

# Do we (Acast podcasts) have your attention?

The Role of Attention in Podcasts

**Acast**  
In Collaboration With  
**d.fferentology**

**June 2022**  
[www.acast.com](http://www.acast.com)

# Background

**Attention.** Everyone is talking about it. But few are quantifying it.

In the world of media planning and advertising, 'attention' is one of, (if not) the primary metrics to measure campaign success.

But how do you measure attention? Research has been limited to eye tracking studies, and for audio, attention has been a hard metric to test. Until now...

Acast commissioned a piece of research demonstrating that **consumers pay more attention to podcasts and podcast spot ads and host read ads vs other audio media.** The purpose of the research was to demonstrate the value of podcasts: and to show that podcast advertising is **more effective than other audio channels such as Radio and Music Streaming.**

## DID YOU KNOW?

Psychologists define attention as 'the ability to actively process specific information in the environment whilst tuning out other details'.



### What did we do?

We conducted a **15 minute online quantitative survey with Differentology**, in which participants were asked to pay attention to a **video of someone washing up or ironing** (to replicate the real life experience of multitasking when listening to audio/second screening) whilst **audio played in the background**. They were then asked questions about the content and advertising they listened to.



#### WHO

Within the survey, there were 4 groups **exposed to various audio mediums**.

1. Podcast spot ad group: **N=200 weekly podcast listeners** who were played a section of the Sh\*ggged Married Annoyed Podcast + creative test ad (part of an ad reel)
2. Podcast host read ad group: **N=200 weekly podcast listeners** who were played a section of the Sh\*ggged Married Annoyed Podcast + host read ad (part of an ad reel)
3. Radio ad group: **N=200 weekly radio listeners** who were played a section of the Capital FM radio show + creative test ad (part of an ad reel)
4. Streaming music ad group: **N=200 weekly music streaming listeners** who were played a section of a Spotify pop/chart playlist + creative test ad (part of an ad reel)



#### WHAT

- All participants were exposed to the medium they claimed to be **weekly listeners of** and were asked to listen to the content and advertising
- This included exposing respondents to the **natural number of ads per media**
- One of the ads was a **fake audio clip** (to avoid any brand bias/category effects)
- Participants were then asked **Brand KPIs and recall questions** about the advertising they heard, to see if they **recalled the key points and to measure attention per medium**

# Research Objectives

- 1 Establish that **consumers pay attention as much (if not more) to podcasts advertising/sponsorship** vs. when listening to the radio or streaming music
- 2 Provide evidence to show that **Brand KPI uplifts are significantly higher when exposed to podcast advertng** vs radio and streaming advertising
- 3 Measure the difference in **claimed attention** to advertising across all three different audio mediums
- 4 Gather contextual evidence of **attention/engagement with each media** using claimed emotional response metrics

# Contents

- 1 Attention Results
- 2 Perceptions Of Each Audio Platform
- 3 Attitudes Towards Each Audio Platform & Advertising

1

# Attention Results

# Attention ad recall questions asked

How old was Lucy's daughter?

What did Lucy need to buy from the supermarket?

What was the name of the supermarket Lucy visited?  
(Spontaneous & Prompted response)

What time were the slow shopping sessions on a weekend?

## EXAMPLE OF THE GENERIC FAKE AD

It was another bad day at the supermarket for Lucy. She only needed to pop out for some **formula** for her **8 month old Abby**, but left empty-handed and flustered after an hour. First, she lost her parking spot to a bullish bloke in a **Mercedes**, leaving her to circle aimlessly as Abby grew restless in the backseat. Then, the shop was all out of trolleys with baby seats. And of course, she'd forgotten her discount vouchers. By the time she got to the endless queues to checkout, Abby was red-faced and crying in her arms. Lucy was equally exasperated. Just as she was swearing never to step foot in **Groceri** again, a kind parking attendant called **Max** came over to tell her about 'slow shopping sessions'. They'd designed them for people who find shopping in peak hours stressful - like parents with young kids, the elderly or people with special needs. Slow shopping sessions meant no more queues. No more mean drivers. And enough quiet to keep Abby calm. She didn't need much persuading. You can join Lucy at one of Groceri's many slow shopping sessions - between **9:30-11am every weekday** or between **3:30-5pm at weekends**. Sshhh... the baby is sleeping.

What was the name of Lucy's daughter?

What make of car took Lucy's parking spot?

What was the name of the parking attendant?

What time were the slow shopping sessions on a weekday?

Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey | Question: Various

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising.

