

[00:00:03.230] - Kriste

Hey, welcome to how It's Done, a podcast for curious marketers. I'm Kriste Goad, I'll be your host and I'm really glad you're here.

[00:00:16.090] - Kriste

Today we're talking to Ryan Estes, who's the co-founder of Kitcaster, a podcast booking agency that books you on top podcasts that speak directly to your ideal audience. Welcome to the show, Ryan.

[00:00:27.500] - Ryan

Thanks, Kriste. It's so nice to be here.

[00:00:29.880] - Kriste

I can't wait to learn more.

[00:00:31.290] - Ryan

Yeah, absolutely. It's a podcast about podcasting. So I suppose it's kind of Seinfeldian, after all.

[00:00:39.370] - Kriste

What's better than that? Especially for people that love podcasts.

[00:00:43.550] - Ryan

Amen.

[00:00:45.480] - Kriste

We want to talk today about utilizing podcasts for growth and how you can leverage a podcast booking agency like Kitcaster to help grow your brand. I know that's a challenge for a lot of people. I've already seen your agency at work booking you and one other guest on this very podcast so far, and I love the process. They do a great job, so well done.

[00:01:08.310] - Ryan

Thank you. Yeah. No, I appreciate it. It's a symbiotic relationship. We can't have a podcast booking agency without excellent podcast hosts so thank you.

[00:01:17.720] - Kriste

Awesome. Well, how about we dive in and you just tell us a little bit about Kitcaster and how it came to be. Tell us a little about yourself.

[00:01:25.780] - Ryan

Yeah. Let's do it. So Kitcaster is a podcast booking agency. We work largely with funded startup founders, entrepreneurs with exits and C-suites execs, and we booked them on the world's top podcasts. There's about 18 of us on the team now, and our job is to basically be the best in the world at booking podcasts for our clients. And I think we're getting close to that mark. It never ends, but I think we're close to that.

[00:01:54.730] - Ryan

Kitcaster started two years ago. We launched September 6, 2019, basically as a collaboration with a friend of mine, Brandy Walen, who's our co founder. She has a PR agency, and I had a PR agency for ten years. And I had a digital marketing agency for about the same time. And I had a podcast for about nine or ten years. It started out being called the Denver Business Podcast, and it became a podcast called TalkLaunch, and it was a founder's podcast. So I'd interview the same kind of folks, tech founders, stuff like that. And Brandy would bring her clients to my show.

[00:02:32.530] - Ryan

And so we're getting coffee and just kind of like, hey, let's do a project together. What do you want to do? It's like, well, we met through podcasting, something there. So we kind of went through a process of validation looking for a project in podcasting and kind of came to this idea of a booking agency. And I think what we liked about it is the way you scale a service like this, kind of a product type service, is old school. It's like having a HQ and putting butts and seats, creating a company culture.

[00:03:02.620] - Ryan

And both of us have a kind of software tech startup kind of background, it was kind of the flip side of what we've been doing. Kind of lean and mean teams with 90% margins and explosive growth or catastrophic destruction. This is kind of more like building a team. And so I think it was really appealing to both of us at the time. So, you know, we started out with the pilot program that went really well and kind of put everything into it. And two years later, here we are.

[00:03:33.800] - Kriste

So you work with agencies all across the country or who do you mostly work with?

[00:03:38.260] - Ryan

We're working mostly with the startup directly, either with their marketing team or with the founder, CEO. We'll do kind of COOs and stuff like that, too. But we also do work with agencies. So agencies will basically bring us on as a podcasting arm to their agency, and we'll work on their behalf, and then they manage the client relationship on their side. But for the most part, we're working directly with the founder of the company.

[00:04:05.860] - Kriste

And how do you determine which podcast to target?

[00:04:09.270] - Ryan

That's a good question.

[00:04:10.970] - Kriste

I didn't have that on the list. I'm just throwing that at you.

[00:04:14.580] - Ryan

No, no. Let's do it. The way that we'll go at it is we really start with the outcomes. What do you want to get out of podcasts? Oftentimes that could be brand exposure, we're just looking to get our name out there a little bit more. Everybody's looking for prospects and we definitely want to move the deal with podcasts where we can oftentimes startup founders are looking for runway. So getting in front of venture capitalists, angel investors, fill in the pipeline becomes a priority.

[00:04:46.440] - Ryan

And especially now, a lot of people are using podcasts to recruit talent, to get out there, show that they're on the forefront of whatever sector they're in and recruit talent through podcasting. So we kind of start there. What are the outcomes you're looking for? What are the attributes of that audience? Find the audience for them, and then we'll go find the podcasts that match the potential outcomes and audience that the podcast has. That gets us really close to finding that right fit.

[00:05:18.520] - Kriste

It's like media relations, but specific to podcasts.

