



## **Developing a Cultural Podcast Platform**

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Matkailun koulutusohjelma

## Abstract

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The aim of the thesis is to develop a plan for launching a podcast platform on which will be delivered audio content like podcasts and audio courses. The content is dedicated to the humanitarian and cultural disciplines like arts, literature, architecture, cinema etc.

The thesis is focused on the topic of podcasting because of its ongoing growth and raising audience from year to year. Podcasting seems to be a big trend nowdays and a pretty actual phenomenon.

In this thesis was considered as a theoretical part podcasting as a phenomenon, how the undustry was developing, existing categories of podcasts, how, why and where people listen to podcasts in the United States and in Finland. Moreover there was viewed the way of how podcasts come to its final state to the consumers.

As the development method was choosed the business model canvas. It covered all the main details for the launching project. As a part of the business model canvas there was developed a customer journey map. Also in the thesis was explained concept of the platform with all of involved stakeholders. To bring a better understanding there are developed SWOT analysis and examples of content plan for audio courses and podcasts' series. Also was considered a marketing stategy for the launching stage of the project.

As outcome it has the developed concept of the platform, content plan, monetization opportunities and as finished product it has to be an application, where all of the audio content is provided for the consumers. Under the platform is meant an application on which all of the produced content will be placed. Produced podcasts should to be posted also on other podcast distribution platforms. Audio courses should to be presented mostly in the project's application and some of them are available after subscription.

## Keywords

Podcasting, Audio Content, Entrepreneurship

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## 1 Introduction

With the development of technologies, there is a growth of information spreading, also as the level of accessibility to the information growing. In the beginning of the 21st century it was hard to imagine how huge and impressive will be an impact and significance of the Internet, smartphones and other digital tools. Nowadays YouTube platform seems to people to be a basic thing, also as to business and content providers it means a significant tool for reaching its' target groups and deliver awareness of own services, are they entertaining, educating or anything else.

At the current time, video hosting services are dominating in the information's consuming. Moreover it should to be said, that mostly people prefer to absorb info with their sense of sight (Shift, 2014). It refers also to the television. In the past century people got used to spend time in front of their TV sets with a purpose to watch news or entertaining shows. Now YouTube replaces TV's place and is becoming a 21st century's TV set. But also due to the high impact of absorbing information in visual way, it was seen the rise of such social media products like Instagram, SnapChat and TikTok.

The grown popularity of the mentioned social media products can also be justified by so called "clip culture" phenomenon. As with the developing of technologies, the pace of absorbing information is growing. Also as absorbing with visuals is much more comfortable and seems to be more interesting and entertaining, so people want to watch more and more videos, so the content needs to be short in order to spare time, also as in order to reach more views. Plus the content needs to be colorful and adorable.

All with this sense of sight and video content dominating, there are some things standing aside. People have more ways of sensing and of course there are other types of content that don't focus on sense of sight, but engage the other one, which is so meaningful to everyone - hearing. So in this way nowadays there are some forms and types for content providers, products and services to reach people and target audiences. It is podcasting, on which is taken focus in this thesis.

The developing podcast platform focuses on cultural topics and questions. At the moment most of podcast projects are focused on comedy, business, personal development, interviewing etc. So developing a podcast dedicated to the aspects of culture is quite free of competition and choosing the right themes, that interest people can guarantee a success for the project. Culture is an universal thing that appears all along with society: starting from the daily routine and ways of doing things, ending with more complicated forms of culture like arts, literature, architecture, philosophy etc.

## **1.1 Background of thesis**

The history of podcasting started in the beginning of 2000s. Its main feature was that the listener could listen to the show anytime and anywhere. Usually podcasts are said to be an independent radio shows. In the beginning basic podcast episodes were as regular radio talk show. In the middle of 2000s podcasting development started a new page, when Apple introduced podcasts into iTunes. Starting from then into podcast industry started to come comedians, journalists and other media companies started to develop different projects. Amount of listeners is consistently growing, types and new kinds of podcast projects are developing, and also as the money flows are coming into this industry. With taking the last point into consideration it is surely the audience will see new projects and formats developed on the podcasting base.

Nowadays it might be the right moment to develop a new podcast project. So this thesis focuses on the developing a high quality podcast project with description of podcast phenomenon, how podcasts are made, its types. Also thesis includes an overview of the American and Finnish podcast situations, concept and development of project's podcast platform, content plan and marketing for the project. As the development method for the project is used business model canvas that covers all the main aspects of the project.

## **1.2 Project's objective and tasks**

The objective of this thesis is to develop a concept for audio content application in which would be presented podcasts and audio courses dedicated to different cultural topics. Also as to overview all the main business model's aspects related to the project's launching. Moreover there is a task to develop ideas for some podcast series and define content for audio courses. Another objective is to develop a marketing strategy for an early stage of the project.

Project's mission is to educate and enhance people's awareness in cultural field. Culture enhances people's well-being and quality of life. So with this project leads to better self-understanding and understanding of other people and things around. (Ontario, 2019).

## 2 Podcasts

Podcast is a radio program that is stored in a digital form that a person can download from the Internet and play on a computer or on an MP3 player (Cambridge Dictionary 2021). To start a podcast producing there is a need to define a theme and value proposition, also as develop its appearance and plan a structure. After that there is needed technical equipment like microphones, recorder, mixer and quiet space isolated from noises. When the content is recorded, its time for editing and sound design. For this there are needed special software. The next step in podcasting is to post it on the hosting platforms like Simplecast, Soundcloud or Podbean. And after that when podcast is hosted, it can be found from distribution channels like Apple and Google podcasts or Spotify. (vc.ru, 2020).

Currently there are about 850 thousands active podcasts, also as over 30 millions podcast episodes (Podcast Insights 2020). More than 50 per cent of consumers above 12 years old in the United States listen to podcasts (Statista 2019). Usually people use their portable devices like smartphones and tablets to listen it and percentage of such users is 65 (Edison Research 2019). Also 32 per cent listen to podcast on a monthly basis (Edison Research 2019). Most of listeners prefer to tune to podcasts at home (Edison Research 2019). Typical podcast listener follows around six shows and listens to seven shows per week (Edison Research 2019).

At Apple podcast categories' list there are different topics of podcasts with several subcategories but the main topics are: arts, business, comedy, education, fiction, government, history, health and fitness, kids and family, leisure, music, news, religion and spirituality, science, society and culture, sports, technology, true crime, TV and film (Podcast Insights 2020).

The most listened podcast category in October 2020 among listeners in the United States was comedy, than go News and True Crime categories. Share of weekly listeners to comedy podcasts was 22 per cent and percentage of News was 21%. With a gap of 3% is true crime. (Statista, 2021).

