meet the whole person.



LIVE | Excited, present, communal

Where? The venue, the tour, the festival

What a brand gets here:

Co-creation. Turn fans into advocates.



COMPANION | Present, personal, one to one

Where? The run, the drive, the kitchen

What a brand gets here:

The voice in their ears. Trust built through repetition.

SETTLED | Relaxed, visual, often shared

Where? The sofa, the big screen

What a brand gets here:

A room, not a person. With room to show, not just tell.

SCROLL | Fast, visual, low commitment

Where? The gap between things

What a brand gets here:

Discovery. Priming everything that comes later.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

The moment screens **can't reach.**

SHARE OF ALL PODCAST FANS WHO WOULD CHOOSE AUDIO, BY SITUATION



29%

say podcasts replace
music streaming

More than 1 in 4

say podcasts
replace radio (27%)

► THE MINDSET

Present, personal, one to one.

Hands on the wheel, hands in the dough,
audio wins during moments a screen can't go.

The only moment where the medium itself is
described as company. Not content consumed
in the background, but a voice that makes a
solitary hour better.

It is also the moment brands find hardest
to buy anywhere else, because nothing else
follows a person into it.

COMPANION

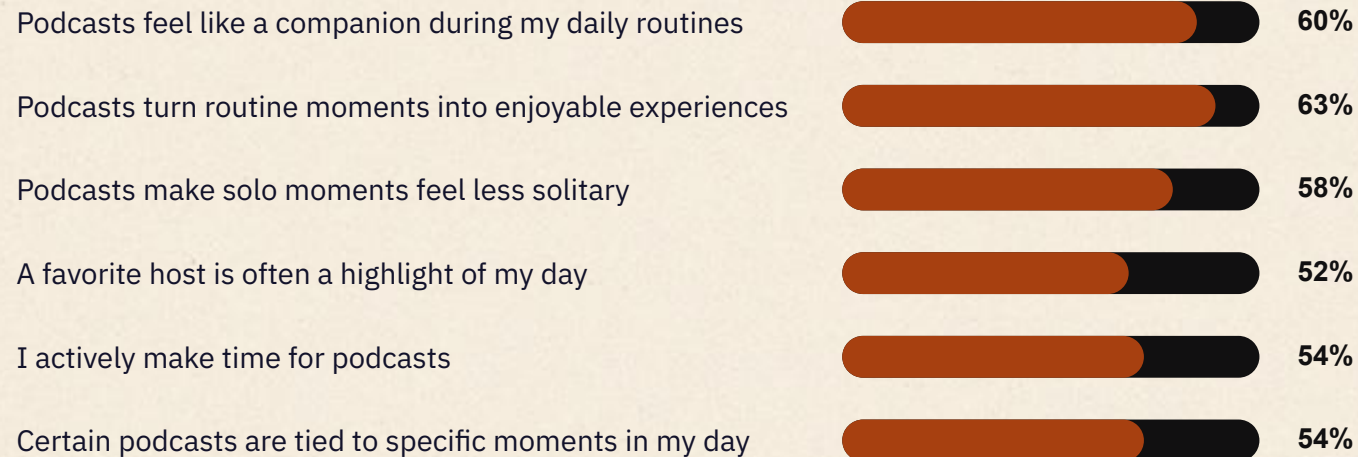
SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Why we reach for podcasts in our day

AGREEMENT AMONG PEOPLE WHO LISTEN DURING OTHER ACTIVITIES



COMPANION

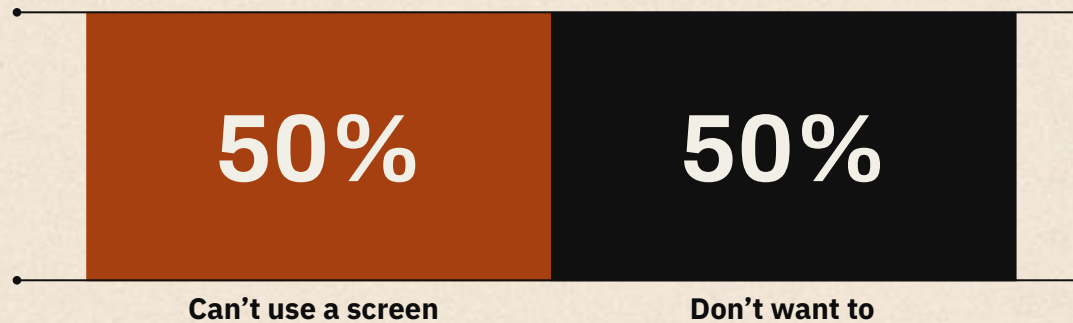
SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Half of audio listening is a **preference**, not a constraint

CAN'T USE A SCREEN vs DON'T WANT TO



Among people who mostly listen but sometimes watch, the split is even. Half of audio consumption is an active choice.



WHY AUDIO WINS THE MOMENT



Audio podcasting isn't going anywhere. It serves a very real and important purpose in audiences' daily routines, where a screen is either unavailable or simply unwanted.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Nothing to click. But they still **go looking**

WHAT AUDIO LISTENERS HAVE ACTUALLY DONE

34%

Searched for something a host mentioned

30%

Looked at a brand's website

25%

Made a purchase from a brand

27%

Found a new favorite brand

33%

Talked to friends or family about it



WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BRANDS

There's no link in an audio ad, no thumbnail, no product on screen. But **81%** have taken an action from listening to an audio-only podcast.

An audio host-read remains one of the most authentic and trusted ad buys available to brands.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Podcasting goes **Prime Time**

SHARE OF ALL PODCAST FANS WHO WOULD CHOOSE VIDEO, BY SITUATION



▶ THE MINDSET

Relaxed, visual, often shared.

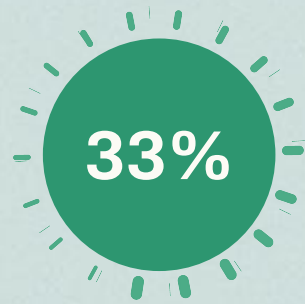
Settled is the moment where the audience is sitting still, fully focused on the content, and frequently not alone.

Video is an expansion of podcasting, welcoming new audiences and giving existing fans new ways to spend time with their favorite creators.