[00:05:21.600] - Ryan

Exactly. Exactly. That's it. So generally we'll do two tracks. We'll do kind of like a broad, generalist entrepreneurial-type story podcast track. And then the other will be a little bit more technical, probably where you can find a higher conversion rate within those outcomes you're looking for.

[00:05:41.200] - Kriste

So when you're talking about conversion rates, how do you typically think about that with a podcast? Does it include all the way through to thinking about production and what calls to action you're putting in there or it goes back to what you were just talking about, what's your goal and understanding that on the front end?

[00:05:57.140] - Ryan

Yeah. You bet. I mean, podcasts are pretty squishy. I mean, they don't fit neatly on spreadsheets. It's hard to find your acquisition cost from a podcast. So we ask our clients. Is this resonating with you? Do you like it? Because that's really important, it does become a really fun way for leaders to lead and talk about the thing that they're most passionate about. But then what are the other areas that we can measure success within the campaign? So it's really just a dialogue with the client of like, "hey, are you getting what you signed up for?"

[00:06:32.720] - Kriste

Yeah. Do you ever find that some CEOs say that that's what they want and "yeah, let's go do some podcasts," and then they're just not available when you start delivering?

[00:06:44.460] - Ryan

On the schedule? Sure, it happens. Totally. We have a philosophy, we don't believe that there's such a thing as a podcast emergency because there just isn't.

[00:06:56.000] - Kriste

That's true.

[00:06:56.570] - Ryan

We definitely take our job very seriously. But it's like, hey, man, where we can we'll reschedule to accommodate our clients. But we're also working on behalf of a podcast host as well. So there's a fine line. If everybody's respectful of everybody's time, it works out great. What's great about the Vin diagram of, let's say, podcasters and CEOs and founders, is they kind of overlap perfectly.

[00:07:25.500] - Ryan

These are folks who love to talk, and we've had clients that have been with us for the entire two years that we've been alive and have just kind of woven these podcast interviews into their schedule because it's something they love to do. And because I think the outcomes oftentimes are a little bit novel and chaotic.

[00:07:45.800] - Kriste

And you don't really have to prep too much for them, right? I mean, if you're an entrepreneur and a CEO or founder, you know what your story is. And so it's pretty easy to talk about it.

[00:07:54.450] - Ryan

100%. You live and breathe the product. What we do find, though, is in the beginning of the campaign, it's good to do a little bit of training around their story. I think for everybody, it's hard to kind of talk about yourself and who you are and how you got to this chair. Oftentimes it's the humble beginning story to that pivotal moment to where you are now in your vision for the future and working with our clients to create stories and pull anecdotes from their past that describe that transformation is really helpful.

[00:08:31.430] - Ryan

Because especially how you started the podcast, "tell me about Kitcaster or a little bit about yourself." Pretty much all the shows start like that. So having a good tee-off point where you can get into the meat of the conversation is just a great way to begin the campaign.

[00:08:46.930] - Kriste

Hey, I agree with you 100%. And you know that's like my passion: "okay, let's help you figure out your story and then go tell it to the right audiences." Which is also a great segue for my next question for you, Ryan, is you describe yourself as an American Buddhist entrepreneur. So I need to know, why do you describe yourself that way and why is that important to your business and maybe your business model? I know you mentioned just a little bit ago, service fund and profit.

[00:09:17.580] - Ryan

Yeah.

[00:09:18.240] - Kriste

And I guess the concept that all of those can, in fact, work together.

[00:09:22.460] - Ryan

You bet. Let's start with the American Buddhist. I guess I differentiate, I call myself an American Buddhist as opposed to just a Buddhist, because I saw the Dalai Lama speak when I was young in Zurich. It was so cool and he spoke in English, which was awesome, too.

[00:09:43.220] - Kriste

How old were you?

[00:09:44.740] - Ryan

I was like, 20.

[00:09:45.890] - Kriste

You're 20, and you're in Zurich. That's a good time to be alive right there.

[00:09:50.860] - Ryan

Oh, boy. I had a lot of fun. It was great. And I was definitely deep into studies of some Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and Buddhism, for sure, but more into Daoism. I mean, I was a teenager, essentially.

[00:10:07.910] - Kriste

You're finding yourself.

[00:10:10.870] - Ryan

Yeah. Absolutely. So I had the opportunity to go see the Dalai Lama and I did. And one thing he said, he's like, "Westerners can't be Buddhist because they don't understand Buddhist culture." And then he talked a little bit about what it was like and the mountainous regions of Tibet and like, why that philosophy rooted there around the culture.

[00:10:36.580] - Ryan

And I kind of took that to heart. I was like, wow, that's pretty harsh. I was like, well, I guess my pursuit of Buddhism is over because the Dalai Lama told me it's impossible. So there's a differentiation there. But it didn't stop my studies. I kept pursuing that. In America, particularly, our introduction to Buddhism, which happened kind of in the late forties and fifties, coincided and perfectly overlapped with what was happening kind of culturally in America with both the hippie movement and the psychedelic movement.

