

5 STEP CHECKLIST

How to Build a B2B Podcast Strategy

It's never been harder for an early-stage B2B startup to break through the noise.

But there is one tactic smart startups are using to stand out: launching a podcast hosted by the founder.

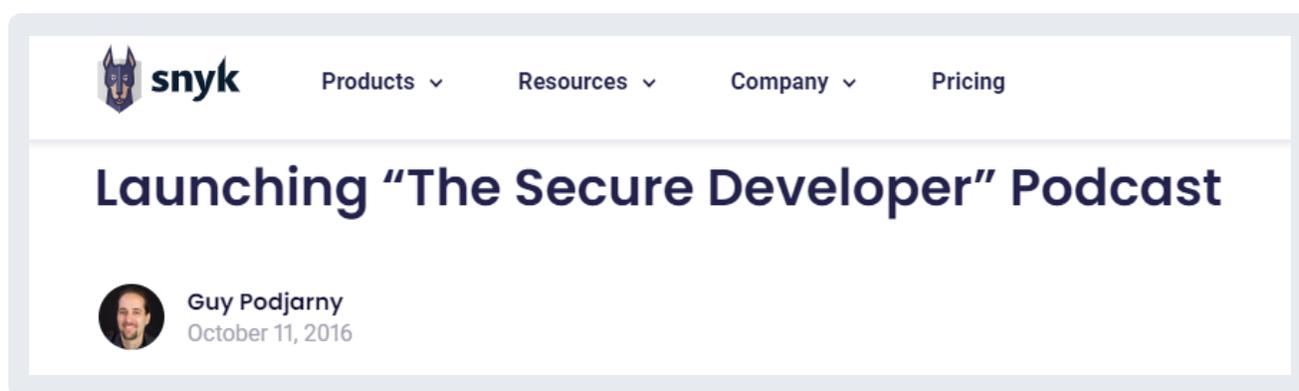
A founder-hosted podcast can help your startup establish credibility, increase brand awareness, and position your brand as a subject matter expert that your customers can trust to lead them into the future.

In this guide, we'll walk you through the step-by-step process you can follow to launch a podcast that realizes these powerful benefits.

In this guide, we'll walk you through the step-by-step process you can follow to build your thought leadership podcast strategy that will set your podcast up for success.

But first what is Thought Leadership Podcasting?

Thought Leadership Podcasting is a podcast hosted by the founder that aims to increase brand awareness and establish trust and credibility. This is achieved by interviewing hand-picked strategic guests for each episode that you collaborate together with to create useful, informative, and original content that engages your target customers.



In 2016, a small startup named Snyk **announced** they were launching "The Secure Developer" Podcast, hosted by their founder and CEO. The mission of the podcast was clear:

To help this conversation, I'm excited to announce my new podcast, "The Secure Developer". Each episode will feature a new guest, sharing their experience on building security into their companies, discussing tools that can help, and reviewing good and bad practices seen in the real world. The goal of the podcast is to arm developers and AppSec teams with better ways to upgrade their security posture, one step at a time!

112 episodes and **\$1.4 billion in funding late**, Snyk's founder continues to host the podcast. Their founder's commitment to consistently dedicate time to do this —especially during their rapid growth — is a clear indicator of the value that podcasting can bring.

Now let's explore how you can bring these benefits to your startup.

Building a Thought Leadership Podcast

FIVE-STEP PROCESS

Five-Step Process to Building a Thought Leadership Podcast

#1

Identify
your target
audience.

#2

Choose
your
format.

#3

Name
your
show.

#4

Identify
strategic
guests.

#5

Write your
outreach
scripts.

Step 1: Identify your target audience and what problem your show will solve for them.

Before you do anything else, you need to get clear on **who** exactly your target audience is and **what** your podcast will do for them.

WHO: The key here is to niche down to a highly specific and *highly relevant target audience*.

