



Buzz Knight and actor/activist Ed Begley Jr. take a walk in Studio City, California.

PODCAST EXERCISE

In this edition of Inside Podcasting, we go outside and join leading media strategist and executive Buzz Knight as he returns to his broadcast roots. “Takin’ a Walk” is an authoritative podcast series where Knight chats with guests – including authors, musicians, media people and ordinary people with extraordinary stories to tell – while walking. The result is an intimate and engaging listening experience. But don’t be fooled into thinking that Knight’s remarkable broadcasting expertise found podcasting akin to a walk in the park.



Buzz Knight interviewed actor Ed Begley for his podcast “Takin’ a Walk.”

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WALKING THE TALK

There's no one-size-fits-all formula, but there are some things to know

BOSTON — My podcast series “Takin’ A Walk” sees me doing just that — taking a walk — but with people I admire, and chatting with them. It also sees me walk, more metaphorically, through my own life’s journey in broadcasting.

By Buzz Knight

I have developed and led strategies to drive audio content and platform innovation for major media companies. In the process, I have discovered new talent, built and engaged with new audiences, created new revenue streams and optimized brand partnerships.

At every step, I have encountered environments that challenged outdated thinking and encouraged me to lead with integrity, a steady hand and an experienced mix of analytics and programming instincts to grow and transform entertainment brands.

I’ve been program director and format captain for CBS Radio and Infinity Broadcasting in Boston, senior vice president of programming for Greater Media, and executive vice president for strategy and innovation for the Beasley Media Group.

Discovering the joys of the interview

Before my career migrated to the corporate programming role, I was on-air, and I worked just about every part of the on-air day, mostly morning drive — the most content-focused daypart. It demanded that I create compelling content while engaging with the audience in their drive to work.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of being on-air at that time of day was interviewing guests. My first interview was with jazz saxophonist Dexter Gordon when I was on college radio. I am a jazz fan, so it was a surreal experience I will never forget. I have been lucky enough to interview so many other people I admire, including comedian Jerry Seinfeld and Dave Gilmour from Pink Floyd.

Embarking on my “Takin’ A Walk” journey is about storytelling and sharing experiences. It also allows me to revisit the joys of broadcasting, but in a more intimate and relaxed setting. Every journey comes with challenges, relearning and new learnings, and this experience is no exception. I have found the biggest challenge is rewiring my brain to reawaken previous skillsets and learn new ones.

So, how does one overcome such challenges? By jumping in and making things happen, definitely not overthinking things. I always strive for perfection before starting anything, but like any physical pursuit, when I began podcasting, I needed to get my reps in and build my stamina. In a way, getting back behind a mic is like working out at the gym. I have had to train myself to think well on my feet. Improvising was not something I typically did when on-air, as every moment was generally part of a plan — there was a script. But life isn’t like that.

Valuable lessons learned

Along my podcast journey — through my many walks with many guests — I have learned some valuable lessons about best podcast practices. There’s no one-size-fits-all formula, but there are some things to know. First, building and maintaining an audience is hard work. I believe that I need to constantly evaluate my position in the vast podcast ecosystem and experiment with ways to build an audience. Also, finding a release cadence and a rhythm is essential. Without that, a podcast risks being disjointed and difficult to listen to. Giving back is also important, so accept invites to be a guest on another podcast.

The joy of publishing content from the start of a process to the finish point is fantastic and something I cherish. I love it when I’m traveling to do a “Takin’ A Walk” interview, and somebody asks me, “Are you here for work or pleasure?” I love having an immediate answer with a smile: “Both!” Yes, it is work, but it is also pleasure. But that doesn’t mean it isn’t hard work. So, at the risk of repeating the obvious, know this: If you’re serious about podcasting, be prepared to work damn hard.

And here’s a tip I give to those who ask: Before you publish, give yourself a head start and bank multiple episodes to release some pressure. Then: Be bold, don’t be afraid, learn, iterate, learn more, and, most of all, have fun!

EQUIPMENT

RECORDING: Zoom H4 Recorder and an iPhone

EDITING: Done by production ace Bob Malatesta. Bob is a veteran of the business and an invaluable part of “Takin’ A Walk.”

MICS: Two Lavalier microphones for back up purposes and a big fluffy wind screen

HEADPHONES: Beats

LAPTOP: Dell Inspiron 7306

PODCAST HOST: Podbean

DISTRIBUTION: Available on Apple/Spotify and wherever else you get your podcasts. Newly added to Radioline.



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