PLANNING CIRCLE · AG1 PLAYBOOK KIT

The AG1 model, explained for planners

The playbook shows what AG1 does. These notes explain why it works, what it costs, and how to use it without AG1's budget. Every claim has a number behind it.

First, the three ways podcast ads are bought

Most podcast plans go wrong because these three get treated as one.

Format	What it is	Best for	AG1's use
Host-read sponsorship	The host reads your message in their own words, usually mid-show	Trust, consideration, "should I buy this?" decisions	85% of AG1's ads
Dynamic / programmatic insertion	Pre-produced ads placed by audience, location and time across many shows	Reach and frequency at scale, testing, precise targeting	The testing and reach layer
Produced spots	A recorded ad, like radio, bought directly or programmatically	Fast reach, consistent message	300 of 522 AG1 shows also carried produced spots

The point: AG1 isn't "a host-read brand". It uses host reads for trust and other formats for reach and testing. A plan that uses only one format is missing a job.

It's a system: each part makes the next one possible

You can't lift one piece of AG1's model and expect it to work. The parts depend on each other:

1. **A tracked route for every show** → lets AG1 judge each show on its own → which makes **testing** possible.
2. **Testing** → finds the shows that actually perform → the winners become the **always-on core**.
3. **A long-running core** → hosts use the product for months and years → their reads carry real **trust**, so AG1 can give them **freedom with one brief**.
4. **One brief, many voices** → the facts and offer stay the same on every show → results stay **comparable**, so the tracking stays meaningful.
5. **Buying listeners, not categories** → keeps feeding **new shows into testing**, far beyond the obvious genre.
6. **Programmatic and produced spots** → add the **reach and frequency** the core can't, so listeners get to the 7+ exposures sooner.

Then it loops: what's tracked gets tested, what wins gets kept, and what's kept builds trust.

Take one piece out and the rest weakens:

Remove this	And this breaks
A tracked route per show	You can't tell winners from losers, so testing becomes guessing and the core can't be justified
Testing	The core never refreshes. You're stuck with your first guesses
The core	No compounding trust. Every flight starts from zero
Host freedom	Reads sound like ads, and the trust advantage disappears
The reach layer	Too few exposures. Consideration stalls, and the core gets blamed for it

The sections below take each part in turn: what it does, why it works, and what it makes possible.

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1 The always-on core

What AG1 does: 19 shows ran AG1 ads in at least 20 of the last 24 months. 8 ran every single month.

Why it works: consideration builds through repetition, not one big moment. It takes **7.2 exposures** before someone seriously considers a brand (Acast Podcast Pulse 2026), so a one-month flight often ends before most listeners get there. Host reads also carry trust that ads don't: **42%** of listeners trust brand recommendations from hosts, **up 9 points in a year**, while trust in influencers, YouTubers and journalists stayed flat (Acast Podcast Pulse 2026).

Proof it works at a smaller scale: a host-read campaign for Abu Dhabi Culture & Tourism (Liwa Village) delivered **+25 points of ad recall, in the top 5% of benchmarks**, from 245K impressions. Cupra's host-read campaign in Europe drove **+42% brand awareness and +56% brand liking**.

The trade-off: budget is committed for months to a few shows, and weeks 1–4 rarely look impressive on a dashboard. Most brands cut the core just before it starts to compound.

Reduce the risk: commit for a quarter but agree a review at week 8 with a clear rule (e.g. "if recall or tracked visits are below X, swap the show"). Start with 2–4 shows, not 10.

When it doesn't fit: one-off launches, sales windows shorter than six weeks, or products the host can't genuinely use.

→ **Makes possible:** host trust (part 3) and freedom with one brief (part 4).

2 The testing engine

What AG1 does: two-thirds of its shows run for only one or two months. New shows arrive in waves (82 in Aug 2025, 98 in Sep 2025), and winners are scaled fast: one show went from 51 to 123 ads in a month.

Why it works: performance varies more by show than by genre. Two "business podcasts" can deliver completely different results for the same brand. The only reliable way to know is to test, and testing only works if each placement can be measured on its own.

Proof: audience-targeted programmatic is the cheapest testing layer. Saxo Bank's programmatic campaign in KSA delivered **+28 points of consideration** with **97% listen-through**. It shows a test layer

can do real work, not just gather data.

The trade-off: most tests fail, and that's the point. Testing without decision rules just becomes a scattered buy.

Reduce the risk: cap testing at 20–30% of the budget. Write the decision rule before the test starts (KPI, threshold, timeframe). A test should always end in "scale", "keep" or "stop".

→ **Depends on:** a tracked route per show (part 7). → **Makes possible:** the core (part 1).

3 Long, personal host reads

What AG1 does: the average read is **1 minute 16 seconds**, **80% mid-roll**, often with the host describing years of personal use.