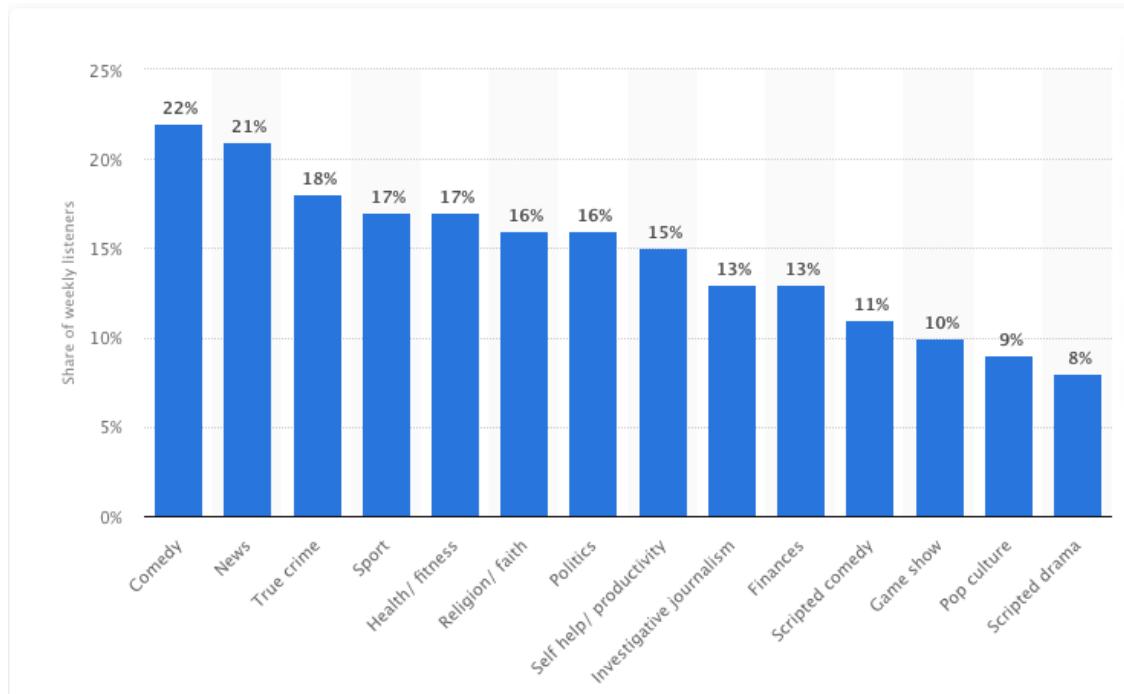


Figure 1. Leading podcast genres (Statista 2021)

Taking a look about other statistics from third quarter of 2019 by Edison Research, it can be seen that Comedy genre was also the most popular one. News category was still on the second place, but on third place was Society & Culture. True crime was on the fifth place. According to Podtrac.com rankings published in April 2020, the top 5 categories in podcasting are: News, Society and Culture, Comedy, Arts and Business. So it can be made next conclusions that Comedy and News categories are the most favorite ones, but also podcasts dedicated to culture are also quite popular.

Table 1. Leading podcast genres (Edison Research 2019)

Genre	% of Weekly Podcast Consumers Listening to at Least One Podcast in Genre in the Last Week	Genre	% of Weekly Podcast Consumers Listening to at Least One Podcast in Genre in the Last Week
Comedy	36%	TV & Film	8%
News	23%	Science	6%
Society & Culture	22%	Health & Fitness	6%
Sports	15%	History	5%
True Crime	12%	Leisure	4%
Arts	11%	Music	4%
Business	10%	Education	3%
Religion & Spirituality	8%	Technology	3%

As most of the people use their smartphones to listen to podcasts, there is several applications that are common for podcast listening. According to the statistics gathered in the

US from 2019 and 2020 in top 3 list there are Spotify, Apple podcasts and Google podcasts. All together its share is more than 50%.

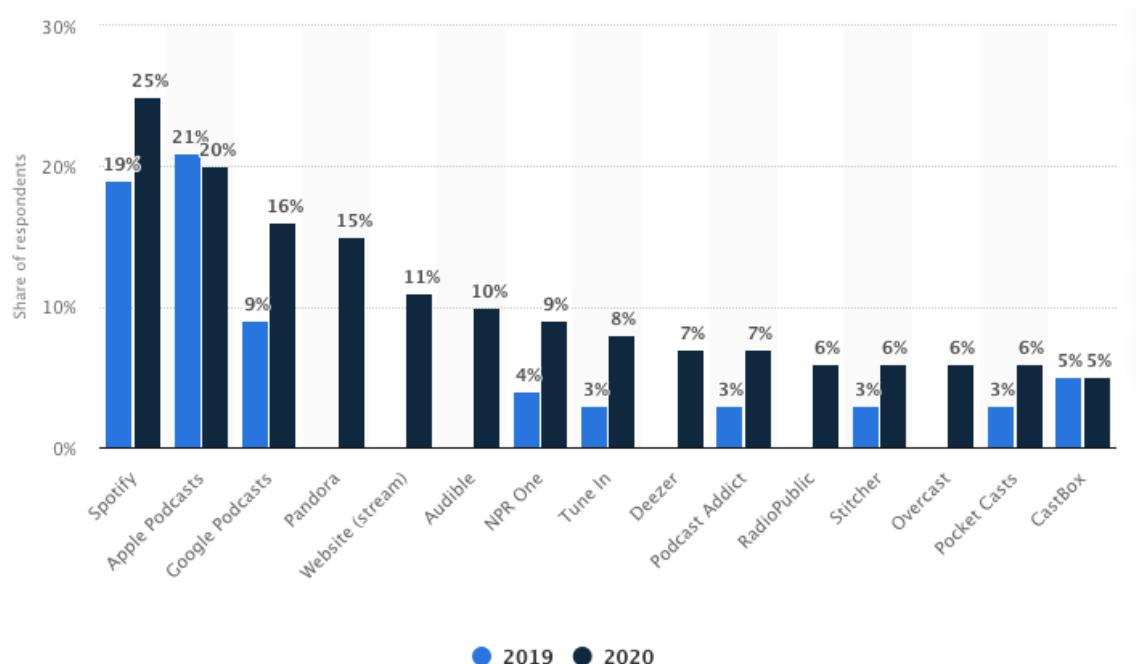


Figure 2. Applications used for podcast listening (Statista 2021)

So as it can be seen from the graphics on the fifth place is website streaming, so it means that people sometimes listen to podcasts on some websites without using any particular application. For better accessibility to users it is important for podcast project to be presented at the most of podcast listening platforms and it is vital at least to be presented at Spotify, Apple and Google podcast platforms.

All of statistics were presented is about the podcast consuming in the United States, as it can be seen the most developed podcast market in the world and analyzing it can bring better understanding of podcast trends. In the further chapter there will be focus on podcasting in Finland.

