

Get Ready for Show Time

One of the most effective routes to cultivate quality business is thought leadership. Tried and true methods of thought leadership through content marketing include getting an attorney quoted in an article, having a firm blog dedicated to an area of law, developing continuing legal education courses and giving speeches at conferences.

Many people take advantage of a commute, a workout or time cooking dinner to listen to podcasts and watch videos to enrich themselves. Podcasts and videos are **fast-growing** media avenues with huge potential for an attorney to develop a reputation as a go-to personality and voice in a practice area, offering insights and ideas either as a guest on someone's show or as a host on one's own.

But production errors can put off a listener or viewer. There are easy ways that any attorney can enter the world of audio and **video media** without making rookie mistakes that will turn off an audience.

Here's a guide any marketing department can hand to attorneys as a primer for getting started with podcast and video production.

Creating the Fireside Chat Sound

For both podcasts and videos, getting the sound right is critical to keeping an audience tuned in. The first thing to consider is environment.

In a room, certain kinds of surfaces and textures absorb sound and others reflect them, the way a lacquered desktop will reflect light while a dark carpet absorbs it. When sound bounces off surfaces like hardwood floors and bare walls, it will create an echo. Resonant echo chambers like a church create an ideal ambiance for a choir, but that is the opposite of the best vibe for radio or video. You want a feeling of closeness, like chatting with a friend next to you on the couch.

Podcasts and videos are best when a show feels intimate, and one part of creating that sound is the environment of the speaker. It may seem silly, but an attorney will be better off recording a podcast in a closet than in a dining room with hardwood floors and a big shiny table. A carpeted room is ideal.

Of course, audio needs must be balanced against other considerations, such as background for video or the immobility of a desktop computer. If the only recording location option has hardwood floors, cover the floors with blankets and pillows to minimize echoing. It will make a huge difference in sound quality.

Improvised soundproofing will also help minimize background noise. Microphones will pick up the ambient hums of refrigerators, people talking, pets, traffic outside and pings



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from devices. Tell people around you to keep quiet during recording. If a truck rattles by or a siren screams right outside your space while you're speaking, stop talking until it goes past so the audio editor can cut out the noise in postproduction. And keep your devices in silent mode.

Sounding Your Best for Podcasts or Video

Gear. Audio and video require a small investment in equipment to get decent sound. You could sound like Ella Fitzgerald with the oration skills of Cicero, but if you're using your built-in laptop microphone in an echoey room, no one will listen to you. Fortunately, it doesn't cost very much to get good sound quality.

When it comes to wired microphones, there are two options: USB or audio cable. A microphone that attaches to an audio cable will require an interface to connect to a computer. While that's a setup for pros, a beginner will do fine with a USB mic that connects directly into a computer, whether it's wired headphones or a standalone mic. Keep in mind that a mic needs a stand. [Here is a good starter kit.](#)

Bluetooth isn't a good idea because even the most expensive earbuds can sound canned, and are apt to cut out if there's an interruption to the connection.

When you're recording, try to prevent unwanted noise: Avoid knocking against your headphone wires or your desk.

Looking Your Best on Video

Good lighting is essential for effective videos. Getting lighting right is easy, and makes a huge difference in video quality.

The coronavirus pandemic introduced the professional world at large to the simple beauty of [ring lights](#). Decent simple desktop ring lights can set you back as little as \$30. A ring light in a sunlit room is enough to get you started on video. You can add [desktop fill lights](#) for another \$45.

Backgrounds should be framed carefully. Because of the pandemic, everyone is used to seeing kitchens, bedrooms and living rooms behind people on screen, so anything is fair game as long as it's tidy. Make sure your camera is at eye level or above. In the background, keep out cords and turn on any lamps.

The quality of cameras that are built into laptops generally isn't great, so a \$70 [investment](#) in a webcam could pay dividends in video appearances, as well as make you look better in Zoom meetings.

How to Perform Well

People love podcasts and videos because they're relaxed, fun and conversational. Right before showtime, do what you need to do to relax: Take some deep breaths, stretch or warm up with some small talk before getting into the meat of an episode. When you're talking to a guest or host, be yourself. You'll come across as warm and personable.

Here are some other tips for improving podcast and video performance.

- **Watch or listen to yourself after you record.** You'll be able to pick up on any habits that need addressing.
- **Don't touch your face during recording.** Check a mirror before showtime and resist the urge to touch your eyes and hair during production.
- **Watch the ums, uhs and likes.** When you watch footage of yourself, you might be surprised by how much filler you use in your speech. Be aware of how often you say "um" or "like." If it's distracting, try to speak more slowly to gather your thoughts so you don't use too much filler, or pause before speaking. It's easier to edit out one big gap of dead air in a podcast than hundreds of ums.

Speaking of filler, it's always a good idea to outline what you plan to discuss during a podcast or video. Most attorneys appreciate the importance of good preparation. An outline or script will keep you organized and ensure you cover all the topics you want to discuss.

After the Show

Time invested after production will pay off. If you're a guest on someone's show, your biggest job after the premier will be posting and sharing. If you want to start your own podcast or video series, you'll have work at the backend of production. Postproduction includes audio leveling, adding an intro and outro, and editing to cut out misspeaking and too many "ums" and "uhhs." Each episode will also need a show description and title, which are essential to drawing in your audience.

Podcasts and videos are a lot of work, so they're easier to do with a team. A full-service creative firm like Jaffe can handle setup, branding, graphics, production, postproduction, and social media so attorneys can work on developing content and establishing a reputation for thought leadership. If you'd like to explore more about podcasting, video or content marketing, contact me, Ada Kase, at ajkase@jaffepr.com.