



Assessing methodology development for the service organizations advertising campaign effectiveness in audio blogs (Podcasts)

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Abstract

The relevance of the research topic lies in the emergence and rapid spread of advertising communication new channels with the target audience. One of these advertising platforms is modern audio blogs called podcasts. The aim of the study is to develop a scientifically based methodological approach to assessing the effectiveness of advertising campaigns on a communication channel - podcasts. During the research, the authors of the article used methods of quantitative and qualitative assessment, comparative and factor analysis, analysis and synthesis, grouping and comparison, when formulating conclusions based on the research results - the method of logical generalization. The use of these scientific methods and approaches in a complex allowed us to determine the meaningful essence of service organizations activities to create podcasts as a promising means of advertising. The authors of the article identified the advantages and disadvantages of service organizations advertising in podcasts, analyzed the target audience of the communication channel, highlighted the types of advertising placed by service organizations on podcasts, analyzed platforms for its placement, and summarized and systematized indicators that can be used to evaluate the advertising effectiveness on podcasts, depending on the placement on various hosting. Article submissions can be of interest to the service and other organizations planning advertising campaigns using audio blogs (podcasts).

Keywords: podcasts, advertising campaign, service organizations, audio blogs, efficiency

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INTRODUCTION

During a pandemic, many businesses and organizations save on their advertising budget. Therefore, at present, social media has an excellent opportunity to update broadcast formats and create new channels of advertising communication with the target audience. One of these advertising platforms are modern audio blogs called podcasts.

A podcast is an audio blog that differs from the radio by the absence of live broadcast - the material is recorded in advance, so users can send it at any convenient time, and from audiobooks - because it is easier and cheaper to create. As a result, podcasts are increasingly being used by companies as corporate media.

According to the international auditing company Deloitte, in 2020 the volume of the global podcast market

will grow by 30% and reach \$ 1.1 billion (Heard: why audiobooks and podcasts are gaining popularity, 2020).

At the end of 2019, the international analytical association Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) estimated the cost of advertising in podcasts at 76 million rubles (VKontakt named the most popular podcasts of the platform, 2019). At the same time, the average monthly audience in Russia is estimated at 5.1 million listeners. The chairman of the audio advertising committee of the IAB in Russia, Mikhail Ilyichev, predicts that by the end of 2020, the audience of podcasts will reach 10.5 million listeners per month, and at the end of 2024 - 27.9 million. The company spends for promotion and integration in podcasts in 2020 will reach 225 million

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rubles, and in 2024 - 1.9 billion rubles (Podcasts for media, 2020).

The limitation of audience growth and development of the podcast industry can be explained primarily by a lack of listening and listening habits. Many people in Russia use radio stations as background sound while driving and listen to music while exercising to keep pace. The podcast, on the other hand, fights for the listener's attention, involves immersion in the created atmosphere in narrative podcasts, and encourages reflection and internal dialogue in spoken genres.

The low entry threshold, the absence of taboo topics and the scope for experimenting with formats, on the one hand, is an opportunity to launch your podcast without having specialized knowledge in the field of journalism, sound engineering and editing (Muñoz-Leiva, Hernández-Méndez & Gómez-Carmona, 2019). And it is these same factors that cause the appearance of the same type of conversational podcasts without a clearly formulated topic and project objectives. Podcasts like these are easy to launch and difficult to develop without understanding the purpose and value of the market.

Among the main growth drivers, experts point out the emergence of large podcasts brands on the market, as well as media. Thus, the already formed, loyal media audience pays attention to the podcast format and gradually adopts the habit of consuming more audio. In addition, the resources of publications, radio and TV channels allow initially producing better quality content - both in terms of content and from the technical side of preparation. Improving the overall quality of podcasts also contributes to audience growth and industry shaping.

The methodological basis of this scientific research was the systemic scientific developments of a general theoretical and applied nature, devoted to the problems of improving the sales system and managing the quality of grain processing industry products, as well as the scientific results of research organizations on the problems of the consumer market, raw materials and food in the agro-industrial complex.

In the course of the research, general scientific methods and theories of researching socio-economic phenomena and processes were used: logical, dialectical, systemic, technological, process and situational approaches, as well as general scientific methods of understanding socio-economic processes: concretization, analysis, synthesis, abstraction. When processing the information-empirical base, the MSExcel and MSWord application packages were used.

