



channel mastery

Channel Mastery Podcast, #119: Rick Saez

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Kristin: Welcome back, everybody, to another episode of the Channel Mastery podcast. I have a very special guest today to introduce to you: It is Rick Saez with The Outdoor Biz Podcast. We're having a meta show about podcasting on my podcast. Welcome, Rick.

Rick: Thank you. Good to be on, yeah. I love talking about podcasting and I love your show.

Kristin: Oh, thanks. I love your show as well. It has been a long time coming, having you on and obviously, I've been cheering you on via LinkedIn and listening to your show and I love what you're doing.

What I'm really hoping to deliver today to my amazing audience out there in Channel Mastery land is just giving them a very current, here we are, end of 2019. Let's say we're in 2020, as far as we're concerned, right?

Rick: Yep.

Kristin: Because we've been on this product line for a while now.

Rick: Yeah, and I'm in the can. I have episodes in the can well into 2020.

Kristin: Here we are in 2020, everybody, and I want to talk about with an expert here on podcasts what a podcast could do for your brand. But before we get into that, Rick has an incredibly, I think, interesting, varied, and entertaining background that really makes him an exceptional guest and also podcaster. Let's talk a little bit about who you are and how you got into The Outdoor Biz Podcast and then we'll go into how you're expanding.

Rick: Yeah, so I've been an outdoor guy since I was a kid. My grandfather took me hiking and hunting and all that stuff and when I got banged up playing sports and realized I was not going to grow beyond about 5'7", not be able to play pro football, I got to

do something else.

Went to college and stumbled into outdoor recreation and got two degrees in it and worked at an outdoor school as an intern teaching outdoor camp, sixth-grade camp, and was river guiding in the summer.

Rick:
trips

This one summer, some buddies and I started a little shop in Kernville doing river and mountain bike trips and we opened a little retail store and just sat around saying, "Why don't you go to the show and buy stuff for the shop? You worked at A16, you know a little bit about retail." I said, "Well, okay."

Went to the show and Reno to buy stuff for the store and met the guys that were bringing Montbell into the US and they hired me as a rep and that's how I got my foot into the traditional outdoor industry as we know it. Then I worked as a rep from Montbell, I was at Eagle Creek for 10 years, had a stint at Dana Design, JanSport, Lowepro.

It was at Lowepro that I got laid off at 55 years old and realizing that, "Okay, this might be a little tough now that I'm north of 50." Struggled to get work and was helping Scott out with The Mountain Labs, Scott McGuire at The Mountain Lab, we were doing some cool things.

Moved back up to Bishop. My grandfather lived in Bishop, so it was full circle for me. Left Bishop after we parted ways with a couple of clients. I was going to hang out at consulting shingle and thought, "Okay, how am I going to tell the world about consulting?"

At that time, I'd been listening to a few podcasts and really enjoyed The Tim Ferriss Show and some others. If you listen to The Tim Ferriss Show, he is a great interviewer and he really, at least back then, was just interviewing all the guys that he ran around with in Silicon Valley. I thought, "I can interview all the guys I hang out with in the outdoor biz."

Kristin:

And women.

Rick:

And women, yep. That's right.

Kristin:

Because you've had several influential women on the show.

Rick:
all the

Yep, thank you. Yep, yep. Launched the show. When you're starting a podcast, experts will tell you, "Don't go all whole-hoggy, don't buy a bunch of gear, don't commit to it. Just try three or four episodes out, get it recorded with what you have, you can do it with your phone. See if you like it, because you might not like it. It's a different venue."

I loved it, it was a blast interviewing people and asking questions. Here I am, episode well over 200, I think, by the time this episode drops. It's been super fun. The guests have been great coming on. I just launched a book at the end of 2019, the first 65 episodes.

It just became a blast as something to do and it really has been a platform for me to expand all the other things that I'm doing: coaching, podcasting, speaking, all that stuff. I think it's a great, great format.

Rick: The outdoor biz is perfect. I think there's so many stories to tell, so many guests to talk about, so many things that some of you brands and some of you retailers out there can talk about as well, that it's a huge opportunity.

Kristin: That's amazing. Your timing was spot-on, wasn't it?

Rick: Yeah, it seems to be because there weren't that many outdoor podcasts two and a half years ago and there's a handful more now, but yeah, I was probably one of the early ones.

I think the other thing about podcast is consistency. I've been dropping an episode a week for two and a half years, so that helps.

Kristin: Definitely. It definitely helps. Those are already two key takeaways for some of our listeners today is, I think, instead of cannonballing into the deep end, you do need to try it out. One of the ways I think is really smart for brands to do that, or even service providers, is to be a guest on other podcasts and try optimizing that show across your channels to your people and see what the engagement is like.

