

AC-T-102 Creating Effective Calls to Action for Your Audioook

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0:00:00.7 Becky Parker Geist: Hi everyone. Thanks for joining me today, we're gonna talk about calls to action, creating effective calls to action, and this is always going to come back very importantly to the listener experience. I know if you've listened to many of my other episodes in this podcast, you'll know that I really, really, really care about the listener experience, and I think that we all should, and that the choices that we make in the process of creating our audio books really needs to be driven by our best understanding of what will make for a great listener experience, so the process we're going to talk about today is going to happen during that pre-production phase before you're in the booth, if you're recording yourself or before your audio book producer or narrator are put to work. Getting the recording done, this is the preliminary work, and it's really, really important to take the time to do your pre-production because when you don't... You miss out on so many opportunities. And then you can also, if you just give a manuscript to somebody and say, Here, please narrate this, you can end up with confusion, mistakes, things being recorded that didn't need to be recorded.

0:01:33.6 Becky Parker Geist: All kinds of things can go wrong. So let's be prepared as we head into the audio book production process, now, as you can imagine, there are different things that we'll be talking about overall, depending on what kind of work you're doing, so if you are in non-fiction or fiction or books for children, we're gonna have some variables here, and so the first part of the podcast, we're gonna talk mostly about non-fiction, and then after the break will come back and talk about fiction and books for children.

0:02:11.4 S1: There are many overlapping components though, so I would recommend that even if you're writing fiction or for children, that you stick with us and listen to this first part, 'cause I think you'll find it really helpful. Essentially what we're doing is that we're going to be going through your manuscript and mapping out the client value journey or the customer journey or the listener journey within the context of your audio book. Now, the first thing that you wanna do, no matter which genre you're writing in, is you're going to wanna think about what are your goals now that can be... What are your goals for your book overall, no matter which format they could be for your audio book specifically.

0:03:00.1 Becky Parker Geist: They could be for your business overall, if you're doing other things such as coaching or have other kinds of services, the way to determine which of those categories and how broad you wanna go is really what are your primary goals, and I think you want to stick with ideally what is your biggest goal? It's okay to have more than one, but if you know what your biggest goal is, overall big picture.

0:03:29.6 S1: Then that can help you as you narrow it down into what is the... Or are the main goals for your publishing work and then narrow down even further to... Do you have very specific goals for your audio book as you're thinking about what your goal or goals are, it's important to list them.

0:03:53.9 Becky Parker Geist: Write them down, it could be that you really want to have more business, that's a very big general goal, it could be... You want to sell more books or increase the size of your email mailing list, it could be that you want to have your listeners share content with their followers and friends, or maybe to get more reviews for your work.

0:04:21.7 S1: Lots of different possibilities, you decide what's gonna work for you and make sure

you write down what those things are, you might just make a big list and then prioritize them. Pick out the ones that really matter. Now, if this were an audio book or even as a podcast, if I was expecting you to do this right now, I would give you the time to actually respond to that prompt, and I would give you some under-scoring music to support you and help you understand that that is exactly what I'm expecting. Instead, I'm gonna tell you, as a listener, what I'm hoping that you're doing is taking some notes about what the steps are, and if you're not in a position to do even that, then I would hope that you would at least make a mental note to come back to this podcast at a moment when you do have more time, now, while I've said all of that, you may have been busy actually writing down some goals, which is cool if you did, but.

0:05:27.9 Becky Parker Geist: Either way.

0:05:29.4 S1: What I'm doing is showing you... Demonstrating how we might handle a situation like this in an audio book, we always work from the assumption that right now may not be the best time for anyone to take an action or to write something down, but that it might be... And so we wanna make sure to craft any kind of prompt like that with a clear expectation about what to do, no matter which situation you're in. Okay, moving forward, once you have your list of goals, the next thing is to list out what calls to action or CTA.

0:06:11.7 Becky Parker Geist: What calls to action might help achieve those goals.

0:06:16.9 S1: The priority goals that you said, for example, one of your CTAS might be to have your listener visit your website or to buy another book, or maybe sign up for a workshop that you're holding, what are those calls to action that will help achieve the goals that you have prioritized? And here again, I encourage you to either take notes or even pause the podcast while you take the time to go through and figure out what your calls to action might be, the next step is to go through your book, your manuscript, go through that content. And look for appropriate places to invite a listener response to do one of those things that you are calling them to do. So for example, you may have a visual, a chart, a graph, an image, illustration, cartoon, any such visual kind of component, and a call to action might be to go to your website, now it's possible that you might be... Have now it's possible that you have included in your audio book a visual that you're using on your website as a lead magnet, you may be asking people to give you their email address in exchange for that visual.

