



**GURU
GUIDE**
with
Vidusha and Anton

in conversation with
Ben Baker

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**PODCAST TIPS FOR THOSE
STARTING THE JOURNEY**

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE GURU GUIDE

The 'Guru Guide' is an attempt to refine decades of hard-earned expertise into succinct, simple and practical advice.

It is NOT meant to be an exhaustive exploration of a topic: rather, pointed areas of focus which can only be discerned by a practitioner. It is not meant to be a generic set of advice: it is advice from battle-hardened professionals who have had a lifetime of experience and proven track records.

The Guru Guide has a pre determined format:

- ✓ It aims to understand a topic/ area of focus
- ✓ It aims to give tools to help you navigate the area
- ✓ It also gives contexts and examples: so that you can customize it to suit YOU

Exploratory, intimate and insightful, the Guru Guide aims to bring to you a wealth of expertise which can only be possible through veterans whose varied and in-depth experiences offer unparalleled insights.

The brevity and simplicity is by choice, and design. Focused on Executives and Managers who want to get quick tips and techniques, who are eager to improve their craft

and trade : the Guru Guide aims to offer 'little nuggets' of advice and importantly, simple tools, which will enable practitioners to up their game and benefit from expertise which may be hard to find in a hurry.

INTRODUCING



**VIDUSHA
NATHAVITHARANA**

Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Luminary Learning and the organization's founder. His areas of expertise are with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



**ANTON
THAYALAN**

Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands-on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management, and currently works as the Chief Evangelist of Luminary Learning and the Transformation Therapist of High5 Consultancy. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL Anton won accolades for his superlative work there: and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional clients.

INTRODUCING BEN BAKER

We 'met' Ben Baker on LinkedIn over his podcasting. A quick round of emails, and we had made a new friend...

What is astonishing is how Ben has made such a massive impact through his podcast and podcast consulting. Speaking to an amazing array of people, Ben seems to be able to 'suss out' amazing little 'nuggets' of wisdom, and useful insights Whether you are a CEO, or you are just starting out in your career, Ben's podcast, The YourLivingBrand.live show, is sure to have something relevant in it for you.

Many we know are also keen to explore podcasting - and who better to talk to than Ben to give some quick advice on this phenomena?



PODCASTING - HOW DID YOU GET STARTED ?

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- » Podcasting has been part of who I am for over a decade. It started by being interviewed 3-4 times the first year and grew from there. I became more and more comfortable being interviewed, and then sometime in early 2016, someone posed the question, "why don't you have your own podcast?"
- » My immediate retort was that I did not feel that I had enough to say week after week, but that same question kept coming back to me from the many people who interviewed me.
- » It was at that point that I started to make inquiries. How do you start a podcast? How do you host it? What format works the best? How do you find guests? What platforms should I be on? How do you set up an interview schedule to make sure you have content that is consistent, on-topic and on-brand?
- » From there, I set out to understand who I wanted to talk to, what I wanted them to learn or take away from the show, how I wanted them to feel, and what the end goals of the podcast should be?

PODCASTING - HOW DID YOU GET STARTED ?

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- » It was at this point that I reached out to people I knew, and who knew me to book them as guests. I was nervous, anxious and unsure of how things would turn out, but I dedicated myself to create ten episodes and then evaluate.
- » Ten episodes turned into fifty, which turned into one hundred and now I am over 265 episodes of the show.
- » What I have learned is that each guest is a gift and every listener is precious.
- » The show has rewarded me with clients, opportunities and friendships and has spawned *books, courses, and a podcasting business.*

PODCASTING - DO PEOPLE ACTUALLY LISTEN IN ?



There truly is a *growing popularity in podcasts...*

Unlike YouTube videos, the audio only format of podcasts enables you to listen while jogging, cycling, driving, in-between meetings, or shopping.... It's actually a fantastic way to learn - and learn while doing other things. Rather than simply playing a game or listening to music - why not listen to a podcast and learn something?