# With less ad clutter vs other audio media, podcasts elicit higher levels of attention and recall

## AVERAGE ATTENTION LEVEL

% of respondents per channel who answered 3+ questions (out of 9) correctly following hearing the fake ad in each audio context



**35%**

6% percentage increase vs average

Paid attention to the fake **host read** advertisement within the **podcast** clip and correctly answered follow up questions



**36%**

9% percentage increase vs average

Paid attention to the fake **generic** advertisement within the **podcast** clip and correctly answered follow up questions



**33%**

in line with the average

Paid attention to the fake **generic** advertisement within the **music streaming** clip and correctly answered follow up questions



**32%**

-3% percentage decrease vs average

Paid attention to the fake **generic** advertisement within the **radio** clip and correctly answered follow up questions

Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey | Question: Various

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising.



# Advertising within a podcast setting has a significantly stronger impact on brand affinity

## Affinity Perceptions Towards Fake Advertisement

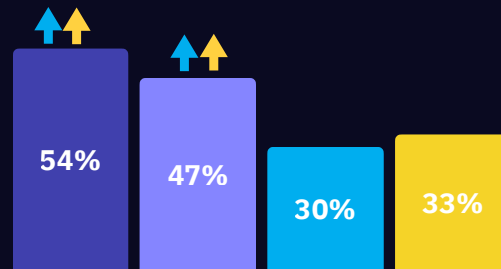
% AGREE (STRONGLY/SLIGHTLY)

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE HOST READ PODCAST AD

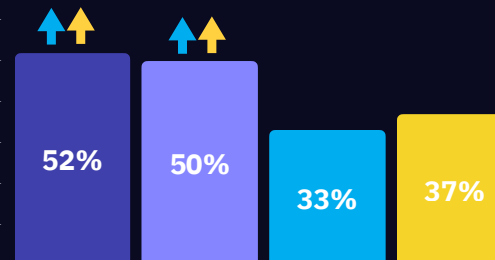
PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC PODCAST AD

MUSIC STREAMING LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

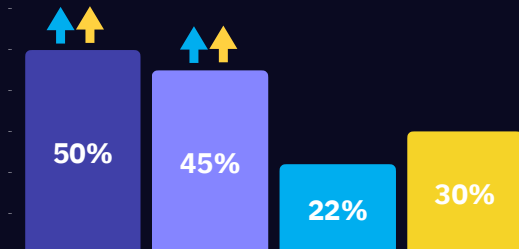
RADIO LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD



Is relevant to me



Is for people like me



Is a brand I like

Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

Question: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with these statements about the advertising you have heard today?

To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following statements apply to Groceri? 1 means 'strongly disagree' and 5 means 'strongly agree'. It doesn't matter how well you know Groceri it's just your impressions we are after.

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising.

# And with less ad clutter, podcast advertising has significantly stronger standout and clarity

## Standout perceptions towards fake advertisement

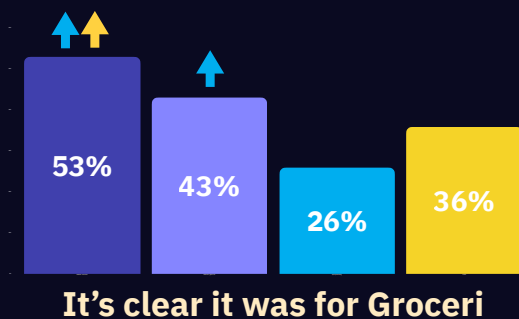
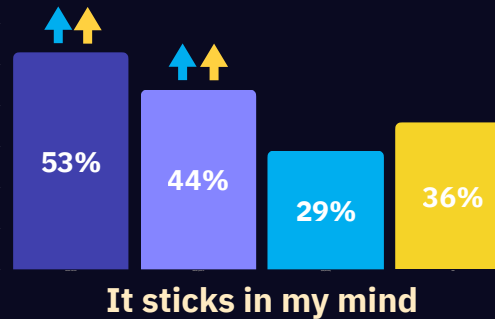
% AGREE (STRONGLY/SLIGHTLY)

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE HOST READ PODCAST AD

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC PODCAST AD

MUSIC STREAMING LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

RADIO LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD



Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

Question: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with these statements about the advertising you have heard today?

To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following statements apply to Groceri? 1 means 'strongly disagree' and 5 means 'strongly agree'. It doesn't matter how well you know Groceri it's just your impressions we are after.

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising.