If you've built a cybersecurity SaaS product, saying your podcast is for the audience of cybersecurity professionals is far too vague. There are more than 300 cybersecurity podcasts already out there and your chances of standing out are slim. Instead, you need to niche down.

Here would be some examples:

- Let's say your cybersecurity SaaS product serves the SMB market and uses a top down enterprise sales approach — *your target audience would be security decision-makers at SMBs.*
- Let's say your cybersecurity SaaS product serves hospitals and uses a top down enterprise sales approach — *your target audience would be security decision-makers at hospitals.*
- Let's say your cybersecurity SaaS product serves security analysts at software companies and uses a product-led approach to growth— *your target audience would be security analysts at software companies.*

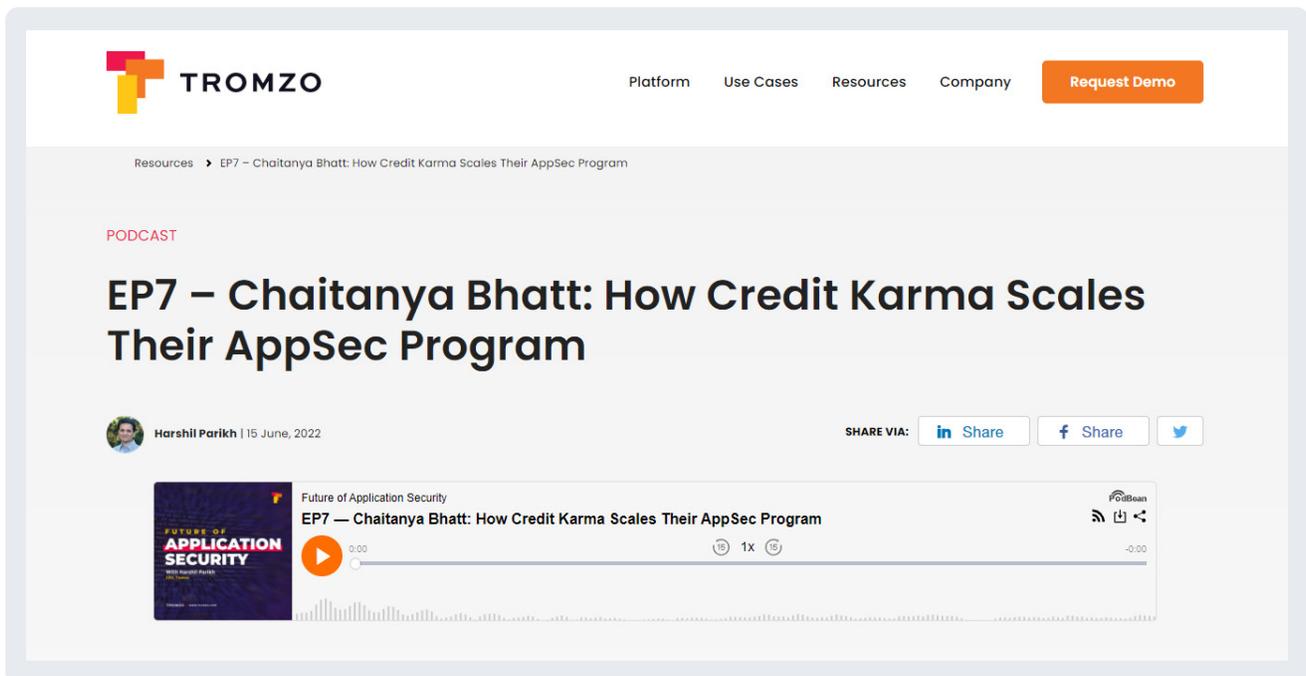
The more niche you can go here, the better. In the B2B world, you don't need to have an audience of millions so see an impact. Even a small audience can play a major role in getting your brand on the map in your early days.

WHAT: The key here is to determine the theme of your podcast and what value the podcast will bring to your target audience.

