



## TICP – Episode 50 – A guru’s guide to internal podcasts (Season 06, episode 02)

**Katie [0:09]:** This episode of the internal comms podcast is brought to you by Acid Test. AB’s unique and powerful tool for aligning organisations around a common cause. Now we all know communication does not equal understanding, if it did well, our jobs would be a lot easier. The acid test of internal communication is whether there is shared understanding.

Is the goal clear? Are we all pulling in the same direction? Do we share the same priorities, the same purpose? Acid Test is a powerful tool that reveals knowledge gaps inside organisations. Its unique and proven methodology gives you the insight and information you need to drive performance by creating deeper understanding and alignment. Now listeners, you know, how fond I am of asking open probing questions that hopefully reveal fresh and genuine insight.

Acid Test is not a tick box survey. Instead, the method is a message. Simply taking part in Acid Test makes employees feel heard, understood, and valued. Visit [abcomm.co.uk/acid-test/](https://abcomm.co.uk/acid-test/) to find out more, download a PDF to discuss with your team and arrange an informal call to discuss Acid Tests with me and my AB colleagues. So that addressed again for you [abcomm.co.uk/acid-test/](https://abcomm.co.uk/acid-test/).

Now is the time to take a privileged peek inside the mind of your organisation by asking the questions that matter. Acid Test a communications audit without the auto-complete.

**Katie [2:24]:** Welcome to The Internal Comms Podcast with me, Katie Macaulay.

This show is about improving the way we communicate with each other at work. Now you might be a podcast addict like me, or perhaps you're just dipping your toe into the balmy waters of this relatively new audio format. Either way, the stats don't lie podcasting is by every measure, the fastest growing publishing platform, more than half of the US population, 55%, have some experience of podcast listening, but globally the US isn't home to the highest number of listeners. South Korea tops the chart for monthly podcast listens, followed by Spain, Ireland, and Sweden. So basically, wherever your employees are based, many of them are likely to at least be familiar with this medium.

Now I was really tempted to call this show ‘Everything you wanted to know about podcasting for an internal audience but were afraid to ask!’ But that's way too long. So instead, I'll just introduce my guest. Brian Landau is an authority in podcasting. He has spent an entire career in all things, audio from content creation to distribution. He was the executive vice president of strategy at the podcast network, Cadence 13, senior director of corporate development at the influencer marketing company, IZA. And spent nearly five years at Westwood One, the largest audio broadcast network in America. Today, Brian is co-founder and CEO of Venny, now that's an audio platform that enables businesses to share their audio content seamlessly and securely across their existing internal and external channels. And I do ask Brian to talk about his solution because I'm frequently asked about the best ways of distributing podcasts internally and about measuring success.



In particular, I'd say, listen out for Brian, talking about a shift from measuring listens per content to actions per content. It's also worth saying that Brian walks the talk by hosting his own brilliant podcast called The Drip. So please enjoy this masterclass in all things audio.

**Katie [5:03]:** Brian I am so excited to have you on the show because this is someone that I can really geek out with about audio. We said, we'd have an audio fest so I'm so excited to have you on the show.

**Brian [5:14]:** You know, there are these rites of passage in life that you expect graduation, weddings, kids, and then there's rites of passage that are unexpected, like joining the Katie Macaulay podcast and in some ways they're just as meaningful and just as important, it's an honour to be here. I appreciate it.

**Katie [5:31]:** I've got to live up to something now, now to introduce yourself, we've already said you and I share a real passion for audio, but the difference is you have spent an entire career in this medium. So, off the bat, just to set some context, what is it that attracts you to audio? And I wonder, if you could share with us some, maybe some highlights of your career,

**Brian [5:56]:** Yeah. Well, I appreciate that. And you know, I'll say that working in audio today is a lot more attractive than it was even three years ago. I know that that isn't a direct answer to your question, but part of what's attractive about audio is that it now matters a lot. It's table stakes for communicators, and it's exciting to be working in an industry that is not only relevant, but critical to how companies will continue to engage with their internal and external stakeholders.

But to more directly answer your question. You know, I think I'm personally attracted to audio and I think many people are attracted to audio because of its authenticity. There's this terrible joke in audio circles that someone has a face for audio. And of course, this means that even a physically unattractive person could be successful in audio.