[00:11:10.800] - Ryan

The introduction of Buddhism was largely founded by people getting turned onto psychedelic drugs. And for better or for worse, that kind of flavored what Buddhism would be for the next 50 years in America, and a lot for worse. There's been kind of a reckoning in Buddhist circles in America as a result of those crazy days. So Buddhism is important to me as a technology, as a way to bring peace and structure to our minds and also some ways to kind of explore consciousness.

[00:11:52.860] - Ryan

So I love talking about Buddhist topics and those in general, but I also like some of their rudimentary ideas of how to be a moral person and a good person in the world without a very structured religious belief, nothing to believe. And one of them is right livelihood. So working in a positive way that doesn't do any harm becomes important to me in my practice as a Buddhist. So introducing those ideas and really just exploring what those ideas could be in work has been a fun process in Kitcaster.

[00:12:31.230] - Kriste

Awesome. So that was very much a part of the conversation when you guys launched this thing?

[00:12:37.470] - Ryan

No. No, that'd be a weird way..."I want to inject Buddhist principles into this company. Are you cool with that?" No.

[00:12:52.820] - Kriste

It's just more like your personal philosophy and compass, I guess.

[00:12:57.920] - Ryan

Yeah, totally. It filters in. You talked about the way that, being an entrepreneur myself, but also a family guy, you know, I got two kids and I have my passions and hobbies, and you start to realize that you just don't have that much time. And I'm also manic, and I love jumping into new ideas and stuff. So I had to kind of create a criteria for which I would do things. And for me that became it has to be fun, it has to be of service and it has to make money.

[00:13:29.870] - Ryan

It has to be fun because if it's not I'm just not going to want to do it, simple as that. It has to make money because otherwise, I'd just be in my closet writing songs all day long forever. I got responsibilities. I got to make money.

[00:13:44.900] - Kriste

You're a songwriter, too?

[00:13:46.180] - Ryan

In a former life.

[00:13:53.010] - Ryan

And then the third one, it has to be of service because bringing meaning to our work is personally important to me. But also, I think for it to stick and to build a staff, you have to feel like you're making a difference in multiple domains. Otherwise, again, it's just you're not going to get your best performance and then figuring out how to deliver your best performance becomes kind of the next task. So Kitcaster for me ticked off all three of those things and kind of sent us on our way.

[00:14:26.160] - Kriste

That's awesome. What's this thing you talk about - "emotional traction," and the role podcasts play in healing our ailing culture. And creating kind business practices, you know, talk to me about this a little bit.

[00:14:41.280] - Ryan

You bet. So a couple of things, I suppose I'll speak just on work broadly first. You know, when I was growing up, I didn't know what an analyst was or this or that. I knew that people did business on the golf course, but I had no idea what that kind of work was. To me, your job was like the characters on Mr. Rogers or the businesses in the strip mall. You've got a grocery store, you've got a mechanic, you got your lawyer, you got a doctor.

[00:15:13.880] - Kriste

A teacher, a nurse.

[00:15:16.230] - Ryan

You got a teacher, a nurse, a mailman, you got the milk guy. You got jobs, you know, and that's what I understood. And now, because of the Internet and kind of these different things, you have things that are called podcast agents, which is so ridiculous. I mean, what is that? It doesn't even make sense. And largely there's a lot of work like that. If you're a software engineer, what it ends up being is that we're spending a lot of time in front of glowing rectangles. And how do you manage that?

[00:15:48.300] - Kriste

Right. My son, he's in college right now, but he had his first PR internship this past year. He's like, "oh, mom, now I get what you were doing on your computer all day, every day." Because that's all he saw me do was looking at this little screen and typing, taking phone calls.

[00:16:07.690] - Ryan

Which is weird.

[00:16:09.210] - Kriste

Yeah, and how do you describe that to kids, right?

[00:16:12.800] - Ryan

Then don't get it.

[00:16:13.430] - Kriste

It makes it difficult. It's not very tangible.

[00:16:15.640] - Ryan

Yeah. But if you're a mechanic, you're at a place and people come in and they have a problem and you solve the problem. And that's every single business. That makes sense. What doesn't make sense is whatever we're doing right here in front of glowing rectangles. There's something unsatisfactory about this kind of work just built-in because really, we're not supposed to be in front of glowing rectangles. We're supposed to be engaging with each other on a personal level. At least that's what we've been doing for a few hundred thousand years as a species.

[00:16:45.760] - Ryan

So there are certain downsides. There's many upsides that are fantastic. I don't want to be lifting rocks in a field, I'm glad I'm doing what I'm doing. But it becomes an internal world, then. How am I engaging with myself so I can engage with my work? So largely a lot of that is, for me, built around kindness and the idea of kind principles both for yourself, you know, like protecting yourself and understanding you're engaging in something that has never been done before by all of humanity.