Can you talk about another few avenues to product market fit, if you will, around "Should I be doing a podcast as a channel expansion strategy in 2020?"

Rick: Yeah, well, there's a couple of things. One quote I like to use when I'm talking to people is from Maya Angelou and she said, "Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning."

When you look at how we engage with books or we read about things in magazines and whatnot and then you listen to somebody telling a story, you get so much more out of it when you hear their voice.

I think there's a bunch of ways to expand the content that you create from a podcast and there's a lot of things that you can talk about on a podcast to educate people, to inspire people, to sell them on other products and other services that you provide.

I mean, it's really unlimited. It's something that, people can't always watch a YouTube video and they can't always come to the shop and talk to you, but they can always put earbuds in their ears and listen to a podcast. They go on their run, they go on their bike ride, they get in the car. You can really be with them a lot of the times of the day and it's a great way to engage your audience.

Kristin:
a brand

It sure is. Let's also talk about, obviously, I see this as such a perfect fit for, say, marketing director to potentially expand and maybe increase the ROI that they have on ambassadors or athletes, for example, and just create a channel around their brand. What are some of the facets that you advise people on in that position in terms of creating this type of a channel to really deploy that branding and that human to human differentiation?

Kristin:
we've both

Because obviously, I know you're a listener of my show and I listen to yours, talked about this: With Amazon, yes, the consumer is being trained, but we're seeing them really, I think, I don't know if I'd say 360, but I am seeing a slow gravitation and it is a strong, consistent, growing gravitation of people from algorithms back to human to human back to specialty. I'm super excited about that and I feel like podcasts are a fantastic way to create that pathway between brand, product, and people.

Sometimes, if you don't have a founder still at the company, you might have to get creative around the people that you present there. What do you advise brands on in that type of a situation when they're actually trying to structure, "How do I deliver the experience of my brand through an audio channel?"

Rick:
you can

Well, gosh, there's so many ways. I mean, one is the very simple basic thing is get one or multiple folks in your shop or in your business to talk about various products or various initiatives or various events that are going on to people. That gives your folks exposure. It helps the consumer, the customer know what you have going on.

Then when you're talking about what whatever topic is, it's a new product, it's, "Hey, got the fall '18 line coming in next week. Come on in and check it out." You can drive what you're talking about and use that to drive them into the store and vice versa. When

they're in the store, you can say, "Hey, yeah, so-and-so's coming in next week and we're going to do a podcast episode. He's going to talk about the climb he did on wherever it was."

You can use your athletes and your employees to give them a piece and help them talk to your customers. You can drive people into the store, drive people in the store onto the online version of what you're talking about.

You can educate customers on, they bought a new piece of gear and, say, every Thursday's Gear Thursday and you talk about the new tent that came in and how you set it up and how you take it down and how you maintain it and clean it. I mean, it's educational, it's motivational, it's inspirational.

If you want you to, too, you can even talk about selling stuff, right? "Hey, if you're listening to this show, come on in and get a free pair of gloves with your new jacket purchase," or whatever it is. It's just really unlimited.

Kristin: Tell us about your coaching that you're offering now and who your sweet spot client is.

Rick: Yeah, there's three ways that I work with people: One is I have a 12-week program where I've got outlined to what the 12 steps to create a podcast. I'll work with you through that. I'll send you the homework, you do the homework, we'll talk about it. Then at the end of that 12 weeks, you'll have a nice shiny new podcast.

The other thing is if you already have a podcast or you're thinking about it and you just want to get your head around it, we can get up and jump on a phone call two or three times and talk about it. I also have a VIP Day where you can fly out here to lovely Bishop, California. We can go spend the day outside talking about your podcast, everything from creating it to monetizing it to just tighten it up, making sure that you have the latest and greatest current strategies as far as the show anatomy goes, that kind of thing.

Then I'm also in the middle of creating an online course, which I hope to have done by the time this is live, but that's proving a little more tougher on my limited technical ability, but you can just grab that course and go online and work your way through it. Those are pretty much the way I work with people these days.

Kristin: That's awesome. It's super forward-looking and I can't wait to see that. I think that is going to be great. Is it really toward the individuals or is it towards brands at this point or can it work for both?

Rick: It can work for both. I mean, it's really, I think I'm targeting the businesses because I've

been on the business side of the outdoor biz for so long as a director of sales and a director of product and those kinds of roles.