# But most of all, podcast ads are engaging and informative vs other audio formats

## Engagement perceptions towards fake advertisement

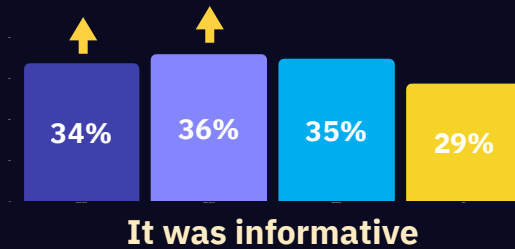
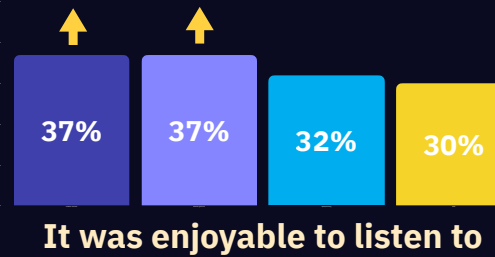
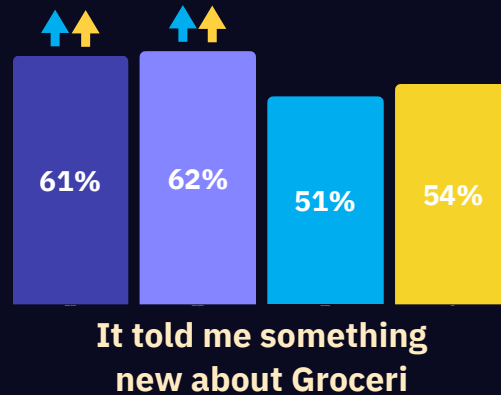
% AGREE (STRONGLY/SLIGHTLY)

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE HOST READ PODCAST AD

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC PODCAST AD

MUSIC STREAMING LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

RADIO LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD



Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

Question: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with these statements about the advertising you have heard today?

To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following statements apply to Groceri? 1 means 'strongly disagree' and 5 means 'strongly agree'. It doesn't matter how well you know Groceri it's just your impressions we are after.

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising.

# This stronger affinity and standout in podcast advertising, leads to stronger consideration and likelihood to recommend

## Claimed consideration & recommendation

% AGREE (STRONGLY/SLIGHTLY)

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE HOST READ PODCAST AD

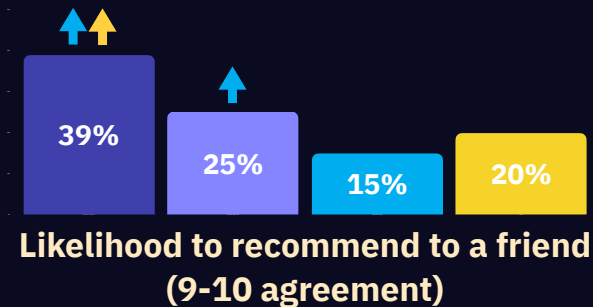
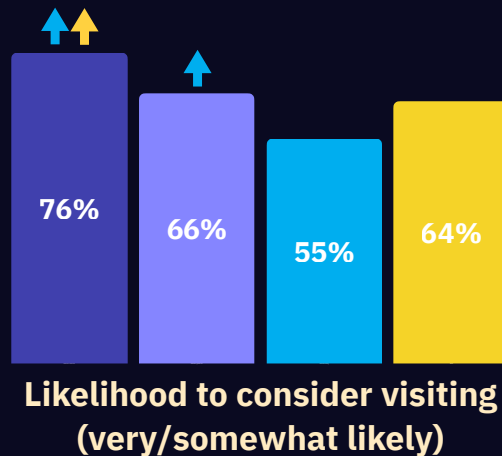
PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC PODCAST AD

MUSIC STREAMING LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

RADIO LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

- Podcasts - host read
- Podcasts - generic ad
- Music Streaming
- Radio

- ↑ SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER VS MUSIC STREAMING
- ↑ SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER VS RADIO



Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

Question: Groceri is a supermarket that does not exist yet, but if it did how likely or unlikely would you be to consider visiting it?

On a scale of 0-10, if Groceri was a real brand, how likely or unlikely do you think you would be to recommend Groceri to family or friends?

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising.