While analyzing podcasts desk research methods were used: analysis of scientific and methodical literature on the subject in question, compilation and classification of research and existing foreign and Russian experience in the field of online advertising.

In the study of this problem, a systematic approach and comparative analysis were used. The use of these

methods allowed us to identify the advantages and disadvantages of advertising in podcasts, to analyze the target audience of the communication channel, to highlight the types of advertising placed on podcasts, to analyze platforms for its placement, and also to systematize indicators to assess the effectiveness of advertising on podcasts.

This study is a continuation of previously conducted research by the authors (Matuzenko & Sotnik, 2017; Matuzenko, Kolesnikova & Trunova, 2018; Makrinova, Matuzenko & Kolesnikova, 2019). Within the framework of this article, the goal was to develop a methodological approach to assessing advertising campaigns of service organizations on podcasts.

Scientific and theoretical Approaches to Planning for Service Organization Advertising Campaign Implementation on Podcasts

The study of various sources on the podcasts use as a communication channel for planning advertising campaigns allowed the authors of the article to conclude that there are currently no methodological approaches to this kind of research.

In this regard, the authors of the article highlighted the stages of planning, implementation and evaluation of advertising campaign effectiveness on podcasts, which are reflected in **Fig. 1**.

Let's consider these stages in more detail. Podcasts first became known in the early 2000s, appeared on iTunes in 2005, and in 2014, following the success of the investigative journalism podcast Serial, they began to be seen as a serious content marketing tool.

Having examined the views of various experts--practice on the use of podcasts as an advertising platform (You can't compare sweet and green, 2020; Heard: why audiobooks and podcasts are gaining popularity, 2020), the authors identified the following advantages and disadvantages (**Fig. 2**).

Assessment of the Current State and Prospects for Podcasts Development as a Communication Channel and Means Of Advertising

Currently, podcast target audience all over the world, including in Russia, is growing rapidly: according to experts, by the end of 2024 the number of such audio content listeners will be more than 27 million people. For comparison: the monthly audience of radio stations in Russia in 2019, according to Mediascope experts, amounted to 107 million people (You can't compare sweet and green, 2020). While the number of radio listeners, although large, remains practically unchanged, the situation is different for podcasting: it continues to gain popularity, as it offers a completely different format of information consumption, which many people find more convenient and functional.

Statistics from Brand Analytics for 2019 indicate that podcasts in Russia are more often listened to by young

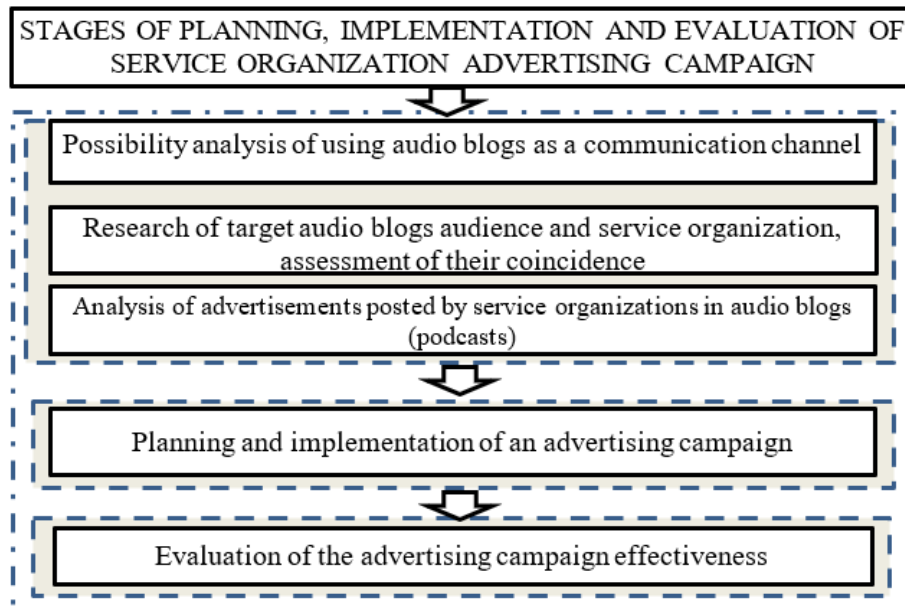


Fig. 1. Stages of planning, implementation and evaluation of service organization advertising campaign effectiveness on podcasts

