

Addy Saucedo. *The Podcast Planner*. Anaheim: ModernVintageRadio, 2018. 180 pp. \$34.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-692-82298-2.

Reviewed by Kyle Kern

Published on H-Podcast (June, 2019)

Commissioned by Robert Cassanello (University of Central Florida)

It is hard to deny the ways podcasting has experienced a sharp upward trajectory in the consciousness of popular culture, with more creators using this digital space to develop original content at a consistent and (seemingly) constant rate. New programs are launched every day to varying degrees of success, and while one could consider this a saturation of media, the variability of this content has allowed for this trajectory to continue unabated. A podcast is clearly able to reach either a broad audience or occupy a niche space, catering to a specific group. Considering this, one might welcome Addy Saucedo's *The Podcast Planner*, a recent entry in a field of literature that engages directly with podcasting as a unique medium, marketing itself as a one-stop resource for the brand-new podcaster and seasoned creator alike. Saucedo's work could be described as a tool of professionalization; *The Podcast Planner* is largely a workbook, offering a structure through which individual creators can develop their work and apply consistency to their program. In an attempt to leverage her previous experience as a content creator, producer, and manager of other podcasts to help creators "stay focused on creating and publishing on a consistent, episode-by-episode basis," Saucedo takes the reader through her personal strategies, hoping to universalize some of her suggestions (p. 1).

While *The Podcast Planner*, on the surface, may appear to be a useful resource for an entry-level podcaster, especially considering the low barrier to entry for the medium and multitude of practical advice that can easily give creators the tools to develop their own original content, those expecting more than cursory nods toward in-depth analysis of the process of developing, launching, and sustaining a podcast will be left disappointed. While Saucedo poses some important questions for the first-time host, her book ineffectively goes beyond the broad strokes of podcasting, offering suggestions for the initial development process alongside a general guide for episodic structure while conveying very little in the way of practical application. Those expecting a rigorous and comprehensive work should look elsewhere.

The Podcast Planner consists of several elements. The first, a section titled "Podcast Compass," gives the reader an opportunity to contemplate a potential business model for their content. The compass, not offering much in terms of advice or guidance (outside of a brief paragraph on the first page), designates spaces for the reader to determine the goals, audience, monetization, and future of their podcast. The compass poses important questions to the reader including those regarding their immediate and future goals and vi-

sion for the podcast, ideal audiences, and a checklist for the launch of the podcast.

The second element, titled “Content Composer,” contains a strategy for developing a “consistently-published podcast,” which first involves the creation of what Saucedo describes as a “knowledge burst” (p. 5). The burst, a collection of post-it notes meant to inspire creativity, is rather confusing and seemingly unnecessary. While portions of Saucedo’s suggestions are helpful and useful, especially her instructions for applying additional research to an episode for support and evidence, the knowledge burst is a component of *The Podcast Planner* that could be described in a more traditional format, eschewing the activity for straightforward analysis of the struggles encountered when developing episodes and content.

The next components, what Saucedo calls “episode,” “interview,” and “storytelling composers,” comprises the majority of the book. The episode composer gives the creator space to track and log episodes, including episode numbers, titles, timestamps, and notes. While these are certainly important components, much of this is logged within the meta-data of a digital recording, perhaps making this written component superfluous and cumbersome; one could simply extract the data from the file itself and log it digitally. The interview composer follows a similar format, allotting space for titles of episodes, information about guests, and questions to compose ahead of recording. Much of this information is useful to the creator, but the compelling aspects of this section are brief. The majority of the book is empty space in which the reader may develop their ideas, track their content, and plan for future episodes and marketing. The aforementioned components contain within them useful information worthy of a creator’s time and consideration yet hardly warrant an entire workbook. The main purpose of this book, to plan a podcast, does not appropriately cater to the needs of its audience.

While there is some validity to the offerings of *The Podcast Planner*, particularly concerning structure, organization, and a general thoughtfulness regarding interviews and episodic structure, Saucedo’s suggestions seem to be removed from the most pressing problems that podcast hosts may encounter when developing their program. The workbook format is itself limiting, excluding the finer details of podcast development and instead merely offering an organizational framework inapplicable for those not familiar with the fundamentals of the development process. Not included in this work are suggestions for monetization, a key component in ensuring the sustainability of a podcast (and likely a goal for many creators). Nor are the particularities of the recording process mentioned. Recording the program, especially an interview, is perhaps the largest barrier to entry for a new podcaster, so one would hope for guidance in audio engineering and the use of software. Saucedo’s choice in eschewing these details is suspect, particularly considering her goal of helping new creators develop content. It is strange that Saucedo thought to not leverage her previous experience in podcast production to illustrate some of the particularities behind the practical development of a podcast. As an exclusively digital medium, one might also hope for guidance regarding the distribution of a podcast, guidance not present in *The Podcast Planner*. Saucedo does not present a plan for web hosting, despite this being a central component of developing a show in an online space. Saucedo fails to illustrate a firm marketing strategy as well and instead includes scheduling and checklists for marketing with little to no strategy for actual distribution. Considering the multitude of options for creators to market their program, especially the many social media channels available, a strategy for distributing and marketing a podcast would be logical choices to include in a volume like this, as marketing is an intrinsic aspect of planning for the future of a program and ensuring growth. Unfortunately, it seems as though Saucedo expects

the reader to find solutions to these pressing and practical problems on their own. Outside of her organizational framework, Saucedo's advice does not offer new creators practical solutions to the existing barriers for new podcasters. Much of her advice could be summarized by an online listicle or video, suggesting that its inclusion in an entire volume is unnecessary.

Saucedo is correct when she asserts that "podcasting is much more than just recording, editing, and marketing" (p. 1). However, these elements cannot be overlooked, as they are fundamental to the development process and allow creators to create and distribute their podcast in the most effective ways possible. Organizational structure is helpful and necessary, but they cannot take priority unless the fundamental components of developing and launching a program are clearly understood and well executed. Though she claims *The Podcast Planner* is marketed toward "both new and seasoned podcasters alike," Saucedo's work is only useful for those who have already explored the aforementioned essential components of podcast development (p. 1). Her book offers some information to those who wish to give structure and a formal schedule to their program, but beyond this, budding creators should look elsewhere for more applicable answers to their questions.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-podcast>

Citation: Kyle Kern. Review of Saucedo, Addy. *The Podcast Planner*. H-Podcast, H-Net Reviews. June, 2019.

URL: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=53846>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.