

This Former Rap Star Is Making \$20 Million a Year With Podcasting: ‘Maintaining Independence as Creators’

A *New York Times* profile of former rap star Joe Budden breaks down the eye-popping figures he’s pulling in by connecting with his vast audience’s ears.

Budden gained acclaim with his 2003 hit “Pump It Up,” and went on to become a TV and media personality. Now dubbed “Howard Stern of hip-hop,” Budden has amassed millions of listeners to his Joe Budden Network and self-titled show. The show mostly involves Budden and his friends opining on the latest pop culture news.

Related: Guy Fieri Teaches His Team This Customer Service Secret – And It Can Unlock Unexpected Success For Your Business Too

Budden and his network’s Chief Executive, Ian Schwartzman, shared some of the incredible numbers behind their endeavor with *The Times*, stating that they “want to make a broader argument for maintaining independence as creators.” They spent two years being available exclusively on Spotify, but otherwise are unattached to any media companies.

Here’s a look at the numbers:

- The Joe Budden Network averages \$1.04 million per month on Patreon thanks to its 70,000 paid subscribers. Subscribers can choose tiers that range from \$5 to \$50

per month. The more expensive tiers come with extras like bonus episodes.

- Two free episodes are available each week to unpaid listeners.
- 2025 subscription revenue is expected to be more than \$12 million.
- Advertising (all conducted through their own in-house department) makes up a significant part of the company's revenue.
- The Joe Budden Network employs more than 30 independent contractors.

While Budden and Schwartzman say it might seem like a “flex” to be so open about their finances, they are trying to inform up-and-comers who might have their eyes set on a big network deal like Joe Rogan has.

“[It’s] uncomfortable to put any money situation out there for the public and competitors to see,” Schwartzman told the *Times*, but added, “How else will they know they can do it this way?”

Related: ‘I Lost My Mind’: Erin Andrews Explains What It’s Like to Be in the Middle of the Taylor Swift Effect

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/inside-joe-buddens-20-million-podcast-network/494915>