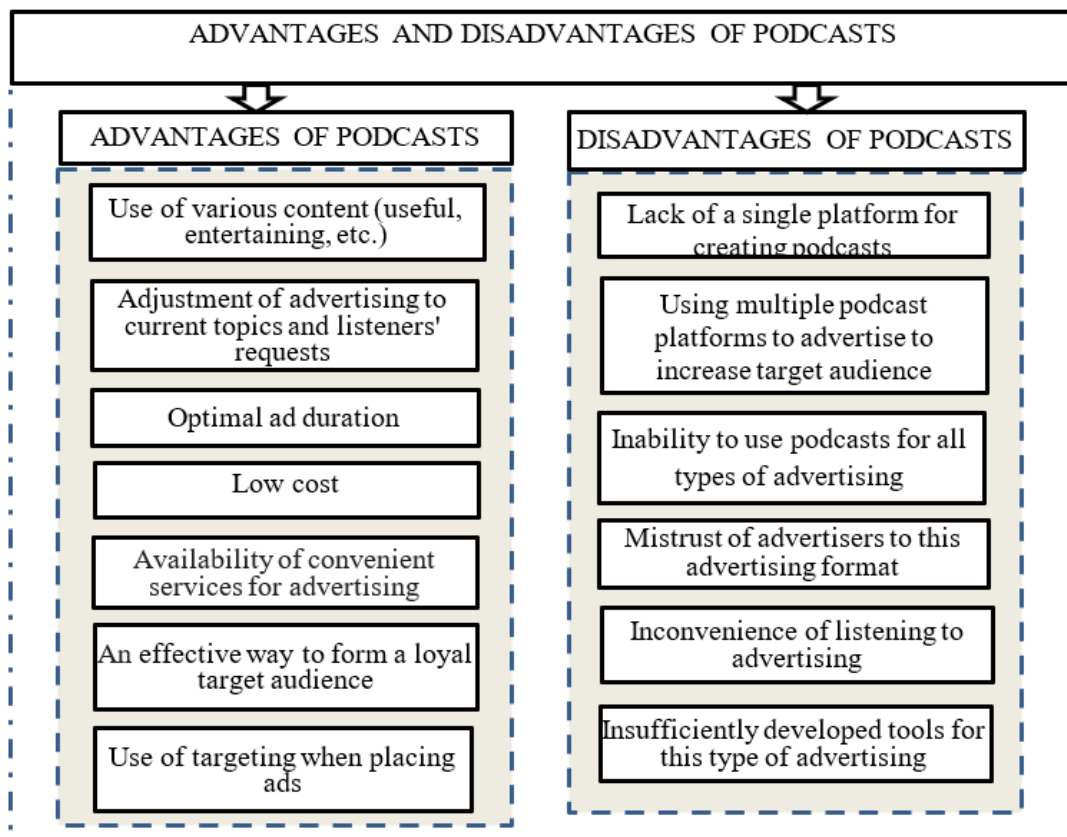


Fig. 2. Systematization of podcasts advantages and disadvantages as a means of advertising for a Russian service organization

people aged 25–34 (37.4 %) (Podcasts in Russia 2019 - on the verge of a boom, 2019) (Fig. 3).

Most of podcasts target audience (55%) in Russia is men. Users of VK, Odnoklassniki, Twitter, Facebook,

Instagram and YouTube, were interested in audio blogs. Podcast references have also been identified on blogs, forums, public messenger channels, and commentaries on news articles.