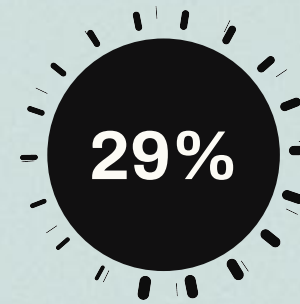
It's the closest podcasting gets to appointment viewing television, and it behaves accordingly.



of video watchers
consume in the
evening



watch with other
people often or
almost every day



watch podcasts
on a connected TV

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Video podcasts are taking a bigger slice of **screen time**

WHAT VIDEO PODCASTS REPLACE

39%

Other YouTube content

29%

Social scrolling

33%

Live and cable TV

30%

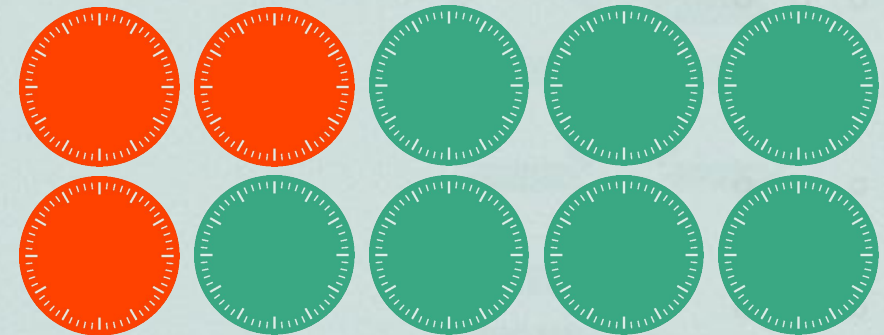
Streaming shows



WHY THIS MATTERS

People are swapping traditional television and streaming content for video podcasts, treating creator-led shows like prime time viewing.

With **one in five** people watching podcasts on their TV screen, your message moves out of headphones and into living rooms. You gain undivided, high-attention engagement from audiences who choose to spend more time with their favorite creators.



3 in 10

consume more podcast content on a TV than a year ago. Connected TV is the second-fastest growing podcast device (30%), behind the smartphone at 50%.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

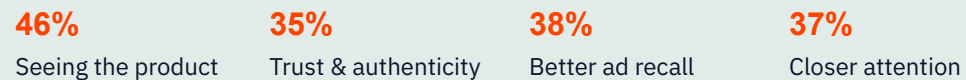
LIVE

Video expands opportunities for **podcast advertisers**

A VIDEO PODCAST AD MAKES ME MORE LIKELY TO



WHAT DRIVES IT



Reach a room, not just an individual

The bigger the screen, the more people in front of it.

55%

co-view podcasts on a connected TV



WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BRANDS

Audio is typically one voice for one set of ears, by design. The Settled moment is the only one where a sponsor reaches a living room. Same creator, same episode, more people in front of it.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Podcasting's **discovery** engine

HOW PEOPLE HEAR ABOUT NEW SHOWS

→ The clip has overtaken the personal recommendation



▶ THE MINDSET

Fast, visual, low commitment.

It arrives on your feed, and either it lands or it doesn't. If it does, that's a new fan gained for a creator.

For brands, it's the widest way into a creator's audience and beyond, adding reach far beyond the episode itself.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Podcast fans follow creators **everywhere**



88% follow podcast creators somewhere other than the podcast itself

 **Nearly half** (43%) expect to follow creators across more platforms in the next few years

WHERE PEOPLE FOLLOW PODCAST CREATORS, OUTSIDE THE PODCAST



▶ WHY THIS MATTERS

Podcast audiences don't stop at the podcast feed, they follow creators *everywhere*.

With nearly nine out of 10 listeners connecting on platforms like YouTube and Instagram, podcast partnerships offer a built-in omnichannel multiplier.

Meeting fans across their expanding media ecosystem deepens brand recall, builds trust, and turns single ad placements into multi-touchpoint commercial impact.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Acast podcasts & creators have
3.75 billion followers across social networks,
an increase of 41% from **2.66 billion in 2025**

Source: Podchaser Analysis, Q2 2025 vs. Q3 2026



Acast

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Extend your reach, and boost recall with **social extensions**

29%

take most notice of a brand
when they meet it across
both podcasts and social clips

And social drives **action**

27%

of podcast clips viewers followed the brand on social

32%

searched for something a host mentioned



WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BRANDS

The Scroll moment is where credibility gets established, so that everything after it lands faster.

Buy it for reach and for what it does to the moments that follow.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

The moment fans **buy a ticket to be in**



+80%

Increase in live podcast event attendance since 2024 in the USA (jumping from 20% to 36% of listeners in 2026)

► WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BRANDS

Excited, present, communal.

Out of devices and onto the stage, where creators co-create the night in real time with their audience. That shared room is where a listener turns into a lifelong advocate.

For brands, it is the most immersive way to step into a creator ecosystem, turning real-world energy into deep trust that carries far beyond the venue.

45% say live podcasts strengthen their connection to the creator

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Live podcast fans bring serious **spending power**

Ticket sales are only a fraction of total spend, as fans invest heavily in the full experience.

AVERAGE SPEND PER ATTENDEE, PER EVENT

Travel		\$62
Tickets		\$61
Food and drink		\$54
Merchandise		\$51
Other		\$40

\$268

total average spend around a single live podcast night, across tickets, travel, food, drink and merchandise

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

Live experiences **convert for brands, too.**

28%

followed a sponsoring brand on social

28%

bought from a sponsoring brand

28%

bought merchandise

Plus 28% a media plan never pays for

Nearly a third of attendees share content from the event afterwards.

The sponsor gets a second flight of reach, created and distributed by the audience, at no incremental cost.

► WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BRANDS

Live doesn't scale like the other moments. It doesn't need to.

It's the only moment where a sponsor can co-create the best time a fan has had all week.

COMPANION

SETTLED

SCROLL

LIVE

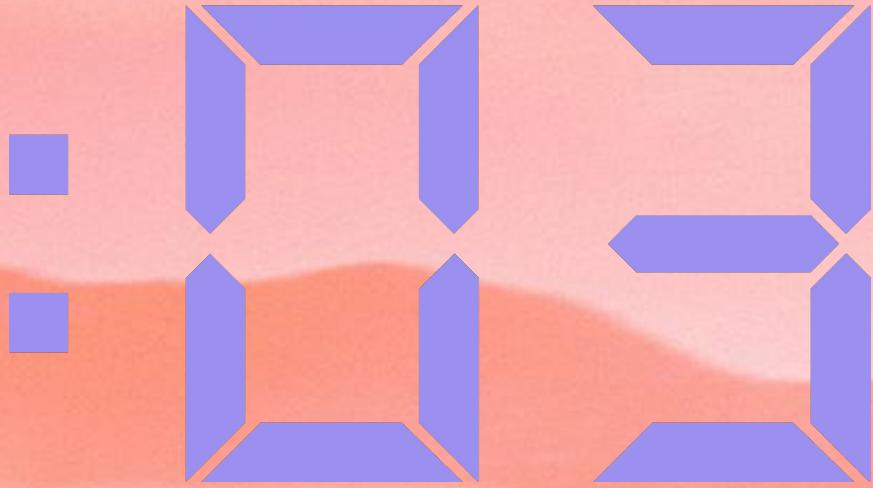
Nick Martell and Jack Crivici-Kramer, **TBOY**

Jack Crivici-Kramer: Our goal every day is to be the most talked-about business podcast. But to be talked about everywhere you have to be present everywhere, so we've invested in distribution flows to make that happen for our show. Our story on what Beyonce's mortgage means for you? It lives on our 20-minute daily podcast feed first... but then in a 10-minute YouTube vid... and a 1-minute Instagram clip... and a 30-second TikTok cut. Each gets its own edit — and for the shortest form platforms, its own script.

