



## Best Podcast Tools 2022 Edition with Charley Valher



Podcast equipment has gotten better each year since the medium started. What's the best gear for 2022? Valher Media's Charley Valher shares his picks.



**Charley Valher**

**James:** James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness. This is episode 894. I'm chatting with my good friend, [Charley Valher](#). Back again, a very popular guest, Charley.

**Charley:** Yeah, very lucky. I'm thrilled to be here.

**James:** Well, you're here because the audience says, Come on, can you get Charley back? We love everything. We've done [video podcasts versus audio podcasts](#). That episode has been really popular. All of the people that I'm dealing with in the podcasting world, they keep talking about how you've been so helpful for them as you have with me.

And I've mentioned this so many times before, you've helped me with the sound quality, putting the videos onto native channels, promoting episodes more, there's a few. Like, they're sort of my go-to things, Oh, Charley, it's good because of this.

Now, one of your pet peeve topics that people always ask you is, Charley, what microphone should I use? But I just want to do an entire episode on that just to stir you up. Because we're here now, I want to do a 2022 podcast tools edition. I'm not doing this like most creators are doing this, because they want to stick all their affiliate links and sell a whole bunch of stuff. That's not my motivation.



My motivation is just, let's just knock it on the head. I want a post or a podcast where when someone says, What microphone should I use? Or what camera should I use? I want to say, Actually, we've recorded an episode about this. This is sort of instructive, because it's kind of the way that I work. I'm building my catalog of things that I can send people to, that help them on their journey. So, are you down for it, Charley?

**Charley:** Absolutely. I feel like this is going to be the year of the podcast. I cannot tell you how many times I've answered this series of questions this year. I'm like, What equipment? What's new? Is it the same as last year? So I think it's a worthy episode. And to be frank, as much as I get that question a lot, it's also an important question. So let's nail it.

**James:** It is an important question. You know, I was just watching a few episodes of Undercover Billionaire. And in one of the series, they set up a podcasting studio as part of their agency. And you know, they're all in. They've got physical space, they've got podcasting rooms firing off, like it's becoming mainstream. This was in a small town where it wasn't happening at all. And now it's on Discovery TV, and it's thrust into millions and millions of viewers. I don't know how many people watch that show.

But everyone knows what a podcast is. I'm thrilled when we jag a top 50 on our show, which is great. And I know I'm not playing the volume game, but I've got the best listeners. So if you're listening to this podcast or watching it, wherever you watch it, firstly, if you're watching the video of it, partly that's because Charley was responsible for that.

Secondly, I just want to say thank you for being a part of my audience, because I know how many podcasts there are, and how competitive it is, and how much choice you have to go and listen to something else. So I want to make this a knock-it-out-of-the-park episode.

## How good is your microphone?

Let's start with the most obvious, the sound. You and I are both using good quality mics. And I'm really hoping that that's retained its integrity through the editing process with my team, and I know your business at [Valher Media](#) is doing this for your clients. So both of us appreciate, the teams appreciate, getting a reasonable quality input to start with. How important is the microphone quality? And what are we using to record today?



**Charley:** Yeah, to start here, sound quality is the backbone of podcasting. And if you don't have good sound quality, and you do have really good video, it's likely you won't get a result. So I think as podcasters, audio should always be maintained as the primary and video as secondary, although that doesn't mean, have a poor video either.

So I think that's an important thing out of the gate. The good news is all these gear is getting so much cheaper. I'm noticing things now that only a few years ago were costing me a lot more, I can get better things cheaper, in all honesty. Now, I review a ton of stuff across the year, I'm very fortunate that I get to play with a lot of the podcasting gear.

And I have to say, there was no takedown in this category, what I'm going to recommend first. I still think, and I hold this, the RØDECaster Pro, which we're both using, the device on our computers here, and then the RØDE PodMic in my case and a very similar one you have over there, the Podcaster, definitely king of the ring, did not get taken down at all, in my view. I think that is the best equipment you can get in that arena. So for audio on the high end, that is the one I would go for.

But I want to throw in a couple of points on this one. I also quite regularly review USB here, and I'm going to give, absolutely, there is a new mic out that I'm a big fan of if you are someone who just wants to go for a USB microphone, and that is the Shure, I'm just reading this one, Shure MV7. I was lucky to get a hold of one of these, and I think they are the best microphone for USB podcasts, if you don't want to go the whole kit and caboodle.