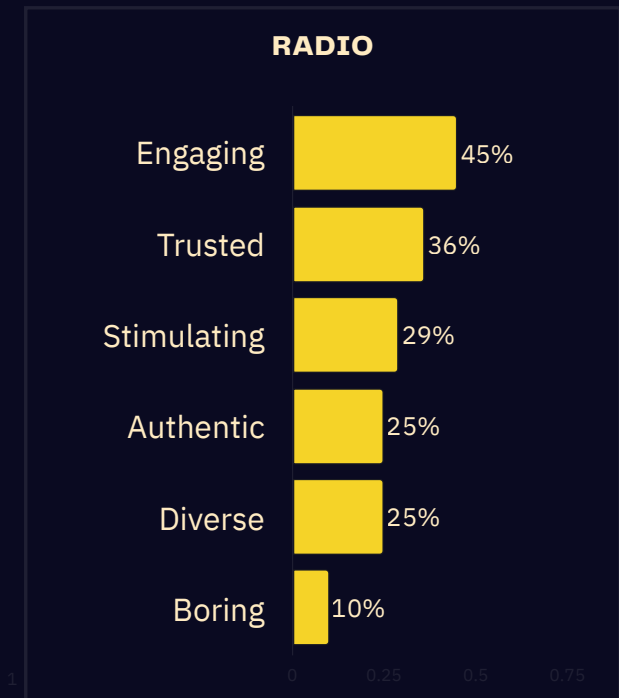
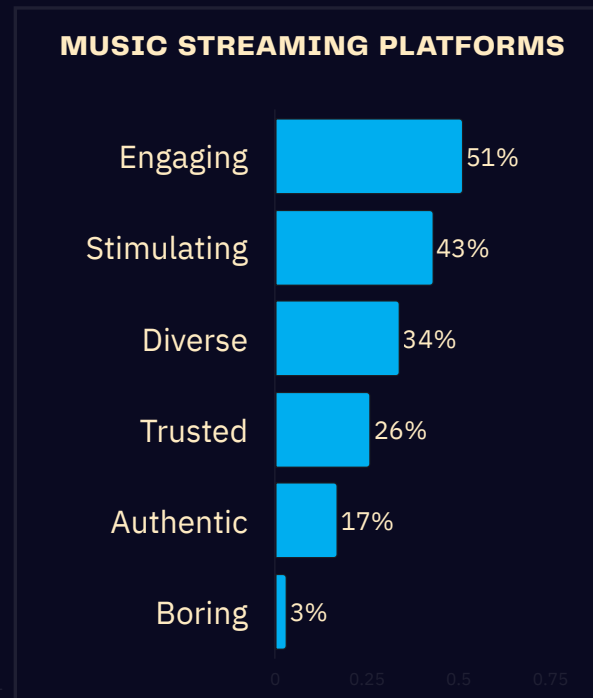
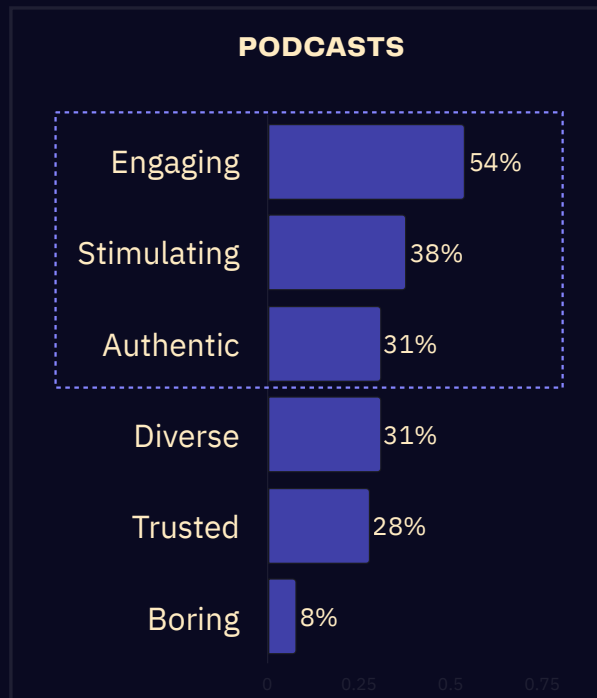
2

# Perceptions of Each Audio Platform

# Podcasts are felt to be the most engaging and authentic audio platform

How would you describe the following media platforms?

% AGREE



Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

Question: How would you describe the following media platforms?