And I always cringe when I hear that expression, because I think it's quite mean, but there's a very important truth to it, which is that there isn't a visual bias on audio. It's someone's voice, there's an intimacy to the experience. And I really do believe that because audio doesn't have a visual bias and because it's much more affordable to create and produce than video; audio has democratised communication in really important ways. You mentioned I've worked in audio throughout my career, and I've been really fortunate to hold executive positions at companies that have been on the cutting edge of both influencer marketing and podcasting. And I think it's offered me a rarefied insight into how people, audio, brand and distribution can work meaningfully together.

And I've been lucky to work on shows like Pod Save America and with individual mega-talent, like the technology journalist and podcaster Kara Swisher.

**Katie [7:21]:** And I just want to put that into context for someone who might not be in the states that's listening. So, I know at one point in your career, you were with Westwood One.



So I think the, you know, the largest audio network in the US and just putting that into context, something like 250 million monthly users, would that be about fair for that whole network?

**Brian [7:41]:** Yeah, it's a, it's a, you know, a billion-dollar radio company. And so, it's naturally syndicated shows as opposed to owning radio stations.

It's shows that gets syndicated across the country and lots of, uh, incredibly premium properties, a lot of sports actually. So if you, there are partners with the NFL, um, so if you'll listen to a football game on the radio, it's a Westwood One broadcast. Uh, so yeah, very fortunate to have worked with some very marquee customers and marquee clients, and then to integrate national advertisers into that.

**Katie [8:11]:** So, I've read a blog that you've just shared on LinkedIn, and we'll put show a link in the show notes to it, where you said 2001 is actually a seminal year for podcasting, but obviously the first podcast was created way back. If we can say way back in 2004, we think something like that. And of course, yes, there has been this complete explosion in podcasting since then, all the reports are saying something like 40% of the adult population in both the US and the UK are listening to a podcast at least once a month.

How have you seen this kind of medium change over your career?

**Brian [8:52]:** Yeah, you're right. Podcasting has been around for a while now, but in the way that the Roman calendar measures before Christ and after death – season, season one of Serial was year zero for podcasting. You really can't overstate its importance as an industry demarcation point.

So just going back in time, all the way back to 2004 before Serial, a lot of podcasting was dominated by comedians. It was a lot of white males that were in podcasting and they're using podcasting as a format to test new material and to promote their shows. So, Mark Marin and Joe Rogan are examples of early adopters of the format.

And in fact, they're both still among the most influential podcasters that are still around. I think Serial is important for a variety of reasons. First, the serialised and journalistic approach to telling the story was so different for so many people. It brought so many people into podcasting as listeners, and it really invited a whole new class of storytellers to the medium.

And secondly, and I think this is really critical. The host of the show, our female, it broke the creator mould. So today podcast, listenership and creation is far more gender-balanced and the quality of the storytelling has increased significantly. There's something to be said about recording from your garage like Mark Marin does, but the layers that Serial and shows that followed have brought to the storytelling has expanded the audience, uh, significantly.



And then I think the other consideration, I know that this is the answer to all modern questions, but smart devices unlocked listening. It made the content more accessible and more importantly, more portable. You combine this with apps like Spotify, Pandora, and Amazon investing heavily in the space. And the discovery of content has never been easier.

And I expect all of these trends to continue into the future.

**Katie [10:33]:** I'm so glad that we're already talking about Serial. Now I'm going to imagine there might be a listener that hasn't listened to Serial, but I, I, it's hard to imagine, but there must be someone out there. We'll put a link to the first season of Serial in the show notes.

It must come with a health warning, because what happens to me was that when it was recommended to me all those years ago, I don't know if I slept for, I can't remember how many nights I didn't sleep for. It's so addictive. It draws you in, in a way that I don't think hardly any content has ever done in the, in recent years.

I don't know what the magic formula was. All the things you're talking about. If, if, if anyone hasn't listened to it, then it's just audio content and its finest. Would you agree?

**Brian [11:20]:** It's brilliantly done. And I think it's, it's the show is brilliantly structured. It's structured in a way where it's, it's a season, right?

So, it's, it's really, it was the first podcast, in my opinion, that modelled a lot of how our video behaviour is. So, in the way that you might watch Breaking Bad in like two weeks, you'd catch up on the whole season. You'd binge-watch it. You could binge-listen. To Serial. And it was really the first podcast that enabled you to do a whole season.