[00:17:23.900] - Ryan

First, we're trying to figure out how to work our lives around email. And then how do you bring that across into your communications that are largely digital and having a kind, give-first philosophy, one, because I think it's important to bring that into the world, but two, it's also to protect ourselves because we need to be able to work and we need to be able to metaphorically close the door and leave work. And for me, from a leadership perspective, it's very important for me to create those opportunities for our staff, because in order to get the best, most creative, productive work out of them, they can't be looking at emails at 8 p.m.

[00:18:05.950] - Ryan

They can't be getting text messages from stuff on Sunday afternoons, because that means from Monday to Friday, when I need them, they're going to be torched. And all this is new territory. So figuring out ways where we can be, use unconditional positive regard and assume positive intent.

[00:18:24.720] - Kriste

That's a big one.

[00:18:26.500] - Ryan

Yeah, because that's what we want to put in the world. But also it releases us sometimes, like searching for the perfect, sarcastic, cold but hot reply. There's just no time in our lives for that. That's kind of my approach, I think, to bringing kindness into the workplace a little bit.

[00:18:49.550] - Kriste

I love that. I imagine that resonates when you're trying to grow your company and add people. We try to put a lot of our philosophies of our agency on our website, and people tell us that that comes through when we're doing interviews and hiring people. So I think it's important to put those values out there and stick to them.

[00:19:12.480] - Ryan

Yeah. And there's a practice. We've got values and things that we talk about, but it's like how does that show up in our daily routines? So we've got a lot of QCs and touchpoints with staff to make sure that they're okay, because we all know if you're getting 100-200 hundred emails a day and all of them are singing your praises and one of them is off, you're just going to be obsessed with that off email, and it'll drive you bananas.

[00:19:44.980] - Ryan

In a leadership position, I do feel like it's my responsibility to help give us some tools in order to deal with these glowing rectangles and how it is kind of an anti-biological work interaction. I shouldn't say anti. It's just new. So we're all trying to figure out how to do this. And also to validate a podcast agent should be on Mr. Rogers neighborhood as a potential career.

[00:20:14.490] - Kriste

That would be awesome. You should talk to Sesame Street.

[00:20:16.970] - Ryan

I know.

[00:20:18.230] - Kriste

Go ahead and add that because they're constantly updating to match the world around us, which is pretty cool.

[00:20:24.470] - Kriste

So along those lines, you say podcast hosts make great podcast guests. I'm wondering why - well, I have some ideas about why that is and why it's important - but I'm also curious, why would I work with a podcast booking agency? Tell me the pluses of it. I've experienced it as I mentioned at the top of the show, but I'd love to hear you talk about it.

[00:20:49.020] - Ryan

You bet. From both sides I think what we're saving people is time and money. If you're a podcast host and let's say you reached out to your network on LinkedIn, you realize that it takes a lot of time.

[00:21:01.090] - Kriste

It takes a lot of time!

[00:21:02.620] - Ryan

Yeah to book guests. So working with a podcast agency like us, if you're a podcast host, it's totally free for you. Tell us what your podcast is about and let us feed you great guests. It's kind of a no-brainer. For podcast hosts we say that they make great guests because one, they like to talk, so they're on podcasts, but two, they're also already comfortable with the emotional material that will come up from doing podcasts. Big emotions. It's kind of shocking at first.

[00:21:32.940] - Kriste

What do you mean by that?

[00:21:34.800] - Ryan

Well, you know, on one side if you're a podcast host, you'll get in a rhythm of making people comfortable. It's your job. It's like, hey, I want to bring out the best for you so that we can have a great conversation here. And you get better and better and better at that. Now, when you turn the table and now you're the guest, you start to understand maybe why those guests were a little uncomfortable because big emotions do arise.

[00:21:56.940] - Ryan

You look at the podcast and you're like, oh, man, am I good enough for this show? Or maybe I'm too good for this show. Or look at the guests that were on the show. What am I going to talk about? What are they going to ask me? All of these things, and just being plain nervous, bubbles up, and figuring out how to work with that as that's coming up and getting comfortable with it. So largely podcast hosts have dealt with that already, so they can really hit the ground running on that side.

[00:22:27.580] - Kriste

That makes sense. Do you find yourself constantly listening and watching other podcasters and always trying to figure out, "I really love what they did there," or "oh, that's awesome. I'm going to bring that into my shows."

[00:22:42.000] - Ryan

Oh, totally. I mean, I'm just a fan of virtuosity across the board. So it became being obsessed with music and then seeing people that talk, like real conversationalists, mastery, masterful journalistic questions, and the way they deliver. Like Guy Raz from How I Built This, the way he laughs, he goes like, so the laugh doesn't hit the mic hard. I'm like this guy's a pro.