**James:** So just in summary, USB means, USB cable, and you plug it into your computer, and there's no other bits and pieces, no amplifier, preamplifiers, deck or any of that stuff?

**Charley:** Yeah. So to separate the categories, if you want the best, the RØDECaster Pro and the PodMic, I think, is the best. If you're looking for, like, 80 percent of the result, maybe 70 percent of the result, then you can get a USB mic, which is a lot cheaper. There are some other things that go into that. But the Shure MV7 is a great option. And I think



they're a fantastic-sounding mic. I'll put it this way, the Shure MV7 is good enough that I could do all my shows with it and be really happy with it.

**James:** Yeah, look, I'm looking across here at my old RØDE NT-USB, and gosh, it probably got me a couple of hundred episodes. And then before that was my RØDE Podcaster USB mic, and I've recorded at least 700 episodes on that across my other podcast with just plug it into USB. I had one in each house. And that was it.

But I will say, when we went to this next level, and I'll just say what my experience has been with this thing. Firstly, it's got cool sound effects, right? So we can put in sound effects. And I occasionally use them, I'm very sparing. I know, you could go over the top, it's so exciting when you get sound effects. Right?

But the most important thing is it's got this digital sound processor. So it just takes my regular crappy voice and just makes it into a radio podcast voice, it just makes it better. It's good. It's kind of like plastic surgery for your voice. The other cool thing is it's got the ability to record locally.

So I'm recording this podcast on this digital sound processing unit. And it doesn't really matter what Zoom captures or not, I'm going to use the high-quality audio. So that's been a huge convenience. It's storing on an SD card. I can instantly just look across and see the level of memory left on the card, I got a huge card in there.

And when I finish the show, I just push a button, export the tracks, and it's super high quality across all the channels. I can also Bluetooth in my phone if I want to call someone. So if I was doing a podcast where I'm speaking to people who aren't savvy with the tech, which doesn't happen to me very often, I mean, look at me, you're my guest today, and you've got better equipment than I do, Charley.

But if I was doing a market where I'm just speaking to regular people, and I have to call them on a cell phone, then I would want a Bluetooth in my phone. And I'd want that recorded through this high-quality machine. So that's basically the reason I really love this machine. And it was certainly worth it for me to go for that upgrade.

**Charley:** Yeah, totally agree. And all those points are true. And I agree. But there's one feature on this, which I think doesn't get enough recognition. If you've ever had a guest and maybe their audio isn't quite loud enough, right, is that if you have the RØDECaster Pro, you can literally just turn a dial and increase the volume of their voice.

**James:** The levels.

**Charley:** Yeah, the leveler, I think, is like, such an under spoken thing. And time and time again, I still listen to podcasts, and it's like, the host has got this beautiful enriched sound and then the guest is like, Hey. It's just like, ahhh! Could have been better.

**James:** Yeah, I got the dials here, and I have had to occasionally adjust them. So that is really cool.

There is another benefit that we haven't talked about. It provides hours and hours of endless entertainment for my daughter. She gets in here, and she puts the headphones in, and she's pushing all the buttons, and I do have to occasionally just check the settings to make sure that we're not whatever, but just for that value alone, it's like, off the top.

So microphones, I think we're covered there. What about for the camera? That was the next obvious step.

## Cameras - from USB to king of the ring

**Charley:** Yeah, I'm going to do this in the same. I'm going to cover USB option, which is a cheaper alternative, and then I'm going to do king of the ring, what I think is the best one here. So in the USB category, we actually have a new winner. Like last year, I would have suggested something else, but a company called Elgato have brought out their Facecam, and I think this is a sensational product.

For the price, it's about 300 bucks. And for a plug-and-play USB camera, it will beat most webcams today, and I think it's a phenomenal way to go. Now, I will mention, and I haven't given this the title yet, is that there's some new inbuilt Mac cameras that are coming soon, and they're going to be fantastic as well, but because they're not officially out yet, on the new iMac or anything, I'm going to save that for maybe the '23 edition, we'll see if it makes it.