Nick Martell: The key is we can't drop the same exact content on every media — we respect each channel requiring a different style, voice, and vibe. Our podcast riffing on Jay Z's in-house sauna works for the listeners of the podcast who signed up for 20 minutes and won't swipe away. But that kind of detail may not be tolerated by the impatient viewers on Instagram. For short-form content, even though they don't drive immediate revenues like our podcast does, we believe it's still worth it. Because with enough laughs and insights, that viewer will make their way to our show, or convince a buddy at brunch to.

”





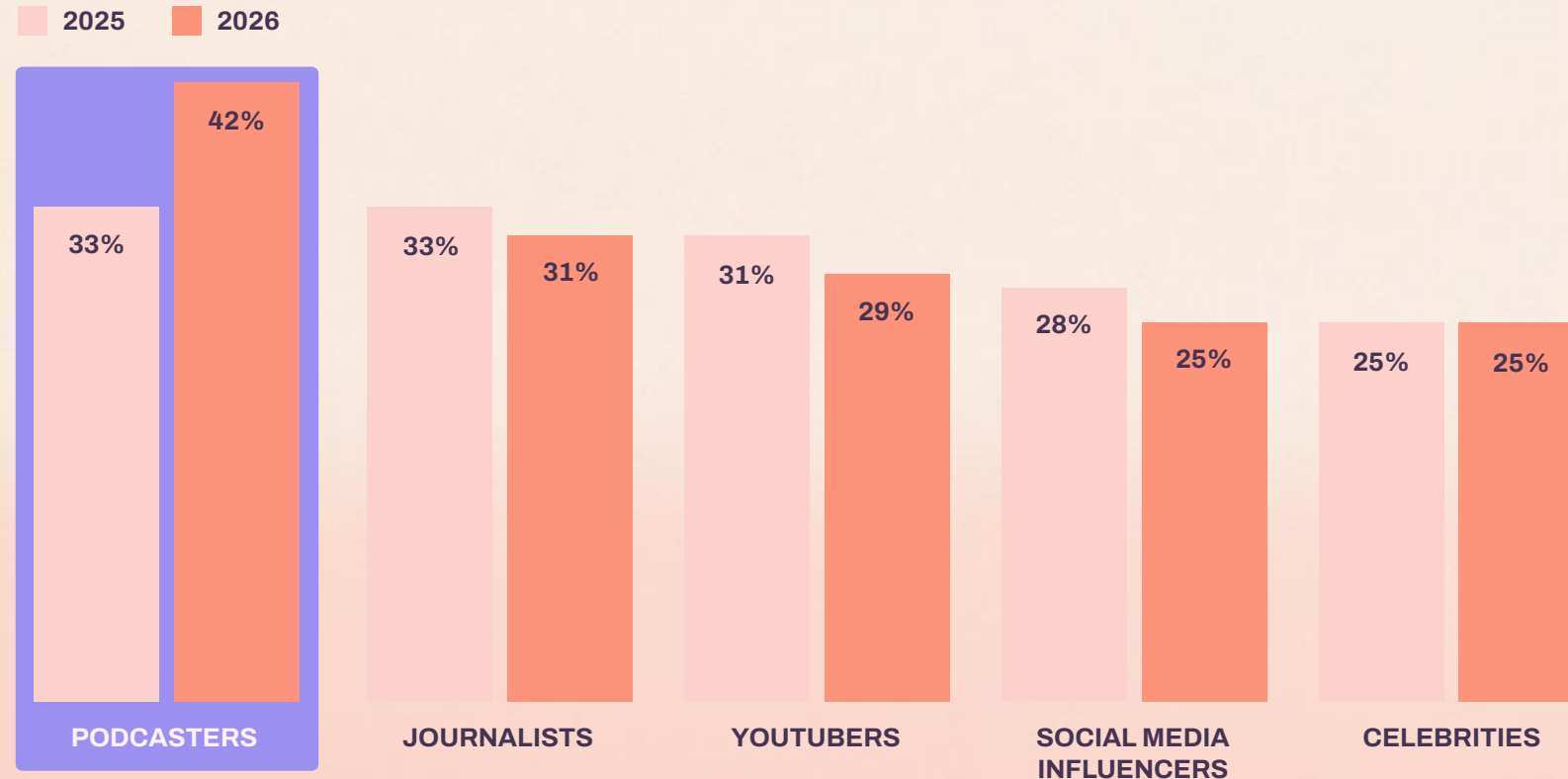
True in every **podcast moment**

Moments are only interesting to a brand if they're special, and what happens inside podcasts is a relationship most media never gets close to.



When trust in media is diminishing, podcasting **bucks the trend**

TRUST IN BRAND AND PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS BY SOURCE



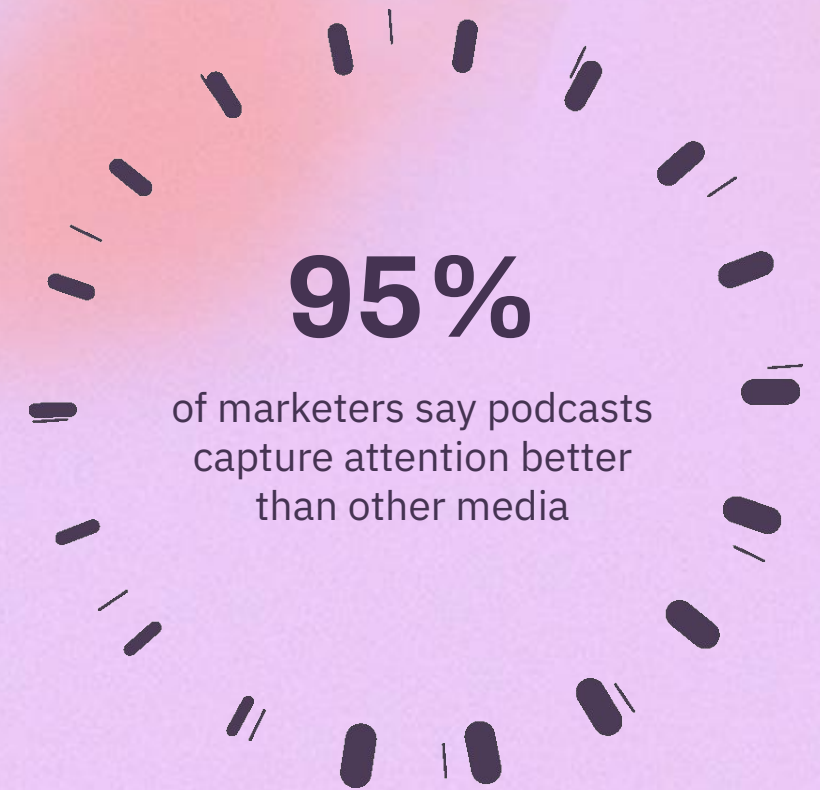
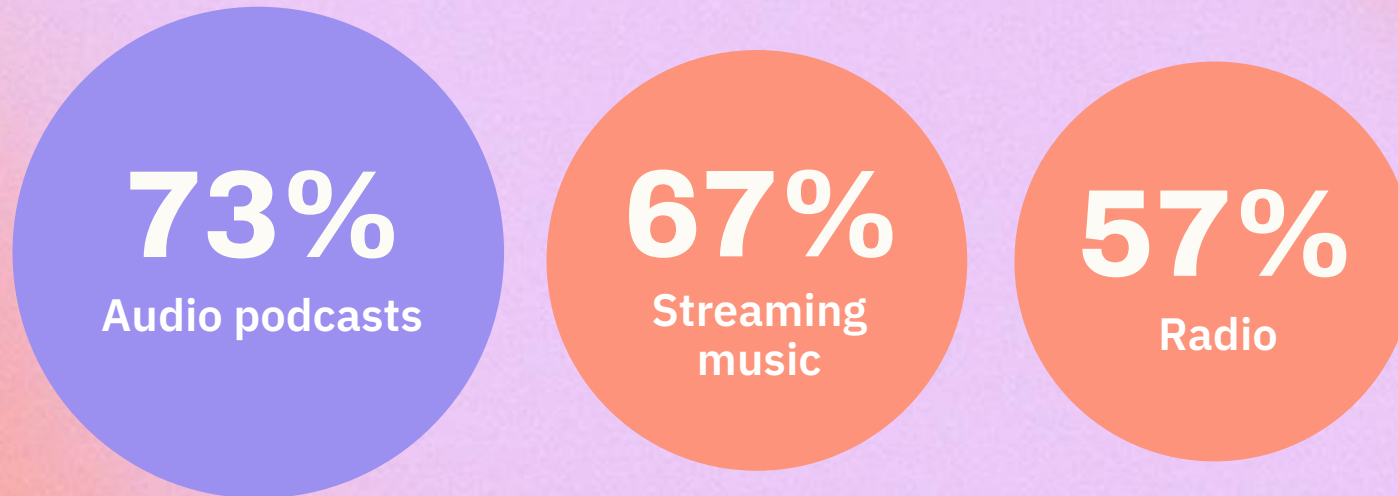
90%