[00:23:13.830] - Kriste

Now I'm going to be completely aware of the laughter thing.

[00:23:19.920] - Ryan

Exactly. I know. I'm totally self-conscious. I mean, now it's like video is part of podcasting. But before at least you didn't have to worry what to do with your hands but now it's back to video. It's like, what am I doing with my hands while I'm talking?

[00:23:32.430] - Kriste

Or a bobblehead. My first video podcast, I was like, I am a total bobblehead. I have to work on that.

[00:23:40.580] - Ryan

No, I think it's great. It shows great empathy. You're like, I'm affirming that was a great response. I like it.

[00:23:48.180] - Ryan

And then for our clients, why would they use us? It's time, money and expertise. So we've built relationships with maybe 5, 6000 podcasts plus and add them all the time. It's nice to have somebody else pitch you because it's kind of weird unless you're a total narcissist to just sing your own praises. And podcast hosts, aside from you, of course, are not communications professionals. So chasing down these podcasts does take some time.

[00:24:18.640] - Ryan

We save them time and money and just tee up usually about once a week podcast interviews for our clients. So it works with their schedule.

[00:24:28.450] - Kriste

Is there some sort of baseline mark that podcasts have to hit for you to pitch them? I'm kind of curious how you guys came across How It's Done. Not that you know the answer to that, but if you do great. But is there some sort of threshold or I imagine there's some sort of criteria that you use?

[00:24:47.240] - Ryan

Absolutely. So we begin our podcast search, we go through those outcomes, the audiences, podcasts and everything. And the search will start categorically from Apple podcast Top 100 shows. So we start there. And then we have kind of this delta between there and the top 10% of podcasts globally. And that's where we're going to find the majority of our podcasts. The sweet spot is that 5%, right in that 5%, top 5% shows that we like to be in, but we'd never book anything that would be less than the top 10%.

[00:25:20.680] - Ryan

We have kind of a platinum package as well that would only be 1% or better for some folks. They just want to see large audiences, and we have a service for them. But largely we're looking for a mix of a great production, super relevant to what they're doing, a nice size audience and just straight quality of the show. And that's how we find the folks that we work with.

[00:25:46.540] - Kriste

Those sound like great criteria.

[00:25:48.200] - Ryan

That's how we found you. I don't know who it was.

[00:25:51.270] - Kriste

Woo! Okay. Well, we got some goals with the show and my friend Ellen, who's listening in and monitoring us as we're talking, she's helping me with that. She's awesome. Shout out to Ellen.

[00:26:06.070] - Ryan

Shout out to Ellen.

[00:26:09.970] - Kriste

So sometimes I'm like, okay, how much runway and ramp do podcasts have because they've really come on the scene pretty hot and heavy just in the last few years. And everyone's like, oh, we're at the very, very beginning of this thing. Do you think that's true?

[00:26:26.720] - Ryan

Yeah. Shockingly. I'm pretty bullish on podcasting.

[00:26:32.020] - Kriste

Yeah. I guess you kind of are. You built a whole company around it.

[00:26:37.370] - Ryan

It's funny, though. I've been doing it for ten years. So podcasting was kind of old hat to me, and I was like, podcast agency... It just seemed, I don't know, inconceivable a little bit. But I do think podcasting and just audio in general is in its infancy, and we're going to see all kinds of different models built around podcasting, as we're already kind of seeing.

[00:27:04.580] - Ryan

They describe audio as a warm medium, and video as being a cool medium. With the war medium, your brain gets to fill in the gaps a little bit. People are just on the treadmill right now, they're imagining us sitting and talking together but of course, we're not. Their brain is very active as they're listening to the podcast as opposed to videos where everything is kind of presented for you.

[00:27:30.830] - Ryan

So to me, it just evokes this idea of sitting around the campfire in the dark and retelling that day's hunt. You can't really see their face because there's a flicker of fire or something where people are telling these stories and those stories became the basis of your culture, but also the basis of survival, because if they're like, yeah, the herd of Buffalo is behind the second rock past...you better get that story.

[00:27:57.530] - Ryan

So I think that there's something innately baked into us to hear conversation and stories and be drawn into them, especially in podcasting where they're casual. They're charmingly amateurish. And it's just how people talk. It's not an interview. It's not Barbara Walters grilling somebody and them dancing around the questions, that's a whole artificial world that people don't really communicate with. Rather, they communicate, like how I'm trying to do, which is a gigantic run-on sentence that never ends.

[00:28:34.700] - Kriste

Yeah. You look at the transcribed transcriptions from podcasts, and they're not quite as compelling as the actual audio.

[00:28:42.980] - Ryan

I know you're like this is a disaster.

[00:28:44.090] - Kriste

No one finishes a sentence.