## 2.1 Podcasting as a phenomenon

The podcasting started in 2004 in the USA with efforts of software developer and former MTV VJ. It was devised a plan that enables people to download online radio broadcasts from the Internet to iPod device. In this way radio files could be stored on a portable player and listened wherever and whenever. In these times podcasts usually were associated with audioblogging or amateur radio. Also in this year appeared the first podcast service provider "Libsyn.com". One year later the word "podcast" was named as the word of the year by the New Oxford American Dictionary. Also there was published the first Do It Yourself guide dedicated to podcasting. Also large companies Yahoo! and Apple paid

attention to podcasting: Yahoo! unveiled a podcast search site and Apple introduced podcasts into their iTunes platform. A period from 2006 till 2013 was time of steady growth for podcasting industry. Some of American radio personalities, comedians and media companies have achieved particular achievements in podcasting e.g. English comedian Ricky Gervais reached 59 million unique downloads. A defining moment for podcasting happened in 2014, when an investigative journalism podcast called Serial was published. Its innovative use of the podcast format that has existed already for 10 years and the captivating dynamic captured larger audience. The number of monthly podcast listeners in the USA doubled in five years. (Skinner 2020).



Figure 3. Monthly podcast listening in the USA over the years (Edison Research 2020)

The reason why podcasts are gaining popularity is because they almost fit in every lifestyle. There are different podcasts that can suit to every person. Also listening a podcast is a good way to get information on the go. Also audio listening allows people to multitask: often people tend to listen podcasts at home while doing their home routine and more than a half listen to podcasts while driving (Edison Research 2018). Especially listening to a podcast while driving has a huge advantage over video hosting platforms.

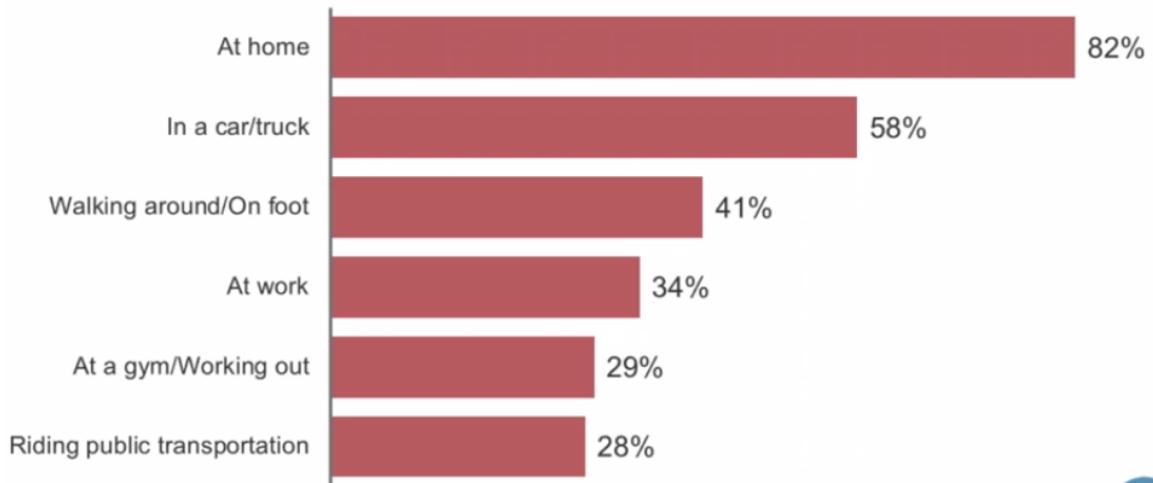


Figure 4. Places where people listen to podcasts (Edison Research 2018)

For the main reasons why people listen to podcasts are learning new things and being entertained. But also people use podcasts to stay up to date with latest topics and this explains the popularity of news podcasts. Also about half of people listen it to relax, also as to feel inspired. (Statista, 2021). With dipping more inside some people can name such reasons to listen to podcasts as improving wellbeing, enhancing relationships, moving forward in career etc. Also listening experience can be much more enjoyable than watching a video, because audio engages our brain and imagination more than just watching. Also listening to others' voices creates a deeper connection to listener and can convey much better. (Brandis 2020).

## 2.2 Podcasting in Finland

Podcasting is quite emerging thing in Finland; there are about 1 million Finnish people who listen to podcasts. In year 2018 there was about 69% who knew what podcast is, in 2020 its percentage grew up to 84%. In the range by age from 15 till 64 years old people about 21% listens to podcast on weekly basis. At least one time per month 39% of Finns listen to podcasts. (Radiomedia, 2020).

The most popular categories for people in Finland are entertainment (49% of respondents), news (35%) and human relationships with 32%. Also about 42% of Finnish men are interested into sports, when 53% of women are interested more in human relationships and family affairs. Motivation to listen to podcasts is quite similar as in the US: entertainment, learning something new and relaxing. (Radiomedia, 2020).

Most of the people in Finland listen to podcasts with their smartphones (about 81%) and also as in the USA, people in Finland prefer mostly to listen to podcasts at home (73%) and by driving a car or being in public traffic almost half of respondents (48%) listens to

podcast. A third of people focuses only on listening to podcast, but 49% of women of Finland listens to podcasts while doing their homework routine. (Radiomedia, 2020).

As it can be seen from the statistics of podcasts' consuming in the USA and Finland, they are quite similar to each other. The one thing that differs is its size, as in the USA lives more people than in Finland. Finnish speaking podcasts can be found on the most common platforms like Apple and Google podcast, Spotify but also there are podcasts published on Yle website and Yle Areena application. Moreover there are several Finnish applications like Radio.fi and Supla, where Finnish speaking podcasts can be found.

In the cultural podcasting in Finland there is seen not so much competition and content. Enthusiasts like ArtPod and Avajaiset Podcast podcast series about arts started to produce some podcasts starting from 2019 and 2020. Also Amos Rex museum launched its podcast episodes in 2020, which were dedicated to the exhibition about the Ancient Egypt. Also on Yle Areena there can be found little more than 50 audio series dedicated to culture.

### 3 Concept of project's podcast platform

The idea behind the project is to deliver educational audio content regarding cultural and humanitarian disciplines. It involves different stakeholders: starting from the core team of the project with engaging the people from academic environment to produce content for the listeners, also as try to find suitable sponsors for the audio courses and cooperating with other cultural institutions like museums or universities. The groups of stakeholders are presented in figure 5, it can be seen that they are all connected through the platform.

