



Press release

Sharjah Media City (Shams) to Launch Podcast Competition

- *40 candidates will be shortlisted to join an exclusive training bootcamp.*
- *Applications can be submitted until November 25, 2021.*
- *Winners will receive a free license, access to co-working spaces and recording studios, and a AED10,000 cash prize.*
- **Shams Chairman H.E. Khalid Al Midfa:** *Upskilling media professionals and aspiring talents is a major part of our mission.*
- **Shams Chairman H.E. Khalid Al Midfa:** *Podcasts are a powerful platform and we are committed to helping talented people in the emirate and elsewhere seize this opportunity.*
- **Finyal Media CEO Leila Hamadeh:** *The podcast industry in the region has grown rapidly over the past year and we are looking forward to bringing more creative minds and ideas to the sector.*

Sharjah, November 17, 2021 – Sharjah Media City (Shams) is gearing up to host a podcast competition and training bootcamp targeting podcast enthusiasts and creative minds looking to become successful podcasters in the Arab region.

Applications to enter the competition -- can be submitted on the registration page on Shams' website (<https://www.shams.ae/podcast>) until November 25, 2021. Once submissions are evaluated, 40 candidates will be shortlisted to join an exclusive training bootcamp, after which 10 participants will progress to the final stage. Three winners will be selected by a panel of expert judges and announced at the end of the process; they will receive a free license from Sharjah Media City, free access to co-working spaces in the free zone, and free access to a recording studio, in addition to a AED10,000 cash prize.

"Shams is committed to its mission to advance the media sector in Sharjah and firmly position the emirate as a hub for media, creative industries, entrepreneurship, and innovation," said His Excellency Khalid Omar Al Midfa, Chairman of Sharjah Media City (Shams). "Upskilling media professionals and aspiring talents is a major part of this mission. And with that in mind, we are constantly introducing programmes and training courses to help aspiring creatives reach their full potential and carry their bold and innovative ideas to fruition right here at Sharjah Media City."

"The podcast competition and training bootcamp we are organising in partnership with Finyal Media are part of this effort. The programme will support and empower podcast



enthusiasts to hone their skills and learn what it takes to build and scale their own podcasts,” H.E. added. “Podcasts have quickly become a force to be reckoned with in the media industry.. This is a powerful platform, and we, at Shams, are committed to helping talented people in the emirate and elsewhere seize this opportunity.”

Meanwhile, Leila Hamadeh, CEO of Finyal Media, noted: “We are delighted to be partnering with Shams on this project and helping grow the pool of podcasting talent in the UAE. The podcast industry in the region has grown rapidly over the past year and we are looking forward to bringing more creative minds and ideas to the sector and further boosting the output of content from the UAE.”

Titled ‘*Podcasting 101*’, the training includes workshops, self-study material, and interactive exercises. The bootcamp aims to teach podcast beginners the basics of podcast production, as well as how to take their content to market. Participants who complete the bootcamp will develop a deeper understanding of how to develop, record, and produce their own podcast. They will learn how to build up their podcast audience and explore the options they have for monetising their content.

The programme is made up of five modules: **Ideation and Concept Development**, where participants learn how to turn an idea into a podcast, set a structure, and create an episode outline or storyboard. Module number two, **Pre-Production**, explores how to research, script, and prepare for each episode, as well as how to find the right guests for a show and put together a production schedule. The module includes a special session titled ‘From a Podcaster’. Next is **Recording, Editing, and Finalisation**, which teaches participants about the kind of recording equipment and software they will need, as well as how to prepare for each recording session, ensure a high quality of sound, edit their episodes, and add music or sound effects.

In the **Distribution and Monetisation** module, participants explore the best audio management software and how to use it, key considerations for podcast monetisation, the different forms that monetisation can take, and how to create a pitch deck for clients. The fifth and final module - **Analytics** - outlines the various metrics that are available for podcasters, key figures they need to analyse, and how to use these analytics with potential sponsors.

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About Sharjah Media City (Shams)

Sharjah Media City (Shams) was established in January 2017 by decree from His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah, as a free zone within the Emirate of Sharjah with its own integrated infrastructure. Shams provides an attractive investment environment for major companies, small and medium enterprises, and startups in the emirate, offering a host of services and facilities that allow entrepreneurs to expand and develop their business. It also provides support for human resources in the media and creative industries.

Shams offers several options for launching a business, starting from AED11,500. Benefits include 100% ownership for foreign investors, integrated business development solutions, a wide range of commercial activities, and total flexibility in switching commercial activity.

About Finyal Media:

Finyal Media (www.finyalmedia.com) is an award-winning podcast network which provides immersive audio experiences for young Arab listeners across MENA. The company's mission is to tell stories that help young people reconnect with the Arab world. Finyal Media's stories bring the region's culture and heritage to life and range from adaptations of classic stories like 1001 Nights, Juha and Sindbad, which have been re-written for a modern audience, to contemporary drama series such as hit Saudi podcast *Alsilah*.

Through their podcasts, Finyal Media reach young Arabs in a medium that is digital and on-demand. Their shows have become hit sensations with young audiences, having achieved over 8 million downloads in the Arab world and five #1 hits on the Apple Podcasts charts. Finyal Media was launched in 2019 by three podcast enthusiasts Mshari Alonaizy, Majid Al Qassimi, and Leila Hamadeh.