PodCasting Begins Well Before You Push the "Record" Button…

Content is Key:

Content is the information known by one person and developed to be presented to others. The quality of the content and the care taken to develop an engaging presentation is key to changing a listener's perspective.

Development is the process of refining content into a structured and engaging audio presentation in which the learner can efficiently comprehend the information and is motivated to put it to practice.

There are many existing sources of content to develop. For PodCasting, information can be extracted from lectures, e-Learning programs, conference calls, panel discussions, on-the-job training, interviews or most often, a combination of resources. When first gathered, the information is "raw," and must be edited into a framework that is easy for the learner to follow. A good lecture, for instance, rarely makes a good PodCast, unless it is carefully edited.

Steps to Developing Content:

First, an assessment must be made of what information is needed by the learner to achieve a certain goal. The assessment should be grounded in legitimate surveys or other valid data. Remember that it's the ***learner's concerns*** that you are addressing.

Second, create an outline. Have a plan for a cohesive program ***before*** you start recording. "Winging it," creates more work and greatly increases the time and cost of post-production. Plan to record narration to open, close and bridge comments in each module to put conversations and comments into perspective. A narrator or host is often employed to bridge elements into "chapters" of information. Carefully edit the elements into a cohesive flow of information. Programming should be crisp, complete and entertaining.

Third, ***focus on your production values***. If you say that you have the "best product available," and the production quality of your PodCast is not professional sounding, then you are sending a negative subliminal message to you audience. Professional narration, appropriate music, a rich texture of voices and hi-fidelity recording quality will enhance and reinforce the learning experience and make listening pleasurable.

Fourth, consider how to create a means of delivery that takes into account the needs and requirements of the learner. Time constraints, learning styles, cultural issues and the attitude of the learner should be taken into consideration.

Finally, ***measure the results***. Use an online survey to test and validate your learning process. Make continuous improvement an ongoing goal for your PodCasting program.

Barry O'Brien

This is one of a series of summaries on media offered by Barry O'Brien. Barry O'Brien is President of North Shore Communications Group, Inc., a full-service communications company specializing in PodCasting, e-Learning, training, video production and streaming, and on-line media services. For more information, contact Barry O'Brien at (978) 282-8222 or bobrien@northshorecommunications.com