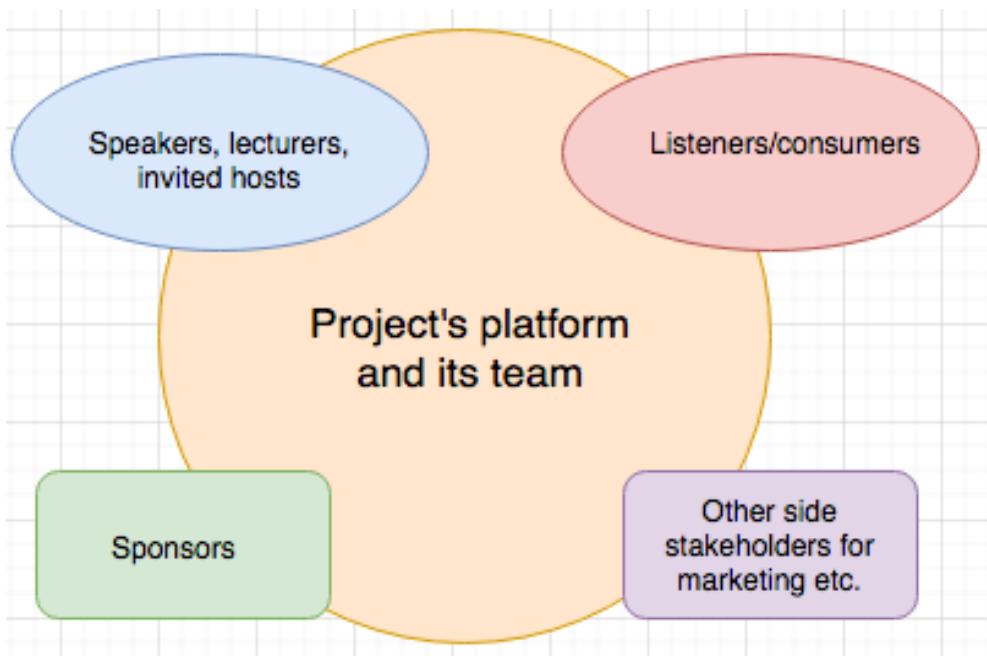


Figure 5. Stakeholders

For the project there are some vital stakeholders for its being and functioning. First of all, it is important to gather a good core team that is responsible for the platform's operation. There are next roles to be in project's team: chef-editor, editors, designer, sound director, photo editor, corrector, publishing editor, developers for the project's application, product manager and social media editor.

Other important group for the project is lecturers and speakers. With their knowledge and help there can be delivered various podcast series and episodes, also as audio courses. The range of experts can be from different disciplines like arts, architecture, world history, history of Finland and so on. Editors with help of editorial assignments should find suitable speakers for the courses and podcasts. In this way speakers can develop their speeches for the episodes. It is quite complicated to figure out how to engage speakers at the beginning stage of the project but could be possible e.g. with some money payment, also as in theory speakers are expected to spread their knowledge for the public.

The next group of stakeholders is listeners. They are project's audience and all of the content provided is for them. It is important to measure and maintain a connection between listeners and the project. As more listeners will tune to project's content than it is easier to engage speakers for the new episodes and series, also as to find and convince sponsors to support the project.

Sponsors are needed for the project to keep it going. As podcasts are good in advertising and most of listeners hear to it without skipping. Also as more than a half of listeners would think about purchasing advertised product or service and they remember the ads they hear on listened podcast. (Buzzsprout, 2021). One of the most important factors to convince sponsor to buy an advertisement in podcast is the rate of listening.

Also there can be other engaged party of stakeholders like marketing or promotional partners, as other companies or groups that can be involved into project's activity. For the new project it is crucial to raise its recognition in order to achieve as many potential listeners as possible. There is a lot of possible partners starting from museums, libraries universities and schools, municipalities and ending with different funds and organizations to cooperate with in content production or project's promotion. Regarding marketing stakeholders, there will be a separate chapter.

## 4 Business model canvas

The business model canvas approach is using to focus on the different details of the product or service strategically. It is used for describing and assessing particular business model. The business model canvas consists of nine different sides of business starting from value preposition and ending with cost structures. It is useful tool to understand how business model works, as it focuses on external and internal factors. (Creatly.com, 2021).

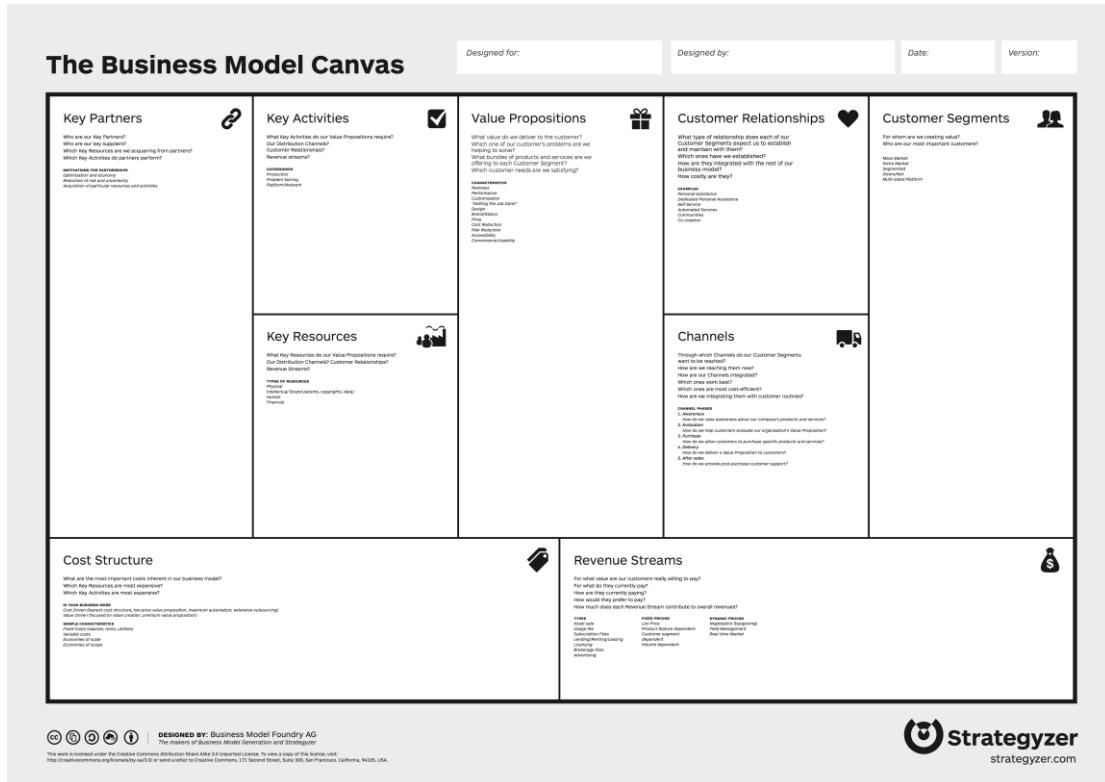


Figure 6. Business model canvas template (Strategyzer 2020)

### 4.1 Value proposition

Value proposition refers to unique solution, product or service for customer's problem or creates a great value for customers. Value proposition supposes to differ from competitors and should be innovative and have new features. (Creatly.com, 2021).

The project delivers to customers a specific value, which focuses on providing new knowledge to them. The platform offers an educational content and at the same time it can deliver entertaining function to the listener. As the project focuses on different aspects of cultural and humanitarian knowledge, the customer can choose any topic that is closer to him, also as to discover and gain awareness about other themes. So in this way the project's value proposition meets all main motivations of podcast listener: entertainment, learning new and relaxing.