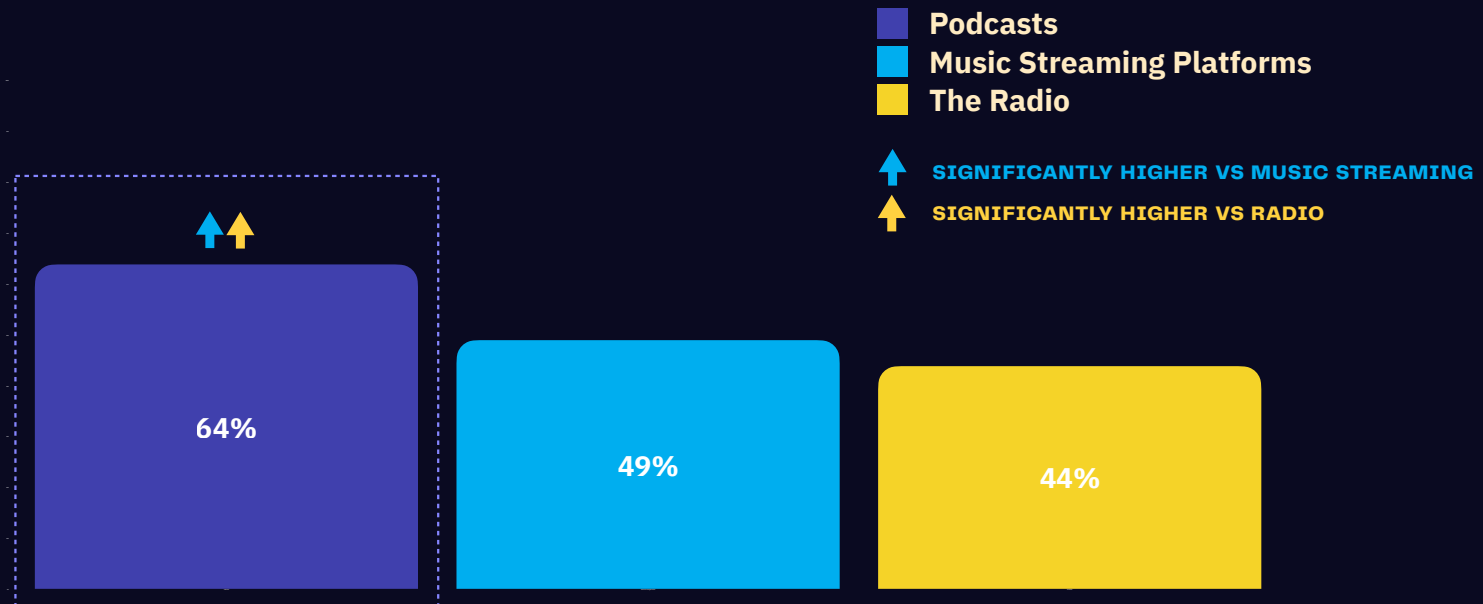
Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising,

# Attitudes Towards Audio Platforms & Advertising

# Podcasts elicit the highest levels of attention amongst listeners

**'Generally, how attention do you pay when listening to the following platforms...?'**

**% GIVE MY FULL ATTENTION** (SCORE 4 OR 5 ON AGREEMENT SCALE OF 1-5)

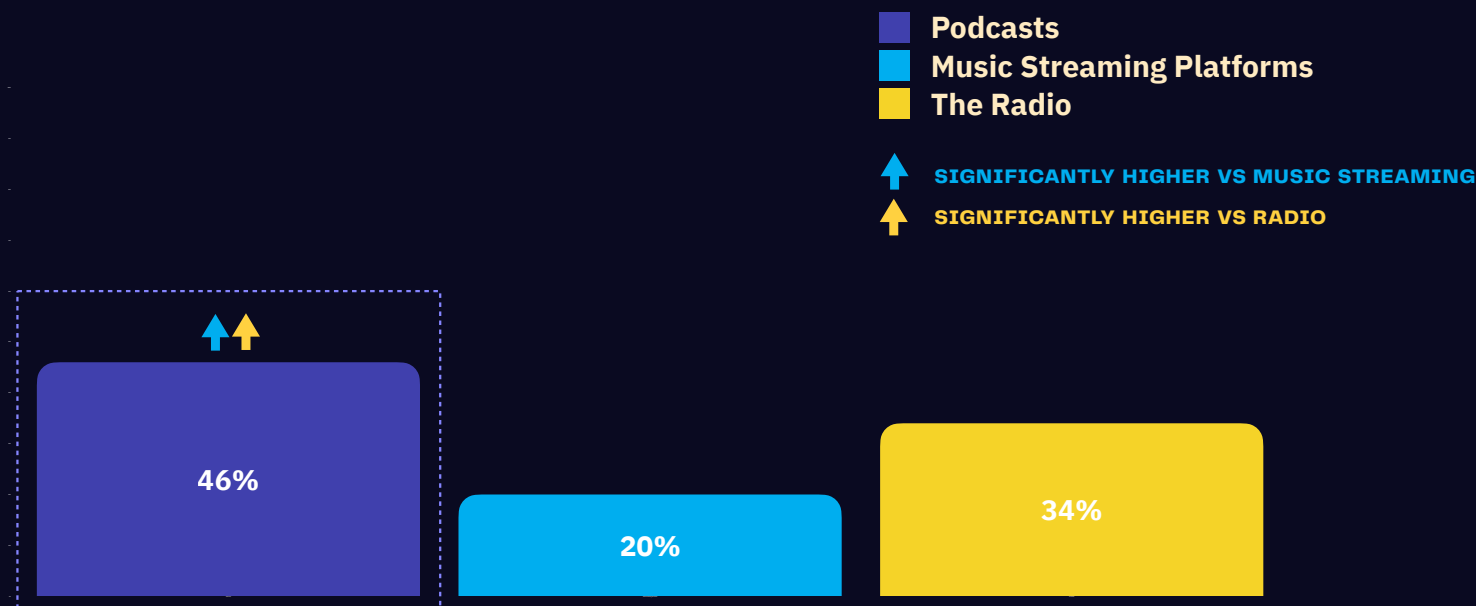




# Listeners actively listen to podcast advertising, more so than any other audio media

**'I actively listen to o advertisements on this platform'**

% **AGREE** (STRONGLY/SLIGHTLY)



Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

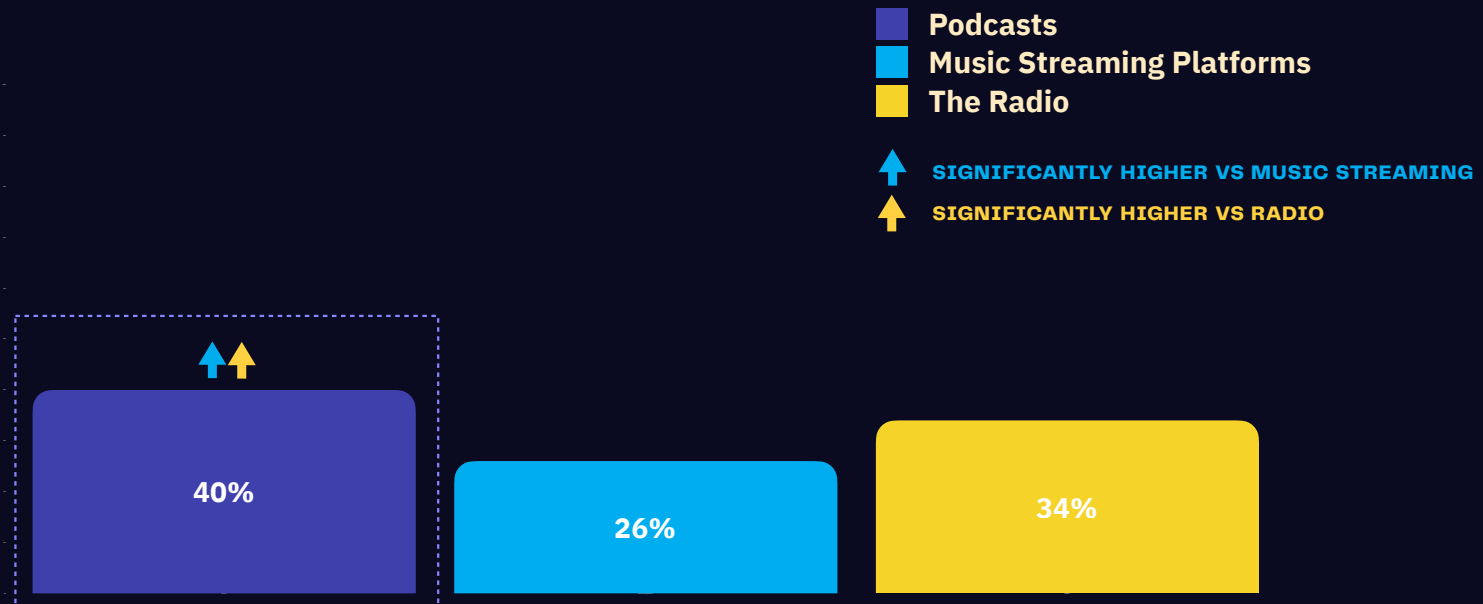
Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following statements apply to advertisements on [platform]? – Top 2 'agree' shown (5-point scale)