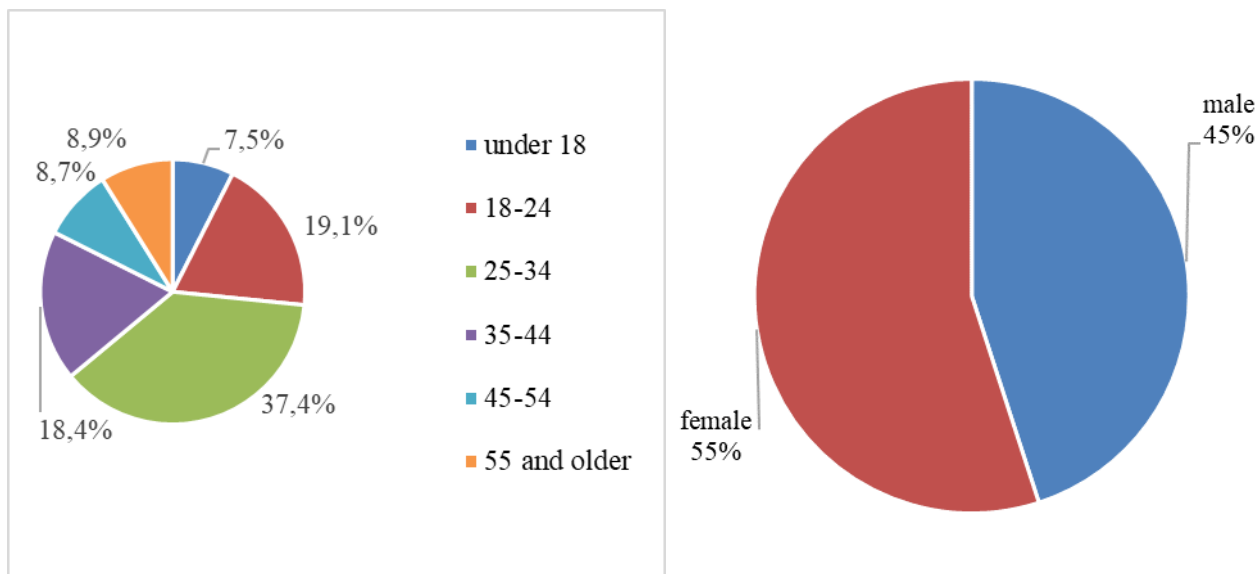


Fig. 3. Podcasts target audience distribution in Russia depending on gender and age

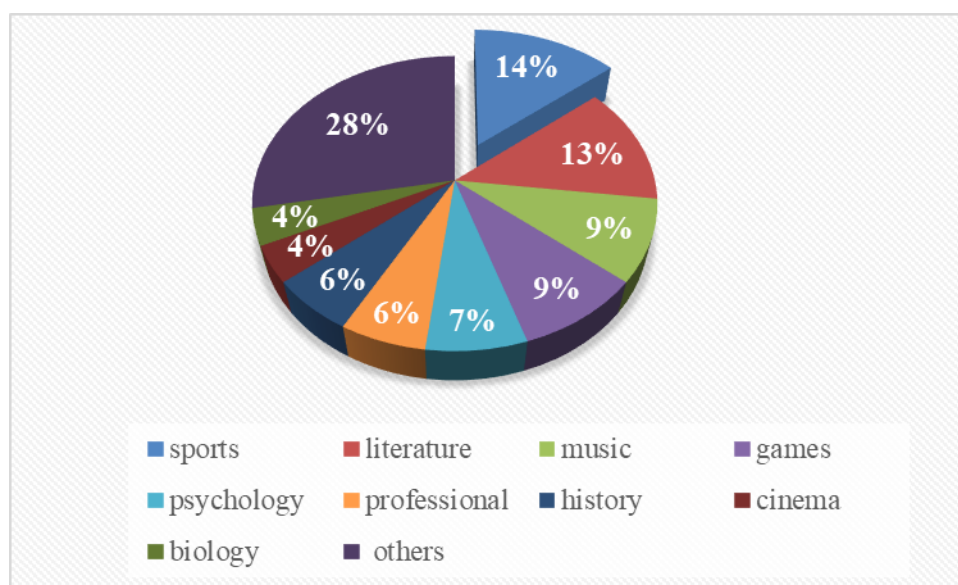


Fig. 4. Distribution of podcasts by topic

Studying the thematic preferences of the Russian Internet audience in podcasting, analysts took into account messages from the first person like “I am listening” / “I listen”. The popularity of hosting sites with Russian-language podcasts was calculated based on the number of their mentions when discussing sites.

Podcast topics, according to Brand Analytics, are shown in in Fig. 4.

The first place in the podcast topic is occupied by “Sport” - 14% of the target audience, the second is for “Literature” (13%), the third is for “Music” (9%).

Currently, many Russian companies create podcasts. For example, in 2019, there were only 2,550 podcasts and 50,172 episodes on VK (VK named the most popular podcasts of the platform, 2019). Nevertheless, podcasts available from such well-known

Russian companies as “Layfhaker”, “Medusa”, “Yandex”, “kinopoisk” and others. At the same time, as practice has shown, podcasts are created by companies with a non-media product. For example, own podcasts are available at English language schools “Do not for Speak”, the bank “Tinkoff”, two podcasts are at “Evotor”, a special podcast of 5 issues with is made for company “Invitro”.