of weekly listeners have
had their mind changed
by a podcaster

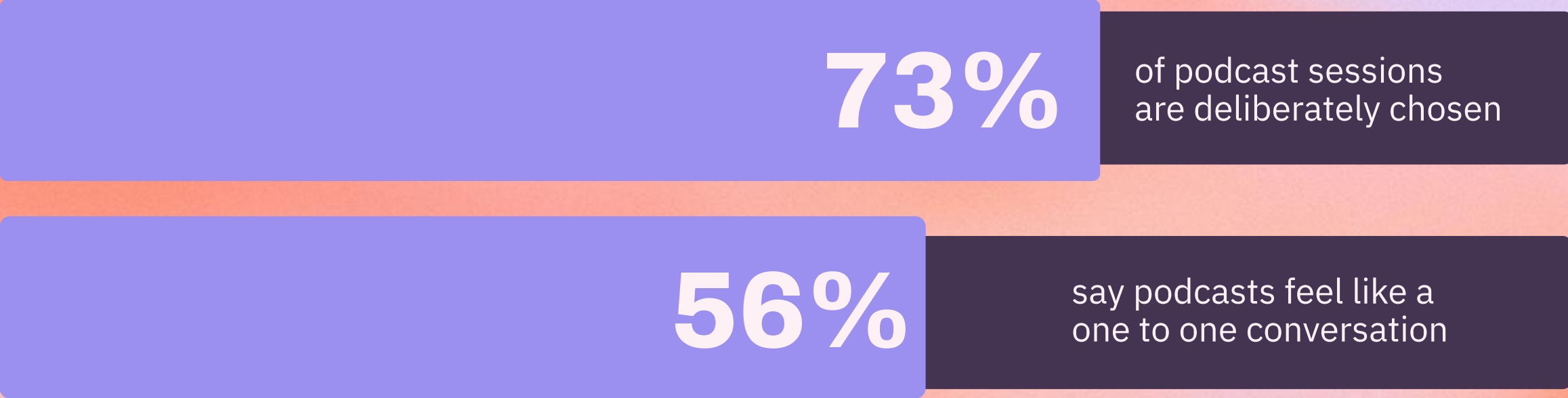
+6pp
from 2025

Need attention? Podcasting's **got it.**

HOW FULLY OR MOSTLY ATTENTIVE ARE YOU WHILE CONSUMING THE FOLLOW MEDIA



Podcasts are **sought**, not served



73%

of podcast sessions
are deliberately chosen

56%

say podcasts feel like a
one to one conversation



WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BRANDS

Every other feed in a consumer's day is served to them. Podcasts are sought out. A host read here isn't an interruption in the content. It's inclusive of a creator's relationship with their fans, extended to a brand.

