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MA International Music Marketing

Term 1. Essay

Word Count: 3.061

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Introduction

“Podcasts are publicly available compositions of sequenced audio files, typically enacted as casual conversations between two or more speakers. This medium allows for a certain production of ideas that is ongoing, fluid and contested – not unlike everyday social interaction.” (M. Lundstrom, P. Lundstrom, 2020)

Podcasts have seen a steadily growth throughout the years from their first introduction to the public in 2004. Previously known as “audioblogs”, with their roots dating back to the 1980s, podcasts quickly gained popularity by being recognised by big companies such as Apple. The latest data from Musicomph shows that there are currently 1 million active podcasts and more than 30 million podcast episodes recorded in 100 different languages, with numbers in constant growth. Currently, 12% of the UK population (6.5 million people) listen to podcasts weekly, i.e. they listen to at least one podcast episode in a week. Podcasts are most popular with the UK millennials at 21% (millennials as a term used to refer to people aged between 26 to 41) compared to baby boomers at 5% (baby boomers used as a term to refer to people aged between 58 and 67).

With such growing popularity, comes to no surprise that more companies have started creating branded podcasts to expand their business visibility, usually with the help of other companies specialised in creating, recording and marketing podcasts for their clients, as we can see with our company, Fresh Air.

Based in UK and founded in 2006 by Neil Cowling, Fresh Air’s main focus until 2018 was on creating broadcast radio shows and documentaries for stations like Radio 1, Radio 2 and 5Live. The company then decided to switch to podcast production for different brands, and since then it kept gaining popularity within the UK podcast productions market.

Even from a quick overview of the company’s website, it’s clear to see where their core values stand: the first one is *professionalism*, with the team made up of professionals with different years of experience in the field and different backgrounds such as comedy producers, science experts, finance specialists, storytellers, journalists and many more. Other core values of the company are *transparency, reliability, efficiency and trustworthiness*: on their website, their “ethos” section states clearly what the company is about, what they offer to the clients and the goals they want to achieve, even stating that they respect their competitors and don’t begrudge their work, claiming to be industry-leading experts in what they do and not apologising for wanting to make money to pay

people properly. Their approach comes across as confident and bold, they make clear that they know what they're doing and are not afraid to set the bar high, which is remarkable. Their claims are backed up from a vast range of important clients such as WWF, Shell, Audi, DHL, BBC, Huawei, BMW, American Express, Hyundai and Audible to name a few, and from the collection of different awards such as the Web Awards, the British Podcast Awards, The Lovie Awards, the UK Heritage Awards and others.

Company's Social Media Presence, their own Podcast and Brand Analysis

The company is active on different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, while also having their own website as main source of informations for their prospective clients.

Their revenue stream comes from commissions on each podcast they create, tailored and personalised for the client.

As mentioned earlier, with podcast always growing in popularity, competition is fierce.

With numerous podcasts agencies all over the world (a few of the biggest names being 4DC, Pacific Content, Content Allies and Resonate) (Goulde, 2021), a company needs to always be updated on the latest market trends, keep their quality high and find ways to always improve their visibility.

Fresh Air has been doing that by not only winning different awards for their great works, but also by partnering with one of the biggest podcast agencies mentioned above: PacificContent. PacificContent is a leading podcasts services company based in Vancouver, Canada.

The main goal of this partnership is to broaden both companies' clientele and overall costumers and listeners reach.

The company's team is made up of veteran media professionals: experts in podcast production, strategy, marketing, distribution and sound design. A diversely talented group, they've created some of the most successful, ambitious, and influential branded podcasts ever made. ([PacificContent.com](https://www.pacificcontent.com))

Regarding the collaboration, founder Steve Pratt said: “I knew from our first call that Neil and the Fresh Air Production team are kindred spirits who share the same passion for making amazing, creatively brave podcasts that deliver real business results for brands. Together, we are going to be able to better serve global brands with world-class production teams, strategists, and our unique audience development expertise in North America, Europe, and the Middle East.” (Pacific Content Pressroom, 2021)

Fresh Air, compared to its UK competitors, seems ahead of the game.

The company also stands out from their UK competitors thanks to their own podcast, “Fresh Ears”.

The podcast, as can be read on their website, was created with the intent of exploring what it takes to make a podcast for a brand.

Presented as a series, in each episode they invite a client and the company’s Senior Producer to discuss a series they’ve already created, the approach they took, who it was aimed at, how they decided on the format, the bumps they encountered along the way and so on.

It’s an interesting source of informations most of all for freelancers or smaller companies with limited budgets that would like to get involved in the world of podcasts without investing too much money.