Why it works: mid-roll catches listeners who have already chosen to stay. Podcast listening is opt-in, and listen-through rates across our campaigns are regularly **80–90%+** (e.g. Emirates 95%, Qatar Airways 98%, Saxo Bank 97%). Compare that with display, where banner click-through benchmarks sit around **0.01–0.3%**. Podcast ads drive **4x higher brand recall than display** (Nielsen).

The trade-off: you give up control of every word. Some brands, especially regulated categories, find that uncomfortable.

Reduce the risk: brief talking points, not a script: 3 facts, 1 offer, 1 deadline, plus a "never say" list. Approve the first read from each new host. For regulated categories (finance, health), agree compliance wording upfront.

→ **Depends on:** the core. Hosts can only talk about years of use if you've stayed long enough.

4 One brief, hundreds of voices

What AG1 does: each season every host gets the same building blocks (a seasonal hook, proof points, one offer with a deadline, their own URL) and tells it through their own life.

Why it works: consistency in *what* is said makes results comparable across shows. Freedom in *how* it's said keeps it from sounding like an ad. The seasonal hook gives a reason to act now, and the deadline turns interest into action.

Reduce the risk: one brief per season, not per show. It keeps creative costs flat as the plan grows.

→ **Makes possible:** comparable results across shows, so measurement (part 7) means something.

5 Buy listeners, not categories

What AG1 does: a health brand on politics, comedy, faith, food and sport shows.

Why it works: the people you want don't only listen to shows about your category. A fintech buyer listens to true crime on the commute. Podcast audiences also extend reach rather than duplicating it: reallocating **5% of media spend to podcasts can increase campaign reach by up to 41%** (Nielsen / Edison Research).

Proof: Valentino's audience-targeted campaign across Qatar, the UAE and Saudi Arabia delivered **+34% purchase intention** with **96% listen-through**. The audience was defined first; the shows followed.

Category clarity: *contextual* targeting puts ads in shows about a topic. *Audience* targeting reaches the right people wherever they listen. Contextual is useful for tone and brand safety; audience targeting is more precise. Strong plans use both.

→ **Makes possible:** a steady supply of new shows for testing (part 2).

6 Podcast is now also video

What AG1 does: the same host reads run on YouTube versions of shows, with QR codes on screen. About 10% of AG1 ads found were on YouTube channels.

Why it matters: **88%** of listeners now listen *and* watch, **55%** watch video podcasts together on a connected TV, and **1 in 3** pay the most attention when they see a brand in more than one format (Acast Podcast Pulse 2026).

Reduce the risk: ask for video rights in every host-read deal. It's often the same price for a second screen.

→ **Adds to:** reach and frequency, so listeners reach 7+ exposures sooner (part 1).

7 Every show is measurable

What AG1 does: a vanity URL and offer per show, said twice per read, QR codes on video, and co-branded landing pages for the biggest hosts.

Why it works: without a separate route per show, you can't tell winners from losers, so you can't test, scale or justify staying always-on.

The measurement toolkit, by goal:

- **Sales and sign-ups:** promo codes, vanity URLs, pixel-based attribution (e.g. Podscribe). A trading platform's always-on campaign is tracked all the way to installs, first deposits and revenue.
- **Traffic:** pixel attribution to site visits. A 7-week campaign for a B2B payments brand drove **6,839 verified website visits**.
- **Brand:** brand-lift studies (awareness, consideration, intent). Johnson & Johnson saw **+13% recall, +28% likability, +20% interest**.

Reduce the risk: set up measurement before you buy, not after, and match the method to the goal. Judging an awareness campaign on clicks is the most common reason podcasts get cut.

→ **Makes possible:** everything else. Without it, testing is guessing and the core can't be defended.

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6 mistakes brands make trying to copy AG1

1. **Picking one piece.** Host reads with no tracking, or testing with no core. Each part only works because the others are there.
2. **Copying the show list, not the system.** AG1's shows fit AG1's buyers. Yours are probably elsewhere.
3. **One flight, then judging it.** Seven exposures take time. A four-week test of a core show tells you little.

4. **No route per show.** Without a URL, code or pixel per placement, every show looks the same, and none can be defended.
5. **Over-scripting the host.** The read stops sounding like the host and starts sounding like an ad.
6. **Wrong KPI for the job.** Awareness campaigns judged on clicks, or performance campaigns with no tracking.

Local markets matter

The model is universal, but the details aren't: language, host culture, the seasonal calendar and measurement norms all vary by market. Build the same system, with local hosts, local moments and local tracking.

Sources: Acast Podcast Pulse 2026; Nielsen; Nielsen / Edison Research; Next Audio campaign results. AG1 data: Podscribe ad intelligence (Oct 2024 – Oct 2026) plus AG1's public ads and landing pages. Next Audio has no affiliation with AG1.
