Audio Script Writing Guide

General Guidelines

● A script should be invisible. When delivered, it shouldn’t sound like a script. If it sounds like a script, your program won't sound spontaneous and won't sound friendly to your audience. The invisibility of your script depends on how it’s written and how it’s presented.
● Write for the ear, not the eye. Text written for the eye can be more complex and still not lose the meaning because readers linger over the text until they figure out your meaning. Scripts written for the ear go by literally at the speed of sound. They have to be much simpler.
● Interview-style podcast – script the introduction and closing and outline the questions. Never script the answers because they can sound stilted when people read them. If necessary, use notes or bullet points to ensure nothing important gets left out.
● Build a connection. Audio products are a chance to create a bond with people as they listen. Invite them into your world by using inclusive language such as 'we' and 'our.'
● Pay attention to rhythm. Be careful about running too many sentences together that are all the same length. A bit of variety will hold a listener’s attention longer.

Structure your podcast

● Have a beginning, middle and an end. Start with your most important, salient point and then get broader pyramid-shaped argument.
  ○ Start with a story that illuminates the problem.
  ○ Then add the hard facts, include references
  ○ What’s being done or should be done to correct the problem.
  ○ Tie it all together at the end.

TIP 1: CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

● How much does your audience know about your subject?
● What style of reporting will connect with them?
● The more you put yourself in your listeners' shoes, the better you will be able to speak directly to them.

TIP 2: BE ATTENTION GRABBING!

● Tell a specific story that you will use to illuminate the rest of your information.
● Find a story that’s honest yet surprising
● Speak in the first-person
● Don’t be afraid to show your emotion or passion for the subject, let the reader know why they should care!

TIP 3: WRITE LIKE A SPEAKER

● Identify acronyms
● Don't use jargon.
● Use contractions because it’s more conversational
● A sentence shouldn't take more than one breath to say.
● Use the active voice, it is more direct, so it gives your statements more authority

TIP 4: MAKE THE SCRIPT SLIP-PROOF

● Spell out symbols and abbreviations.
● Write out URLs as they should be read. For example: w-w-dot-c-d-c-dot-gov-slash-tobacco
● Spell out long numbers and dates
● Spell out unusual words phonetically, with stress.

TIP 5: READ YOUR SCRIPT OUT LOUD & HAVE SOMEONE ELSE READ IT OUT LOUD

● Do you/they stumble?
● Does it flow well?
● Does it make sense?

TIP 6: DON'T STRESS THE RECORDING

● You will be editing the audio in GarageBand.
● If you make a mistake, STOP, wait 5 seconds (this makes it easy to edit) then start at the beginning of the sentence. NEVER keep talking, always start the sentence over.
● If one section seems awkward just leave 3-5 seconds of silence then START OVER.