The Fresh Air Logo

“The primary role of a logo is to identify [...] Trends come and go, design tools and techniques will evolve, what we perceive a logo to be may even drastically change with time, but for all eternity the single most important goal of a logo will always remain this – to identify the person, product, business or service you’re designing it for.” (I. Paget, 2017)

Fresh Air’s logo itself is quite simple, the font used is a basic Open Sans Extra Bold, with closer letter spacing. This font is also used on their website for some of the captions, alongside the Bebas Neue font.

As a background for the word “fresh”, we can see what should resemble a sound wave.

Their brand is coherent throughout their platforms, with the website following the same colours as the logo’s, with the logo’s colours mainly white lettering on light blue or light blue lettering on a white background.

From a colour analysis, blue is often seen as a sign of stability and reliability, with businesses that want to project an image of security often utilising blue in their advertising and marketing efforts.

It also calls to mind feelings of calmness or serenity, often described as peaceful, tranquil, secure, and orderly (Cherry, 2020).

The colour choice probably also fell on a word play between fresh air and fresh “air” in connection to podcasts being “on air”.

Although after analysing the company I could see where their choices regarding the brand fell, when I first saw the logo (so without any previous knowledge on the company or what they were about), “podcast” wasn’t the first thing that came into mind: by looking at the logo (1) it reminded me of those companies involved in air purifiers or air fresheners, such as Febreze (2) and Glade (3):



(1) Fresh Air Logo



(2) Febreze Logo



(3) Glade Logo

The sound wave on the background also comes off as deceiving in the message it wants to deliver: the combination of its form and the colour choice adds to a misleading reading of what the company is actually about.

Company’s current favicon (Tab Icon):



From further inspection on the company's ideals, purpose and current branding, I felt like Fresh Air could use a new, clearer and smart logo, while keeping their company's name as already well established.

Company Re-brand: the new Logo

On my re-brand approach to the company, I felt it was important to start from their logo and their new branding to build a new image for the company while still keeping them recognisable in the industry. On this note, I didn't want to change too much (starting from the name itself) as Fresh Air has been an established company for different years now, so my decision fell on a partial re-brand.

As I started working on new ideas for the new logo, I decided to keep it as simple as the original, only by making a few improvements on the colours choice, changing the current background sound wave and by utilising a different, yet still simple font.

I chose a font called "Kollektif". Similar to the "Open Sans" font used in the original logo, "Kollektif" in bold is slightly rounder and thinner than "Open Sans" in bold.

As it can be seen from the portfolio, the first draft idea involved a black background with white lettering. I added the word "production" which the company itself uses for different social media platforms such as their Twitter account, LinkedIn and website url, as I felt it gave a stronger and clearer message on the logo. I added a different sound wave next to the main word "fresh", and a dot next to "Air" to recall the "on air" symbol.

Once I was happy with the layout, I started trying different colours, going from black lettering on white background to red lettering on white background (red to keep coherency with the dot next to "air"). Although I was satisfied with the results, I felt like it wasn't fully keeping in line with the company's initial idea of lightness and brightness.

On that note, I researched about the different colours psychology and eventually decided on orange as the main colour palette for the logo and, consequentially, the branding.

Orange is often described as an energetic colour. It may call to mind feelings of enthusiasm and excitement. (Cherry, 2021)

A 2018 study published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology* found that orange was seen as an exciting colour that could increase energy levels. (M. Costa, C. Frumento, M. Nese, I. Predieri, 2018).

“In color psychology, orange represents creativity, adventure, enthusiasm, success, and balance. The color orange adds a bit of fun to any picture, website, or marketing material it’s on. Despite it’s attracting color, it’s not as commanding as the color red. Many marketers still use the color for call to actions or areas of a website that they want to draw the eye too. (N. M., Ferreira 2019).

From these findings, I felt confident about my choice to use it as the company’s new colour, as it felt in line with their core values and with the way the company presents itself. The final logo idea landed on a white background (same as the previous company’s branding) with orange lettering for the word “Fresh”, same orange tone for the dot next to “air”, and black for the rest of the words, “air” and “production”.

For the Favicon (also known as Tab Icon), I decided to use the capital “F” from “Fresh”, shallow with orange outlines, and the “on air” dot next to it.

Final logo concept:



New Fresh Air Logo



New Fresh Air Favicon

The new Internship Program

My main re-branding approach for the company landed on a partial re-brand, instead of a full re-brand.

Although the company is overall doing well in the market, I felt they could add something to keep them interesting and more engaging. The team itself is made up of veterans from the industry, and one of their main claims is to wanting to help and better people or companies that would like to start their own podcast - reason why they created “Fresh Ears”. On this note, I felt they were lacking on a younger team presence, as their own podcast is only aimed at technicalities and at analysing previous works done with clients. My strategy for the company is to add an internship program where young adults can curate their own podcasts with the mentorship of one of the senior producers.