Podcasts **keep it real** in the AI era

58%

say podcasts are still one of the few media spaces that still feel human

AUTHENTICITY IN PODCASTING IS THE KEY TO BRAND IMPACT

Hosts give more genuine endorsements than social influencers

52%

A host's recommendation made me consider a new brand

49%

I've discovered a brand on a podcast I now view positively

50%

HOW FREE FROM AI SLOP DOES PODCAST CONTENT FEEL COMPARED TO OTHER CONTENT ON THE CHANNEL

+102%

vs X / Twitter



+78%

vs Instagram



+76%

vs TikTok



+74%

vs Facebook



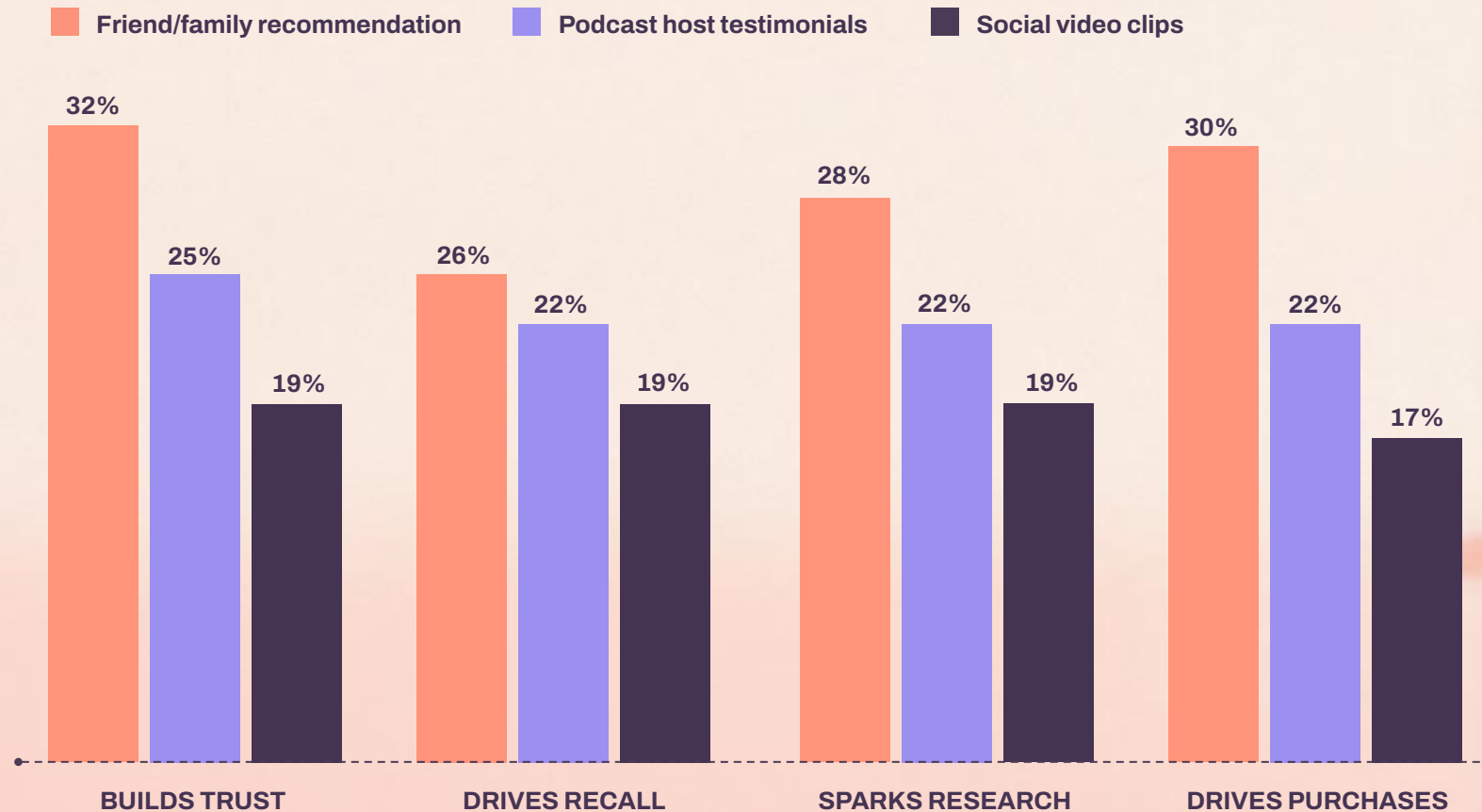
+44%

vs YouTube



Podcast creators are **word of mouth** at scale.

WHAT MOVES CONSUMERS FROM TRUST TO ACTION?



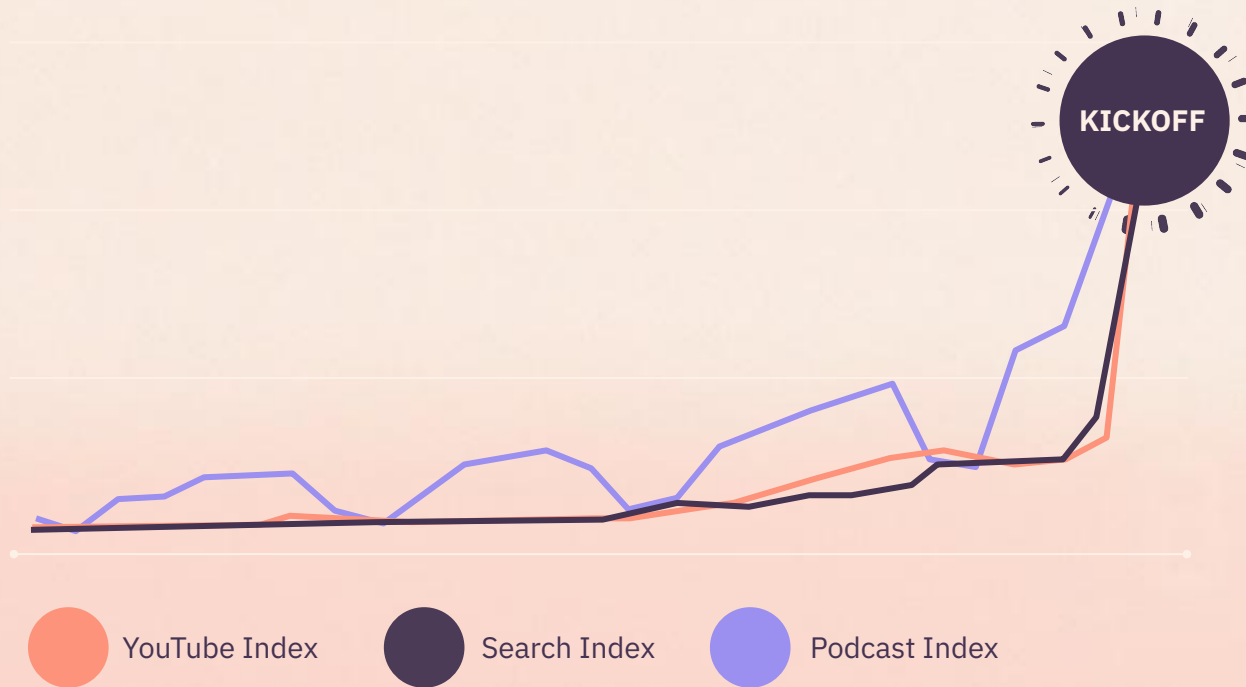
WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BRANDS

The only source of influence ranking above a podcast host is a recommendation from a friend, and that inventory isn't for sale.

Host testimonials give brands the highest level of commercial trust, recall, and purchase driver money can buy.

Podcasters start the conversation. Every else joins in.

WORLD CUP ATTENTION INDEX BY PLATFORM



3x More attention on podcasts vs. search two weeks before opening match.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR BRANDS

Investing in podcasting is the cultural equivalent of getting in at the ground floor. Before everyone's talking about it, podcasters are starting the conversation.

CREATOR VOICE

Paul Fernley, **Audio Always**

Five years ago the podcast was just the audio medium we made and channeled all our creativity into. Now, it's the cornerstone of the content that everything else grows out of. We see it right across the Audio Always slate. Help I Sexted My Boss sells out arenas. The Girls Bathroom lives on video and social media just as much as it does in the audio feed. The Jack & Ash Show has an online community that carries on all week, regardless of whether a new episode's dropped. The show builds the relationship, then the audiences follow the creators into whatever channel they produce content in next.

Audio Always and Acast are in the business of bringing those audiences to brands, with not only the podcast itself, but everything that's grown up around it. That's the bit brands keep underestimating. Most still buy podcasting as a mid-roll against a CPM. That absolutely still works, and can deliver some powerful messages, however, this is the equivalent of renting 30 seconds of a relationship somebody else has spent three years building. When Jet2 and Visit Malta worked with Help I Sexted My Boss, that meant an integrated storytelling arc through the podcast itself, YouTube-first vlogs, competition giveaways and trend-led social content — a campaign the audience still talk about long after the event ended. That's a different result to buying the ad break and leaving.

We build those places at Audio Always, and we make each one work — branded content woven into the show itself, activations at the live events, product placement that actually fits. Whether it's audio, video, social, live shows or merch, you're investing in a platform where people have actively chosen to be part of. The ad break is just the start.