[00:28:47.900] - Ryan

Three commas, two dashes, no punctuation. But that's how people talk and that's how people listen. Their attention will fade in and fade out, and they're like, he's rambling on him, space out, and then maybe there's a little nugget there, and you dance around that a little bit. So I think podcasting brings out this natural instinct to communicate, but also to be a fly on the wall as it were. And the second part of your question before, like me personally, I do think that podcasting is a healing force because of that.

[00:29:24.280] - Ryan

Social media has proved itself to be maybe a net negative to culture. I don't know if we could say that yet.

[00:29:33.800] - Kriste

Not so redeeming.

[00:29:35.890] - Ryan

It seems like it really brings out some of our negative capabilities. Whereas podcasting, I think, really brings out our best, which is to say that, Kriste, you and me seem like we're very similar but even if we weren't, I think we would greet each other on this podcast in the same way we'd extend the olive branch as it were to look for places that we do connect, as opposed to places where we don't.

[00:30:01.030] - Ryan

So social media brings out our polarities, but I think podcasts and just conversation in general brings us back together.

[00:30:08.600] - Kriste

I love that, which makes it all the better channel medium for startup CEOs, people that are trying to do cool new things or just build cool and nice companies to be able to also have that human connection.

[00:30:29.780] - Ryan

Yeah. Especially in startups. It's like, what blue flat logo do you like better than the other one? It's all pretty homogenized. If you do have a story out there, then that could be the differentiator why you go with this Widget versus that widget: "I heard a podcast with a CEO. He seems cool. She seems awesome. That's why I'm going to go there." What better reason.

[00:30:54.870] - Kriste

Yeah when I watch documentaries, how many times have I watched a documentary of some band or musician and, like, you know, I was kind of indifferent to them maybe beforehand but then I watched the documentary and I'm like, "oh, man, they're the best."

[00:31:08.790] - Ryan

You fall in love with them.

[00:31:11.290] - Kriste

Yeah. I liked the Avett Brothers, but then once I saw that documentary, I was obsessed with them.

[00:31:17.650] - Ryan

Those are my brothers.

[00:31:21.410] - Kriste

You know, when you're working, is there a size company that's, like, too big? That's really not in your sweet spot that you wouldn't really take on? Or is that not really a thing?

[00:31:33.040] - Ryan

No way. Bigger the better. We've worked with billion-dollar companies. Typically, what we'll do with them, though, is really silo their leadership team. If it's a COO, CEO, maybe there's an HR story, figure out what department is trying to do what, and then really go there. What's fun with big enterprise-type companies is that they're going to have a very specific approach. And also it looks impressive. It's like, Whoa, this company's worth \$10 billion. It makes it easier for us as booking agents.

[00:32:12.420] - Ryan

Plus, they have great budgets. I love enterprise companies.

[00:32:16.500] - Kriste

Right? You get to do some cool stuff. And then the other big benefit is then they can leverage their social media channels and they can showcase these different podcasts that their executives are on and the stories they're telling, and they can publish them themselves on their own channels. And I think that gets so many more eyes on it. It's such an awesome opportunity.

[00:32:41.070] - Ryan

Oh, totally.

[00:32:42.290] - Kriste

Above and beyond just a digital news article, for example, which is equally great, but they have a different role.

[00:32:49.260] - Ryan

Absolutely. No, it's good. And the challenges there are oftentimes just compliance and making sure that company message, brand standards are front and center. And we kind of review that. I mean, the nice thing about if we're talking about a founder, they can shoot from the hips. It's their baby. They're not scared of what they're going to say.

[00:33:07.080] - Kriste

Their job is to create news, right?

[00:33:09.200] - Ryan

Exactly. But if you're working with a compliance officer at an enterprise company, they might be a little bit more guarded, and rightfully so. But typically, they've gotten to the position where they are because they're very good at navigating that balance.

[00:33:26.820] - Kriste

As part of your role, do you do anything post-booking? If maybe they don't like something about the podcast before it gets published and want something edited out. Or does that turn over to somebody else?

[00:33:38.230] - Ryan

Oh, no we'll take care of it. It's only happened two times.

[00:33:44.040] - Kriste

Can you tell us what happened?

[00:33:46.130] - Ryan

Okay. Sure. The first one was somebody, you know, like a fist bump. And he was talking about, you know, after he wrote his book, he came home and fist bumped his kids because he was excited about it. But he said fisting, and the podcast host started laughing about fisting kids.

[00:34:05.620] - Kriste

Yeah that's not good.

[00:34:07.530] - Kriste

He didn't know what that was. And so the podcast agent was like, "oh, you know what? You don't know what that was. But I don't even want to tell you." But we went back and they took it out, of course.

[00:34:22.810] - Ryan

and the other one was somebody meant to say "person of color," and they said, "colored people again." I mean, this isn't somebody who is a native English Speaker. And the podcast host is like, "Hey, hey, I think what you meant to say is a person of color." And so they went back and helped them out. And I think it just again points to the fact that podcasting is all...