And it was all connected and it was beautifully constructed, and it was a very gripping, real story. And they were able to sort of update the story in real time because it started to garner just so much international, but definitely here in the United States, a lot of national attention. Um, and so there was a lot of different facets at play that contributed to its success, but it really sort of, in my opinion, was the first show that mirrored, how we might consume video content.

And it became an analogous experience. I think for a lot of people who hadn't yet experienced podcasting as a preferred content format.

**Katie [12:23]:** But of course now, I mean, certainly here at AB we are creating more and more podcasts. I mean, as you say, there has been this kind of massive explosion in it, but for, particularly for internal audiences.

And I just wonder from your perspective, cause you've seen sort of, you know, all kinds of podcasts produced for all kinds of niche, audience groups. What do you think the attraction



is of using podcasts and audio for those employee audience groups? What's driving the popularity of podcasting internally.

**Brian [12:55]:** It's really a combination I think of the two prior questions. The first is that podcasts are the consumer behaviour that enterprise can actually mirror. Like I've never met a regular person say, 'you know, I really hope I got another cryptic memo from HR today' or 'yeah, the weekend is great and all, but I won't have any zooms to sit in on.'

You mentioned this just before, but you know, in the question, 40% of adults in the US and the UK have listened to a podcast in the last month. But there's research that shows that 83% of corporate workers want to hear from their companies via podcasts. Wow. Professionals, over index against the general population with respect to podcast listening.

And guess what the data suggests that peak podcast listening is during working hours. So your colleagues and employees are already listening to audio during work. You combine this with the fact that so many companies are trying to convey empathy to their employees. They're increasingly thoughtful of zoom fatigue, are seeing low engagement on emails and are trying to communicate with distributed and workable workforces. Audio because of the authenticity, because of its scalability and who can participate from a creation perspective is checking an awful lot of boxes for businesses that are looking for new and meaningful ways to engage with their, their first audience.

**Katie [14:06]:** Yeah, it's so funny. We have a, we have quite a powerhouse, a guru, I suppose you'd call him in internal, in the internal comms world called Shel Holtz. But I remember when he was on the podcast, I'm sure he said, you know, no employee wakes up in the morning and jumps out of bed and thinks, gosh, before I do anything, I must check the intranet.

It just doesn't happen. But as you say, we can convey so much more with audio and those stats are fascinating. So for listeners who are thinking about taking their first kind of baby steps into creating audio content for the first time, what's your advice. You've seen a lot over your many, many years. What are the common challenges or stumbling blocks?

How maybe we can help people pre-empt those? What advice could you give? And of course there's so many different formats out there, so, you know, are some more successful than others. How do you pick a format?

**Brian [15:00]:** The consideration I think is whether or not this is for internal or external audiences. So externally let's start there.

Even though this show is about internal communications externally, I think companies often start with the creative concept and never really developed a business case. How are you defining success for the project? What are the outcomes that you're trying to drive? How are you going to measure these outcomes?



Like if you create a beautiful podcast that no one listened to and you couldn't measure ROI, did a beautiful podcast actually get created?

**Katie [15:26]:** Good question. It's about the tree falling in the woods.

**Brian [15:31]:** A hundred percent. And it's really exciting to, you know, workshop and storyboard and do all these things. But if you're not set up to measure the success and you don't understand the outcomes, you've wasted a lot of time and energy. For internal use I think the biggest challenge from what I'm observing is around who is actually hosting the podcast. This is where a lot of enthusiasm tends to stall out.

And I think there's two tricks. The first is, let's say that it's an executive. That's going to be the voice or the host. Don't call it audio. Call it a podcast, call it a show, give it a special name, identify a music bed, create original cover art. Do all of these things for an internal podcast. If you create a regional IP and you call it a show, you'll get the executive to buy in because they'll have ownership over the execution.

It will feel real and not just another communications motion that they're being nagged about. And please, please, please, please, please. Publish this podcast at a repeatable cadence. It's okay if it's only once a month, but commit to the first Wednesday of the month, for example, let your audience know the who, what, where, why of that podcast?