Prior research has regarded internships as a first work experience, which allow students to reinforce and clarify the theoretical content of specific study programmes (Knemeyer and Murphy 2002), giving undergraduates the first sense of professional activity (Yorke and Knight 2006). As to career outcomes, it has been generally acknowledged that internships allow future graduates to integrate the informal network of employers, enhancing the opportunity to find references which may be crucial for future career moves (Alpert et al. 2009).

The first approach would be to create a new brand for the podcast, and I felt the current “Fresh Ears” was a name more suitable for it, while the company’s podcast would become “FreshON Air”, keeping the same concept and topics.

With the interns podcast becoming the new “Fresh Ears”, I needed to create a new logo to differentiate the new podcasts and to market them better.

For “FreshON Air” I decided to keep a similar style to the “Fresh Air” logo, same font with a lighter orange shade for “on”. For the new “Fresh Ears” podcasts, I chose to go with yellow while also adding an orange headphones icon to give an overall feeling of youthfulness, brightness and joy, while still staying coherent with the company’s colours. The radiant colour of yellow, in fact, is said to promote happiness and optimism in the observer. Believed to have an influence on the left side of the human brain, yellow also helps foster strong analytical thinking (D. Kelly, 2019).



Company's new Podcast Logo



Interns podcast Logo

The next strategy: new program website and Social media re-brand

My next approach to the company re-brand would involve their current social media platform and website. The colour palette would revolve around the logo's main tones: orange, light orange and yellow, staying consistent throughout their online presence.

Apart for the branding colours, I won't make any change to the current website's layout as it's already clear and straightforward and in line with the company's brand.

My main work would actually be focused on the new Internship Program: Fresh Ears would get its own Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and a new YouTube channel. This way, interns will have the option to specialise and better their skills in different fields: social media marketing and strategy, where they will have to keep the different accounts active and engaging, audio production when learning how to create good quality recordings for the podcasts, podcast production, storytelling and so on.

With this new program, the company will have more opportunities to engage with a larger audience and gain more attention, also while getting more recognition in the market and adding something different that would make them stand out even more from their competitors. With an internship program the possibilities are endless: on the YouTube channel, the interns will have the opportunity to upload videos of podcasts, talks on the line of TED talks, record videos about their experience within the company, curate interviews with the Company's CEO and the rest of the team, invite guests and so on.

Instagram will also be a great tool for the interns, as the largest share of Instagram users is the 25-34 age group, comprising 30.1% of all UK users, and 18-24 year olds with 26.1% of the user share. (Instagram UK Statistics 2022, 2022)

On the same line, another platform that will help the Interns podcasts get more recognition from a younger audience will be TikTok: in 2019, the largest age group in the UK was aged 18-24, accounting for 26% of users accessing TikTok from smartphones. (TikTok UK Statistics 2021, 2021).

This way, the new Fresh Ears podcast will be able to bring younger listeners to the company and boost the company's overall presence since, as seen previously from the most recent statistics, young adults also make for the highest percentage of podcast listeners in the UK, with the age groups of 15-25 at 31% and 26-35 at 38% (G. Johnson, 2021).

Project Development

Internship usually last a minimum of 3 months. They can either offer a minimum wage and fair compensation or academic credit in exchange for hours worked (B. Siegel, 2020).

For the company, I planned to have the internships last 4 months, divided in January till April, May till August (summer internship) and September till December.

That way, there can be a continuity with the Fresh Ears Podcast while keeping the overall engagement active on the rest of the social media platforms.

With that in mind, the first approach would be to launch the new company brand and logo on the 4th of April. On the 5th, there will be a blog written and uploaded on the company's website to introduce the new internship program, explain the change in the company's new podcast's name (FreshON Air) and introduce the new interns podcast and what it is going to be about. This will also be shared on the other social media accounts of the company to make everyone aware of the changes and of the new podcast.

Between the 5th and the beginning of the program (set on the 2nd of May), I will take care of searching and recruiting the first interns, aiming for a minimum of 5 interns.

That will be done by contacting universities, creating different internship opportunity posts on different recruitment websites and by also sponsoring the program via LinkedIn.

Overall, the whole project should be achieved and fully delivered within a period of time of 2 months, which will include the pre-production, production and one month of after care.

With the internship program officially launching on the 2nd of May, I will keep curating its marketing strategy and branding for the first month of activity, with my contract ending on the 2nd of June 2022.

That way, I will be able to help monitor the development of the program, study its analytics and its progress while also helping the company and the new interns in achieving the best results, feeding them ideas on where to go next and what to create to boost the first period of the program and helping the interns in curating the social media platforms of the new podcast.

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