According to social network “VK” the most popular Russian podcasts are: “urban fairy tale” - a podcast with fairy tales; “VDud” – a podcast from journalist Yuri Dud; TED in Russian- a podcast with translations of various talks from TED conferences; “Lifehacker” - audio versions of the eponymous publication articles, sometimes updated and supplemented; “NewWhat” - interesting foreign materials translated into Russian.



Fig. 5. Advertising services types and means of Russian service organizations on podcasts

Apple Company also publishes annual ratings of the most popular podcasts including Russian. In 2019, this top included the following podcasts: “Perhaps the most beautiful music in the world!”, “EuroHit top-40” Europe Plus “Official- new songs”, Radio Record, “Russian dance floor” and “Brandyatina- brand stories” - it is produced by radio Mayak. Also this list contains podcasts from Lifehacker and Meduza - Meduza in the know (Heard: why audiobooks and podcasts are gaining popularity, 2020).

After analyzing various scientific and online sources (), the authors identified the following types of advertising used to podcasts (**Fig. 5**).

Advertising by direct employers is used by Russian service organizations in practice very often due to advertisers distrust to the content format. Due to scattered statistics and the absence of a single podcast platform, advertisers do not fully understand what podcasts are and how advertising works in them, and podcasters do not know how to evaluate ad space and do advertising well.

But there are also pluses: podcasts are developing rapidly, and their audience is usually very high-quality – the audio format is preferred by young people with an active lifestyle. In addition, you can thematically target - listeners in most cases choose podcasts on topics of interest to themselves - and get into a specific context.

Another interesting nuance: since podcasts are often listened to while doing other things, ads in them, as a rule, are not rewind - it’s just not as convenient to do as when watching a video.

Podcast crowdfunding is like voluntary donations from listeners, which can be of any size and frequency. Thanks to donations listeners can get early access to the manufacture or unique content, mentioning name on the air, souvenirs and etc. In addition to the above, there are other ways to monetize podcasts:

- creating partnerships issues, the author makes a podcast episode for some company. The main

difference from regular advertising is that in partner projects, the brand can influence the content of the issue to a greater extent;

- sponsorship and investment – working tool, though it is not common. For example, in 2019 the company LVL1 Group became an investor for a studio podcast “Either / Or”;

- links to advertising offers in the podcast description - can be used both in conjunction with advertising integrations in the podcast itself, or independently. But there remains the problem of measuring the effectiveness of such advertising;

- Paywall, or paid subscriptions, while working poorly in Russia, an example is the content of the Republic. The essence of the method is that the podcast becomes available only by subscription, but there are many free podcasts, and there are not enough listeners willing to pay;

- recording a podcast with the audience - is the most popular form of advertising on podcasts.

- paid interview - this is when an expert or some speaker pays for it, that he was interviewed, but this format is suitable only for large media projects with a large audience.

In 2019, Brand Analytics found out that most of the Russian-speaking audience listens to podcasts on YouTube, [Soundcloud.com](https://www.soundcloud.com), Apple Podcasts and VK. The problem with the first two services is that they don’t associate with podcasts at all. The global problem with podcasts is the lack of a single service for listening.

A more successful strategy nowadays is to promote podcasts on sites that already have their own audience. For example, Medusa and Arzamas to podcasts convert their audience from the site.

Podcast hosting platforms are depicted in **Fig. 6**.

According to experts in the field of online advertising (Neumann, 2018; Orel, 2018), currently, one podcast is not enough to capture the maximum number of target audience of a company: it is better to be present on