My vision is I see that as an opportunity for a brand or for a retail shop as well, so I think that's kind of my sweet spot, but I'll work with an individual. I think there's so many great people that have so many great stories and other great audiences that they can leverage to share their stories.

That's kind of what I'm doing with my is it got dreamed up from The Outdoors Show. We go out to Outdoor Retailer twice a year. It's like a huge high school reunion. We're hugging in the aisles and drinking beers. Then we go dark for six months and my podcast is hopefully a way to share some of those stories, give a little longer life to all that energy at the show.

I know other folks out there have expeditions that they're going on. You could record the whole thing on your expedition and then come back and turn it into a multi-episode show that becomes something where you talk about expeditions or you talk about whatever part of the world you were on your adventure and the things going on there. It's just, it's really unlimited.

Kristin: Yeah, I can hear the passion for it that you have it. It is such a fun... I mean, yes, it is a commitment, so you have to love it and I know that you do. I definitely do. The days that I get to batch shows or do a show, or if I land an interview, it just is my favorite. I love it.

Rick: Yeah, it's energizing, right? It's energizing, yeah.

Kristin: It really is. Then all of a sudden you look over your shoulder and you're like, "Whoa, I have this body of work. That was crazy."

I actually heard Geoff O'Keeffe when I connected with him at a recent show, say that you're creating almost the industry anthology in outdoor.

Rick: That's what somebody said. Yeah, I created the recorded history. Yeah, it's pretty exciting. I grew up in the industry at a time when it was forming, right? I mean, I started back in, gosh, I was at A16 in the mid-'80s and got to meet Larry Harrison when he was a young rep back in the day and Skip Yowell came to the shop all the time, so I got to interact with some of the guys that started the business. Having them on the show is pretty exciting, too. Bob Woodward, he was a blast.

Kristin: Oh, he was one of my first bosses.

Rick: Oh, really? Oh, cool. Yeah.

Kristin: Yeah, back when I was a journalist, I worked for his SNEWS.

Rick: Yeah, cool. Yeah, he's awesome to talk to. Hopefully, I'm going to see him in Wallenfels. I guess this is coming out later. I will have seen him in Wallenfels over the holidays.

Kristin: Oh, that's awesome.

Rick: Yeah.

Kristin: Tell me, you have such a great experience set that's really spanned back over decades and now you're talking to people I think who have similar backgrounds and also some up-and-comers. Where do you see some key trends or key directional things happening in our space? What do you see as maybe in 2020 if you and I were doing this show a year from now, what would we be talking about, like, "This happened this year?" You know what I mean? I feel like you're a great person to ask almost from a crystal ball standpoint.

Rick: Yeah. Oh, man, that's tough. I think the outdoor industry is going through two things: One is, I think we're having a resurgence sort of like we had when I got into it. I think there's a lot of young folks that are coming through college or coming up and their parents worked in a factory or did something and they don't want to do that and they see this outdoor thing because they climb or they bike or they whatever and they want to get into that, so there's a lot of young folks that are wanting to get into the industry.

That's why I wrote the book; it's really just an advice piece because one of the questions I ask everybody is: "What advice do you have for those wanting to get into the industry?"

I think we'll continue to see that. I think more and more people will want to get into the industry because it's a growing industry. It's 880-some billion-dollar business now in the US, or maybe that's global, I don't remember that number.

Kristin: No, it's US.

Rick: It's the US? Okay.

Kristin: It's the outdoor rec economy.

Rick: Yeah, that's what I thought. Yeah, so it's huge in that way, so we're going to continue to see that influx. That's fun, people see all the fun that we get to have, so that's cool.

I think the other thing that we're starting to see, although it's been a little slower than I would hope and that I would anticipate is the business is starting to get more sophisticated.

We were talking earlier before we flipped the mics on about how we will create the best jacket, most technical, latest fabric, zippers that zip themselves, whatever it might be; we're into all that tech. But then when it comes to the tech-tech, the digital tech or the business tech, we're a little slower to bring that to the table, right?

I remember back in the day when Geoff O'Keeffe was one of the first online retailers in the world in the US outdoor-specific and they were walking around the show selling that. Everybody, even I was at it then and we were looking at it going, "Is this a thing? Is this going to last? Is this... Really?"

Then that kind of faded because of the online crash and then we were getting everybody in line to... Well, you need a website, you got to have a presence, and people were hesitant to have a website, so I think we're a little slow to embrace that tech.

I think that's the same with podcast. I think podcasting is going to be one of the ways that we talk to consumers here in 2020 and beyond. I mean, and even though one of the things people always say is, "Well, Rick, everybody has a podcast."