In this project's case it is important to mention that as on the platform are expected to be published different podcasts and audio courses about various disciplines and thus every podcast series and course has also its own value preposition for the listener. To present the value preposition in better way, it is important try to catch the consumer's attention straight away with right heading, good description and design. When these factors have played out and person started to listen to content, it is needed to have all the instruments to allow user to adjust the content consuming to listener's needs: a playback speed adjusting, an opportunity to play some amount of seconds back and forward, an opportunity to set a sleep timer, an option to see episode's description and some graphics content etc. User-friendly interface and functionality enhance the experience and fulfills the value preposition.

#### **4.2 Customer segments**

Customer segments are groups of people that are targeted and to whom it is tried to present and sell the product (Creatly.com, 2021).

There are two main customer segments on which project should focus. First ones are people that are interested in cultural and humanitarian topics. Also they may be involved in cultural leisure like visiting museums and exhibitions. The second ones are people that listen to podcasts in general. Regarding about demographics of target audience, there is no difference in gender, but taking in consideration the age range, they are expected to be mostly adults and middle age people. The customer's language is Finnish, as all of the content should to be recorded in Finnish.

#### **4.3 Customer relationships**

For the business is important to understand how it should establish relationships with its customers. For understanding how these relationships are establishing, there is such tool as customer journey map. (Creatly.com, 2021). Podcasting establishes relationships not only with listeners but also with industry experts. Also as in general it can lead to new community's gathering around the project. So it is important to remember to establish and maintain connections with experts and opinion leaders who might be also involved to create and develop the project. (Carbary 2020).

For the project is important to build a long-term relationship with listener. The involved customer is expected to use the project's application from time to time and track the new episodes and content down. By listening to one audio course and appreciating it, the customer can try another one posted on the platform. Also, there should be an opportunity to get a feedback from the listeners to improve project's services.

For better understanding how relationships would get established between listeners and project, there can be used a customer journey map. Customer journey mapping is a technique used to identify the touchpoints and to understand how and through which channels customers engage with business. (Visual Paradigm, 2020).

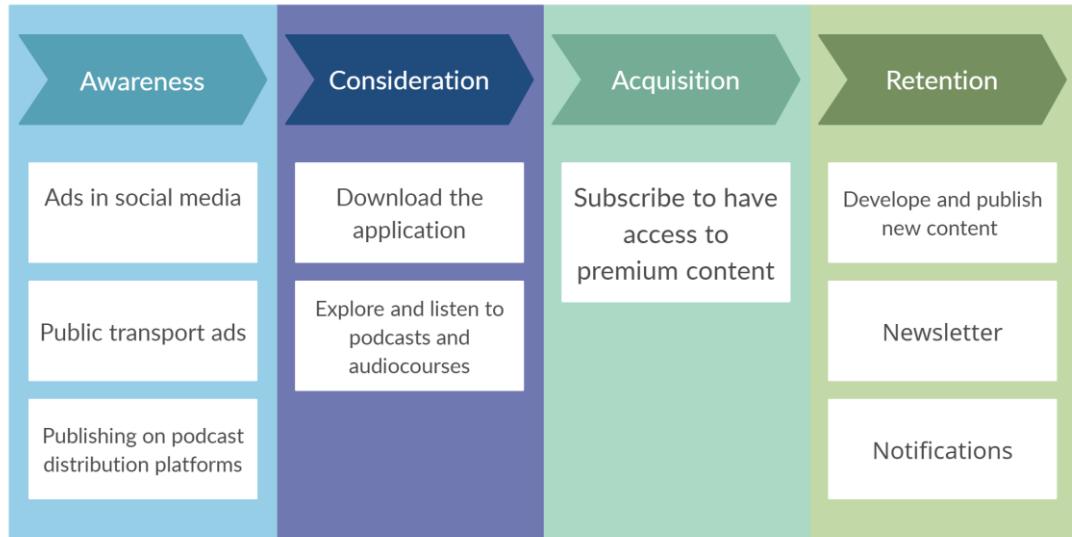


Figure 7. Customer journey map

As it can be seen from the map, the journey starts with awareness. To get in touch with listener there should be used ads in social media and public transport. The most suitable advertising spaces to reach more audience are Helsinki underground and Tampere tram network. After the first stage the targeted person is expected to consider the platform: download the application and explore the content or in other way if he found the content on distribution platform like Apple Podcasts it could also lead him to downloading. The most important part of journey and success stage for the project is when the consumer is satisfied with content and has got more interested in project than he subscribes and pays money to it. On the last phase of retention it is expected to maintain relationships via newsletter about new episodes and courses, also as reach and remind customer about new content via notifications on his smartphone.

#### 4.4 Channels

Channels are used for communication and reaching out to customers. They play a role in awareness of business and deliver value proposition to customer segments. There are two types of channels: owned and partner. (Creatly.com. 2021).

To reach project's target audience there should be used different channels. First of all, as the project is a new product, it has to focus on actions that lead to awareness boost. Awareness can be increased through social media like e.g. ads in Instagram. But it is pret-

ty doubtful that user won't just skip the ad. After all, there should be the project's accounts on two main social media sources: Facebook and Instagram.

Another approach to reach the audience is to show up information in places where the target audience can gather. As people who visit museum can be seen as the main segment for the project, there can be a good chance to deliver project's value proposition to them. So, as one of the important aspects to establish the right channel between the project and customers is co-operating with museum and other cultural institutions (libraries, universities).

Other place that is good to spread awareness about the project and try to encourage people to listen to project's content is public transport. In this way city trams and underground have a good potential to gain the audience for the platform, as they have quite good options for advertising.

In the chapter dedicated to marketing strategy, there will be considered more about what type of messages can be spread to people to make them download the project's application.

#### **4.5 Key activities**

In this section is needed to describe what are the tasks to fulfill business's purpose and which key activities are needed to make business model work. Basically there are three types of key activities: production, problem solving and network supporting. (Creatly, 2021).

Project's main key activity is to produce educational audio content: high quality, entertaining and letting listener to learn something new. It should ensure that consumer would stay satisfied with spent time while listening to the content. To produce such content the project's team should focus on developing the right content's topics, also as finding the right speakers and hosts for podcasts and courses, and focus on organizing recording process of the content.

Other activity coming from technical side is to ensure that the platform's application is running smoothly and everything stays up to date and whenever possible update the application. Also the project requires some marketing activities to attract more listeners. These actions can be like finding, negotiating and cooperating with possible partners, creating some promotional content, social media accounts' maintaining, participating in events etc.

#### **4.6 Key resources**

In this block are listed resources that needed to perform key activities in order to create value preposition (Creatly, 2021).

The project needs several types of resources. First of all, there should be a space for the project's team to operate, also as all of the needed tools: starting from computers, software, audio recording equipment etc. Also human resources are needed for the project: its team members with right skills and competences to launch and establish project's operating and speakers, who will participate in the content's creating. After the content is produced, it will be also project's copyrighted intellectual resource. Also the application that has to be developed and on which all of the content should be published for the listeners is a part of project's resources. As a resource for the content's distribution should be used side podcast platforms: Apple and Google podcasts, also as Spotify.