So I've heard good things, but definitely, at the moment, USB Elgato Facecam is the USB pick. And then on the other side of things, I've stuck with, so this is the king of the ring category, if you've got the budget, go for this, is the Sony a6400, once again. I did not use a camera this year that impressed me more than that camera.

And there's certainly more expensive cameras out there, but the crossover of quality, value, runtime, the flip screen, it's got all the goods that I think make podcasting super easy to do. And also high quality.

**James:** Yep. I'm putting my point of view here. Firstly, I wasn't using cameras at all, I was only doing audio for years. Secondly, I was using a laptop, or a Mac Air, or a MacBook Pro, like I was only using equipment that had sh\*t cameras. And so, I needed an external camera. So I got Logitech stuff, I had the Logitech C920, or whatever it is, and then I had a 4K Brio.

And I'm going to say they're better than the one that comes in a laptop, but they're still rubbish. The exposure, or the brightness, or the extra little janky plugins you need to do to tune it never worked great for me. When I got an iMac, along came the pandemic, and I'm not traveling every month.



So I'm like, Okay, I just want a machine, because I've got this fantastic sound deck and I've got this fantastic camera now, I've got the Sony a6400 that you recommended, which is amazing. That's what we're talking to you on now, it gets you that blurred background effect. The lens just sits there on its tripod right near the camera in a computer. And I don't touch anything.

So I've got this dedicated machine with the new chip. That chip makes all the difference, because my old computer used to huff and puff, and we'd lose, remember we had to change the cables, Charley, because we were losing some of the...? The quality of the equipment wasn't making it through to the thing. It was just wheezing and puffing like an asthmatic, running up a hill, carrying a backpack of lead.

But now, this iMac with the good chip, and high-quality cables, you specifically said, You've got to get this special high gigabit cable. What is it? Mpps 10GP?

**Charley:** USB-C 3.1 is the one we use.

**James:** Yeah, so 10 Gbps or something, it's there, and it's just feeding the camera and the sound, and it's just faultless. The camera's made a huge difference. But I will say this, when I moved house and packed away all my equipment, and I was just left with the iMac and a USB mic, the camera in the iMac was better than the Logitech.

So what we didn't say with the microphone is that you absolutely cannot use the microphone that comes in a laptop or a phone or something. It's ideally just, it doesn't get you a ticket into podcasting anymore. Maybe the iMac, the iMac is impressive. The camera is better than the Logitech, in my experience.

And the sound is actually reasonably good. But it's nothing like having an external sound source. And if you're going to go for an audio format, please just upgrade the audio. Camera-wise, I could get by with the one in the iMac, but the one in the Sony is just that much better. And if you're going to do this, I mean, what kind of business can you do where you spend, like, five grand to set up? And you can tax deduct that straightaway probably in most countries, and it's going to last you for hundreds and hundreds of episodes.

### **Let's talk about the lens James is using**

I'm using the microphone that Charley suggested, I'm using the camera that he suggested, I'm using the special lens. Do you want to talk about that Sigma lens?

**Charley:** Yeah, absolutely. So the Sony a6400 is the body of the camera, great camera. But one of the things that, if people are watching this video, is they'll notice we've got the blurred background effect. And that's actually done through the lens. The lens does that. To this point, there's no great software that will do it through this means.

So there is a Sigma lens that I highly recommend, I actually haven't got the name in front of me, but it's an f1.4, I believe. And you get that for the amount, and very reasonably priced, for what you get here. So it does certainly sit in that value point as well.

**James:** Now, Charley, when I set mine up, and then we were comparing yours to mine, I wasn't getting exactly the same quality as you. And what you and I had to do is just benchmark a bit and get all the settings right, you know, the F-stop, and the exposure, and the auto white balance, all this stuff.

I'm going to just say, if you're following this episode, and you've got a Sony a6400, then check out Charley's website, [Valher Media.com](http://Valher Media.com), because he's going to put together some kind of guide or video tutorial on the settings, right, Charley? I just put you in that.

**Charley:** I've got to say, we don't have that. But you know what, I actually have it. I've got it recorded on my phone, where I've actually been going over the settings of what to push. So we can do that, we can do that.

**James:** I know. You can take a screenshot of it, and it's got all that, I just matched mine to yours and then it just magically came. Because there's things like, you've got to get the current right or it's going to flicker and all this stuff.