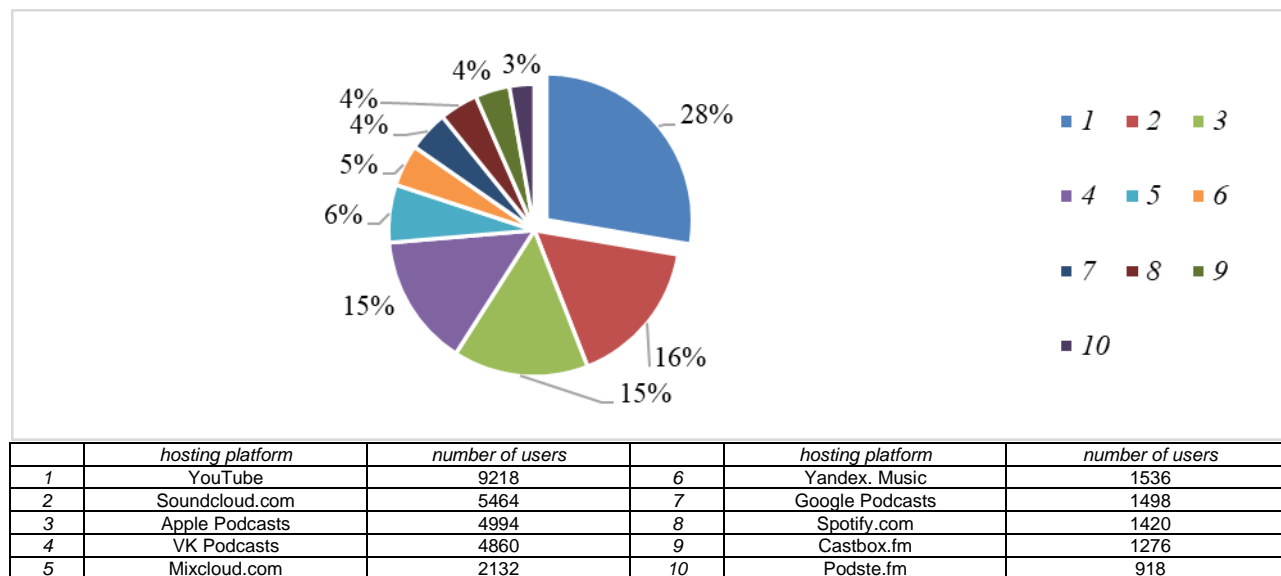


Fig. 6. Podcast hosting platform

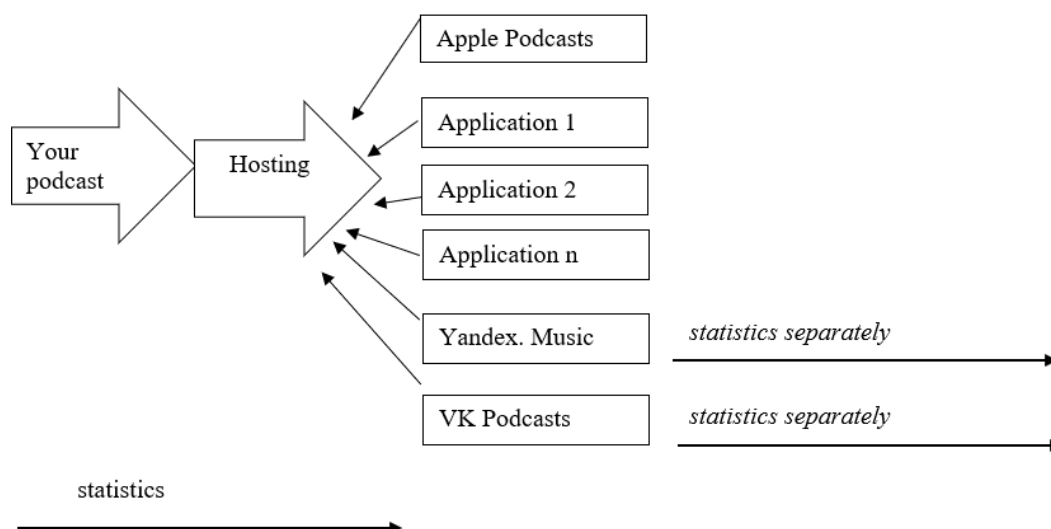


Fig. 7. The process of placing podcasts across different applications and services

several platforms at once. In addition, according to the authors of the article, this advertising communication will be most effective in synergy with other and content marketing channels.

In practice, the following sequence of placing a podcast for different applications and services is used (Fig. 7).

In order for a podcast to find its listener, it must be uploaded to the hosting - a special service that allows users to post information on the Internet. After downloading, hosting providers distribute podcasts to applications and sites, where they can be found and listened to, and get statistics back for authors.

This mechanism has key problem collecting podcast analysts - different hosting can have a different set of statistics on the downloaded podcasts and generally regarded as the statistics in different ways, and some areas, for example, "VK", or "Yandex. Music", and does

not provide their metrics to hosting providers - podcast authors need to collect analytics directly from these services. Sometimes podcasts are listened to without an Internet connection, which also makes it difficult to collect analytics.