The second consideration for an internal podcast is that you, the head of internal communications at your firm, you don't need to be the content creator. I think this is a really unique opportunity to elevate voices from within your company to contribute content. 'Did you know that the manager of the supply chain already hosts her own podcast, and would love to talk about sustainability at the company?', 'Did you know that the associate in enablement has an undergraduate degree in audio engineering and misses being at the controls?' I think this is an opportunity for internal communicators to be the moderators of the content. You're at the controls of what gets published. It takes the pressure off of you to write all the copy. This is a really cool and potentially powerful way to elevate the voices across your company. And then with respect to what type of formats, once you've empowered your colleagues, your managers, your employees to be at the, at the wheel, they will determine the format for themselves.

Your job then in internal communications is to make sure that they're putting out the right type of content, but allow them to say this is going to be an interview show where I interview colleagues of mine about their special talent that no one knows about because no one ever asked them. That's a really successful show. That's an interview style show.

**Katie [17:48]:** Such good advice listeners, right there, two things I want to pick up on. So right about the fact that you don't just have some audio content, you have a show and why not develop that into a kind of news brand, you know, give it a name, give it an identity. And I think so often when I'm doing research on which channels are effective, which pieces of content are effective, which campaigns.



Frequency comes up time and time again, because once there is no cadence and they don't know when they saw the last one and they don't know when they're going to see the next one, you really have lost loyalty there with your reader, your listener. So I think frequency and committing to that is, is so important. So thank you for that advice.

Clients will often ask me how to distribute this kind of content, because what they want is they want it behind their corporate firewall. So they'll want it on a channel like SharePoint or Slack or Yammer. So you have a really unique solution. This is all about the kind of the pipework, the technology behind the content at Vennly.

Can you explain to me how your technological solutions solves that problem for organisations?

**Brian [19:01]:** Well, I really appreciate the opportunity to talk about our work and thank you. It's incredibly gracious of you. So let's start with what most companies seem to be doing today, right? Which is they are posting an MP3 to their intranet or Slack.

In its worst case, there are security issues with this because the content frequently can be downloaded and repurposed by a bad actor. And in its best case, you don't get any listener insights on an MP3. So you're doing this communications motion without any line of sight into how the communications is actually performing.

It's just anecdotal. There's a lot of podcasts with specific technology now, and these providers are focused on distributing to apple and Spotify, and increasingly their features are on supporting sponsorships and other forms of monetisation. So you can retrofit some sort of consumer podcast play, but it's not built for you, it's not designed for you. They are frequently not premium solutions. The players are wonky. It's a very complicated, ill fitted type of solution for enterprise.

Our platform is designed for business and our driving thesis is that we believe that your audio should live in the flow of work with privacy security and listener insights.

So in our platform and it's called V E N N L Y. The admin can either approve or deny podcast content. So even in the scenario where you're inviting employees from throughout the work to record podcasts. That content gets uploaded directly by the content creator from wherever they are. You can listen to that before it gets published and before it gets distributed.

So you have control over what content actually ends up on your channels. Once it's published, the content can be shared to your internal channels, either through an embeddable player, which comes in two sizes. And that's as simple as plugging a line of script. You can disable sharing and approve specific domains for the embedded content.

And this means that if your intranet page is [katie.sharepoint.com](http://katie.sharepoint.com), you can approve that domain. And the only place on the internet that that piece of content could be listened to is



katie.sharepoint.com. Approving a domain completely locks that content to the page and the content can't be shared or downloaded. Slack works a little bit differently because we have a direct integration with the platform. For Slack you would share a player link right into the workspace. And our tech authorizes all of the associated users with that company workspace. Only authorised users of the workspace can access the player. So, it's totally private and it works on both on your computer and mobile device the same way.

From our conversations a huge challenge for internal communicators is context switching. You've asked your employees to treat Slack, SharePoint, et cetera, as a source of truth for the company. Audio is a different content format, but it shouldn't require a different context for consuming it, our audio players, whether they're embedded or shares a slack or mobile responsive, and they've been optimized for your team to listen, whether they're at their desk or out for a walk.

So I hope that answered your question, but I tried to do it in as non-technical a way as possible.

**Katie [21:55]:** It makes perfect sense. We often say be where the audience is. And so that's exactly what that technology is allowing you to do. It's an embed that content where you've already got your traffic, presumably that's how it, that's how it works.