**Charley:** There is a little bit, and like, I will disclose this, like I've given this king of the ring status and then we've suddenly gone through all the reasons why it's not just plug and play. If you want to achieve a high quality with the tech that's out there right now, on the a6400, you do have to go through a couple of processes, whether it's settings or getting good cables.

**James:** But once you do it, it's done. I just walk into this room, like literally before this call, I was helping some guy fold his ladder away because he was fixing something in my roof, but I just walk in, fire up the session, and away we go.

## **What a lot of people don't think to consider**

And there is a third component to this. And that's the lighting. And it's probably often overlooked.





I'm now having a lot of conversations with people. What about my backdrop, and my lighting, whatever? You record this stuff, and then you realize you've got Skeletor eyes or it's just not quite right. Do you want to talk about that for a second? Because you've helped me out with this too. And I've also found a great device that I'm absolutely in love with that I think's been tremendous, and I would get again. That's the test. Would I buy it again?

**Charley:** Would you buy it again? I like it. I like that test. I feel much the same. One of the things I'll give a briefing here is like, lighting isn't lighting, like you can't get on eBay and buy one of those cheap lights and think it's going to perform the same as one of the more expensive ones. I think that that is a bit of a fallacy.

And especially when someone's using a Logitech camera, and you have cheap light, that exposure, holy smokes, is very, very interesting. You just see blowout everywhere. If I could say, like, what's a good way to go about this, is, number one is like, you definitely want to use a light with a softbox. A softbox and soft light makes a huge difference. That's what I'm using right now.

And then the brand I recommend, there's two, is Godox and Aputure, who both make really quality lights. And I believe I'm on an SL60 or an ML60 Godox light right now. I do swap them. So forgive me not knowing the exact ones, because if anyone could see the shelf in front of me, they would understand. There's a lot of different stuff here. But that makes a really huge difference.

And I'll go with this, one good light will be five points. So nice soft light, use a softbox, makes a massive difference.

**James:** Nice, well I've got natural sunlight across this whole room with a double blind, no actually, she's single at the moment. I think you and I discussed this, I can have two blinds or one. But as it's daytime at the moment recording this, I've got this, effectively, a wall-size softbox.

**Charley:** Correct.

**James:** That's why it's got a nice feel.

But here, I've got one of those Kodak ring lights, and it allows me to adjust the whiteness here, I can make it blue or yellow. Right? So I quite kind of like the yellowy one, and I can make it brighter or softer. At nighttime, see that's dark, right? Look at that. I'm just shadowed. If you're listening to this, sorry, it's going to work on the video.

**Charley:** You just have to know what shadow you're at. It was, trust me.

**James:** Now, if it's nighttime and I don't get my big softbox, I've got some little Philips Hue lights, and I've got one each side of me, and I've got one facing on the back and then I've got one in my little glass top sideboard. And what that allows me to do is to, again, adjust the mood and to fill in any gaps. So that's pretty cool.

But the other thing, you put me onto this, this sort of colored wand light, which is sitting in the corner.

**Charley:** Mine's actually behind me, mine's right there. I love that product.

**James:** Right. Mine's currently sort of a pinky red, and it's picking up my surfboard in the backdrop and giving it that sort of really interesting look. If you look at some of my backdrops in videos, they're either purple or blue or red. That's because I'm filming at night, and it starts filling up the room with more color. At the moment, because it's daytime, I've got a different ambience. So there you go.

## Optimizing your sound environment

Also, while we're on the sort of the random topic, sound insulation. I don't know if this is on your podcast tools edition, but for me it was critical. You may recall my old office, I had all Blacks, every single wall was sound-insulated, and you and I had conversations about this. Like, some people even put it under their desk and in the roof corners and stuff.

It was great until I needed to move. And then when I started pulling it down, like I destroyed that office. I was out there with a chisel. I spent days trying to get rid of quick grip and liquid nails and silicone, and I tried like 17, double-sided tape, I tried all these different ways to affix it. Lesson learned.

I took the best sound panels, and I brought them here. And what I did here, when I moved, I got those big cardboard Port-a-Robes. And when I finished, I just cut one open, put it on the ground, and I got some liquid nails, and I spread it all over the thing, and then I stuck the sound foam tiles onto the cardboard. And then I just pushed the cardboard into the corner of my wall.