In addition to hosting sites and individual sites for hosting podcasts, analytics can be collected on special services for collecting statistics, for example, on Chartable or Podkite.

Methodology for evaluating advertising campaign effectiveness on podcasts

The main recognized indicator of the effectiveness and the Internet - advertising is CTR (the Click-Through Rate), calculated as the ratio of clicks to displays. This indicator is usually measured as a percentage (the resulting value must be multiplied by 100). At the same time, it is obvious that in the final assessment of the

Table 1. Index system to assess the effectiveness of advertising campaign on podcasts

Hosting name	Cost	Performance indicators
Anchor	Free	- the number of listens for all episodes from all platforms; - estimated audience size - the average number of views for each episode in the first 30 days after publication; - auditions for the episode; - top 10 episodes; - location of listeners; - apps and devices from which your podcast is listened to.
Castbox	Free	- the total number of subscribers and dynamics for the period; - the total number of listeners' subscribers and dynamics for the period
Simplecast	Paid	<i>Basic analytics:</i> - the number of downloads today / in total / in 7 days; - the number of unique users; - top episodes; - platforms from which to listen to the podcast; - the time when they listen to the podcast; - geography of downloads; - top countries. <i>Advanced analytics:</i> - the total number of downloads for the selected period and the number of downloads of individual episodes; - detailed statistics on geography; - user retention analytics; - devices from which the podcast is listened to; - providers; - unique listeners
Soundcloud	Paid	- which track has more listens, likes, comments and downloads for the selected period; - geography of listeners; - the total number of times the track was listened to.

advertising campaign effectiveness, it is important to take into account not only the frequency of particular Internet resource attendance, but also the achievement of the advertising campaign financial result (Kondratyeva, 2019).

Turning to the assessment of the advertising campaign effectiveness on the podcast must take into account the specific features of this Internet resource. Therefore, according to the authors of the article, when assessing the advertising campaign effectiveness on podcasts, it is important to consider the following parameters:

- listens - how many people have turned on the podcast;
- full listens - how many listeners listen to the podcast to the end (such metrics can be found, for example, in VK and Apple);
- number of listeners / subscribers;
- listening concentration - attention and actions of the audience during and after listening;
- ratings and reviews of the audience;
- downloads.

After analyzing numerous scientific sources (Naumov, 2013; Plotnikov, 2018), the authors systematized indicators that can be used to evaluate advertising campaign effectiveness on podcasts and to reflect them in **Table 1**.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The issues of evaluating the online advertising effectiveness have been studied practically from the very first years of using the Internet capabilities to promote goods and services. There are many studies of online advertising effectiveness, both in Russia (Mikailova, 2018) and abroad (Rzemieniak, 2015;

Arshad, Ahmad & Siddiqui, 2018; Kim, Kwon & Chang, 2011; Broeck, Brahim & Poels, 2019; Kim & Moon, 2020; Runge, Geinitz & Ejdemyr, 2020). At the same time, the study of using podcasts possibilities as an advertising campaign tool has only become relevant in the last decade, due to the growing popularity of this communication channel with goods and services consumers.

In contrast to the previously published works of the authors of the article (Matuzenko & Sotnik, 2017; Matuzenko, Kolesnikova & Trunova, 2018; Makrinova, Matuzenko & Kolesnikova, 2019), devoted to the development of digital technologies, and the second articles investigated one of the new digital platforms in Russia - podcasts, growing in target audience and attracting businesses, in order to substantiate the methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of an advertising campaign on podcasts.

As a result of the study, it was possible not only to characterize the target audience of podcasts in Russia, as well as platforms for posting podcasts by service organizations, but also to offer methodological tools for assessing the effectiveness of this communication channel use in advertising campaigns.

At the end of this study, we can conclude that the podcast market in Russia is still quite young, not fully formed, but very promising. At present universal podcast platform does not exist as well as universal metrics that would make the same work for different hosts and applications. In addition, there are many risks and concerns from both podcasters and service organizations - advertisers. However, major brands, especially network (hotel chains, restaurant chain, cafes) has realized the importance of podcasts as a means of advertising and actively create their own podcasts, picking up new audiences and increasing

existing customers loyalty, earning on advertising integration, partnership issues and donations from listeners.

The effectiveness of this activity will be higher if it is based on the use of an evidence-based approach, including the one proposed in this article.

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