**Brian [22:08]:** Yeah a hundred percent. And then again, setting security standards and privacy standards against that and understanding listener engagement on every single piece of content that gets published, whether it's being shared to SharePoint or Notion or Slack, you understand exactly how people are engaging with that, with that piece of content.

**Katie [22:25]:** Which brings us very neatly on to the subject of measurements and listener insights. How would you advise clients to measure success? And I know that's a very big question, but we, you know, we often try our best to calculate the return on investment of our activities. Do you have advice for listeners on measuring success?

**Brian [22:48]:** Yeah, I mean, right now, ROI in audio is mostly defined as, uh, plays per piece of content. And this is a pretty table stakes metric. And one of my biggest frustrations as an operator in podcasting has been that it's very hard to connect desired outcomes with the content. So on this player that I just described that can live on SharePoint and Slack and all these different channels.

And this is true by the way, for both Slack and the player that embeds, um, there's a call-to-action button that can be customised on a per piece of content basis. This button lives right on the player. So for example, the head of HR might share a podcast and the CTA would be to nominate a colleague as part of a heroes type of initiative that a lot of companies have.

The CTA button might have a link to a form that accepts nominations. The CEO might share a podcast and the CTA would be to take a pulse survey. The head of marketing might share a podcast and the CTA might be to like, or share a company posts on LinkedIn. And the CTA





would link to that. Given LinkedIn post. So for us ROI, isn't listens per piece of content, but rather actions per piece of content.

And there are different high value actions across the organisation. Our platform enables the management and customisation across these different functions with respect to measurement, because we're both the hosting provider and audio player. We're able to pass back a ton of valuable insights for communicators by creator and on a per piece of content basis.

I think one really interesting insight is that many companies use Slack and an Intranet. Using our platform, they can share content to both places and see engagement metrics by destination over time. So for example, 40% of listening is happening on Slack, but that content is listened to within a day of posting.

Whereas the balance of the listening is happening on the Intranet, but the consumption is more long tail there. Many internal communications professionals don't have that level of channel specific insights on a per piece of content basis. And one of the things that we've seen is that content from the CEO doesn't always perform as well as content that's created by a peer.

Leveraging insights to drive content strategies to elevate voices within your org has added just a ton of unintended benefit as part of the ROI equation.

**Katie [24:53]:** Yeah. There's so much in that answer you've given us there, so absolutely insights so that we can take evidence-based decisions on, on guests, on topics, on whatever it is, because we know what people are really listening to and what's really engaging them. Number one.

And we talk a lot about measurement and the difference between measuring sort of outputs and outcomes, so, and clicks and listens and consumption rates all very interesting, but tends to be much more output focused where if you've got a call to action button, you're doing something much deeper.

You're measuring the impact on behaviour there, which I think is so much, so much more powerful.

**Brian [25:34]:** I think one thing that I don't see companies doing a ton of is internal thought leader. So they invest a lot in their blog, in their medium strategies, in their LinkedIn strategies. And they have all their subject matter experts, and they publish all this blog content and video content and audio content to externally.

Right. But your employees are your first audience and your employees also want to know that they're working for the best in the brightest. That they are part of this conversation. And I



think there's a real opportunity when you think about, well, what, where should I start? What content should I start with?

There's a lot of different places to go, but internal thought leadership, elevating, subject matter experts, inviting partners, customers, investors, depending on the size of your company, you know, inviting them into that conversation and using that as a vehicle. To demonstrate, you know, wisdom and insight and futuristic thinking for your employee base, I think is very, very underrated.

And then connecting that to some sort of critical call to action is a huge opportunity and a pretty straightforward place to start.

**Katie [26:36]:** I love that so much. And I think it's worth saying at this point that you may be a specialist in making a certain type of technology, a certain product for a certain consumer base.

And you're thinking your thought leadership could be around that. Yes, absolutely. That makes sense. But within most organisations, there are brilliant experts in finance risk, R&D investor relations, you name it. So, you know, I think you can think quite broadly about thought leadership in terms of all the experts that you might have across your organisation.

That's going to help build back employer brand.

**Brian [27:12]:** One of the most successful podcasts that any of our partners are creating and success being defined by listens and then also actions taken on that piece of content is an interview with the head of communications, it's a once a month interview, the head of communications interviews, the head of engineering.