So from about the right hand side of my screen all the way around into the corner, just the whole wall is black sound foam tiles, like egg carton, just sucking up the extra echo. And it's quite acceptable, you know, for a little home studio, without damaging it. If I've finished with this room, if I repurpose it, like, for example, let's say I just fill it with surfboards or something, as if that would happen, then I can just pick it up and just pull it off the wall. And there's not even one nail, nothing, it just sits in the corner beautifully. And it's been great.

**Charley:** Yeah, great way to do it. Great way to save your walls.

**James:** I think I can see some sound foam tiles there on your setup.

**Charley:** Yeah, so I'll mention something here, microphone selection or type is the big difference. If someone has a condenser mic, which I won't go too much into those categories, which sadly, is what your RØDE NT is, you're going to have to use a lot of treatment to make that room work. But if you use a dynamic microphone, which is what I'm using now and what you use, James, you can get away with a lot more in your room.

And that's because the microphone has shielding. It's actually stopping sound coming into the sides and back from all directions. So really important point is that you get the right microphone to create that effect.

**James:** Those Yetis or the Snowballs, are they the ones that pick up absolutely everything?

**Charley:** Yeah. The Yeti is a great mic if you have the environment to use it. But if you don't, it is an echo box. It will probably sound something like that, if you use it. It's a big, big bouncer.

**James:** My RØDE Podcaster mic used to be quite directional.

**Charley:** Great mic as well.

**James:** Yeah, it was forgiving, because I had, like, kids and dogs running around before in my old house, and it was a noisy environment. But people couldn't pick it up, which is great. And I had someone ask me today, they said, Listen, on our calls, I noticed you're typing, but I never hear the keyboard. And like, he said, What keyboard do you use? I'm like, Just a regular Mac one. He goes, That's amazing. That is amazing.

**Charley:** That's probably the greatest example, right? That's the difference. You will hear typing on a condenser mic versus a dynamic. But to answer your question more directly, one of the things I will say is a lot of the soundproofing stuff out there is garbage. It's fake. If you are buying cheap panels on eBay, or Amazon, many are just knock-offs that don't actually work. So, like, there is a lot of science that goes into, like, really good sound absorption.

Now, I've got to give people probably one of the most budget hacky ones that I think works so well. More often than not, a clothes horse with the towels on it will outperform a

lot of things, because of the nature of how it's designed. So if you've got nothing, got no budget, I think that's a really great solution for people, just obviously hide it away from your shot, and that will absorb a lot of room noise.

But second to that, my absolute favorite is, in anyone who's watching this video, you can see these black panels, I've got one there, and I've got one there. I'm actually using a fiberglass panel that are covered and just look nice in a cloth. They have been sensational. They're definitely more expensive. I think I spent about 800 bucks on all the panels in this room right now. But it's almost to the point where I can clap and it sounds funny, because it absorbs so much sound, it's brilliant. So I'm quite a fan of that.

**James:** It's amazing. I've done all the hacks too. Before, I used to put a pillow and a doona around, you know, those portable, or just those little sort of foam mattresses. I used to stick one behind my computer, between that and the hard wall when I was making info products. I had a big thick beanbag on the floor, I had, like, rugs. You basically want soft furnishings and small spaces if you want great quality, right?

**Charley:** Yeah, absolutely. To the point is like, soft furnishings, a good mic still very important here, and then a couple of good panels or things can make a huge difference.

**James:** I've actually got a couple of these. When I moved, I was transporting bottles in these. And I've got a couple of these just sitting around behind there. Again, you could make some stuff out of egg cartons if you're really on a budget, you could do worse than that. By the way, the foam sound tiles, when the removalists came and took my bed and everything, and I was sleeping on a futon, I actually ended up sleeping on top of three or four layers of sound foam tiles to just get a nice sleep.

**Charley:** It probably would have actually been quite comfortable, right? They're quite soft.

**James:** This episode really could have been how to repurpose podcasting gear for practical other applications.

## **What's the best recording platform?**

Let's talk about recording. I've mentioned I'm recording straight to this sound deck. We're also recording on Zoom. So I've got at least some redundancy, and I suspect you're recording on your side too, Charley, because you're Charley. It means that even if the Zoom fails, you and I could just get our hard drive versions and join them together, and we can still end up with at least an audio salvage.