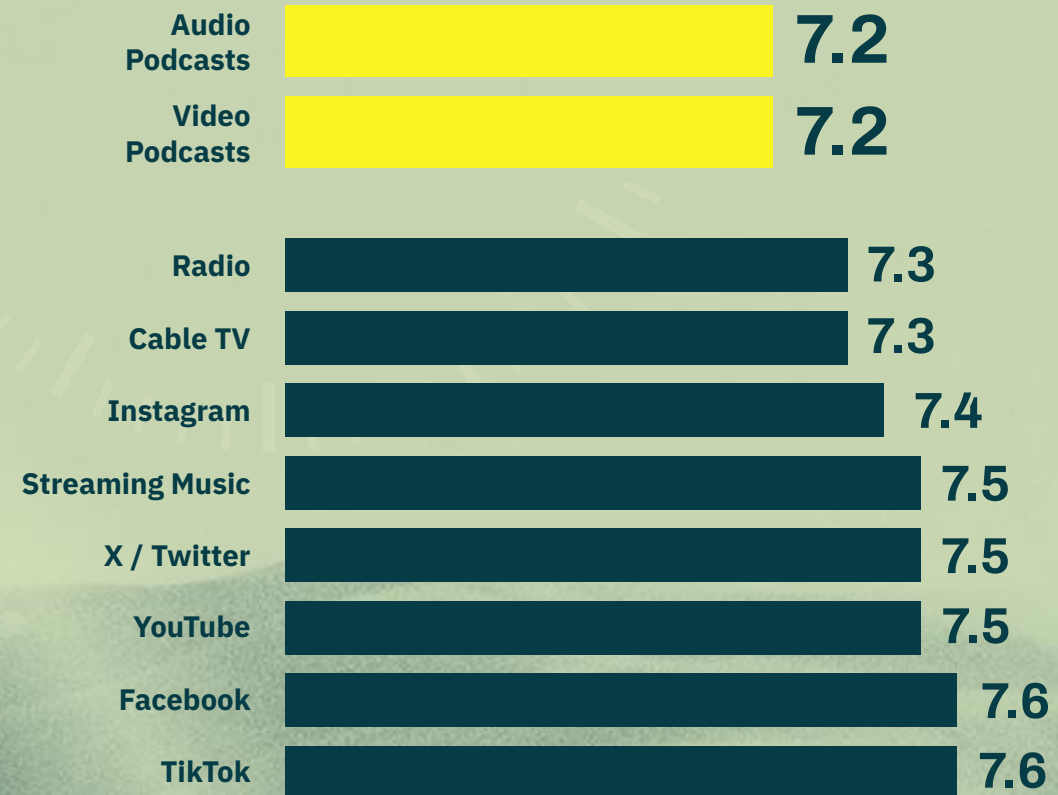
04:04

Putting **your brand** in the moment

Podcast advertising puts your message into the exact spaces listeners value most, where impressions across multiple moments work hardest.

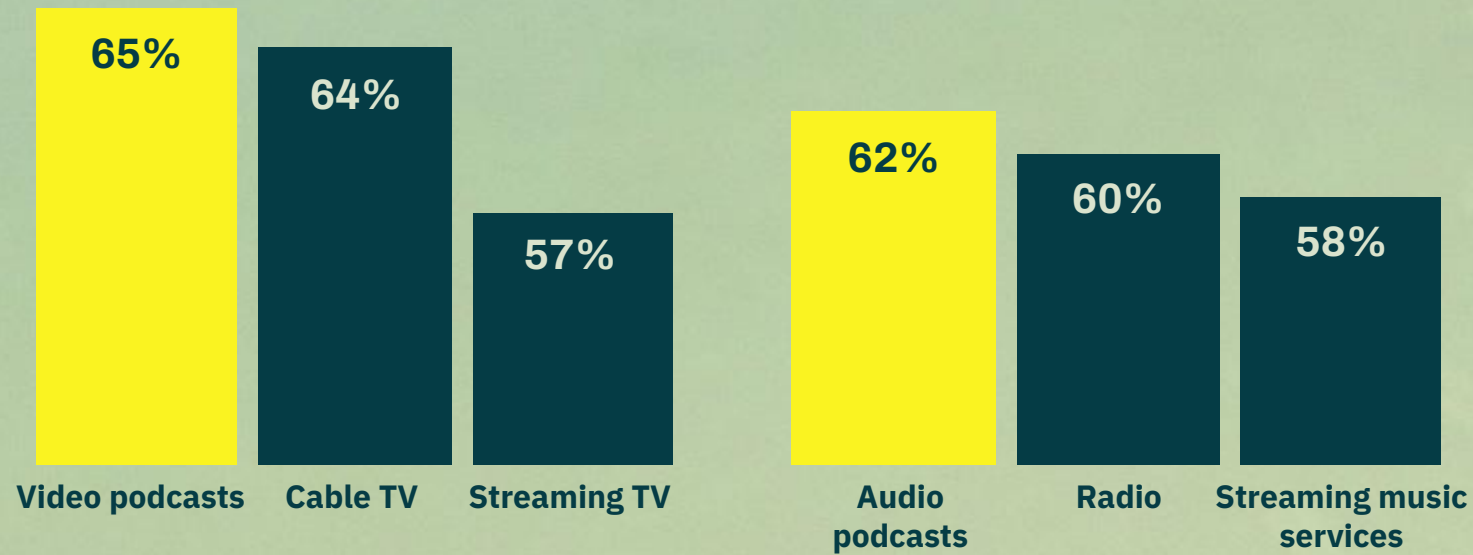
Podcast impressions **work harder.**

Consumers need fewer exposures on podcasts vs. other media to seriously consider a product or brand.