Because the goal of your podcast is to position your brand as a thought leader, we recommend positioning your podcast as a resource that can help your target audience survive and thrive in the future. This allows you to make your podcast as tactical as possible. A tactical podcast will add the most value to your target audience and best position your brand as a trusted expert.

For example — with our client Tromzo, we launched the **“Future of Application Security”** podcast. In a recent episode, their CEO interviewed the Director of Application Security of Credit Karma and learned tips, best practices, and actionable insights that other Application Security leaders can learn from.

This highly tactical interview with the leader of a widely recognized brand offered unique and valuable content to Tromzo's target audience while at the same time, increasing their trust and credibility by associating their CEO with an expert that their target audience of application security professionals trust and respect.



As you plan your podcast, your goal should be to create a show that provides your target audience with highly tactical insights that they can immediately put to use. By focusing on making your show tactical, instead of simply entertaining or informative, you have a much better chance of building an audience.

EXAMPLE

Podcast Audience Brainstorm

● Who is your target audience? (be as specific as possible. Think about company size, industry, tech stack, etc.)

● What problem will the podcast solve for them?

● What content do they consume today to solve their problem?

● What will they walk away with after they listen to each episode?

Next you will write up a short paragraph that will serve as the mission statement of your podcast. As you plan each episode, you can refer back to this mission statement to ensure everything you are doing is in full alignment.

Podcast Mission Statement

Our new podcast is dedicated to helping super **specific target audience** get ahead of the curve and prepare themselves and their organizations for what lies ahead.

In each episode, we will conduct interviews with respected experts to distill best practices, lessons learned, and actionable takeaways to help listeners survive and thrive in the years ahead.

Step 2: Choose your format.

With your target audience clear, now you need to decide on the format of your show.

Co-Hosted	Two hosts have a recorded discussion.
Solo	One host will do a monologue sharing their personal opinions and views.
Q&A Interviews	Host interviews guests for their insights and expertise.

For B2B startups, we recommend a Q and A interview format where the founder interviews guests in 20 to 30 minute-long episodes.

Here are three reasons why:

#1 While the long term goal is to build an audience, your immediate goal should be to use the podcast to open doors and begin building relationships with hand-picked people. Each guest you interview is a networking opportunity.

#2 Each guest you bring on increases your trust and credibility — each guest should either be an expert that your target audience will recognize and respect. Your credibility increases simply by association.

#3 Being a solo host or co-hosting with someone else requires far more time and energy from you. You need to personally engage the audience for an entire episode, over and over again. When you are the interviewer, all you really need to do is show up and ask your guest questions that pull out interesting insights.

Step 3: Name your show.

Now you need to name your show. Choosing a good name is what will catch your audience’s attention, tell them what your podcast is about, and draw them in — yet this is where we see many companies go wrong.

When it comes to naming, there are two things you want to avoid. First, do not put your brand name in the podcast. That instantly feels promotional, so you won’t only get fewer listeners, you will have a harder time getting quality guests to agree to come on.

Second, don’t get cute and clever. When someone sees the name, they should immediately know who the show is for and what the show will be about.

A great example is Snyk’s “The Secure Developer” podcast. It’s immediately clear what this podcast is about (security) and who the podcast is for (developers).

The screenshot shows the Apple Podcasts interface for 'The Secure Developer' podcast. On the left is the podcast cover art with the title 'THE SECURE DEVELOPER' in large purple letters, a padlock icon, and the website 'thesecuredveloper.com'. Below the cover, it says '117 episodes' and 'A podcast about security for developers, covering tools and best practices.' On the right, the podcast title 'The Secure Developer' is displayed, followed by 'DevSecCon, Snyk Ltd, Guy Podjarny' and 'Technology' with a 4.9 star rating from 18 reviews. A 'Listen on Apple Podcasts' button is present. Below, two episodes are listed: 'Ep. 116, Open Source Security & Vulnerabilities and Supporting Women i...' dated JUN 7, 2022, and 'Ep. 115, Security Ownership and Culture with Peter Oehlert' dated MAY 16, 2022. Each episode has a 'PLAY' button and a duration (43 min and 44 min respectively).