It's a technology company and the show is called 'Talk Nerdy To Me.' And the entire concept, it's a 10-minute podcast, it's once a month, and the head of engineering will talk about product updates, engineering updates, what's in the pipeline that from a technical roadmap perspective. And the whole point is to demystify because even though this is a technology company, not everyone in the company, in fact, most people in the company are not technical and they need to have an understanding.

And so yes, they will do the all hands. They will do the memos. They'll do the trainings, they'll do all of that stuff. But what they've found is that this is a format to speak in a very human way about the work and that, because the head of communications is not technical. She's asking questions in a lay type of fashion.

And it's just been very, very popular amongst, um, amongst the employees at this company. And they see incredible engagement on that piece of content. That's like a way to elevate a subject matter expert internally, I think in a very meaningful and important way.



**Katie [28:31]:** I've just had a flashback moment because we didn't have podcasting.

Cause I'm going back now probably nearly 20 years, but this would have been a fantastic way of getting over this problem. I was on a factory floor and these guys were guys and girls were producing some kind of food stuff, some kind of, I don't know, noodles or something. I don't know. I can't remember.

There was a national TV campaign about to launch and they'd seen a preview of it and they absolutely hated it. They thought it was completely wrong for the people that they were proudly making this food stuff for. And I was just thinking to myself, if you could have had the heads of marketing and advertising on the show to explain in advance the thinking and the strategy behind that.

It would have been so powerful.

**Brian [29:18]:** I mean, look, there there's a time and a place for video. I love video. I think videos are very important. Part of the marketing communications toolkit, a lot of video content, even ones that are not being done on zoom and go into post-production feel very sizzily if you will.

And sometimes people don't want the sizzle. Sometimes they just want it in a very natural, conversational way. And I think, you know, podcasting really uniquely enables that type of communications cadence, where it doesn't feel super polished, but from an internal communications perspective, you have all the benefit, right?

Because it's on demand. Production is straightforward. You can copy, you know, you can take stuff out, you can move things around, you can have the feel and sound the way that you want it to sound while still having this very human element to it. So not everything needs to feel like a sizzle reel that's going to go live on, you know, a, a 30 second brand spot on television. Sometimes you can have a more candid conversation, but you still have all of the controls in place so that you're putting out what you need it to sound like.

**Katie [30:20]:** Now you walk the talk because you produce your own very successful podcast.

Again, we'll put the link in the show notes, it's called The Drip, which is all about how to caffeinate your campaigns. It's a really great listen. What have you learned personally, from the experience of hosting your own show?

**Brian [30:39]:** Well, my favourite guest thus far has been this woman and Katie Macaulay. Um, that's a key, key learning.

I really appreciate it. And it's been really fun to do. It's my first time hosting a podcast, I've always been on the business side of the equation. The angle for the podcast is that I wanted



to stay away from future of the industry type of pontification. I wanted a boots on the ground show that got into the tactics.

And because of that, the majority of the people that I've interviewed have been director and VP level professionals. Absolutely incredible executives but depending on the size of the organization, not always the ones that are trotted out for the company media tour.

Time and time again, I've heard from people that I've interviewed that they've shared their episode internally, and that a day later, the CEO sent them a Slack saying how great they were.

And if you're the director of marketing, you don't usually get 20 minutes with the CEO. People listen to company podcasts. And while I knew that regular listeners would find value in the content and unintended, but incredibly gratifying benefit has been that the podcast has helped elevate many of my guests in the eyes of their colleagues and their managers.

**Katie [31:53]:** That is such a powerful unin. I love the unintended benefits. You just said that you didn't want your show to be all about the future of the industry. So now I'm going to ask you about the future of the industry. Of course I am. What are your predictions? I can't not ask you can I, what are your predictions for how audio might evolve, say over the next five years, but we don't have to be really strict with ourselves around the timeline.

And I don't mind whether we take this as predictions for content internally or externally. What do we see going to happen do you think?

**Brian [32:26]:** Yeah. Well, if you'll invite me into the ivory tower, I will gladly come join you there. So podcasting has both dramatically expanding and consolidating, um, and more people are creating and more people are listening.