#### **4.7 Key partners**

Key partners refer to external companies or suppliers that can be needed for key activities. Co-operating with partners can lead to risks' reducing also as to resources' acquiring. There can be distinguished several types of partners like strategic alliance (partnerships with non-competitors), co-operation (strategic partnership), joint ventures (partners in developing new business) and buyer-supplier relationships. (Creatly.com, 2021).

As the speakers who participate in the audio recordings have been seen as a resource, they are also at the same time key partners for the project. Also to the key partners can refer podcast-hosting platforms, also as platforms for podcasting distribution. Other important partners are businesses that can be seen as sponsors. In more detail about this aspect was written in chapter 3.

#### **4.8 Cost structure**

This section covers the topic about costs that needed for operating the project. Basically it includes the cost of creating also as delivering the value preposition, creation of revenue streams and maintaining relationships with customers. There are two types of businesses that can be: cost-driven (focus on costs' minimizing if possible) and value-driven (providing maximum value to customers). (Creatly.com, 2021). For this project it is better to have more focus on providing good value.

The cost structure of the project includes expenses for the technical equipment, application's development and maintaining; also there can be a rent for the space where the con-

tent can be recorded. Also using software for podcast editing and hosting require some amount of money spending. Moreover there can be used money rewards for speakers, also as salaries for the project's editors. Most of these costs are fixed, except of rewards for speakers. It is desirable to focus on developing good quality of content and use all possible tools for this. When the cost structure will be finally balanced in order to prove good quality, it should influence the final price for subscriptions.

The biggest share of cost structure takes the application development: its price can get up to 41000 euros per year (Blair 2021). The editing software like Adobe Audition costs 207 euros per year (Adobe 2021). Podcast publishing platforms also require some costs, for example Simplecast platform will require 345 euros per year for essential package (Simplecast 2021). Renting a place with needed equipment will take 4320 euros per year if the content will be recorded in two 5-hours sessions pre one month (Mestacoworking 2021). Also there should be a salary for editor who works on content producing: with finding suitable hosts, organizing the recording process, editing and publishing the content. One editor is expected to require about 1200 euros per month or 14 400 euros per year. All in all, the project requires about 70 thousand euros per year.

#### **4.9 Revenue streams**

Under the term revenue stream is meant the source from which a business generates money from the value proposition. There are considered two revenue models: transaction-based (customer makes an one-time payment) and recurring revenue (ongoing payments for continuous service). Also there are several forms of generating the revenue but for the project the most suitable ones are subscription fee and advertising. (Creatly.com, 2021).

There are different opportunities to get profit in the podcasting industry. It should be ensured that the project could use most of them. But as one of the main revenue streams is expected to be sponsorships and advertising that come from side companies that agreed to purchase advertising block in podcast episode or helped to deliver a new course. Sponsors can get interested if the developing audio course is related to their niche. A food company or food retail chain can be interested to get some advertising space in the course dedicated to gastronomy. A travel company or airline business can be get interested to be presented in podcast that meets common sphere of interest. The main factor here is how popular is the platform and how wide is its audience, how many listenings get each course or podcast episode.

There are several advertising formats in podcasting: pre-, mid- and post-roll. They called so because of depending in which time period the advertising was placed. If a promotional

announcement was made in the beginning of the podcast's episode it is called pre-roll and so on. The most used formats by insertion are pre- and mid-roll. And mid-roll is recognized as most effective one, as it comes in the middle of episode, when the attention of listener is on the highest level. (Skinner 2021).

Other source for profit is subscriptions. Subscription can be made by listeners in order to get access to premium content. So from this point of view, the posted content on the platform can be divided into two groups: one group is available for all and another is for these people who bought a subscription. Subscription can be made for one month or for the whole year. If the taken price for one-month subscription will be 10 euros, the project will need 7000 subscribers to cover its cost structure or, in other way, about 600 subscribers for whole year which will pay subscription monthly without taking the sponsorships into consideration.

## 5 Podcasts for the platform

It is assumed to launch various podcast series on the platform. As the project is dedicated to the cultural and humanitarian field, so do the podcast series. There are some common formats for podcast: interviews, conversational, information, solo cast, non-fiction storytelling and fiction (Rowles & Rogers 2019, 29). There is opportunity to use different formats but mostly there will be more focus on conversational, solo cast and storytelling.

Conversational format has multiple hosts and focuses on a discussion about defined topic. In this format is important to have the right hosts with their awareness and knowledge about the theme. Co-hosts create a good dynamic of podcast, so it makes listener more connected to the conversation. Solo cast is kind of recorded monologue. Usually this format is based on the speaker's own experience. It is important to notice that dialogue is easier to listen to than a monologue and solo cast hardly depends on the skills of the solo host. Advantage of the solo cast is that it can build a stronger intimacy between host and audience. Format of storytelling became very popular in podcasting due to so called true crime stories. This format can include practices like audio clips or interviews. Also storytelling is highly immersive and attention capturing and can transport an audience like no other podcasting format. (Rowles & Rogers 2019, 30).

Also as in podcasting industry in general the hosts must have a good and clear voice but also it is good when it feels host's personality that appeals the listeners. Further in sub-chapters a several concepts for the project's podcasting series will be considered.

### 5.1 Why did I see it?

The concept of this series is that two co-host have a conversation about arts. The topics of episodes can vary greatly: from discussing particular art artist and art movements to discussion about Finland's and world's main current exhibitions. There should be found suitable hosts for the podcast series that are experts in arts field. To find such hosts it should be editor's task, also one of the co-host can be an itself editor from the project.

### 5.2 Newcomers

This podcast series are expected to be interviews with people who come from different national cultures but who stayed and succeeded professionally in Finland. The idea of podcast series is to put effort for better multicultural landscape. Also as to hear stories of people how was their life in new country for them, how they see Finland and Finnish society, culture and traditions from own point of view. For the editors the main challenge is to

find suitable guests that come from different cultural backgrounds and settled down in Finland for many years.

The episodes have pretty the same scenario leaded by the host. The host should interview the guests about their life paths, situations, feelings and observations during their lifetime in Finland and in the end of each episode the host could ask the guests same questions e.g. like: what is your favorite Finnish word, what stereotype about Finnish people was confirmed, favorite Finnish tradition, favorite place in Finland, favorite Finnish food, what is the worst thing in Finland, what is the thing from your country you miss about.

### **5.3 Art jewel hunting**

The idea behind this podcast is that there are great arts jewels around the world like for example Mona Lisa in Louvre of Paris, the Scream of Edvard Munch in Oslo, van Gogh's Sunflowers presented in London etc. So the host should take for each episode one of the greatest piece of art and explain to the listener why it is important to see this art, its meaning and significance. Also there is an opportunity for the host to describe own feelings and experience about cultural object. The format of this podcast is assumed to be a solo cast.

### **5.4 Personal XX century**

The concept of this storytelling podcast is to deliver personal stories of people who witnessed some noticeable events like Olympics 1952 in Helsinki, any participants' memories of the Winter War, Karelian refugee's story, story about a trip to Leningrad, memories about opening day of Helsinki underground etc. So the most difficult part in this series is to find persons who could deliver to this podcast series with their memories and stories.