0:07:58.6 S1: Now, depending on what your goals are and who you perceive as your audience and what you feel comfortable with, it might be fine to leave it just like that, to where when they come to your website, they still need to put in their email address in order to get that content from your audio book, or you may feel that it's really important that your audio book listener receive that visual without having to put in their email address. This is one of those interesting places where you can modify the call to action and the result of that based on what your goals are. Another example of something that you might want to use as a call to action would be a checklist, check lists work really well as visuals and can be great either for someone to scan from your book or to use in an e-book, but in an audio can be a little trickier, like how do you check those boxes in an audio...

0:09:05.7 Becky Parker Geist: Right, so providing that as an optional download, so providing that as an optional download from your website can be really great and a real bonus to your listeners, you might have other things such as images... Well, you can put those on your website. That's a great option. Another option might be if you, depending on your goals, if you, let's say, are trying to

build your following on Pinterest, you could include a link or an invitation to see those images on your Pinterest board, or if you use Instagram and put your images on Instagram and that that's the main place where you share them, that might be a great way, especially if your goal is to build your Instagram following. Let's say you have some exercises or meditations that you would like to offer, and you can include some of these in your audio book, certainly, but if you would like to really create an excellent bonus experience for your listeners, you might also include them on your website or let's say one of your goals is to build your following on Insight Timer or some meditation app, for example, or if you're doing some kind of meditation retreat, then you want to invite people to that, then these are opportunities to go deeper, to engage with your content, more fully.

0:10:47.1 Becky Parker Geist: So again, we're looking at what are the calls to action, and then going through your content of your book and looking for appropriate places to invite that kind of listener response.

0:11:01.5 S1: Initially, what you wanna do is just note the places where you might want to add a cultural action and what that call to action would be once you've done that, and you may wanna even make a separate list if there aren't too many of those, or depending on... The way that your manuscript is laid out or how you work best, you may want to make it as... You may want to make a separate list or perhaps not, but the next thing you wanna look at is which of your goals will each of your calls to action address? In this way, you're lining up your goals, your calls to action, and your placements within your book, so that they can all be in alignment with each other. Once you have done that, then you want to take a look and make sure, first of all, that if there's a goal that you didn't address with a call to action, but that you think your listeners would benefit from and appreciate, then you can consider how you might make that offer, maybe it's something that you'd like to add to or about the author, or in a segment of an interview, for example, if you're doing an interview as bonus material, once you've got that list, once you've mapped it out, then before you put it into action, it's very important that you review that list and really consider the listener experience, have you got too many calls to action in there?

0:12:50.5 Becky Parker Geist: It's very important that your audio book, no matter how much great content you may have, no matter how many bonus experiences you want to provide your listener, it's really important that it doesn't come across like a big sales pitch, it should be an experience. A great experience, but not so filled with calls to action that a listener gets fed up, so there is a balance and there is a tipping point where you can go too far with this.

0:13:25.1 S1: So it's really important to review and to seriously consider what the listener experiences journey is going to be like, and then make adjustments accordingly. You're better off doing less than more as a general rule, make those calls to action really inviting and appropriate to the content. For example, if you have a section of content where you're talking about managing your teams, and then at the end of that, you offer a download for how to increase your sales, there's a disconnect there. So this part of the process is really, really critical and needs to be done with a lot of thought and consideration and imagination for what your listener is going to experience as they go through it.

0:14:21.2 Becky Parker Geist: And then once you feel confident with all of your calls to action, then comes the time to craft those invitations, you want them to be simple and easy to remember, imagine that your listener is driving a car and cannot take a note in the moment to write down some

long complicated website address, and if your invitation is... Download this PDF at this website, that may not be as inviting as telling them how they can deepen their experience with the specific content, if they would like to get your free download that you're offering as a writer, you want to really use your writing craft to develop something that's going to be inviting, think of it truly like an invitation to somebody that you care about and you would like to offer a gift to... Okay, let's take a short pause and then we'll come right back and talk about fiction and children's books and how you can incorporate calls to action in those genres.

0:15:45.6 Becky Parker Geist: So let's talk about fiction, what are some of your opportunities that you have in fiction that are different from non-fiction?

0:15:58.3 S1: Well, first of all, you still want to map out what your goals are, that piece is important for any genre that you're working in, what are your primary goals and what are the calls to action that will match up and help you achieve those goals? Now, with fiction, you have some different kinds of things that are available to you, if you are a writer that has included a map of your world for your book, that might be something that would be inviting to a listener to go check out, especially as you're referencing those points in the book or in the story that... That can be really helpful to them. Now, what I'm not suggesting is that in the middle of your story that you interrupt the story to recommend they go see the map, but rather at the beginning that you let them know it's available and wear.