And I expect that to grow considerably in the, in the years to come, that's expansion. But the primary distribution points, Apple, Spotify, Pandora, Amazon are investing in original content and connecting that content with subscription. So, this is incredible news. If you're an executive at a talent agency, there are a lot of content deals that are getting done right now, but the implications are that businesses will have a much, much harder time getting oxygen for their podcasts on those channels.

So I appreciate the flexibility on the time horizon. It's not five. It's in the next year and a half to two years, businesses will be treating audio as a first-class communications medium, and they will be treating it as an owned content strategy. You will create audio for your colleagues, and that will be shared to Slack and SharePoint.

You will create audio as part of onboarding and training, and that will live on Notion, Asana and your LMS. You will create customer success, success, stories, and audio, and that will be



shared to your blog and LinkedIn, you will create thought leadership content, and that will be embedded in company posts on Medium and on Reddit.

I've shared a little bit about my company's technical capabilities for internal communications, but our platform also possesses external sharing capabilities, like sharing audio to email it to PDF. Is your company publishing a 30-page ESG or DEI? We're going to see companies integrate audio stories into those documents.

My company is tech already supports those use cases. So a little self-serving in that example, but really innovative partners are going to be thinking about what role audio plays across their business channels. In telling customer stories, thought leadership research documents, and it's going to be a multi-channel approach and an owned content strategy, not just a distributed to Apple and Spotify strategy.

**Katie [34:19]:** And we do a lot of content. We, we, we sort of, um, manage and own and create lots of regular titles, digital titles, a few print titles. It's more difficult with print, but certainly on the digital side of things, you know, you can tell a story now in many different ways. So when someone, you know, opens up that title and has a read of that monthly issue, they can get the story, they can read it, they can hear a clip of the person talking about the moment when that thing happened, that can say gallery of imagery.

But the, the audio content and hearing someone's words speak spoken in first person story, and just a clip of that really does help bring the story to life. So I love the way that you say it's going to live in all kinds, in all kinds of manifestations, in all kinds of places. That's such an interesting way of looking at it.

**Brian [35:08]:** Well, I think audio living in print is a very straightforward execution actually. Right? It's it's a QR code.

**Katie [35:14]:** The QR code, of course it is, wake up Katie.

**Brian [35:17]:** But I think it's really powerful, right. Go behind the scenes, learn a little bit more for more information, whatever that might be. And then it doesn't need to be a 30-minute podcast that sounds like Serial.

Yeah, it doesn't, it doesn't have to be that right. I mean, it's beautiful if you can create that, but that takes a lot of resources and a very specific skillset. It can be this style of thing that's eight minutes long talking a little bit more in-depth about the article or the blog post, or that might be, and again, just to sort of like hone in on this point, that one piece of content will live maybe through a QR code on print, it will live on SharePoint, it will live on your consumer facing blog. It's a function of how do you distribute it meaningfully, can you connect all the insights together so that you understand by destination where that listening is happening? And, you know, we're excited to be pioneering this space for our corporate partners.



**Katie [36:06]:** It's not it's worth dwelling on QR codes for a little while, because many years ago, when we first started to use them in print, you had to actually have a QR reader need to download that from the internet. Oh my goodness. Me. But of course now with the technology, just open your camera and it's there. So, uh, and I think sadly, because of the pandemic, we're all using those QR codes so much more to sort of check into places and all the rest of it.

So yes, of course you can use audio in print guys. Good point. So, we have a few quick-fire questions at the end of the show. Are you up for those Brian?

**Brian [36:40]:** I hope so.

**Katie [36:43]:** My first question of those quickfire questions, what would most surprise people about Brian Landau?

**Brian [36:51]:** So I have to say, I don't think that I have much mystery about me. I think it's made me a great partner friend, colleague and manager, but it's definitely made me a terrible rapid-fire participant people more or less know what I'm about at all times.

**Katie [37:09]:** What do you wish you had known when you first started out in your career?

**Brian [37:15]:** So it turns out that corporate recruiters and head hunters really care what companies you've worked at in the past, like who knew. I'm very proud of my career, but I've worked at start-ups and for companies that most people have never heard of. Right. I imagine many of your listeners have never heard of Westwood One, even though it's a very big, important media company.

I don't have any regrets, but I might've considered a few years at a place like Google or Microsoft or American Express, just to get that name recognition on my resume. I think many recruiters look for that outside validation when evaluating candidates. And I wish I had known that when I was 21 years old.