Base: N=800 weekly listeners of each audio platform

## And listeners pay the most attention to podcast advertising vs other audio media

**'And, how much attention do you pay to advertisements on...?'**

**% GIVE MY FULL ATTENTION** (SCORE 4 OR 5 ON AGREEMENT SCALE OF 1-5)



Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

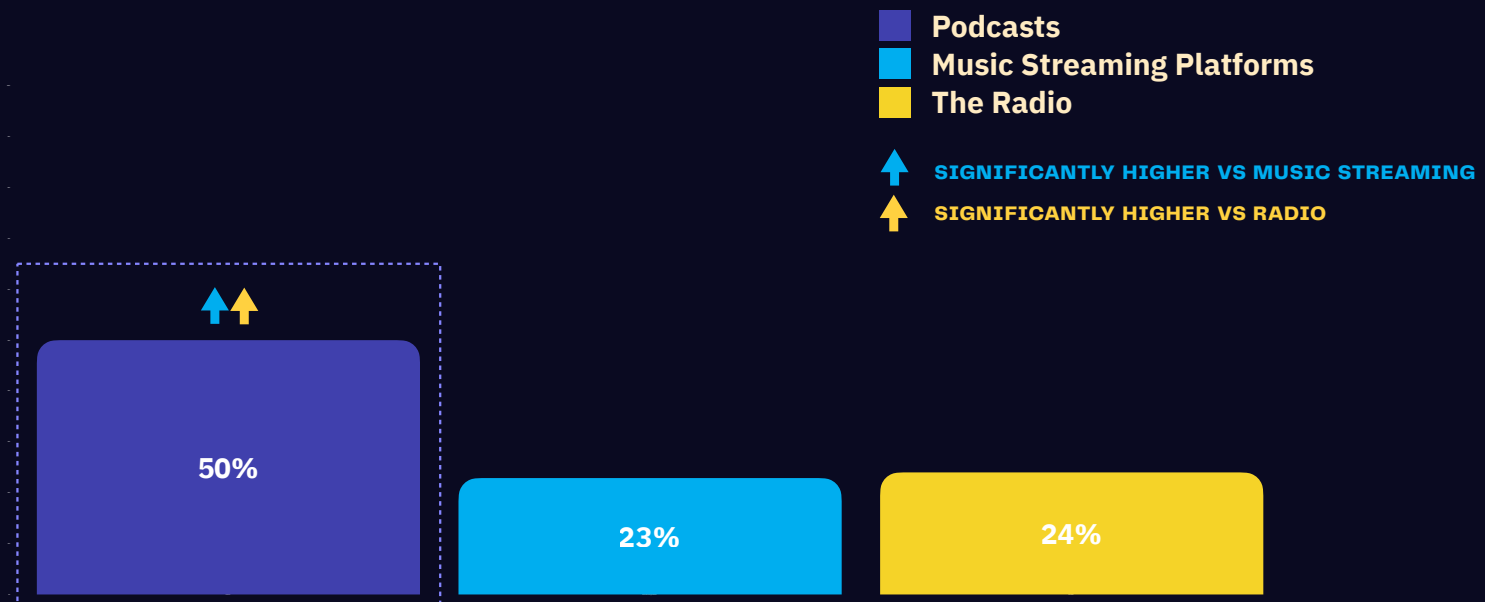
Question: And, how much attention do you pay to advertisements on...? – Top 2 'I pay attention' shown (5-point scale)

Base: N=800 weekly listeners of each audio platform

This is likely because podcasts have the right ratio and number of ads vs content compared to other audio media

**'There are the perfect number of advertisements on this platform'**

% **AGREE** (STRONGLY/SLIGHTLY)



Listeners aren't just paying attention to podcast ads more than other audio mediums, they genuinely enjoy the fun, informative advertisements too

#### ATTITUDES TOWARDS PODCASTS

↑ 51% OF LISTENERS AGREE THAT ADVERTISEMENTS IN PODCASTS ARE INFORMATIVE  
↑ Vs 40% for radio and 29% for streaming music

↑ 46% OF LISTENERS AGREE THAT THEY PREFER ADVERTISEMENTS IN PODCASTS AS THEY ARE MORE FUN  
↑ Vs 31% for radio and 20% for streaming music

↑ 42% OF LISTENERS AGREE THAT THEY ENJOY HEARING ADVERTISEMENTS IN PODCASTS  
↑ Vs 27% for radio and 16% for streaming music

↑ SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER VS MUSIC STREAMING  
↑ SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER VS RADIO

# Did research meet its objectives?

- 1 Establish that **consumers pay attention as much (if not more) to podcasts advertising/sponsorship** vs. when listening to the radio or streaming music
- 2 Provide evidence to show that **Brand KPI uplifts are significantly higher when exposed to podcast advertng** vs radio and streaming advertising
- 3 Measure the difference in **claimed attention** to advertising across all three different audio mediums
- 4 Gather contextual evidence of **attention/engagement with each media** using claimed emotional response metrics



# Summary

## ATTENTION

- Those hearing advertising in podcasts answered **significantly more questions** about the ad correctly vs other audio media, suggesting that **podcasts elicit higher levels of attention and recall**
- Advertising within a **podcast** has a **stronger impact on brand affinity, standout, clarity and engagement** vs other audio media
- This stronger affinity, standout & engagement in podcast ads **leads to stronger consideration and likelihood to recommend**

## PERCEPTIONS OF EACH MEDIA

- **Podcasts** are felt to be the most **engaging and authentic** audio platform
- Podcasts are felt to be more **stimulating and diverse** vs radio, and are felt to be **less boring** than radio

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUDIO PLATFORMS & ADVERTISING

- Podcasts elicit the **highest levels of attention** amongst listeners, with listeners giving **podcasts their full attention**, more so than other audio media
- Listeners **actively listen to podcast advertising**, more so than any other audio
- And listeners pay the **most attention to podcast advertising**, with listeners giving **podcast advertising their full attention**, more so than other audio media
- This is likely because podcasts have the **right number and ratio of ads vs content**
- Listeners prefer advertisements in podcasts as they are **more fun and enjoyable** compared to other audio media

4

# Appendix

## Fake audio ad and content played to respondents



**PODCAST HOST READ  
FAKE AUDIO CLIP**



**PODCAST GENERIC  
READ FAKE AUDIO CLIP**



**MUSIC STREAMING  
GENERIC READ FAKE  
AUDIO CLIP**



**RADIO GENERIC READ  
FAKE AUDIO CLIP**

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising.



