

---

A DECISION GUIDE

# Before You Start a Podcast

A Decision Guide for Independent Consultants

HOW TO READ THIS

Ten minute read. Make a decision by the end.

---

— THE SHORT ANSWER

## Executive Summary

---

If your pipeline is thin and you need clients in the next 60 days, do not start a podcast. Pick up the phone, chase referrals, or run targeted outreach. A podcast won't help you with a short-term problem.

But, if you're building a consulting practice for the medium term and want a steady channel that earns trust before you get on a call, podcasting is the most effective way to build that trust.

It may be trendy, and it can be difficult, but the economics are compelling for high-fee services, and the mechanics are more accessible than most consultants assume.

This guide will help you decide whether a podcast fits your practice, and if it does, which production method suits your situation. It's written for independent consultants and small firms billing £15,000 or more per engagement.

### DO NOT START A PODCAST IF...

your pipeline is thin and you need clients in the next 60 days. Pick up the phone, chase referrals, or run targeted outreach.

### START A PODCAST IF...

you're building a consulting practice for the medium term and want a steady channel that earns trust before you get on a call.

## — THE MECHANISM

## Why Podcasts Work for Consulting

Consulting is a trust sale. Your clients commit significant fees for work they can't fully evaluate until it's finished. Their purchase decision rests on whether the buyer believes you understand their problem and feels comfortable working with you.

Podcasts build trust through a specific mechanism. When someone reads your article, they evaluate your ideas. When someone listens to your voice, they form an opinion of you as a person. Over multiple episodes, listeners develop what psychologists call parasocial familiarity. They feel they know you, even though you've never met.

A finance director has listened to your last four episodes on her commute. One walked through a case study about a problem her division faces. When she books a discovery call, the conversation starts at "how would this work for us?" rather than "tell me about yourself." That shift changes your conversion rate, your sales cycle, and whether you're competing on price or fit.

The evidence backs this up. 80% of podcast listeners trust hosts as an information source<sup>1</sup>. 75% of B2B decision-makers listen to podcasts<sup>2</sup>. Over 80% stay through a full episode<sup>3</sup>, giving you 20 to 40 minutes of sustained attention. The average web page gets 52 seconds<sup>4</sup>.

**80%**

of podcast listeners trust hosts as an information source

**75%**

of B2B decision-makers listen to podcasts

**80%**

stay through a full episode (20–40 minutes)

**52s**

average time spent on a web page

The economics are simple. An HR consultant billing £25,000 per engagement who runs a fortnightly show needs two client conversions per year to cover production costs of £6,000 to £12,000. That's £50,000 against a modest investment. For most consultants billing above £15,000, one or two conversions a year makes the maths work.

## — THE NUMBERS

## The Maths: Winning New Clients

A fortnightly consulting show that converts two new clients a year at an average engagement value of £25,000. Same revenue, very different investment.

	TRADITIONAL PODCAST	AI PODCAST
Average engagement value	£25,000	£25,000
New clients won via podcast per year	2	2
Annual production cost	£40,000	£12,000
New revenue generated	£50,000	£50,000
Net annual return	£10,000	£38,000
Return on investment	25%	317%
Deals needed to break even	1.6	0.5

### Defending and growing existing work

That same parasocial relationship is critical when it comes to defending and growing existing work. When you generate deep trust and a personal connection clients are less likely to put work out to tender or try to bring it in-house.

## — THE NUMBERS

## The Maths: Defending and Growing Clients

One existing client retained, and 50% growth across two further accounts. The trust compounds inside the book you already have.

	TRADITIONAL PODCAST	AI PODCAST
Average engagement value	£25,000	£25,000
Clients retained through podcast	1	1
Revenue defended	£25,000	£25,000
Growth in business due to podcast	50%	50%
Clients grown	2	2
Revenue growth	£25,000	£25,000
Production cost	£40,000	£12,000
Net annual return	£10,000	£38,000
Return on investment	25%	317%

---

— THE LIMITS

## What Podcasts Won't Do

---

Knowing the limitations before you commit separates a strategic investment from an abandoned project.

They won't generate leads quickly. Months one to three, expect 10 to 80 downloads per episode, mostly from your existing network. Months four to six, your back catalogue compounds and downloads climb to 80 to 150. Months seven to twelve, the effect takes hold. One strategy consultant described the trajectory as "three months of doubt, three months of small signals, and three months of results." By month twelve, his podcast was generating 30% of new business.

They won't replace your other marketing. A podcast without distribution is a file on a server. You still need LinkedIn, email, and your website to drive listeners. The podcast is the trust engine. Your other channels are the distribution engine.

Most podcasts fail through inconsistency, not quality. 47% stop at three episodes or fewer<sup>5</sup>. Strong first episodes, no plan for episode 30. Twelve months and 24 to 26 episodes is the minimum commitment for a meaningful evaluation.

Your audience will be small. That's fine. A niche B2B consulting podcast typically attracts 50 to 500 downloads per episode. If those listeners include the decision-makers in your target market, each representing engagements worth tens of thousands of pounds, audience size is irrelevant.