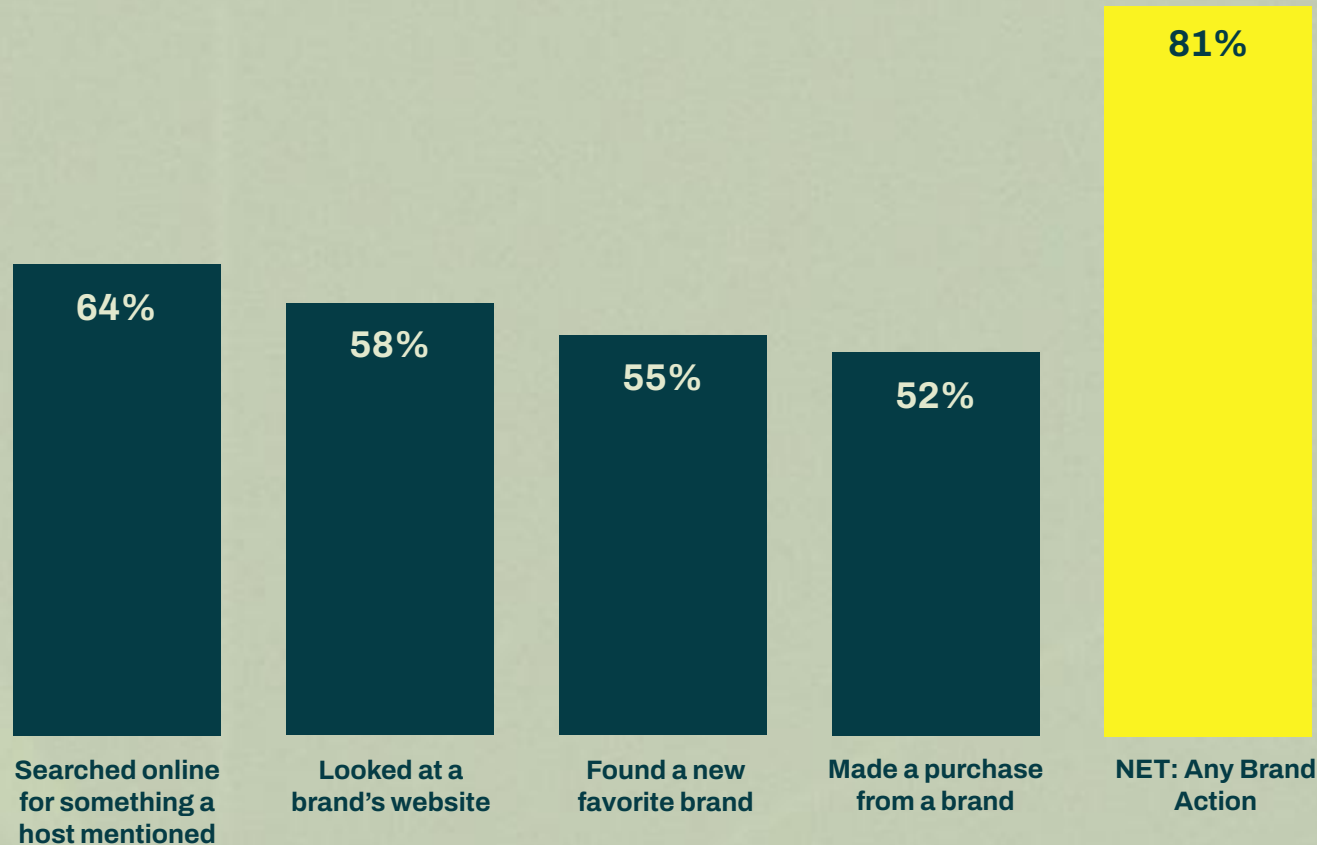
Consumers are **least likely** to **skip podcast ads**

Which media do you consume ads half of the time or more on...



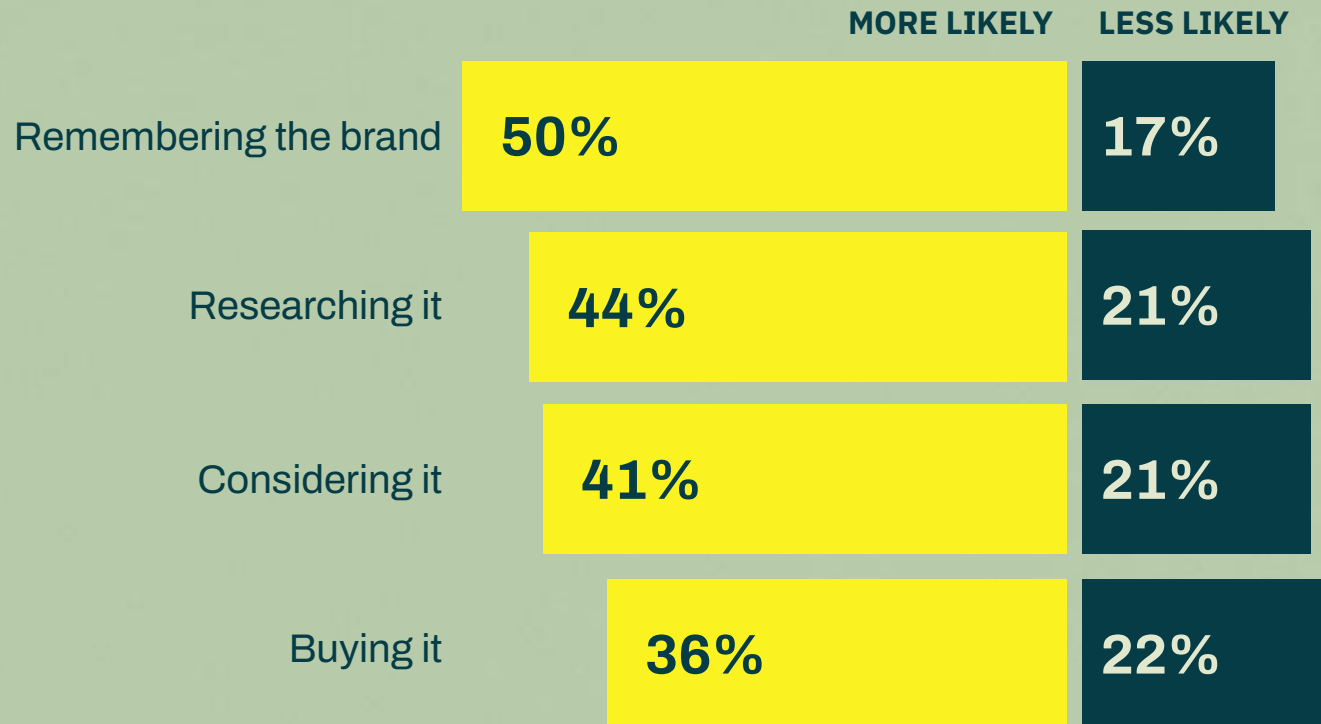
Podcasting drives **full funnel effectiveness**

Actions taken by global podcast consumers because of a podcast ad



Repetition **builds**, it doesn't **wear out**

Hearing a brand again on a podcast helps far more often than it hurts, on every outcome tested.



Why this matters for brands

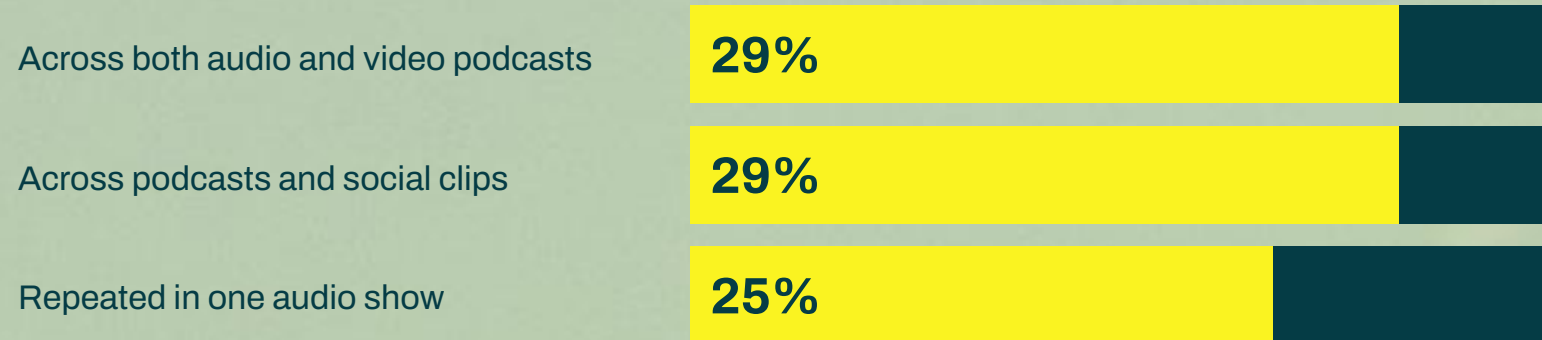
Most media plans are designed to avoid ad fatigue, but the data tells a different story.