Podcasts are gaining popularity for this very reason. They are a perfect opportunity to learn, at times of your own choosing WHILE doing something else...

WHY ARE SOME PODCASTS MORE POPULAR THAN OTHERS ?



There are 4 fundamentals to creating a successful podcast:

- » It must be relevant
- » It must be useful
- » It must be novel - or unique
- » And here is the differentiator: it must be shareable. People like to share content and when you can make something shareable... they will.

A great podcast is successful because it speaks to a specific audience. People who have a specific passion or interest or have a problem that you can solve. When you focus your podcast on the needs of the audience, and adding value to them week after week, success happens. However, if you are merely focused on your own popularity and showing people how smart you are ... people lose interest.

In anything you do professionally, try not to get swayed by wanting to be 'popular.'



TIP # 1 : UNDERSTAND WHY YOU ARE DOING THIS



As with anything important - starting with being clear idea about WHY you are doing it is a good place to start.

I am creating this podcast to help people

The people I am trying to help have these types of challenges

Through my podcast, I hope to achieve

Remember - there is a difference between podcasting as a 'hobby' - or it being a supplement to your professional brand.

So, be clear about why you are doing it. Many get carried away with podcasting, for podcasting's sake, and lose sight of the objective behind why there are podcasting in the first place.

Don't get me wrong - it is perfectly ok to get immersed in podcasting strictly as a hobby – however, if you are podcasting with a specific objective in mind, it makes it far easier to focus and achieve it.

TOOL 1 : NAVIGATE YOUR WHY

Knowing why you are doing your podcast and also how much time you actually have to commit to it is a good starting point to narrow down what type of a podcast you should create.

Never start a podcast for the heck of it - or because everyone is doing it - it is a sure way to become yet another podcast in the crowd, barely noticed and soon forgotten.



TIP # 2 : UNDERSTAND WHAT THE AUDIENCE WANTS



Different audiences want different things...

- » Professionals will want quick tips, insights - and will not spend a ton of time on a podcast if they do not perceive it as valuable to them.
- » Those who exercise and listen in, will possibly have more time - and would probably enjoy an easy conversation rather than a technically detailed one.
- » Those who do research on specific topics, will want technically in-depth conversations, which augment their reading.

So, take the time to understand which audience your podcast is for and design your podcast so that it is in the language of your audience. Pick guests that are on topic and stay on theme. Podcasts that break these rules tend not to have the listenership the podcaster desires.

TIP # 3 : KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET



As a general rule of thumb, shorter podcasts work better.