## — SUMMARY

## At a Glance

The strengths and the limits, side by side. Read across to see what podcasting is designed to do, and what it was never going to solve for you.

### WHAT PODCASTS DO WELL

- Build trust before the first call through repeated voice exposure
- Shift discovery calls from “tell me about yourself” to “how would this work for us”
- Deliver 20–40 minutes of sustained attention per episode
- Create compounding returns as your back catalogue grows
- Improve conversion rates and reduce fee negotiation

### WHAT PODCASTS WON'T DO

- Generate leads in the next 60 days
- Replace your other marketing channels
- Work without consistent publishing (47% stop at 3 episodes)
- Produce large audiences (50–500 downloads is typical and sufficient)
- Compensate for a lack of ideas or point of view

---

— HOW TO MAKE IT

## Four Ways to Produce a Podcast

---

There are four realistic production methods. Each has different trade-offs on cost, time, quality, and consistency.

**Self-production.** Buy a USB microphone (£80 to £130), record into free software, edit yourself or hire a freelancer. Cost: under £300 per month self-edited, £200 to £600 with a freelancer. Time: 6 to 8 hours per month (excluding research) once you find your rhythm. The risk: when client work intensifies, the podcast drops first. Self-produced shows make up the bulk of that 47% failure rate.

**Full-service agency.** A dedicated producer plans content, coaches your delivery, edits to broadcast standard, and publishes. You turn up and talk. Cost: £4,000 to £10,000 per month. Time: 4 to 8 hours per month. You get professional quality and a producer who sharpens your content. The trade-off is cost and the hours still come from the same pool you bill to clients.

**AI SaaS tools.** Platforms like NotebookLM let you paste written content and receive generated audio. Cost: free to £50 per month. Time: 30–120 minutes per episode. The limitation that matters: synthetic voices lack the vocal variation that builds trust with you personally. These tools work for experimentation and internal content, but not for client-facing trust-building.

**AI production service.** You provide written source material. A human editor shapes it into a script and generates audio in your cloned voice, with editorial review and quality control. Cost: £400 to £2000 per month depending on cadence. Time: 20 minutes per episode. The trade-off: The voice is yours and the ideas are yours, but AI generates the delivery. If your brand depends on live, unscripted conversation, self-production or an agency preserves that. If your value is in the ideas themselves, this method lets you publish consistently without the time cost.

## — SUMMARY

## Side by Side

The four production methods, compared on the variables that matter to a consulting practice: cost, time, voice, quality, and the risk of quietly abandoning the project.

	SELF- PRODUCTION	FULL-SERVICE AGENCY	AI SAAS TOOLS	AI PRODUCTION SERVICE
MONTHLY COST	Under £300	£4,000–£10,000	Free to £50	£400–£2,000
TIME PER MONTH	6–8 hours	4–8 hours	30–120 minutes	20 minutes
VOICE	Your live voice	Your live voice	Synthetic voice	Your voice and style
QUALITY	Variable	Broadcast	Detectable as AI	Broadcast
CONSISTENCY RISK	High	Low	Low	Low
BEST FOR	Time-rich, hands- on consultants	Established practices with budget	Experimentation	Existing content, limited time

---

— BEFORE YOU DECIDE

## Five Questions Before You Decide

---

The production method is the wrong first question. These five determine whether podcasting fits your practice and which route works.

### 01 Do you have a regular flow of ideas

If you already write, speak, or post substantive content two or three times a week, you have the raw material. If you struggle to produce one piece of written content per fortnight, a podcast will magnify that problem. Build a content habit first.

### 02 Does your buyer consume audio

If your clients are operations directors, finance leaders, managing partners, or C-suite executives aged 35 to 60, the answer is almost certainly yes.

### 03 What's your realistic time budget

Write down the hours you can commit during your busiest client periods. Above 8 hours per month: self-production and agencies are viable. 2 to 4 hours: you need a method that doesn't require recording. Under 2 hours: a podcast may not be realistic right now.

### 04 What's your production budget

Under £300 per month points to self-production. £400–£2,000 opens AI production services. Above £2,000 makes agencies accessible. Free to £50 limits you to AI SaaS, suited to experimentation only.

### 05 Is spontaneous delivery central to your brand

If prospects need to hear you think on your feet, self-produce or use an agency. If they need your ideas in your voice but spontaneity matters less, AI production works well.

---

— ACTION

## What to Do This Week

---

Each route has a concrete first step.

ROUTE 01  
SELF-PRODUCING

If you're self-producing, order a microphone and record a five-minute test on a topic you could discuss without preparation. If you can tolerate the editing process, commit to 26 fortnightly episodes before evaluating.

ROUTE 02  
FULL-SERVICE  
AGENCY

If you're considering an agency, email three B2B podcast agencies with the same questions: how many consulting clients do you serve, can you share sample episodes for similar firms, and what's your cancellation policy. Make a decision within two weeks.

ROUTE 03  
AI SAAS TOOLS

If you want to test AI tools, paste your best, recent article into NotebookLM and listen to the output. Ask yourself whether you'd send it to a prospective client as a representation of your expertise. Your answer determines whether this route suits your purpose.