Frequency is not the risk marketers treat it as. Positive listener responses outweigh negative ones by roughly **two to one** on purchase intent and nearly **four to one** on brand recall.

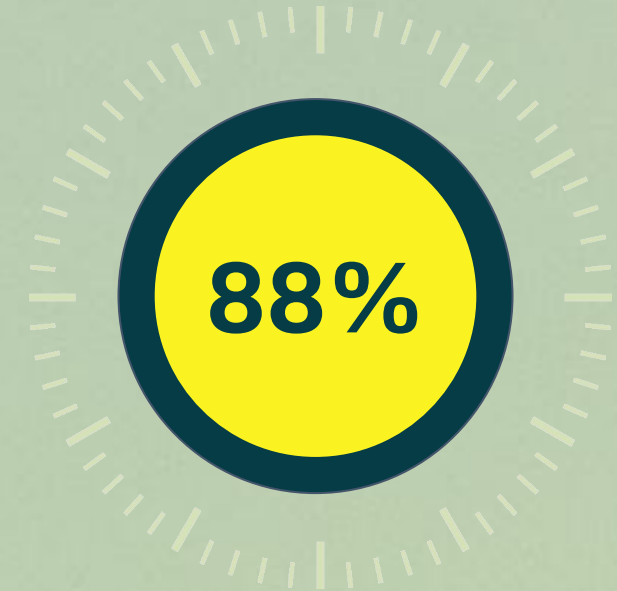
And that repetition works hardest when it **moves across** moments

People take most notice of a brand when it turns up in more than one moment.

WHEN DO YOU TAKE MOST NOTICE OF A BRAND?



► Global Marketers agree



believe podcast advertising is most effective when combining multiple formats

Same campaign, different arrangement, four points of difference

Video and audio work harder together

In an Acast exposure study, combining video **followed** by audio drove the **strongest brand outcomes**.

WINNING SEQUENCE



Video followed by audio

FAVORABILITY LIFT

+30%

vs control

83% favorability vs 64% control

LIKELIHOOD TO USE LIFT

+51%

vs control

83% likelihood to use vs 55% control

Designing video podcast ads that **work in audio**

An Acast study with Attest showed that designing 30-second video podcast ads to be effective when only listened to increases brand performance across both audio and video environments.

Here are three creative takeaways:

BEST PRACTICES

1

Say the brand

Identify it clearly in the spoken creative, not just visually

2

Make the message self-sufficient

The audience should understand the offer and why it matters without seeing it

3

Make key information audible

Translate key visuals, benefits, and CTAs into spoken language so nothing essential is missed

THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES



Video-first ads lose effectiveness when the screen disappears

Up to
-6pts

in effectiveness across consideration, interest & enjoyment



Audio-designed video ads hold steady or improve without the screen

Up to
+4pts

in effectiveness across consideration, interest & enjoyment

Three things to take into your **next podcast brief**

The audience is already moving between formats. The campaigns that work are the ones that move with them.



**Meet the whole person,
not just part of their day**

88%

consume both
audio and video



**Frequency works harder
when it moves**

+4 pts

in noticing brands
when a message moves
across formats



**Campaigns don't stop
at the ad break**

88%

follow podcast creators
somewhere other than the podcast



▶ **One campaign. Every moment the creator's audience shows up in.** ◀

05

Why **Acast**?

Acast



At Acast, podcasting is no longer a channel. It's an influence ecosystem.



TALENT

Authentic voices with built-in fandoms.



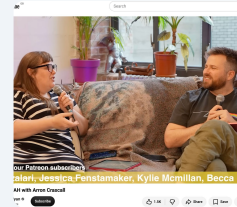
AUDIO

Captive attention at scale.



VIDEO

Long-form storytelling built for deeper engagement.



SOCIAL

Short-form moments sparking discovery.



EXPERIENTIAL

Live experiences that create community.



How we **built this**

4300

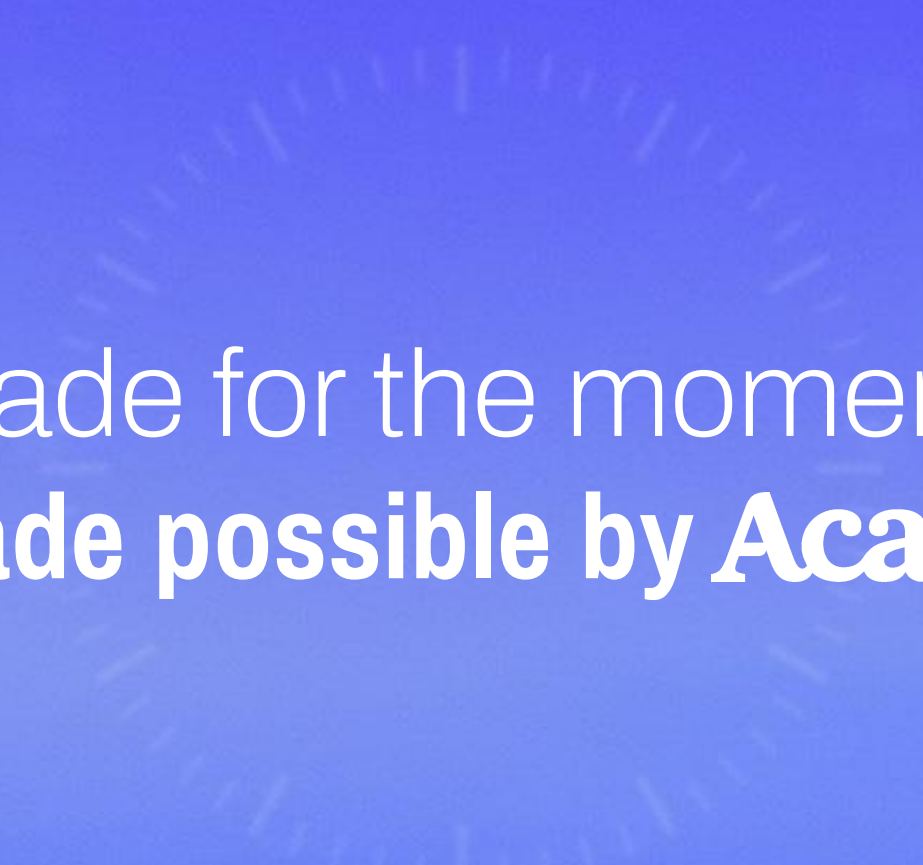
Respondents surveyed,
aged 16 to 64. Monthly
podcast listeners qualified.
Study via Differentology.

13

Markets in this file.

136

Global English speaking marketers
reflect the marketers stats in the study.
Study via Attest in August 2026
inclusive of USA, UK, and Australia.



Made for the moment.
Made possible by Acast

Podcast Pulse 2026 • Global