Step 4: Identify strategic guests.

Next, you need to build your list of potential guests that will join you on the show. We recommend starting with a list of 50 potential guests, launching outreach, and then using what you learn to optimize your pitch and expand your guest list.

Podcast Guest List Building Checklist



Look at your existing network. Are there influential people that you've met once or twice but would like to grow a relationship with? Invite them on your show! Do you have a prospect that's gone cold? Invite them on your show! Do you have a customer that you want to deepen the relationship with? Invite them on your show!



Look at who other podcasts are inviting. Go to Podcasts.Google.com and look for competing podcasts. Go through their guest list and pull out people who've already been on other shows. This is a smart move because in many cases, guests need to get approval from their company in order to participate in a podcast. If they've already done a podcast before, there's a higher chance they will be able to say yes and join.



Look for people with specific job titles on LinkedIn who are in the industry you address, and may have exciting insights to share. This will require LinkedIn Sales Navigator but it's worth it.



Go to Amazon to search for books based on keywords relevant to your industry and area of expertise. Look for authors who've written about topics that are relevant to your podcast, and reach out to them. Having them on your podcast also gives them a chance to talk about their book — another reason for them to say yes.



Look at past industry conferences and review the lists of speakers. Pull out those who spoke about interesting topics and ask them to share their insights on your podcast.