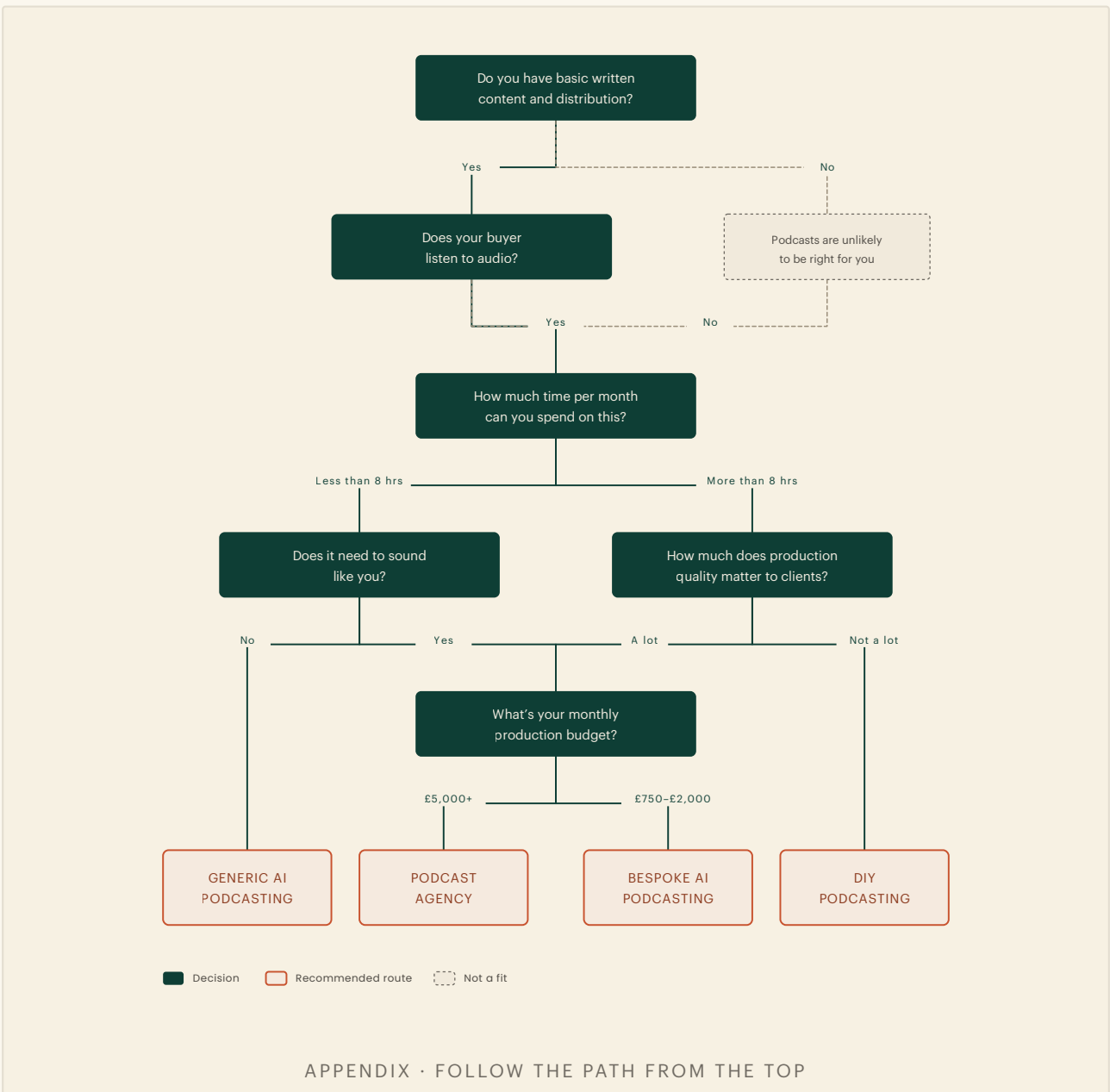
ROUTE 04  
AI PRODUCTION  
SERVICE

If you'd like to explore an AI production service, Aloudable produces podcasts for consultants. You send written content. We send back a finished episode in your voice, with human editorial oversight. Book a 20-minute call and we'll talk through whether a podcast makes sense for your practice.

— APPENDIX

# Podcast Decision Tree

A one-glance summary of the logic in this guide. Follow the path from the top and you'll land on the production method that fits your practice today.



— CITATIONS

## Sources

---

---

1. Nielsen/Acast, 2023
2. Content Allies, 2024
3. Edison Research, 2024
4. Contentsquare, Digital Experience Benchmarks, 2024
5. Podcast Index, via Podnews

---

BOOK A SHORT CALL

# If a podcast fits your practice, we'll help you build it.

Aloudable produces podcasts for consultants. You send written content. We send back a finished episode in your voice, with human editorial oversight.

---

NEXT STEP

[aloudable.com](https://aloudable.com)

INSIGHT NO. 01  
© 2026 ALOUDABLE