What are we using to record, these days? I asked you about a solution the other day, and you gave me some mixed feedback on it as well, because my team was saying, Well with Zoom, we're only able to get a certain resolution with the video. And if we could use other

solutions, maybe we could get a higher resolution, like if I could record it directly into the camera.

But then I'm only going to be sort of limited to my guests, because most guests are not going to be able to record, to work a Sony a6400, right?

**Charley:** Yeah, great topic. So I'll go through these ones. It's like, Zoom is the standard. And it's the standard for podcast is because it's reliable. Now, I'm not going to say it's the most high-quality. But when's the last time anyone jumped on a Zoom call, and it failed? Right? It's incredibly robust. And if you are interviewing people, that's a really great feature to have.

It's also really easy to use. You don't have to train anyone how to do it, everyone's pretty much used to Zoom calls, right? I'll say in most niches. So there's some really big wins for that. And then personally, I use Zoom as well. But it is one of those things where I've said for so many years, now, surely there has to be a higher resolution solution. Surely there's a way to do this.

Now, the contender in here, and I'll say contender, is Riverside.fm. And I love what they're doing, I really do. And I want to support these guys in getting their product to an amazing stage. But sadly, my experience has been very mixed, and I'll express it. So Riverside is four times the quality of Zoom. So, four times better. So it's not just a little bit better, it's a lot better.

But on a bad day, there's lag issues, I've had upload issues, I've had numerous challenges where I've actually lost recordings. Now, on its good days, amazing. Like, it is the best quality podcast we've ever done. But until I can be confident in the reliability, I've had to wait, and I'm sporadically testing it every six months or so to see if it improves.

But to this point, I'm still reluctant to make that jump, because I just don't like the idea of getting halfway through an interview that's going well and then suddenly the lag falls out. And it's not just a little bit. We're talking like 15 or 20-second lag that I've had experiences with, personally, that just didn't do it for me.

**James:** Yeah, it's no good. I mean, I've tried GoToMeeting right before I committed to Zoom, and it doesn't split sides. You need to be able to split sides for editing. I used to use Skype, which was fine, except a lot of my guests had to install it to be able to talk to me. Like, I rode that train all the way to the end of the station. And it's like, eventually, they just didn't cement their grounds. So Zoom is where it's at for me at the moment, in the short term.

**Where to put the finished product**

Let's talk about where we put the podcast, because that qualifies as a tool. I'm using Amazon S3, just partly because we've been using it for such a long time. It's extraordinarily cheap, they're a pretty big company. And if they go down, then we're all going down. And that happens occasionally, but not often.

And it's sort of how we set up our original podcasts using a plugin, a Blubrry plugin. And it does allow redirect, we can track downloads, we can get some visibility, I think on Spotify, but I know that it's not the latest greatest solution. And I'm curious to know, what are people using in 2022?

**Charley:** Yeah, that's a really good question. There's a lot of good options in this category. So for podcast hosting, I'll list my two favorite and why. And then I'll mention a few other things that I think are really important here. So number one, what I use personally is Omni, and I'll tell you why I use them, is the support has been amazing.

Anytime I've needed anything from them, they've helped me immensely. And this isn't just for my own show, but all our client shows. And I think many people would be a bit surprised by the amount of times a podcast won't show on one platform, or something needs to be resynched, or there's a bunch of stuff that happens in podcasts from time to time. And having someone on your side to help you resolve that has been amazing.

So for that reason, I work with them, and I support them in the big way. And they are also very quick to roll out new features. Second favorite is Libsyn. While I'll admit it doesn't have the most stylish dashboards or interface or anything like that, it kind of falls into the category of, like Zoom, it's super reliable. So I'm quite a fan of those two. I don't think anyone can go wrong with those two, which is why I recommend them.



But the third one, if people aren't doing this, I think they really need to reconsider their emotions here, is that, I think people need to take YouTube seriously as a podcast host. This is one you do in combination, like if you aren't currently able to use any other podcast host, do an upload on YouTube. But I will tell you right now, it is amazing to me how many people use YouTube as their podcast player.



And if you are not currently doing that, you are missing out on some potentially very big opportunities. And I'll just say one little, like, this is a prediction. I think Audible and Amazon do a lot better in the coming year. Some very, very cool tech in the hosting space as well.

