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“What unique angle can you bring to the conversation?” with Kathy Sucich

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Kathy Sucich is the Host and Executive Producer of the Smarter Healthcare Podcast, which is distributed on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Stitcher, TuneIn, and Deezer. She is also Vice President of Marketing at Dimensional Insight, a data analytics company based in the Boston area. When she is not working, Kathy is an avid reader, Marvel movie watcher,

and Peloton-er. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband, three daughters, and a dog.

Can you tell our readers about your background?

I went to college in New Hampshire, which is the state that hosts the first-in-the-nation Presidential primary every four years. I had some friends who were involved in the college radio station, and because I was a government major with an interest in American politics, they asked if I would join the radio station to interview presidential candidates as they swung through town. I did, and was instantly hooked on broadcasting. I ended up becoming news director and anchoring our Election Night coverage in 1996. That was the birth of my career in communications!

After college, I worked as a television news writer and producer for a few years before making my way into the relatively more stable world of technology public relations. I worked at a PR agency for about nine years and then did some freelance writing and public relations before joining my current company. I have now been at Dimensional Insight for nine years in a variety of marketing roles. I started as a part-time PR & Social Media Manager and I've worked my way up to VP of the department.

In January 2020, after probably about a year of both noodling on the idea and putting all the right pieces into place, I launched the Smarter Healthcare Podcast to profile people working on the front lines of healthcare innovation. The launch of the podcast felt a bit like coming full circle, going back to my roots in broadcasting, but in a modern way.

What inspired you to start your podcast?

Healthcare is one of the primary vertical markets in which Dimensional Insight has customers, and over the years, I've immersed myself in the world of healthcare technology. I've found that there are so many interesting stories in this area that I wanted to share, from applications of telehealth, to artificial

intelligence, to VR and robotics. And with my background in broadcasting, I was itching to do something “on air.” A podcast seemed to be the logical way to combine these interests.

How did you start it? What were the first steps you took?

The first step was to figure out what I was good at, and what I was not so good at. I determined that my strengths lied in booking and interviewing guests. My weaknesses were in audio editing and distributing the podcast. So I opted at the outset to not even worry about those aspects of the podcast and outsource them. I’m currently working with a great editor and a great podcast distributor, and I couldn’t be happier to have these tasks off of my plate.

Next, I gave a lot of thought as to my audience and angle for the Smarter Healthcare Podcast. There were a lot of different directions in which I could have taken the podcast, but ultimately, I decided that I wanted to focus it on the technologies and people who are shaping the future of healthcare.

The last initial step was to start booking and interviewing guests. There comes a point where you have to turn your thoughts into action, and just do the darned thing. I had thought about doing a podcast for many, many months, and actually starting to do it was both exciting and scary.

What has been the most effective way of raising awareness for your podcast?

We have LinkedIn and Twitter accounts for the Smarter Healthcare Podcast where we promote new episodes, and we also cross-promote on our Dimensional Insight LinkedIn and Twitter feeds, as well as our corporate website. In addition, I ask my guests to promote the podcast. I’ve found that typically, the episodes that have the most downloads are those where the guests themselves have been actively promoting them.

If I were to take a “next step” in terms of promoting my podcast, I would look into paid opportunities, such as advertising or joining a podcast network.

What have been your biggest challenges when launching your podcast?

Hands down, the top challenge has been the COVID-19 pandemic! I initially wanted to do most of my interviews in person, because I felt that made for a better conversation, so I tried to schedule interviews either at conferences I attended or with somewhat local guests. In fact, my Episode 2 guest was an in-person interview I had with a global health professor at Dartmouth College, my alma mater. We talked for a few minutes about this virus in China that we were starting to hear about, and then about a month after that interview aired, the whole world shut down.

After that, all my interviews went virtual. Although I was initially disappointed at that, I’ve found it’s alright because it actually broadens the pool of people I can interview, and I have had guests from all around the world. I now conduct my interviews on Zoom and request that guests keep their cameras on so I can see them so it’s more like an in-person interview where you can better read pauses or non-verbal cues in the conversation.

How do you monetize your podcast? What are your best tips to monetize a podcast?

Our podcast is currently not monetized, since it is financed by Dimensional Insight. Monetization is definitely something I have given thought to, though, if we ever look to broadly expand in the future.

What's your best piece of advice for aspiring and new podcasters?

My biggest piece of advice goes back to the audience and the angle for your podcast. Really give some thought as to who you’re targeting, and what you can provide to them that’s different from what they’ll get anywhere else. There are

so many podcasts out there these days, so it's important to think about what makes yours unique.

A follow-up piece of advice would be to stick to that angle! Yes, you will find other interesting stories or things you will want to share with your listenership, but you don't have to be everything to everyone. Less is often more, as they say.

What's your favorite app, blog, and book? Why?

Favorite app: Peloton. It's important for me to have an outlet outside of my work, and during the pandemic, my husband and I hopped on the Peloton bandwagon. I love having an endless number of workouts to choose from every day on my Peloton app and being a part of a supportive, albeit virtual, community.

Favorite blog: NY Times Live Feed. The "live" blog on the NY Times website is one of the first places I go for news each day. It gives me a quick synopsis of what is important in the world today without being too much of a news overload.

Favorite book: The Plot. Gosh, this one is hard, so I picked the best book I read in the last year. The Plot by Jean Hanff Korelitz was great – good characters, good pacing, and quite an ending! I have a Bookstagram account @books.happen on Instagram if you want to see some of the other books I read throughout the year.

What's your favorite business/podcast tool or resource? Why?

Honestly, I think the best podcast resource is just listening to other podcasts. It helps me figure out what is newsworthy, what is interesting, and what is appealing as a podcast listener.

I listen to NPR's Up First every morning. Similar to the NY Times live blog, it keeps me up to date on the news each day. Less frequent in my rotation (but still

great shows) are The Daily by the NY Times, which goes more in-depth into a newsworthy topic, and NPR's How I Built This with Guy Raz, which profiles entrepreneurs and how they built their businesses.

Also, WTF with Marc Maron is an outstanding podcast. I spent a lot of time listening to Marc Maron and how he interviews guests prior to starting my own podcast. Although I don't think I could ever be as good of an interviewer as Marc is, it is certainly something I aspire to.

What projects do you have planned for the next six months?

I am headed out to a healthcare technology conference in a couple of months – the first conference that I will attend in more than two years! I talked earlier about how I originally wanted to conduct all of my podcast interviews in person. I'm hoping to connect with people for interviews during that conference if I can. I recognize that even post-COVID (if that day ever comes), I will still do many of my interviews virtually, but it would be nice to start to weave in some interviews that I've conducted in person if possible.

How can our readers connect with you?

Both the Smarter Healthcare Podcast and my company, Dimensional Insight, can be found online, as well as on LinkedIn or Twitter.

Smarter Healthcare Podcast

<https://www.smarthcpodcast.com/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/smarthcpodcast/>

<https://twitter.com/SmartHCPodcast>

Dimensional Insight

<https://www.dimins.com/>

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