### **5.5 Audio courses**

Also on the platform can be shared various courses dedicated to different topics. Most of the content has to consist of these courses. There are several disciplines to which audio content can be dedicated. Courses are expected to be relevant and raise an interest of the listeners. Each course can consist of several parts. On the early stage of the project's launching there should be already developed enough amount of courses to present. Also its amount should resupply constantly. Format of courses is strictly solo speaker recorded. As one course can consist of various episodes, so it possible to involve more than one speaker for the one course. Also as some topics can be on junction of combined disciplines, they can appear on various sections.

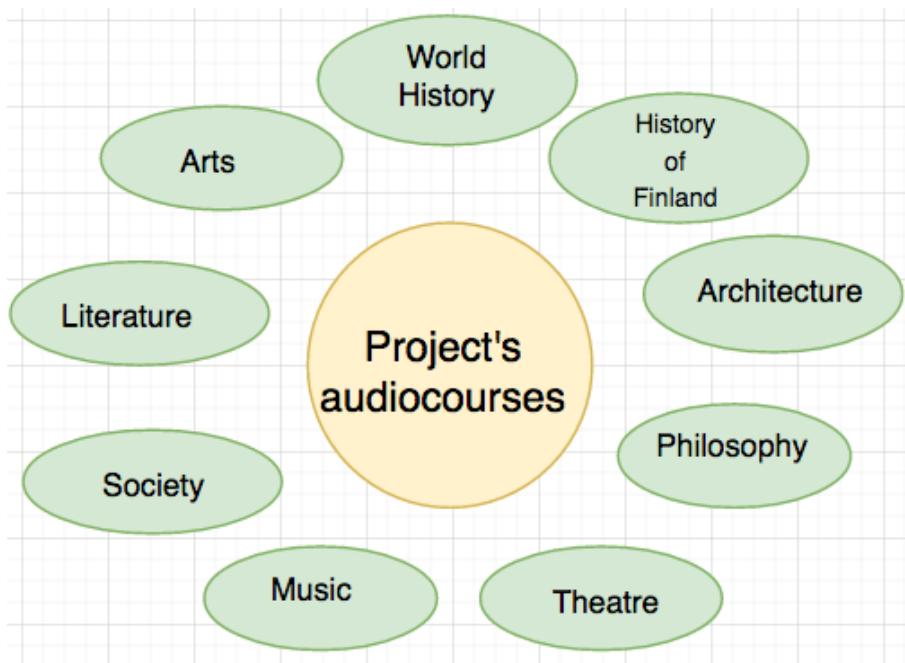


Figure 8. Audio courses' categories

## 5.6 SWOT analysis

This analysis is used to evaluate and understand product or service's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It helps to assess the performance, competition, and risk, also as potential of a business. It consists of internal details (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats). Under the term strengths are describes the things in which product is good and what it excels. Weaknesses are the details which business needs to improve and which can complicate its performance. Opportunities refer to things that can enhance the project and give an advantage. Threats refer to harmful factors that can occur. (Grant 2021).

Table 2. SWOT analysis

<b>Strengths:</b>	<b>Weaknesses:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand new and fresh project</li> <li>• Based in growing industry</li> <li>• Various topics for the content production</li> <li>• Own application that enhances the project's brand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project is new and needs to get wide awareness</li> <li>• Content production needs significant amount of time</li> <li>• Content need to be strictly accurate</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<b>Threats:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity to launch more products (e.g. for kids, video content, events)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be not gained enough audience and as consequence there won't be a strong interest for sponsors to cooperate</li> <li>• Bugs in application</li> </ul>

Taking aspects mentioned in table above, it should be made all efforts to reduce the threats and minimize the weaknesses of the project. Most of them should take care a competent marketing strategy, when other ones are responsibility of project's team and developers.

### **5.7 Evaluating the demand for the project**

The project has an advantage - a possibility for the content's themes producing is huge. Moreover every podcast searching person looks for something that could fit for him or her perfectly. Part of audio courses that is devoted to arts can appeal certain numbers to the platform, also as other part of content that is devoted to other topic like for example American literature or in-depth description of culture and history of particular region in Finland can appeal absolutely different people with different interests.

As it was mentioned in subchapter 2.2, there is about 1 million of people listens to podcast. Also this numbers are tending to grow. For scoping more narrow segments it can be taken the numbers of Facebook groups and page to measure the interest of people in different topics. For instance a group "Kirjallisuuden ystävät" has almost 29 thousands members (Facebook.com, 2021). Supposing that at least one percent of this group will attend to the platform's topics and download the application, than it will be rate of 290 people. A "Kultturivinkki" is an Instagram page dedicated to the art paintings with about 18 thousands of followers, taking one percent of potential listeners gives amount of 180 new consumers (Instagram 2021).

From the other side, the visits' rate of Helsinki museums (Ateneum, Kiasma, Amos Rex, Kansallismuseo and Helsingin kaupunginmuseo) in 2019 was 1 611 664 (Museovirasto 2020). Roughly speaking a half of these visits could be made by non-target group of the project, but even taking one percent of half of this number gives about 8000 of potential interested listeners.

The main idea for encouraging the demand for the project is producing qualitative content with various topics and reaching potential listeners through the right channels.

## 6 Content plan

To have a clear vision in developing the content for the platform, there should be created a content plan. A content plan is a tool used in performing content strategy and it can contain data about planned content like description, dates when content is expected to be published, platforms where to publish and other information related to content (Tague 2020).

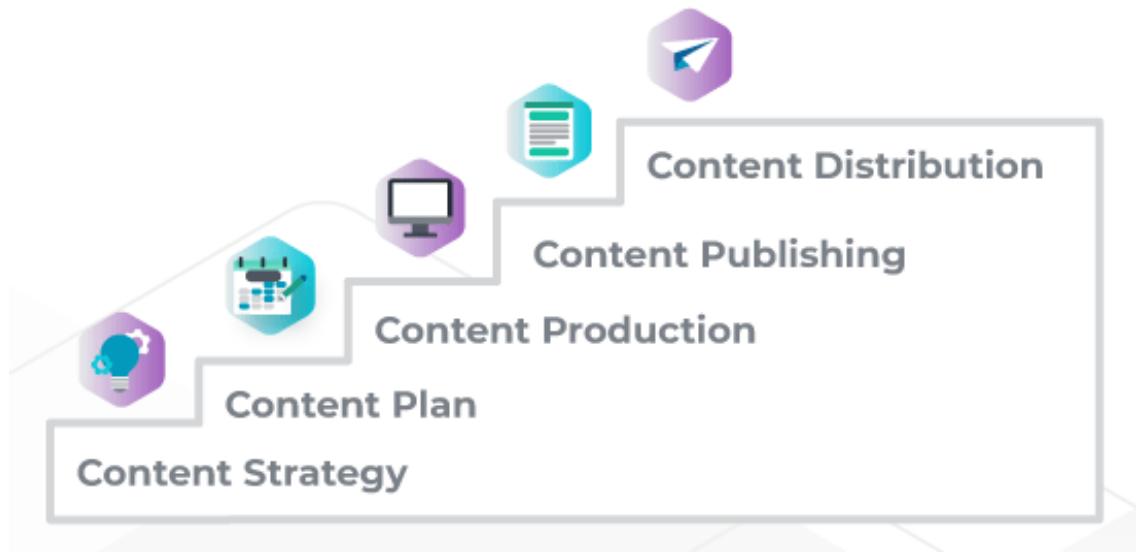


Figure 9. Content marketing approach (Clearvoice, 2020)

As the platform is just launching, so there are two stages of the content strategy. Early stage of the project intends that there is some amount of podcast episodes and audio courses is already done and ready to publish. Than goes the second stage when there are adding new content continuously.