And when I do mentoring of college-aged students, I always say maybe a place like Oracle is a good place for you to start your career. Um, go work at a big bank if you want to work in finance, before you go into venture capital, for example, go get that type of brand experience that those big companies, you know, it wasn't for me. And I don't think it would've been for me, but, um, they do a really good job of training you and you have a really great network and then you have this very important brand potentially on your resume for the rest of your life.

**Katie [38:15]:** So what book? Oh, it doesn't have to be a book. It could be a website report. It really doesn't matter. But what should all marketing comms professionals read?



**Brian [38:26]:** Yeah, my, my answer for this is maybe a little non-traditional. There's a very famous, iconic basketball coach named John Wooden. He's no longer alive, but he was the coach at UCLA for many years and he won something like 10 championships in 12 years.

He's considered one of the great American coaches of any sport to have ever lived. He's written several books, but one, in particular, is called *On Leadership*. It's not a communications book, but it is about leadership styles and how you communicate. And it's not that he says anything, especially regulatory, but he does write in this really unmatched fluency. It has been influential in my professional life and I'd encourage anyone, even those who know nothing about basketball, don't care about basketball, to give it a read. I think you'll definitely take a lot from it.

**Katie [39:08]:** Thank you. So here's one. What would you do tomorrow? If you knew for certain you couldn't fail, we take failure off the table.

**Brian [39:21]:** Go on a family vacation and not get COVID.

**Katie [39:28]:** In a pandemic. It's a, you know, it's low stakes really now it's high stakes to do very simple things.

**Brian [39:33]:** So we took a, I've, I've got little kids. Uh, and as your listeners probably tell them on here in the United States or north America, anyway, I'm based in the New York area. And we took my young kids to Disney World in Florida.

Two months before the pandemic started. It was right around Christmas time. And so now my, my young daughter is asking weekly when we're going back to Disney World. Oh. And I'm like probably never kiddo. Sorry. I'm just not doing that anytime soon. Um, so yeah, we'd go to, we'd go on a family vacation and if you could guarantee me that everything would be safe and healthy and we'd have, we'd have a good time. I'd probably go do that.

**Katie [40:11]:** Yeah. I think a lot of listeners are going to be nodding along. So finally, Brian, we give you a billboard. It's a bit of a metaphorical billboard, but basically, it's yours to put a message on for millions to see what's your message going to be?

**Brian [40:29]:** Working with Brian Landau was both gratifying and affordable. Oh wait, sorry. Sorry. Sorry. That was the last email I sent you, Katie.

You know what people need to know? This is like always rankled me. It's eSpresso, not eXpresso.

**Katie [40:50]:** That's fun. You can put that on a billboard. So you always, you know, people would get it right in future

**Brian [40:54]:** E S P R E S S O, not espresso it's not super-fast. It's espresso.



**Katie [41:04]:** This is going to be the most original billboard arts that we've had so far, which I love Brian. It's been an absolute pleasure as I knew it would be to have you on the show. Thank you so much.

**Brian [41:17]:** It's a great privilege to be here with you and thank you so much for the time.

**Katie [41:22]:** So that's a wrap for this episode of the internal comms podcast.

If you enjoy the show, I'd be really grateful if you could show your appreciation by leaving us a review on Apple podcasts, this isn't vanity metrics on my part, I promise. The way the algorithms work, the more ratings we have, the more discoverable the show becomes for other IC pros out there. For the show notes to this episode, including a link to Brian's podcast and Serial, head over to the show notes at [abcomm.co.uk/podcasts](http://abcomm.co.uk/podcasts). I should also mention that AB has distilled its podcasting experience into a simple step by step guide to planning, launching, and producing IC podcasts. So, if you'd like a copy, simply email me at [Katie.m@abcomm.co.uk](mailto:Katie.m@abcomm.co.uk).

Now we have some great guests lined up for the rest of the season. A really interesting mix of in-house practitioners, advisors, and consultants. So, you might want to hit that subscribe button today. All that remains is to say a special thank you to all of those who reach out to me on LinkedIn and Twitter to say how much you're enjoying the show, listeners, your feedback means the world to me, and I do try to respond to every comment. So, until we meet again, lovely listeners stay safe and well, and remember, it's what's inside that counts.