[00:34:46.480] - Kriste

It's not like a gotcha thing.

[00:34:47.650] - Ryan

Everyone wants you to be okay. And I know what you meant, and everybody knows what you meant, but we're going to go ahead and edit that out anyway because we don't want to make it a source of stress for you.

[00:35:01.450] - Kriste

Those are great examples.

[00:35:01.920] - Ryan

I know. I was like, "oh, yeah we want to change those."

[00:35:08.270] - Kriste

"We're going to work on that."

[00:35:11.520] - Ryan

But otherwise, countless hours of podcasts recorded, and it's fine.

[00:35:16.830] - Kriste

Well, and obviously you've seen great results. Like, what do your results look like? What could someone expect if they're hiring you? I guess it depends on the budget.

[00:35:23.540] - Ryan

It's across the board. It's everything and everything in between. So we've had people that have found seven-figure runway by finding investors through podcasts we've booked on them, which is great. We've had authors that sell books. We've had coaches that sell subscriptions to their coaching program. We've had attribution models where we're getting SAAS, B2B tool signups from podcasting. We have had people hired from podcasts. We've had people find their co-founder through podcasts we booked.

[00:36:00.460] - Ryan

So the outcome is the most important thing to me, because as an entrepreneur, I'm sympathetic to what they're doing and we want to make sure that they're using their time in a way that makes them money, gives them service and is fun.

[00:36:15.370] - Kriste

Well, obviously, you're having great results because you've been around now for, wait, you said you started 2019?

[00:36:21.330] - Ryan

Yep. Two years on the 6th, which was yesterday.

[00:36:24.110] - Kriste

Happy anniversary.

[00:36:25.670] - Ryan

Yeah. Thank you.

[00:36:26.600] - Kriste

That's awesome.

[00:36:28.060] - Ryan

Yeah. So the results are fantastic. And the only way we know that is because that's what our clients tell us by sticking around.

[00:36:38.040] - Kriste

That's a good sign. And you're in Colorado?

[00:36:42.340] - Ryan

Yeah. We're in Denver. We're based in Denver.

[00:36:44.400] - Kriste

What part of Denver?

[00:36:45.640] - Ryan

Baker.

[00:36:46.720] - Kriste

I don't know where that is.

[00:36:50.650] - Ryan

There's a Baker Arts district here on Santa Fe Drive. So we're just shy of downtown Denver South. How about you?

[00:36:58.020] - Kriste

Nashville, Tennessee.

[00:36:59.260] - Ryan

I love Nashville.

[00:37:01.440] - Kriste

Yeah, it's awesome.

[00:37:02.890] - Ryan

I should have known. I saw your guitar back there.

[00:37:05.340] - Kriste

That is not mine. That's a little baby Martin that I got for my son when he was little. And I think he may have played it once.

[00:37:13.520] - Ryan

You're born with a Martin guitar, right in Nashville, isn't that how it works?

[00:37:17.790] - Kriste

I mean, a lot of people are, but I have zero musical talent. I mean, zero. So it's kind of sad. I thought about trying to learn how to play the guitar during COVID, but that didn't last very long.

[00:37:30.420] - Ryan

It hurts the fingers. It really does

[00:37:32.980] - Kriste

Gosh, I didn't know that your fingertips went numb. It's pretty amazing.

[00:37:37.660] - Ryan

Yeah. I've been teaching my daughter to play guitar, and she's like, "dad, how do I get these transitions and changes?" I was like, "you have to play until they bleed."

[00:37:48.390] - Kriste

And like, truly.

[00:37:50.850] - Ryan

And they will. They will. And then the feeling leaves your fingers.

[00:37:56.250] - Kriste

I mean, I don't know how I never knew that before. It's just not the part people talk about.

[00:38:01.810] - Ryan

Fun fact, guitar players are the only people that can tickle themselves because they have no feeling in their fingertips.

[00:38:12.150] - Kriste

Well, this seems like a pretty good segue to a favorite part of our podcasts. We don't always, but sometimes we like to end on, like what are your favorite book, podcast, quote, movie, music. You said in the previous life, maybe you were a songwriter or maybe you wanted to be, and I just heard this love of Nashville, so you got some favorite music?

[00:38:36.140] - Ryan

Oh, boy. What do I like now? You know, the album that got me through COVID was that Nathaniel Ratliff record.

[00:38:45.500] - Kriste

Oh, gosh. So good.

[00:38:47.240] - Kriste

So good.

[00:38:48.180] - Kriste

He's awesome. I'm gonna see him in concert here in October.

[00:38:52.250] - Ryan

With The Night Sweats?

[00:38:54.230] - Kriste

Yeah. Oh, man, I'm excited. You go to Red Rocks a lot?

[00:38:59.390] - Ryan

Yes.