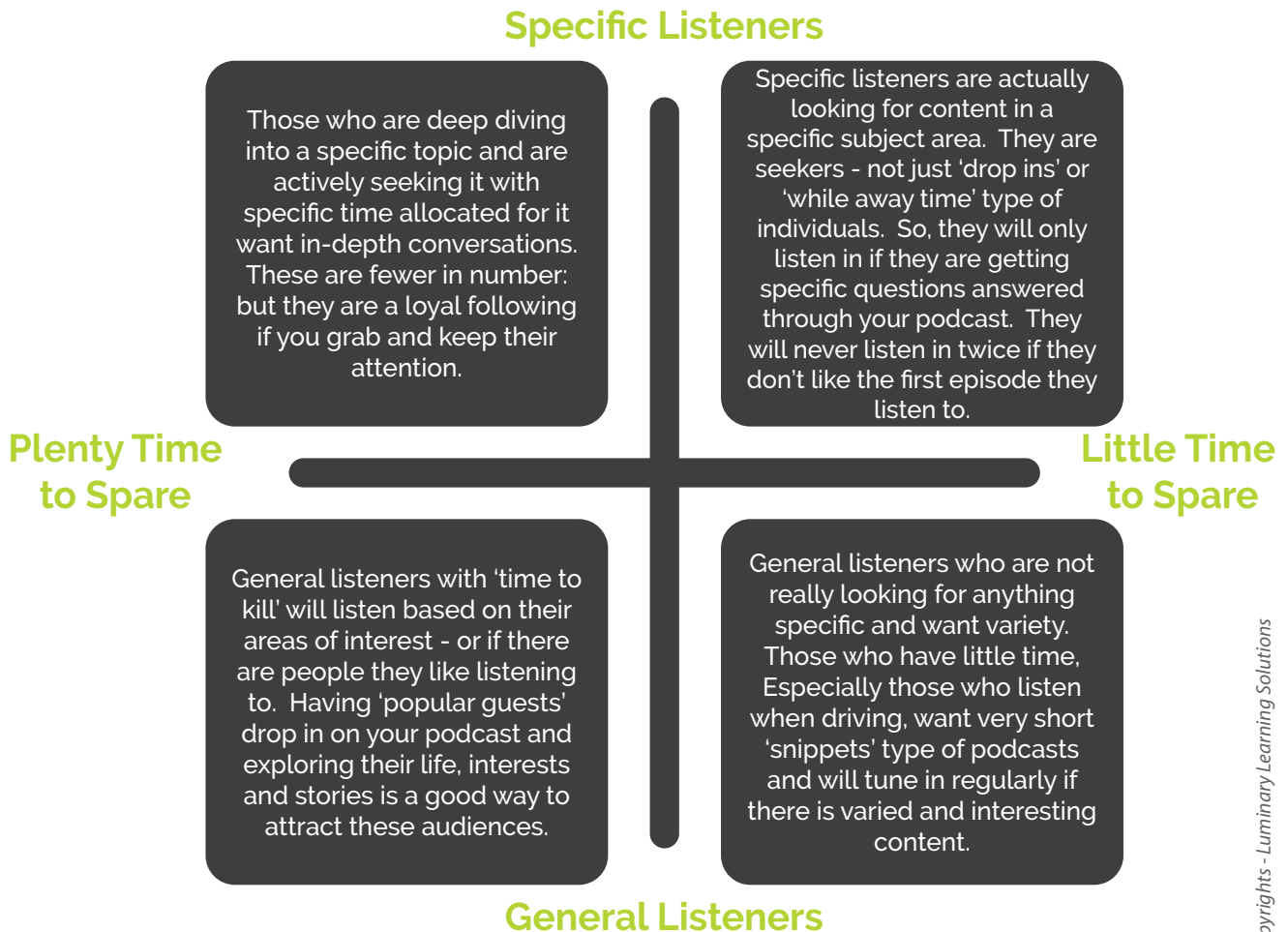
There ARE exceptions for sure. There are many I listen to which are over an hour in length - but they ARE interesting to me, and they feature people I WANT to listen to. This makes a huge difference... as if you do not hold your audience's attention, they will go looking for another podcaster who can.

If you are starting out - it is advisable to keep the podcast for 20-40 minutes per episode. Length can depend on subject matter, audience, guests expertise and your ability to hold a conversation. If you have a guest and a topic that is interesting enough - break it into 2-3 episodes and invite your audience to come back to hear more.

Shorter podcasts draw more listeners - and it will be easier for you to have a broader base of listeners this way...

TOOL 2 : TYPES OF AUDIENCES AND ATTENTION SPANS

As much as knowing why you are doing your podcast - focus on the type of podcasts different groups of people listen to. You cannot satisfy everyone with one type of podcast - and choosing who you want as your base audience to be is critical to growing a faithful following for your podcast.



TIP # 4 : MAKE IT REGULAR



No matter what type of podcast you do - make it regular.

Launching a few episodes and then taking a long, extended break, and then coming back, is a sure way of losing your audience.

Unless you are true celebrity, that people are just dying to listen to - ensure you make your podcast a regular feature. When audiences listen in, and like what they are listening to, they make 'a date' with your podcast - NEVER disappoint them !

TIP # 5 : ACTIVELY SEEK GUESTS



Your content – and the overall interest in the topic explored, has a lot to do with the quality and personalities of your guests.

Remember - you audience cannot see the guest - or their facial expressions or gesticulations. So, ensuring the guest is 'interesting' over the 'mic' is important when selecting your guests.

