

OBIAA 2023 AWARDS SUBMISSION

Contact Name: Viveca Gravel	Pillar & Category: M&P - Marketing
BIA/Organization: Owen Sound River District	Time period: 2022/2023
Entry title: River District Podcast	
Project description: <i>New businesses and hidden gems were going unnoticed in the River District and there has not been a chance for them to tell their stories to the public through modern channels where they could engage new visitors. Giving businesses a platform to tell their story and share their unique value proposition was how the River District Podcast was born.</i>	

NEED OR OPPORTUNITY

Established in 1973 the Owen Sound River District (formerly Downtown Owen Sound) has always been Owen Sound's locally owned and operated shopping area. Colonized in 1841 and incorporated in 1857 the City of Owen Sound has been part of Canadian history for well over 150 years. The City of Owen Sound was built on the shoulders of the Sydenham river and on its east bank lies the River District. Owen Sound's most historically significant area having been part of just about everything to ever happen in the city limits. From the logging that used the river to clear land for the first settlers, jumping forward to its rich black history being the northern most terminus of the underground railroad to the prohibition era leaving Owen Sound as the last dry city in Ontario. These historical footsteps all walked along the streets of the River District.

Like many of these historically significant areas in small cities around the world they house independently owned and operated businesses making them the backbone of any city, but a backbone is a very fragile structure and like many downtowns, the River District saw several years of distress. In 2019 the then DIA and the City of Owen Sound banned together to redevelop and execute a 3 year River District Action Plan. Since it's implementation in 2020 and full undertaking in 2021 the River District has seen incredible growth and prosperity is in the air.

The River District is made up of almost 200 businesses from professional services to retail and eateries. Some of these businesses have been around for generations, others have only just recently opened their doors. They all however, suffer the same fate of being undiscovered because of the former "Downtown" reputation for being unsafe or unequipped. Under the River District Action Plan it identifies as part of the rebrand to bring these businesses to the forefront and celebrate their unique offerings.

Staff of the Owen Sound River District presented an opportunity to host a Podcast to the River District Board of Management. These episodes would invite local business owners into the studio to discuss their business, offerings and what sets them apart. This allowed people to learn more about these businesses and rediscover the River District as a destination for all of a family's needs, while leveraging a platform that speaks to the River District Action Plans key demographics.

AUDIENCE

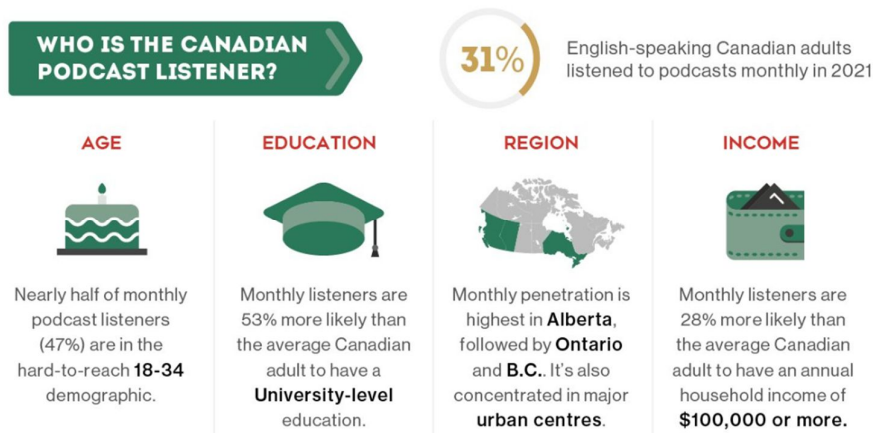
The River District Action Plan outlines the River District target demographic as the below:

- Local Owen Sound residents and those that live in nearby surrounding communities.
- Owen Sound or regional resident – lives in Owen Sound's downtown area, suburbs or surrounding communities
- Age: 32 – 42 (older Millennials and youngest portion of Gen X)
- Married
- Children at home – ages 2 – 12

- Income: Comfortable – not a large income, but not a small one either
- Enjoys entertainment and social settings
- Likes to spend money on quality items
- Values experiences, high quality food and drink and date night
- Values culture and the unique
- Believes in supporting small business owners
- Enjoys window shopping
- Casual dresser, but well put together
- Believes in sustainability
- Sees potential even when others do not
- Confident and comfortable in their own skin
- Independent thinker
- Seeks to chart their own way – does not follow the pack

Focusing on this primary demographic based on the market research done during the establishment of the River District Action Plan allows the River District Board of Management to target the lowest hanging fruit and those that will frequent the area creating a primary core of visitors, guaranteed to continuously return.

This grouping of people is easily targeted through a podcast. The Podcast Exchange outlines the following data about podcast listeners:



The data is clear, and this is one of the main reasons the River District Board of Management moved forward with the River District Podcast.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: To reengage the key demographics for the River District by reaching them with content on a platform they are comfortable with and already interacting with.

Goal 2: To create regular video content available on multiple platforms on a strict budget.

Engagement objective 1: Promoting the businesses within the River District to those visitors who may not know about certain businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION Working with CTRE Productions to create a proposal to the River District Board of Management staff worked to create the most cost-effective plan that would best utilize the time of the Community Development Coordinator, business owners and studio time.