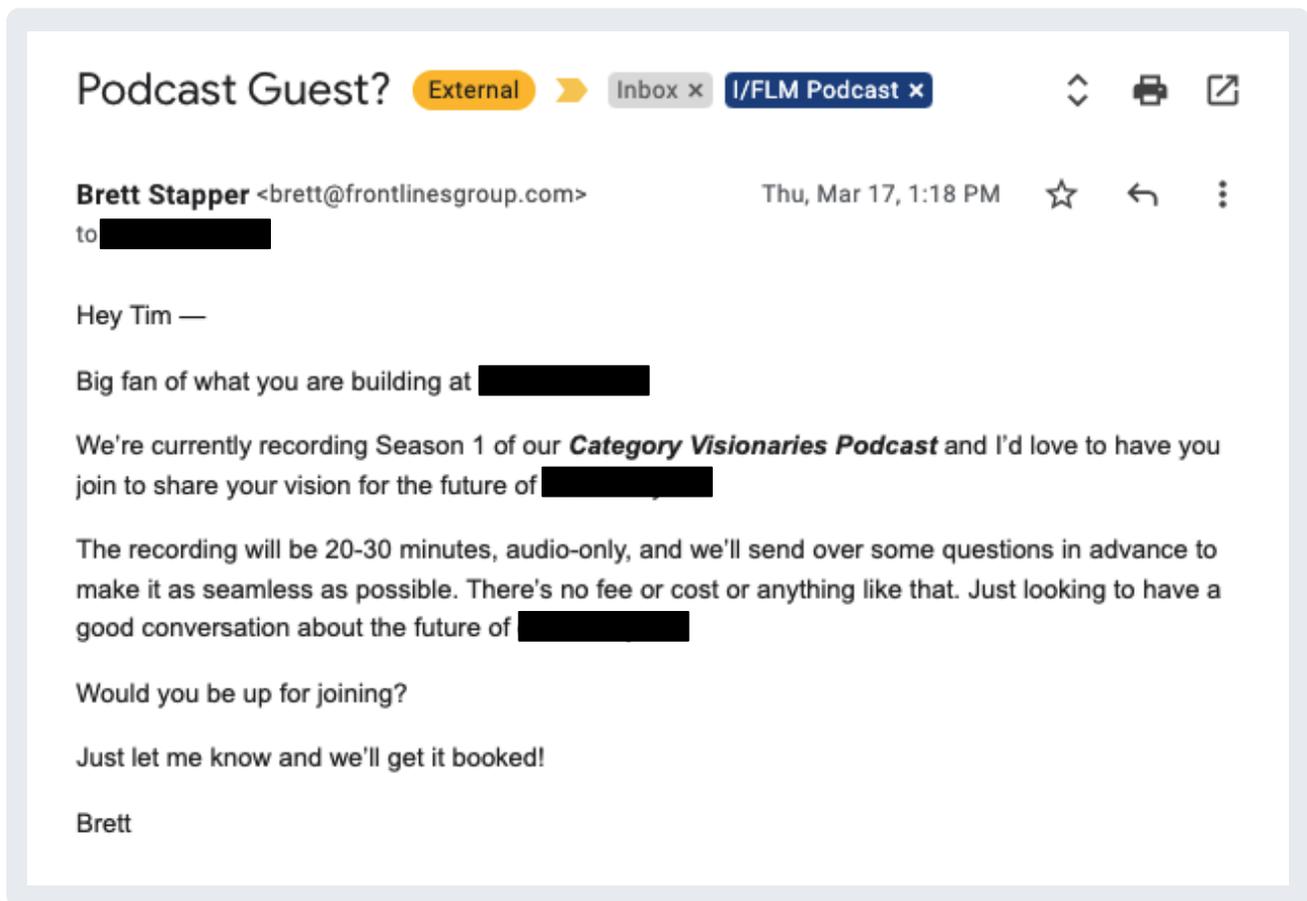


Search for "top XYZ industry" influencers on Google and review the lists to find potential guests you haven't uncovered in the previous steps.

Step 5: Write your outreach scripts.

Like any form of cold outreach, being short and to the point is critical. Make it feel like it's a personalized invite, not something that was mass spammed out to hundreds of different people.

Here's an example of the pitch we make to bring guests onto our podcast:



If you've followed these five steps, you are well-positioned to build a successful thought leadership podcast that will play a critical role in your go-to-market strategy.

Planning a B2B Thought Leadership Podcast

BEST PRACTICES

Make It Founder Hosted

One of the primary benefits — both short-term and long-term — that comes from hosting a podcast is networking. It gives you a chance to build relationships with people that matter to your goals in a unique way, and interviewing each guest is the start of that relationship. It's also important that the founder owns these benefits — not someone else on the team who could leave the company tomorrow (and take those relationships with them).

Position Your Guest as the Hero.

Your guest is the hero of the podcast, not you. The more you can make them feel important and validated, the more likely they are to join your podcast. Everyone loves talking about themselves — make it your underlying goal to turn your podcast into a platform to celebrate your guests and for them to humblebrag and feel important.

Make it Tactical, Make It Niche.

Don't try to build the most entertaining show that exists for your target audience. Instead, focus on making your podcast the most tactical podcast that exists for their highly specific niche.

Take the Time to Build Good Guest Lists.

You may think that building the podcast guest list is something you can pass off to an intern, but that's exactly what you should not do. Bad guests = bad content = bad show. Simple math! Block off two hours, follow the steps outlined in Step Four, and handpick each guest.

Keep it Short.

Aim to make each episode less than 30 minutes. There are so many shows out there that are long. Don't try and build the next Joe Rogan show that's four hours long. Keep it short, tactical, and engaging.

Final Thoughts

Breaking through the noise is not easy, but a well-executed thought leadership podcast strategy can be your secret weapon if you know how to use it. Following these steps above and keeping the best practices in mind will set you up for success.

Now, get out there and launch your podcast before your competitor reads this guide and does it before you.

**Ready to launch your own
thought leadership podcast?**

FILL OUT THE FORM

Build Your B2B Podcast Strategy

You build the future.

We'll Tell

EVERYONE.



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