**James:** We've also heard about Spotify, you know, with Joe Rogan.

**Charley:** Yeah, absolutely. But one of the things is, is Spotify will link into Omni and Libsyn. So you kind of, by default, enable that platform, just like with iTunes is still the biggest one by far. And that is in-tied to those as well.

**James:** And there's also, we hear about Stitcher and also maybe SoundCloud?

**Charley:** So Stitcher and SoundCloud have, I would say, declined a little bit in the last 12 months. I've certainly noticed in dashboards. So just to give this preference on the shows I look at, like, we have quite a substantial amount of shows, and the biggest growth areas I've noticed in the past 12 months have been Spotify and YouTube.

Apple is still the king, undeniably. But then Stitcher and a lot of these other players, smaller ones, I've actually haven't seen them growing in the same way that these bigger platforms are, I think the Big Four is forming, so to speak.

**James:** Well, we do put all of our shows on YouTube. Like, we'd load it up to YouTube, we'd load it up to Facebook, we go that extra distribution. And compared to the old days, we get maybe half or 60 percent of the number of downloads as we used to get just on the Apple platform, but plus the ones we're putting elsewhere, which you'd have to say cannibalizing to some extent or contributing to the overall pie.

I think the overall pie is bigger. But we're meeting people where they're at. And I'm okay with that.

These are the main things that I'm, you know, we've talked about the obvious ones, the sound, the lights, the video, the hosting, the recording tool. Beyond that, what are the other things we might want to consider as a sort of must-have podcasting tool?

**Because you've got to do your research...**

**Charley:** Yeah, this is a new one. This is something we've only brought into the arena in the last year, I'll say, but it's something I'm using extensively now. And that's research tools. The two I'm a really big fan of are Topic Mojo and TubeBuddy. And these two platforms really helped me understand what content is doing well in a niche.

Now, if you've ever been a podcaster, and had the thought, Well, what do my audience want? How can I be sure I'm making things they want to consume? I think these are absolutely essential, and something a lot of podcasters should spend more time on.

I had my doubts, I was even skeptical, especially of Topic Mojo. And then after using it a few times, I am of the view that I will be using it a lot. It was really good, and then also offered a ton of SEO benefit for ranking things as well, which I won't go into too deeply here. We're not talking about SEO specifically here. But I just know there's some hidden value in knowing what people are searching for.

**James:** Well, for context, you used to be an SEO guy, and you also were a paid traffic agency. So you do know about these things. Have you tried [SparkToro](#)?

**Charley:** I have not, not as yet.

**James:** I know my team use that. We had the founder on our show. We bought the tool, been using it. It's been quite interesting. There are lots of other tools that are out there. I think, BuzzSumo, is it?

**Charley:** Yup. And also [Ahrefs](#) has got a fantastic one as well. I have to say, the Topic Mojo and TubeBuddy one have certainly won it for me against Ahrefs, even though I do like Ahrefs a lot.

**James:** I think TubeBuddy is very important if you're doing YouTube, right?

**Charley:** Correct.

**James:** Yeah, I think that's a really good tip.

## Editing tools of the podcast trade

What about editing? This is something I'm not really involved in at all. I think we use Adobe or something, but honestly, I don't know, and it doesn't really concern me. I'm happy for my team to have the best tool. So I'm asking on their behalf. What are you recommending for editing? And to get the production going?

**Charley:** This might be the most polarizing question you've asked, James. There's certainly camps in this one, this is a big question.

**James:** I didn't even know that, I didn't know this is controversial.

**Charley:** It is. There's different crowds out there. But I would say Adobe is my favorite editing tool by far, and my team use it a lot. They're big fans of that. But I'll say one of the things in the editing suite that I think is quite interesting is there's a tool out called Frame.io that actually allows you to review things. And I think this is fantastic.

So if you're working with an editor as a podcast, and you want to be able to review things and leave time-stamped messages on videos and know things have been changed, I am a big fan of that. And I think using it for clips, or little snippets and caption stuff is, I've noticed a significant increase in productivity and being able to, rather than sending a

message to your team, going, Oh, hey, can you fix up this bit? You can actually mark the video and put in a little note so your editor knows exactly what you're talking about. I think that's a great tool.

