



# Listen and Learn

By Bill Smith, APR

**P**ARKING PODCASTS have been generating a lot of excitement in the industry this year. As a parking marketer, I'm just as excited. Podcasts can be wonderfully effective additions to a marketing program because they allow thought leaders to reach new audiences in an extraordinarily convenient way. And best of all, they are inexpensive and relatively simple to produce.

It's estimated that more than 1 in 4 people in the U.S. has listened to a podcast in the past month. That number is going to keep growing. Why are they so popular? Primarily, it's because they give people a chance to access valuable content while they are doing other things, such as getting dressed, driving, or even exercising. How many times have you planned to read an interesting article only to find that deadlines get in the way? With podcasts, you can listen and learn while you do other things that don't require all your attention.

## Getting Information

But it's not just a matter of productivity. Sure, podcasts allow us to make better use of our time. But they also provide an enjoyable new way to access the information on which we rely. Podcasts give us a chance to hear experts discuss parking issues in their own voices. They give us a chance to get to know those experts a little better because their personalities often come through more vibrantly when they are being interviewed.

Interestingly, several industry-specific podcasts, including Parker-X and the Parking Podcast by Isaiah Mouw, CAPP, weren't developed as marketing tools.

"Really, I just wanted to provide value to the parking industry," says Lester Mascon, vice president of Sentry Control Systems and the man behind Parker-X. "I saw it as a way to bring a modern flair to the industry."

Parker-X features interviews with industry leaders in a conversational setting. So far, its host has interviewed well-known parking consultants, owners and operators, and technology experts, and he plans to interview dozens more parking leaders in the coming months.

Though it only debuted in mid-March, Parker-X already has over 3,000 views on YouTube, and more than 1,000 more listeners on streaming services (as I write

this two weeks after its debut in early April). Listenership and viewership is growing by approximately 10 percent per day.

## Finding Great Podcasts

Most podcasts are free to access and easy to find. The audio interviews are recorded, and links to podcasts are usually posted on social media. Podcasts can be found through Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts (for Android users), Spotify or on your favorite podcast app. Podcasts offer expertise on many things applicable to parking and mobility: marketing, business growth, human resources issues, finance, and the list goes on.

They are also great opportunities for industry members to get publicity. Offer yourself up as a guest, propose an episode topic, and be ready to jump in and participate. Any number of podcasts are appropriate for parking and mobility professionals, and it's pretty easy to introduce yourself to a podcast owner or host and offer to share your expertise. That, of course, helps get your name out there and share your message.

Even though Parker-X wasn't developed by Mascon as a marketing tool, it does provide marketing opportunities for the experts he interviews. Parking professionals who are fortunate enough to be interviewed get to demonstrate their expertise to thousands (soon, tens of thousands) of parking professionals. The same is true of many podcasts—maybe even one that's a personal favorite already. ♦



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