In appendix of this thesis there will be presented a content plan with more data about the content that should be produced and published. There are two examples of content plans: one is for podcasts and other one is for audio courses. They should consist of content's name, brief description, also as who are the hosts or speakers, is there sponsorships, on which platform can be found produced content and the date of publishing. Also it should be noticed the number of episodes for each audio course and which episode number of podcast is going to be published. Also there could be information about which course or podcast episode is available after subscription.

## 7 Marketing strategy

To gain good numbers of audience and raise awareness about the platform it is essential to develop a right marketing strategy. Marketing strategy is a plan for reaching potential customers and turning them into users of products or services. It contains value proposition, brand messaging, data on target audience and other elements. Important topics to cover while developing marketing strategy are product, price, place and promotion. (Barone 2021).

The marketing strategy has to develop and revolve continuously. So as this is only a launching phase of the platform there will different types of action, as it would already exist platform. On this early stage is important to get wide awareness among consumers and offer them a good amount of high quality and interesting content. In this project is a virtual product that consists of an educational audio courses and podcasts about humanitarian disciplines. The price for this product is expressed with one-, three-month or one year subscriptions. The place where a potential consumer gets the product is his smartphone. Promotion for the product is ads putted into places where the potential consumer can get reached. These places are social media, public transport and museums.

Regarding the marketing strategy in social media, it is assumed to use two of them: Facebook and Instagram. Launching project's pages in Facebook it can be reached mostly middle age people and in Instagram there can be reached adults. There should be posted graphic content about upcoming project's content, also as some interactive opportunities like quizzes etc. Instagram and Facebook are using the same advertising system that allows businesses to reach its users by adjusting some data about target audience. This data includes not only such information like age, gender and location, but also can include such info like interests and connections. (Lua 2021). Customizing the right data of last two details can be really effective in reaching potential listeners for the project. This channel for reaching potential audience is good by costs, as social media marketing does not require a lot of financial costs.

Another channels for raising awareness about the project is public transport commercial space. The main idea behind this is as one of the most ways to listen to audio content is being on the way to somewhere, so there can be reached the potential audience. It is assumed to use advertising options also as inside public transport like trams, underground also as outdoors advertising like public transport stops. Another key thing here is that there are two big public transport networks in Finland: in Helsinki and Tampere. To reach the audience in Helsinki the project could take some advertising spaces in Helsinki underground and ad spaces inside of Tampere's trams. The focus on these two cities can be

justified because there is quite big human traffic. This channel requires much more money, as outdoor advertising spaces cost a lot. But from other side this channel reaches a lot of audience in physical space.

Also there is other way to perform in marketing strategy. It is co-operating with other stakeholders like for example museums and to make any educational cultural events like open lecturers. Also an interesting way of getting more awareness is to invite some popular media persons or opinion leaders to record content for the platform. They can bring a part of their audience to the platform. But this option of marketing strategy is more suitable after the beginning stage, when the project has already gained some amount of audience and on the next stage the project could take more focus on actions that can enhance its brand.

## 8 Conclusion

At the end of this thesis to sum the things up it should be said that the way of starting a new platform with audio content seems to be more than possible. The most challenging thing is not to collect all of needed equipment for audio content recording, also as not to edit this content and publish onto podcast distribution platforms or develop an application for the project. The main challenge consists in developing suitable topics for the content also as to find and establish relationships with experts.

To overcome such challenges, the first thing to do it to recruit passionate and knowledgeable team of editors. They have to be open minded and creative persons, who are ready to do the new thing. This project is aimed for something new, to provide new content that brings new knowledge, to give an opportunity for the experts and lecturers to spread their experience with audience.

It seems to be more possible for the project to be launched under the brand of any cultural institution like for example Oodi Central Library or any other organization like this, than to be developed on independent basis and bank loan money. As the podcasting phenomenon is spreading wider from year to year, so "big players" in the cultural, and not only cultural industry, probably should pay attention to audio content options.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Content plan for the project's audio courses

Publishing Content	Description	Speakers	Sponsorship	Platform to upload	Date of publishing
Society: History of Finnish food (4 episodes; premium)	History about Finnish cuisine from Middle Age till 19th century	Lecturer xx	Prisma; pre-roll (15s)	Project's application	May 2022
Architecture: Architecture of railway stations (4 episodes)	How the railway stations are built and which architecture styles are expressed in there	Lecturer xx	VR; pre-roll (15s)	Project's application	May 2022
Arts: Hugo Simberg (4 episodes)	The course about person and art works of the biggest representative of Finnish symbolism	Lecturer xx	No	Project's application	May 2022
Literature: American literature of 20th century (5 episodes; premium)	Main writers of the North America	Lecturer xx	No	Project's application	June 2022
Society: History of money (5 episodes)	History of money and how it influences human relationships	Invited host	Nordea; pre-roll (30s)	Project's application	June 2022

## Appendix 2. Content plan for the project's podcast series

Publishing content	Description	Speakers	Sponsors	Platform to upload	Date of publishing
"Why did I see it?" Episode 1: How to understand impressionism.	Art critic and project's editor discuss significant painter of French impressionism	Speaker xx Speaker xx	No	Project's application and podcast platforms	April 2022
"Newcomers" Episode 1: Teacher from Germany	A German teacher tells about 1st May, Finnish sauna and German places in Finland	Host xx Guest xx	No	Project's application and podcast platforms	April 2022
"Art jewel hunting" Episode 1: Mona Lisa in Louvre	Exhibition curator tells about one of the most popular painting of female	Host xx	TUI; pre-roll (30s)	Project's application and podcast platforms	May 2022
"Personal 20th century" Episode 1: Memories of Helsinki Olympic games athlete	A story of athlete who participated in Olympics 1952	Host xx	No	Project's application and podcast platforms	May 2022
"Newcomers" Episode 2: Entrepreneur from Britain	A British entrepreneur about leading business in Finland and Finnish nature	Host xx Guest xx	No	Project's application and podcast platforms	May 2022
"Personal 20th century" Episode 2: Masmutto Ruotsiin	Memories of Finnish immigrant of 1960s	Host xx	No	Project's application and podcast platforms	May 2022