



# MARKETING AND BRANDING CREATIVE BRIEF

**DEPARTMENT:**  
Programming

**PROJECT NAME:**  
Sam's New Thing (Podcast)

**KEY STAKEHOLDERS:**  
Sam Sanders, Brett Baughman, Steve Nelson

**DEADLINE:**  
Trailer Release 6/19; First episode airs 6/23

**PREPARED BY:**  
MT

**APPROVED BY:**  
RP / bq

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| <p><b>WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ABOUT?</b></p>  | <p>Creating a name, brand mark, and marketing materials for a new podcast hosted by Sam Sanders, formerly of the NPR Politics podcast.</p> <p>Sam's new endeavor transfers the familiar – and extremely successful – round-table-style structure and 'explainer' format of the NPR Politics Podcast to a show that does the same for current events en masse. The goal for each episode is to draw threads of understanding through each current event in order to reach the kind of conclusions that can only be arrived at in conversation.</p> <p>While the show will air semi-regularly with Monday/weekday episodes devoted to a single topic or event, the centerpiece of the show will be the weekly Friday wrap-up, where Sam and a shape-shifting panel of experts recap and a week's worth of news with the easy rapport of a group of friends at happy hour.</p> <p>As he engages with journalists, newsmakers, and listeners about news, popular culture, sports, and the Internet, Sam's new show aims to make some sense of the complicated world we live in.</p> |
| <p><b>WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?</b></p> <p><b>WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THEM?</b></p>                        | <p><b>Target Audience</b><br/>Listeners of the NPR Politics podcast<sup>1</sup> represent the audience that we're seeking: social newsaholics. They're multi-channel news consumers, constantly-connected, and digitally-savvy. They're driven by social connection and interaction, and the high that comes from talking things out with a friend.</p> <p><b>What do we know about them?</b><br/>News-obsessed and active on Twitter and Facebook. They live for the short- and long-form takes that they see posted, liked, shared, and re-tweeted by their friends and favorite journalists. They're constantly connected to what's happening and literally part of the conversation themselves – they'll @ Sam and other journalists and ask questions directly.</p>  |
| <p><b>WHAT DO THEY CURRENTLY THINK?</b></p> <p><i>and</i></p> <p><b>WHAT DO WE WANT THEM TO THINK?</b></p> | <p><b>What do they currently think?</b><br/>I have a strange relationship with the news: I'm sick of current events, but I can't stop thinking about them. I'm exhausted by my endless newsfeeds, but I crave them, and I'm constantly connected, especially on socials. Most of the time though, I feel like I'm drowning in a sea of news. It's hard to find a website or a journalist out there that feels like they're engaging with the sort of questions that I have.</p> <p><b>What do we want them to think?</b><br/>Sam's new podcast is my saving grace. It's the salve to the 27/4/365 news cycle, or the infinite scroll of my newsfeed. Sam gets at exactly what it's like to consume the news on socials because he lives on socials. He's able to break down, dignify, and draw connections through the hundreds of headlines that pass (and harass) me every day. It's energetic, completely non-pretentious, and everything I want in a weekly podcast. Sam's the sort of friend that helps me make sense of it all.</p>                                       |

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| <p><b>WHAT DO WE WANT THEM TO DO?</b></p>  | <p>See Sam’s New Thing as their new favorite podcast, full-stop. We want our audience to feel compelled to retweet, amplify, and quote the podcast whenever they talk about the news.</p>   |
| <p><b>SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE WE WANT TO DELIVER?</b></p>  | <p>Sam’s show gives me the conversations that I wish I could have about the news, and is here to talk me through – and maybe even make sense of – what’s going on in our world.</p>   |
| <p><b>REASONS TO BELIEVE</b><br/>Please provide us with proof points to support the above message.</p>                   | <p><b>The Power of Sam:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The show will be carried by the charisma, thoughtfulness, and wit of our host, Sam Sanders. As <i>Vulture Magazine</i>’s ‘2017 Summer Podcast Preview’ notes, “Endlessly warm and gifted with a strong ear for the moment, Sanders drew a strong enough following to earn him a shot at his own show.”</li> <li>○ As far as Twitter and social followers go, Sam’s presence is astounding. With 60.3K followers and daily – if not more frequently– Tweets, his online engagement makes him a proxy for the sort of news-obsessed social user, constantly interacting with the news.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Power of the Politics Podcast</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The success of the NPR Politics Podcast serves as a lodestar for NPR programming in both format and tone. With six NPR journalists reporting on distinct beats, in addition to a changing cast of guests, the show routinely rocketed to the top of the iTunes charts during and after 2016’s election season. Much of that listenership –70% of which is below the age of 34<sup>1</sup>— comes from a personal relationship with the hosts on their social media accounts.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>BRAND ATTRIBUTES</b><br/>If this brand were a person, how would you describe it? What are its characteristics?</p> | <p><b>Freewheeling, but focused when it needs to be:</b> The shape-shifting panel speaks in a tone that’s as casual as a conversation over cocktails, but with the insights of your most intelligent friends. The show tricks us into thinking it’s all fun, but there’s plenty of meat to it.</p> <p><b>Irreverent, and fun to listen to:</b> The show allows journalists to stretch, but maintain credibility on any subject: Bob Mondello may speak on the retail industry, Linda Holmes may speak on Congress, or a NPR Politics reporter may talk about how it felt to listen to the new Kendrick Lamar album from an elliptical.</p> <p><b>Empathetic, warm, and non-pretentious:</b> Sam’s our secret sauce. As host, he’ll do his part to stoke the expertise of all of his interviewees. As mediator, he’ll make sure the conversations move where they need to go. And as a journalist, he’ll bring the level of rigor in the room up to a standard of excellence.</p>  |
| <p><b>WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?</b><br/>Please include key dates and deadlines</p>   | <p>5/22: Internal naming presentation<br/>5/23: External naming presentation<br/>5/24: Final name selection<br/>6/1: Legal vetting completed</p> <p>6/13: D1 Logo review with SS team<br/>6/14: D2 logo review<br/>6/16: Finalize logo</p> <p>Week of 6/19: Brand guideline build-out / all logos delivered<br/>6/21: D1 concept review, with Meg + SS team<br/>6/23: D2 review and fine-tuning<br/>6/27: D3 review and final tuning<br/>6/29: Finalize posts</p>   |

Appendix:

### Politics Podcast Demographics:

|                         | Politics  | All NPR Podcasts |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Male                    | 48%       | 52%              |
| Female                  | 52%       | 48%              |
| 18-24                   | 21%       | 15%              |
| 25-34                   | 49%       | 45%              |
| 35-44                   | 17%       | 20%              |
| 45+                     | 13%       | 20%              |
| Median Age              | 30        | 32               |
| White/Caucasian         | 89%       | 86%              |
| African-American/Black  | 3%        | 3%               |
| Latino/Hispanic         | 6%        | 6%               |
| Asian                   | 4%        | 6%               |
| Other                   | 2%        | 2%               |
| <i>College Graduate</i> | 85%       | 85%              |
| Median Income           | \$ 75,365 | \$85,992         |

93% get news via computer at least once a week

83% read news stories others post on social networks, 78% share stories

56% male

A bit younger (54% under 35) than the NPR podcast audience

A bit less diverse (89% white)