**James:** I love that. It's like I'm doing with text in Google, you know? Like suggested changes and stuff. It's fantastic to have that ability to mark things up and draw attention to it. You gave such a big hint there. Snippets, taking big podcasts, breaking them down into little bite-sized pieces. That's what you do there at Valher Media, it's part of what you do, helping these people get their podcasts out there, developing their shows, making them win.

## **This is a tool you likely haven't heard about**

What about an underrated tool that we probably haven't heard of, or we may not know about?

**Charley:** Yeah, so I've got two left that I think are probably underrated, that we're using now, that I'm a big fan of. So one is dynamic podcast ads. Now for anyone that doesn't know what a dynamic ad is, it's the ability to record an ad, and then have it appear on your entire back catalog, without having to hard burn it into the episode.

So James, if we made an ad right now, but someone went back and listened to [Episode 300](#), you can have that new ad appear.

**James:** Can I still do it to my show now, or do I have to do some major technical thing?

**Charley:** If your hosting provider enables it, so if Blubrry have that option, you could do it. I know Omni does, definitely do. And that's something we do a lot of. But if you're someone who's continually updating, like, your offer, or your opt ins, or you have something new, the ability to have it appear in front of your entire back catalog, all at the same time, be able to change it, is something I don't think enough podcasters are taking advantage of.

**James:** It's basically an ad server.

**Charley:** Best way to describe it, yes.

**James:** I used to have an ad server. When I had 2000 domains and 1000 websites, we had [Dave Wooding](#) built me an ad server, and we could just run any ad on across our entire network. It was great. And we could also run backlinks across our entire network, just inserting them on the footer back in the good old days, could rank anything, you know, within an hour.

It was fantastic. I totally get it. It makes a lot of sense. And I am curious to know if we can do that. Because one day, I mean, people tell me I'm insane not selling ads or advertising



on this particular show. So if you're listening to this show, and there is an ad running, you know that in the future, I decided...

**Charley:** We've updated it.

**James:** ...to run ads because of Charley. I feel like I do leave a lot of money on the table, because I coach people who make plenty of money doing ads. And if the sponsor was appropriate and sits within my core values, and it was useful, then I'd be okay with that.

**Charley:** Yeah, but even promoting your own stuff. Let's say you got a webinar coming up or an event. It's time-sensitive.

**James:** Yeah, that's amazing. That's really like the email list, I can broadcast to my email list about things that are interesting. And I'm constantly letting people know about my partners and when there's new content. It'd be good to be able to put it across there, especially if I ran a live event. You're right, that'll be an amazing opportunity.

**And finally....**

What's your last tool, Charley?

**Charley:** So the last one is one you actually introduced to me, which is [10XPRO](#). So one of the things that we've introduced and we're bringing in is using 10XPRO to collect all the emails and opt-ins and things from our show.

So these two kind of go together. When you imagine that you're suddenly using a dynamic ad, and you're offering a webinar, or a training, or a framework, or whatever it is, is the ability to have people come into 10XPRO and just absorb that ecosystem. And get on your list and buy stuff.

**James:** So you're clicking on campaign, just doing book funnel, a webinar, or a new, whatever, and you just deploy the campaign. And it spools up a thing, you can rename the page, you can fill in the words. You'll be up and running very quickly if you had a team, but even if you're just doing it by yourself, it's that easy to use now.

I'm glad you mentioned that. And I appreciate it. I know, there's some real power users using this platform now, which I'm excited about. A lot of the partners that I work with are using it, and we're building a better tool. I've been certainly pushing through some great update suggestions as I've been getting deeper into it as well. So thank you.

Wow, so basically, we've listened to this Episode 894. We've got a pretty good handle on what tools we're using, how we're making these podcasts, where we're putting them, how we distribute them, how we run ads. If you've got the technical questions about it, please get in touch with Charley. He's a better person to ask that question. [Valhermedia.com](#). We'll put a link to it in the show notes at Episode 894.

Charley, thanks so much for coming along and sharing. We've got a few other topics that I want to ask you about for future episodes, if you're willing to come back.

**Charley:** I'm super keen, James. I love being on the show.

**James:** Thanks. We love having you. Well, that's it then. Thank you so much, and speak to you next time.



Stay on top of marketing trends with James's help

[CLICK HERE](#)