

Cultivando AgriCultura: Representing the Underrepresented

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Introduction/Need for Idea

Agriculture is a field deeply intertwined with culture, yet the stories of the individuals who drive the industry often remain untold, particularly those from historically marginalized backgrounds. As the agricultural industry has evolved those in marginalized groups, including those in the Latinx community, have seen negative impacts disproportionate to other populations (Horst & Marion, 2019). Personal narratives are a space where one can learn more about an individual's lived experience using temporality, sociality, and place (Sztukowski-Crowley & Funk, 2020). Creating a space for those who are interested in agriculture, yet historically marginalized, to share their personal stories may provide an opportunity for the sharing of lived experiences and the broadening of knowledge surrounding the culture of agriculture.

Podcasts create a space for people to connect from around the world and engage in listening to personal stories and gain perspective (Swiatek, 2018). Additionally, the ease of production associated with podcasting makes the media accessible for those on the production side while allowing for an easy process to distribute knowledge (Llinares et al., 2018). This has resulted in the creation of podcasts for agriculturists in Spanish. Two examples are the self-proclaimed first agriculture podcast produced in Spanish, *Podcast Agricultura*, created to provide technical content about agriculture to a broader audience (Axayacatl, 2020-present), and *Agroperiodista* was created for those involved in agriculture decision making positions (Cuéllar, 2021-present). However, a search for podcasts about agriculture in both English and Spanish resulted in zero finds. Further, there are no existing podcasts focused on personal narratives and agriculture in Spanish, let alone Spanish and English. To create a space for those from marginalized populations involved in agriculture to share their stories, *Cultivando AgriCultura* was created. The podcast spotlights diverse stories of people of color in agriculture, highlighting their backgrounds, journeys, and challenges. The intent of the show is to inspire college students, young adults, and others to pursue careers in agriculture despite systemic barriers, thereby fostering a more inclusive and diverse industry.

How it Works/Methodology/Program Phases/Steps

Creating *Cultivando AgriCultura* involved 6 key steps for the creation of the podcast series and the recording of individual episodes. Below is a comprehensive list of the steps taken to implement this podcast, along with a description of key activities needed to implement each step effectively:

1. **Concept Development:** Brainstorming the podcast name and creating a bilingual dimension. *Cultivando AgriCultura* incorporates a bilingual dimension, with episodes available in both Spanish and English to ensure accessibility to a broader audience.
2. **Logo and Branding:** Designing the logo and developing a cohesive brand identity.
3. **Website Development:** Creating a user-friendly website with essential sections like mission statements, host backgrounds, and contact information.
4. **Social Media Setup:** Establishing an Instagram page to connect with the audience. Each guest's photo and story are shared on our media platforms, giving them the freedom to narrate their journey authentically.
5. **Content Creation:** Planning and recording episodes, followed by editing. A meticulous schedule for recording and uploading episodes ensures consistent engagement with the audience.

6. Distribution: Uploading episodes to the platform for distribution to directories. The podcast distribution is managed through a Really Simple Syndication (RSS) platform, which facilitates seamless uploads to Spotify and other directories.

Results/Implications

To date, six episodes of *Cultivando AgriCultura* have been published. Episode length ranges from 20 minutes to 1.5 hours long. A complete list of episodes, with guest names, and a link to created content will be included with the poster. Each episode has focused on the importance of resilience, community, and cultural identity for marginalized voices in agricultural spaces. The stories have underscored the systemic barriers faced by people of color and the strength required to overcome them. As indicated by podcast feedback via social media platforms, the podcast has inspired listeners to persevere through challenges and build supportive communities. This contributes to a more inclusive and diverse agricultural sector where listeners are inspired and empowered while the invaluable contributions of people of color in agriculture are spotlighted.

Future Plans/Advice to Others

Looking ahead, the hope is to explore more stories, bring in new guest speakers, and continue the mission of creating a more inclusive and diverse agricultural community. Having practiced over the production of six episodes, refining each episode's length for consistency segment to segment is needed. Analyzing listening data from current episodes may aid in the determination of an ideal episode length. Further, the creation of a consistent intro and outro should be implemented to bolster listener recognition. Concerning the project's marketing, looking into search engine organization (SEO) related strategies may help expand the ease with which listeners can find the podcast via an internet search.

For those embarking on similar projects, it is advised to prioritize authenticity and inclusivity when selecting and interacting with episode guests. Building a supportive and engaged community through social media and other platforms is crucial to create a positive outward image for branding. Additionally, leveraging bilingual capabilities can broaden the reach and impact of such initiatives as well.

Costs/Resources Needed

Costs to implement this project included \$4.99 per month for the RSS website allowing the uploading of podcasts to Spotify. The personal account website (to be included with the poster) was created using Canva premium which costs \$12.99 per month. The Canva account was also used to create social media posts and other branding and promotional items. Further, audio equipment for recording and editing episodes (e.g., microphone, roda caster, SD card, and laptop) was readily available in the program department for student use for free. These items may pose additional costs to podcast creators if they are not available.

Additional resources included human capital. This podcast was created as the graduate internship project for two master's students. The workload was divided between the two where co-host #1 handled the marketing aspect, including the creation of the website, social media platforms, and branding. Co-host #2 focused on communication, writing emails, contacting guests, and drafting questions for interviews. Each co-host was bilingual, being fluent in both English and Spanish, which also served as a significant resource to produce the podcast.

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