As much as you might want to interview 'popular' figures they may disappoint - try find those 'hidden gems' that will add a lot of colour and variety to your podcast.

TOOL 3 : FINDING GUESTS

Finding Guests is an art form that you must master.

Remember - a podcast is only as good as the guests it attracts. So, actively be on the lookout for different types of guests you can have - and also, the kind of conversations you can have with them.

NEVER have the same type of conversation with everyone. Try not to repeat topics either - unless there is a completely different angle to take.

If you have not ever heard the guest speak before, schedule a 15-30 minute conversation with them off-air to determine if they are a good fit or not.

Keep finding guests - and keep making friends - it will hold you in good stead outside of the podcasts too!

Subject Matter Experts

The reality is that many subject matter experts may not be great conversationalists. However, being able to truly probe and glean insights from their vast expertise is what will define you as a navigator of a podcast. So, prep up for these - and make sure you get the best out of them.

If you want to attract a core set of loyal followers in a particular topic, ensure you have proper subject matter experts coming in. If they are natural conversationalists as well this is a killer combination! You have struck gold!

Will need prepping

Natural Conversationalists

There are many popular figures who shy away from being 'out there'. Try and convince them to BE ON your show - and prep them for it. When they get comfortable they can certainly have an easy conversation with you. Remember - having someone who is rarely seen in the 'public domain' but is very popular will add a lot to the credibility of your podcast.

Another group to bring in - to ensure your 'popularity' and 'reach' grows are 'popular figures' who may not be subject matter experts. Those who are natural conversationalists also will do brilliantly well with proper questions - which will add a lot of colour and interest to the podcast.

Popular Figures

SOME FINAL TIPS

- » Tip 1 from Ben – Podcasting is not about you, it is about your guest and your audience. If your goal is to use this medium to sound important, make money or become famous, look elsewhere. Podcasting is a long-tail marketing play. It is about creating a body of work that people can listen to asynchronously, understand its value to them and then engage and share IF they perceive value.
- » Tip 2 from Ben – Sound quality matters! You don't have to invest a LOT of money in equipment right away, but you need to invest. Recording on your phone does not cut it. **Buy a microphone.** It does not have to be a \$1000 mic, a \$100 one will do. I suggest either an AT2005 or a Rode Podmic. Both are USB, low cost and great sound quality for the money invested. It is about making sure you sound as good as you can, and that goes for your guest as well.
- » WHY?
- » Because that is what people are listening to, your voice. If it is not clear and easy to understand, they will go elsewhere, no matter how good your content may be.
- » Tip 3 from Ben – Tone of voice matters. Be authentic. Don't try to be someone else or emulate another podcaster's style or tone, create your own instead. People tune in to hear you. Your voice, your thoughts, your cadence and the way you craft questions. Trying to be something or someone you are not comes off as disingenuous, and turns people against you.
- » Be yourself and those who believe what you believe and are passionate about what you are passionate about will listen, engage and share.
- » Tip 4 from Ben – Recording your podcast on video and just placing it on YouTube is not going to make you a YouTube star. If you want to be a YouTube star, see what other YouTubers are doing and build the elements that resonate with you into the show. It needs to be dynamic, visual and engaging. That video can then be repurposed as audio only, and then put on Spotify, Apple, etc, but recording the video portion of your podcast and just putting it up on YouTube will increase your SEO but more than likely not your viewership.

SOME FINAL TIPS



- » Tip 5 from Ben – Niche down. There are thousands of podcasts out there on hundreds of subjects, the good ones have their own take on things and speak to a very specific audience.
- » For instance, having a podcast that speaks to people who own a 1957 Chevy. You may not get millions of followers or download, but if your show is good, you will get a very loyal following who hang on every word you create which allows for advertising, sponsorship, speaking opportunities, courses and a myriad of other ways that you can monetize.
- » If all your podcast is, is another that speaks to a subject everyone else does, in the same way, who cares? It is about finding an angle and speaking to that specific audience in ways that resonate and benefit them.

**BEN
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