0:17:00.1 Becky Parker Geist: And just an idea in terms of making it... Especially enticing to go view that map. You might mention that there are certain things, if there are in your story, that will be... It will help them to see that, but you might also take that map and add a treasure point to it in some way, you can actually take, let's say, for example, a map of a region of the country, and maybe you do something, add something onto there that will be a clue, or maybe the cue is actually in the midst of your story, and if they get through to that point in the story where they get that clue, then they'll understand by looking at the map what that clue means and where it leads, and then have some kind of prize for anybody that succeeds in finding the treasure on your treasure map, you can just be a way to sort of Gama fly that aspect and that call to action.

0:18:13.1 S1: Sometimes glossaries are included, and these are typically in SIF or fantasy books where we're coming up with a whole different world, and there's a lot of terminology that's involved in that, so you wanna think about maybe... Here again, if you wanted to GIF it, maybe add something into the glossary on your website that becomes a clue to winning some prize or vice versa, you might have something in the book that is the clue that when they go to the glossary, then they can have some kind of interesting game thing.

0:18:55.8 Becky Parker Geist: The cool thing about, especially if you're writing in fantasy, is that so many people who enjoy fantasy also enjoy different kinds of role-playing games, that the game tying of that feeds that kind of same interest in your listener. So it's just something to think about as a possibility. This other suggestion that I have is something that I recommend as on a regular basis, whether you are fiction or non-fiction, and that is sneak previews, if you have some other title in the same genre or that would appeal to the same audience... Same target audience, then having a sneak preview or a sample of that is a really great idea because you're giving them a chance to sample your other content without having to go any further. And this would be at the end of the book. If they've gotten to the end of the book, that means they almost certainly enjoyed it or they would probably have stopped, so when they get to the end, most listeners want more.

0:20:04.5 S1: Give them some more, let them know how to find more... What else have you written... What else can they enjoy? Another possibility, also bonus material, is an interview. Now, I do recommend doing interviews, and I think that they're especially good for helping your listeners get to know you, and listeners generally like that. People like to know more about the people that they're following. The authors, the content creators. And if you do an interview and you only include part of it as your bonus material, then invite your listener to your website to see the whole thing, or to your YouTube channel, if that's where you would like them to go. Again, what are your goals? Again, looking back at what are your goals and choosing a call to action that's appropriate to your goals, this is a way to bring people into further interaction with you.

0:21:12.9 Becky Parker Geist: Mike wise with your... About the author. I always recommend that authors have there about the author, narrated. And that you include in that. A way to find out more about you. Hopefully, you have a website and you can just direct them to your website, and I do also recommend that you keep it simple, so if you have, let's say, all of your social media handles that are included in your print book or your e-book, that's a great place for them, but audio is not just send them to your website, let your social handles be there and make sure that on your website that you have the links, they can easily go and find you on social media, remember that while that information can be easily updated in print or in e-book formats, it is not so easily updated in audio format because you need your narrator to re-record those, because you need your narrator to re-record that segment, if you're going to include that information and then it becomes outdated. You're so much better off just keeping it simple, keeping it just your website, and there may be other kinds of bonus material that you would like to include, anything from a blog post that you especially like And pertains to your content.

0:22:49.0 Becky Parker Geist: And if you're thinking about your goals, and one of your goals is to increase the number of people who follow you or follow your blog, then that could be a good option for you, so I hope that gives you lots to think about in the fiction world, and now we're gonna move on to children's titles. For the most part, kids books are very short, and your calls to action are gonna depend a lot, again, on your goals and also on what you have available for them in addition to this one title of this one book. For example, you may have a website where you've added some games or some activities for kids, if that's the case, then definitely, you wanna find the right call to action to invite the kids to your website. Now, clearly, parents are gonna be involved in this process, if you have good content that is suitable for the kids, the parents are gonna be happy to have their kids engage as long as it fits within their screen time rules, if you have things where you can offer some kind of prize. That's great. Kids love prizes, parents love prizes to for the most part, but you do wanna keep in mind that ideally, you're gonna be having lots of responses, and so you wanna make sure that whatever kind of prize you're offering, that it is something you can deliver on.

0:24:29.0 Becky Parker Geist: And I mean that both financially and in terms of time and ease, so the greatest prize, of course, is something that you can deliver digitally and can be automated, but you could also do something for a short term and then close it off as a way of generating additional interest during a promotional period, if you're going to do that, then make sure that your audio book is just driving them to the website and that you have your special offer showing on the website, if you include the special offer promotional deal in the audio book. And then you stop offering that, then you've basically got a piece of promotion out there that is obsolete and inaccurate, and you could end up with some problems with that, so let's avoid the problems and keep it simpler, all in

all, especially with kids, titles, you wanna think about what would be fun? What would be educational? What can I offer that will meet those goals and meet those needs? That's it for this episode. I hope this has been helpful. We are here to help.

0:25:47.4 S1: Please come visit us at [pro audio voices dot com](http://proaudiovoices.com) and schedule a call, we would love to talk with you, and if you're not a subscriber to audio book connection yet, we hope you'll click to subscribe, have an awesome day.

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