Well, yeah, there's probably 500,000 or a million podcasts out there, but do you know what the average episode number, episode length is of the average podcast out there? How many episodes do you think the average podcast has today?

Kristin: You mean of the big, broader body of work?

Rick: Yeah, all the podcasts. Say, all the podcasts.

Kristin: Eh, 20.

Rick: Seven.

Kristin: What?

Rick: Seven. The average-

Kristin: Well, I'm very proud to say that you're well over 200 and I'm at like 115 is what I think you are.

Rick: There you go. See? Yeah, we're on it. But my point is: Don't let the fact that we think

everybody has a podcast deter you because everybody might have a podcast, but everybody doesn't have a hundred episodes, right? A, if you're consistent and you have a thought and an idea and it's sellable-

Kristin: Point of view.

Rick: Yeah, a sellable point of view, and you commit to doing it, you'll be fine. It's a growing opportunity. It's not going away. Hello? Hello?

Kristin: I totally agree with you. Then what do you think about, I think it was probably a year and a half ago or maybe even two years ago when everybody was looking ahead to Apple CarPlay, wasn't it, and how popular podcasts are going to be? I mean, I think from one podcaster to another, that was definitely interesting, but I don't think that that's what's driven the growth, frankly. What do you think is driving the growth right now?

Rick: I think it's the quality of the content. I mean, if you listen to a broad variety of all the shows that are out there today, there are some people putting out some amazing shows. I mean, everything from Oprah's got this Master Class podcast where she interviews someone who's the master in their class of cooking or whatever it might be and they talk about the ins and outs of whatever there is, it's actually a master class on cooking, to just an entertainment show.

I was on a show last night with Scott Ohsman, Somethin about Nothin. He just gets together with three or four friends of his and they go to this local bar, they record in a bar and there's a little bit of music and they talk about topics of the day, they talk about sports, they talk about various things. It's really like the Seinfeld of podcasting, I told him last night.

There's all kinds of different shows and the folks that are dropping shows every week or dropping a couple shows a month and are sticking with it, they're really putting out some good content, so you can learn, you can be entertained, you can be motivated. Your podcast is a great job at educating people about channel mastery and how you can really be successful in the outdoor industry.

There's just such a wide variety of stuff out there that I think that's where it's going to continue. It's going to be one of the new venues where we're going to go to learn things, not only you know how to do things, but also we'll get our news and we'll get our information. They're just storytelling; there's nothing like the human voice to listen to a story.

Kristin: Right. I totally agree. I don't know if you're anything like me, but for as long as I can remember, I always have had several books on my nightstand that I'm making my way through.

Rick: Same.

Kristin: I feel like podcasts are just fantastic for that because you have the shows you subscribe to, you can find new ones, you pick up an episode here and there. Sometimes you binge and finish the whole thing. I feel like it's really kind of a parallel there.

The other thing I wanted to say, I would be remiss not to ask you this because you're an expert in this topic, is: For a brand manager who has limited budget, limited hours in his or her day, to put something like this together and to consider everything, I also think there's such a big return if you look at this as a first.

Rick: Oh, my god.

Kristin: Make this content, use the transcript, turn it into written word, turn it into short videos.

Can you talk a little bit about how you talk about leveraging this key piece of content?

Rick: Well, basically, the first part of it is it's so inexpensive to produce. I mean, you look at

some of the stuff that people are doing with video and whatnot, that's pretty expensive. I mean, if you're going to get someone who really knows how to do video and sound and all that stuff, that's a lot of money.

Podcast, I think the mic I'm using is under a hundred bucks. Maybe it's 100 bucks. We're recording on Zoom, which is an online recording tool that we're using. Then the editing, you can use Adobe Audition, you can use Audacity, you can use GarageBand, which is free on your Mac, so creating it is really inexpensive.

Then once you've got that content, like you said, you can publish the podcast, you can publish little bits, quotes and bits of the podcast, you can digitize it, transcribe it and have blog posts that go out, you can use some of the voice for some of if you're going to do some audio radio ads or spots like that or spots on other podcasts. I mean, it's amazing what you can do. If you really want to do video, you can do video, too. I mean, we could have totally done this on Zoom and recorded this video and published that as video as well.

If you're a brand, I envision somebody walking down the PCT with their new, I'm going to use Dana Design bomb pack for a lack of a better term, and unpack the pack and you can talk about packing your pack, you can talk about the pack itself, you can talk about how to set up your tent and why you want to set it up over here and not over there. I mean, and then you could have a video and a podcast at the same time. It's unlimited. It's amazing.