# Sample Demographics

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE HOST READ PODCAST AD

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC PODCAST AD

MUSIC STREAMING LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

RADIO LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

Podcast - host read

Podcast generic ad

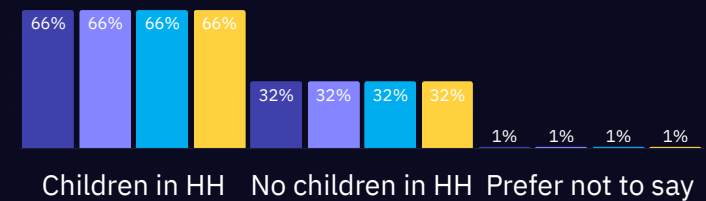
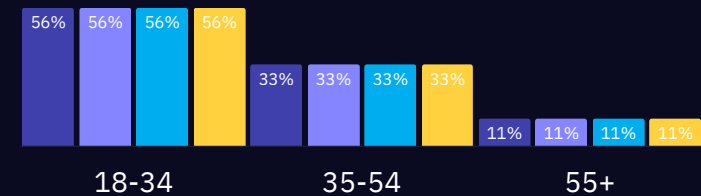
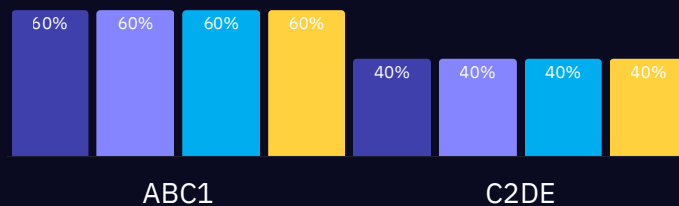
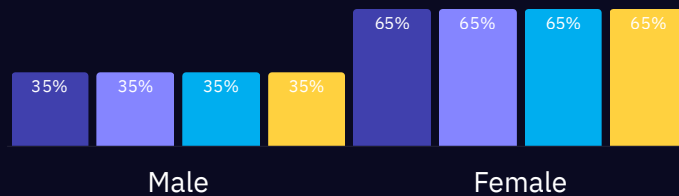
SMA WEEKLY PODCAST LISTENERS - THIS PODCAST WAS CHOSEN AS IT IS ONE OF THE TOP 10 RANKED PODCASTS

Music Streaming

SPOTIFY FREE POP/TOP 40 LISTENERS - THIS PLAYLIST WAS CHOSEN AS IT IS SIMILAR TO THE MUSIC PLAYED ON CAPITAL

Radio

WEEKLY CAPITAL RADIO LISTENERS - THIS RADIO STATION WAS CHOSEN AS IT IS ONE OF THE TOP 10 HIGHEST REACHING STATIONS



Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

Question: Various

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising,

N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising,

# Average attention scores per question

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE HOST READ PODCAST AD

PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC PODCAST AD

MUSIC STREAMING LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

RADIO LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD

QUESTION % CORRECT PER GROUP	PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE HOST READ PODCAST AD RESPONSE	PODCAST LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC PODCAST AD RESPONSE	MUSIC STREAMING LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD RESPONSE	RADIO LISTENERS WHO HEARD THE GENERIC AD RESPONSE
What was the name of the supermarket Lucy visited? (Spontaneous response)	7%	11%	10%	6%
What was the name of the supermarket Lucy visited? (Prompted response)	15%	18%	15%	14%
What did Lucy need to buy from the supermarket?	40%	35%	33%	31%
What make of car took Lucy's parking spot?	32%	25%	25%	27%
What was the name of the parking attendant?	17%	23%	13%	21%
What was the name of Lucy's daughter?	32%	36%	29%	26%
How old was Lucy's daughter?	23%	21%	21%	17%
What time were the slow shopping sessions on a weekday?	31%	41%	38%	31%
What time were the slow shopping sessions on a weekend?	24%	19%	26%	22%
AVERAGE	24%	25%	23%	22%

Source: Acast x Differentology Attention Survey

Question: Various

Base: N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a host read ad and podcast advertising, N=200 weekly podcast listeners exposed to a generic ad and podcast advertising,

N=200 weekly Music streaming listeners exposed to a generic ad and streaming advertising, N=200 weekly radio listeners exposed to a generic ad and radio advertising,