On May 11, 2022, a content creation proposal was brought to the River District Board of Management that outlined a quote from CTRE Productions for \$2,800.00 + HST. This quote included 4 full days in the audio lab, and editing for as many podcasts as we could record within the time frame. It was outlined in the proposal that will a full scheduled over the 4 days up to 52 podcasts could be recorded, this would not account for breaks, cancellations and any other potential changes.

The River District Board of Management could not and did not pass up the opportunity to create a years' worth of video & audio content for under \$3,000. There were no objections to the proposal.

The Community Development Coordinator split the recording sessions into two two-day sessions, once in the spring and the second a fall session to accommodate as many businesses as possible. Reaching out through the River District Review Newsletter to encourage businesses to sign up the spring sessions were nearly full with only a few time slots left available for breaks. The fall sessions were booked in the same fashion and after some cancellations last minute and breaks worked into the schedule just over 40 sessions were recorded. In just 4 days staff recorded 2 seasons of a podcast.

The Community Development Coordinator undertook all aspects of creating and hosting the podcast except for the equipment and editing which was all taken care of by CTRE Productions.

Following the recording (both audio & video) for the podcast CTRE Productions undertook the task of editing each podcast to include titles, intro, and outro. Once complete they sent the files to the Community Development Coordinator.

It was determined that these podcasts would be hosted to multiple platforms to best engage our audience. Audio was uploaded to RSS.com which flowed through to several podcast hosting platforms such as Spotify. YouTube served as a host of the initial video content that was then embedded into the website. Each individual podcast video was created as a news article on owensoundriverdistrict.ca. From there the video was shared to Facebook creating Facebook content and serving to create a path from Facebook to owensoundriverdistrict.ca. Leveraging tagging through Facebook this content was then shared by the business and those in support of the business, growing the audience reach. A trimmed version of the video was published to Instagram to engage that audience but only as a teaser and then invited the listener/watcher to follow a link to the Spotify channel.

Additional costs were discovered during the posting process as a hosting site for the initial audio content was required to feed the files through to podcast hosting applications. This is approximately \$20/month.

Challenges uncovered:

- Attempting to book so many sessions on the same day making it difficult to change course if needed. Filling spaces when someone cancelled last minute was next to impossible.
- Learned lessons about hosting to digital platforms and how the flow through works.
- Hindsight we should have put closed captioning on the video content.

The River District Podcast was innovative because not a lot of people are using the platform to create content specific to business owners. Giving them a platform to tell their story and the stories of the City they call home. More and more you hear people listening to podcasts instead of music and being able to leverage local content is always a great opportunity.

Providing this content on multiple FREE platforms allows accessibility to virtually all audience members. This also creates longevity for the content as it will be accessed and discovered through multiple platforms by different people at different times.

RESULTS

Goal 1: To reengage the key demographics for the River District by reaching them with content on a platform they are comfortable with and already interacting with.

Result: We were able to leverage, YouTube, Spotify, owensoundriverdistrict.ca, Facebook and Instagram plus any other aggregate content platforms that take from RSS.com making this content incredibly accessible by our key demographics on any platform they are comfortable with.

Goal 2: To create regular video content available on multiple platforms on a strict budget.

Result: By creating two seasons of pre-recorded video and audio content being released weekly over the 2022/2023 years for under \$3,000.00 was beyond our expectations and some of the lowest cost content available.

Engagement objective 1: Promoting the businesses within the River District to those visitors who may not know about certain businesses.

Result:

- Analytics through RSS.com provide some detail outlining 31 downloads in the last 30 days (January 15-February 15, 2023) this would represent listens on Spotify and any other aggregate podcast site.
- YouTube direct has shown 931 views total – this number represents videos watched directly on the platform.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Links:

- Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/6LlFcnia0EGEDtCziZ8Ab4>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RiverDistrictOS/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/riverdistrictos/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@RiverDistrictOS/videos>
- RSS.com: <https://rss.com/podcasts/riverdistrictos/>
- River District Website: <https://owensoundriverdistrict.ca/en/river-district-live/river-district-news>



www.ctreproductions.com
226-664-0567

Quote for
Owen Sound River District
Ref : 2022-23

Date: 2nd March 2022



OBJECTIVE:

- To assist in the creation of 52 podcasts.

OVERVIEW:

The podcast would be recorded over four days, in CTRE's Audio Lab. To allow for the footage to be used for promotional purposes, the audio and video will be recorded simultaneously from a single static camera.

PRODUCTION OF PODCASTS

With the one camera in the room, we are looking at the PLATINUM level of production. This also includes ten (10) hours of editing. Any editing above and beyond would be charged at a rate of \$75/hour.

- 2.5 days in the Audio Lab (Platinum Level) would be \$1,815.00 + HST

You would be responsible for coordinating the talent, the scripts and segments during the allocated period of time.

Considering each may take up to 30 minutes (give or take) = 16 per day. If you are hoping to achieve 52 podcasts, we suggest you extend your time in the Audio Lab to be four (4) days in length.

- 4 days in the Audio Lab (Platinum Level) would be \$2,800.00 + HST