Kristin: Well, and I do have to say, because you're a listener of my show, you know that I've had

this Leadville obsession over the past years with the mountain bike thing. It was a game-changer for me when I found out about the Leadville podcast. That was probably three months into my training in the first year I tried to do it.

It ended up being the best thing and then a little bit of the worst thing because I was following what they were saying so closely that I actually did something on... Literally, they did a show right before the 2018 event and they talked about how hot it was going to be and they talked about increasing your electrolyte pills and I was like, "Oh, okay, I'll do that."

I ended up doing that, but not, they didn't talk about the water to electrolyte pills, which was my responsibility to research, but they didn't put it on there as a something to note, so I was doing more electrolyte pills without more fluid and I ended up not finishing because I had that happen. Everybody's done that exactly one time. Never again.

Rick: That's it.

Kristin: But it's interesting because I was just so into it and what they did is, they broke the

course down over several different shows. They had coaches on there, Rebecca Roush was on there. It was literally this treasure trove.

I was, as they say, "Find out how they're sick and make them well," I was really, really worried about, "How am I going to do this?" It was such a big endeavor for me, as I was not young and we had a bunch of people in my family. We used it as a fundraiser for my dad who had just passed from cancer.

Anyways, I put all this pressure on myself and it was a godsend. Then this year going into it with like one race under my belt, at least partially, I was able to even get more out of it and I still listened to every single episode.

Here's one of the most important things I want to say because I believe podcasting is a fast track to creating an emotional connection with a person because you're in their earbuds, you're like right there or in their home or in their car.

Literally, when I hear the music come on for a new episode of the Leadville podcast, I get goosebumps because it's the starting line. It has Ken saying, "Three, two, one," and shooting the gun and then they have the music and I get literally so fired up.

Rick: Puts you right there. Yeah, it puts you right there, yeah.

Kristin: That's another thing that I think is so important and perhaps we can close with this, is

there is nothing more important from a brand communications agency leader and former journalist in the specialty markets...there is nothing more important than that emotional connection, especially as we're competing with these juggernaut, big retail, and Amazon and frankly, even the YouTube content creators and the launches that are going to be coming from that.

It's all around us and this is a great way to get started, building new emotional connection pathways, I think, through alternative channels. It could be a gateway to a video show and all these other things, but it's a great place to start. I feel like if you literally can have a fun conversation with someone, you can have a great podcast.

Rick:
human

Yep, exactly. Yep. If you can tell a good story and you nailed it. I mean, it's the voice, right? It allows you to establish such a deeper connection with the listener on the other side. As long as you're telling an engaging story, which I think most of us in the outdoor industry have, and whether we're talking about our products or talking about our activity or talk about our next trip we're going on, it's the best way to engage.

When people hear your voice and they hear your passion, they hear your inflection, they hear your excitement, they can't always get that out of reading your ad in the magazine, but they always get that when they listen to you. I think you're right. You nailed it.

Kristin:
were

Yeah. Everybody, I just want to make sure as we look to wrap up here, Rick and I already starting to scheme on things that we could do to serve our audiences better because, obviously, I think we're a pretty complementary a set of wonder twins here.

Rick:

Yeah. Fun stuff, huh?

Kristin:
flesh out.

Keep your eyes peeled, we've got some cool things that I think we're going to

Rick:

If you have any ideas for us, send them our way.

Kristin:
could

There you go. We're all about testing and learning, obviously, because I think you confidently say that we've semi been pioneering this channel, if you will, in our community. I just feel like we could really, exactly, crowdsource what else can we do to serve you because I feel like we could be real complementary and that is really where we're both coming from and we'd love to do that.

Rick:

Yeah, exactly.

Kristin: Hit us up. Why don't you tell my amazing audience where they can learn more about
The Outdoor Biz Podcast, your coaching, your book, all these things that you've put together to help people and serve people?

Rick: Yeah, thanks. You can find me at ricksaez.com, all of the things live there. If you go to
ricksaez.com/podcastcheatsheet, there's a free cheat sheet you can download that has the 10 steps that I teach you to create a podcast. You can find me on all the socials, Rick.Saez on Instagram, Rick_Saez at Twitter. Rick Saez on-

Kristin: LinkedIn.

Rick: Rick Saez on LinkedIn, Rick Saez on Facebook, yep. Saez is S-A-E-Z. Yeah, I'm all over the
Rick Saez place on the socials.

Kristin: I'm glad you spelled it. That was my next question. Thank you again so much. It's been
amazing connecting with you here. I know the audience is going to get so much out of this.

Rick: Thank you.

Kristin: I look forward to all of the cool stuff that we can do together in the future.

Rick: Yep. It's going to be a blast. Thank you, Kristin.