[00:39:00.710] - Kriste

I see. What was your last concert?

[00:39:03.350] - Ryan

At Red Rocks? Oh my gosh, it was Pretty Lights. Probably in the fall of 2019, right before it was 20. March 20. Yeah. Pretty Lights. And that was an incredible show. It was very cool.

[00:39:19.150] - Kriste

I bet. I saw Tyler Childers there, it was the last concert I saw there.

[00:39:25.240] - Ryan

Cool. I got tickets to see Bill Burr on October 1, so I can't wait for that. Little comedy on Red Rocks.

[00:39:31.990] - Kriste

That's gonna be awesome.

[00:39:33.150] - Ryan

Should be cool, yeah.

[00:39:36.210] - Kriste

Well, awesome. So that's your headquarters we're looking at here on the screen. For our audio listeners, they can't see this, but it looks awesome. I love it.

[00:39:45.520] - Ryan

It's a really cool space. It used to be, we were in this other building in this facility, it was a co-op workspace that we were in and then COVID killed it. But we're still here, and so we took over the whole thing.

[00:40:02.080] - Kriste

That's awesome.

[00:40:03.580] - Ryan

Yeah, we are growing fast enough that we kind of were like, "well, can we just stay?" So we did. So we're here, but we are actively looking for a new HQ here in Denver, something that we can make our own, something a little bit smaller.

[00:40:18.620] - Kriste

I was in the Rino District recently in July. I was there for something. We ended up going to a Rockies game, stayed at the Ramble. It was awesome.

[00:40:27.230] - Ryan

That's a good spot to end up right there.

[00:40:29.810] - Kriste

Yeah. So it looked like there was lots of space down there you might could inhabit.

[00:40:34.750] - Ryan

I had an office in Rino on Larimer, probably for four years, but that was before it was cool. Now they know what they've got. It is like the cool spot in Denver. And actually parking down there is a complete disaster. So we're looking for something a little sleeper that has parking.

[00:40:56.290] - Kriste

Yeah. Yeah. That's a good idea. Parking is primo.

[00:41:01.220] - Ryan

Parking is big. If you get to work and you have five minutes to get on your Zoom call and you're looking for a spot, it kind of sets the tone for the day.

[00:41:11.980] - Kriste

Yeah, I agree. Well, good luck on that. That's not easy to find, I know.

[00:41:17.690] - Kriste

Well, listen, I appreciate you taking the time, Ryan. Before we check out today, I'd love for you to share how people can get in touch with you, find you, what's the best way to reach out?

[00:41:29.770] - Ryan

Kitcaster.com. is a great way to learn about the service. There's an application there. If you want to be a guest on podcasts, we want to talk to you. If you'd like to talk to me, you can just email me. My email is Ryan@kitcaster.com. And I'm happy to talk about podcasting or anything else.

[00:41:47.580] - Kriste

Buddhism. American Buddhism.

[00:41:51.530] - Ryan

Yeah. Totally. Leadership. Or I've been really liking Ted Lasso. If somebody wants to talk about it.

[00:41:58.160] - Kriste

Shut up, I'll talk about him all day long. And Roy, he might be my favorite.

[00:42:03.810] - Ryan

I know, Roy. There's a little Roy in all of us, right?

[00:42:08.400] - Kriste

Yeah.

[00:42:09.310] - Ryan

Angry at ten all the time.

[00:42:11.390] - Kriste

Angry, but like a softy really at heart.

[00:42:15.250] - Ryan

A lot of swearing around children that he does. I'm just like, I don't like that, Roy. Come on now.

[00:42:21.410] - Kriste

Well, you know, they're British.

[00:42:23.240] - Ryan

That's true. So they're drunk all the time. So that's their excuse.

[00:42:29.240] - Kriste

Yeah. It's a great feel good show. Love it.

[00:42:31.890] - Ryan

Totally.

[00:42:33.410] - Kriste

Well, Ryan, thank you. I appreciate you taking the time, being my guest today, telling us more about Kitcaster. I'll definitely be following up with you guys. Would love to work more with you.

[00:42:43.020] - Ryan

Me too, Kriste. I really appreciated this great conversation.

[00:42:46.170] - Kriste

Yeah. Thanks so much.

[00:42:47.570] - Ryan

Thanks.

[00:42:48.680] - Kriste

That wraps up this episode of How It's Done. My guest today was Ryan Estes, co-founder of Kitcaster. Thanks, Ryan.

[00:42:57.320] - Ryan

Thanks, Kriste.

[00:43:23.340] - Kriste

That's it for now. Thanks so much for listening. We're looking forward to keeping great conversations coming your way as we grow this podcast. There's even more great content from our conversations on our blog. Be sure to check it out at growwithfuoco.com. That's grow with fuoco – f-u-o-c-o – dot com. Stay tuned until next time and no matter what, stay curious.