

Product Requirement Document

Why (Objective):

Users-

- Users find it difficult to discover podcasts on the platform.
- If we enable users with intent and mood based categorization which can facilitate bias for action and improve on platform discovery.

Business-

- Weak discovery leads to drop in user acquisition rate for podcast listeners on the platform.
- We can increase user acquisition through improved discovery.

User research:

Problems-

- Spotify's discovery is weak:
 - Doesn't surface variety of topics.
 - Recommends the same artists/hosts instead of adjacent or intent-based themes.
- Search friction: if podcasts don't appear quickly (top 3 search results), users drop off.
- Loss of "What's New" feed frustrates daily listeners.
- Segregation issues: Users see Spotify as music-first, YouTube as podcast-first.
- Lack of personalized recommendations tailored to listening themes or habits
- No categorization of podcasts by genre, mood, or chapters
- Difficult navigation within large podcast libraries (episode filtering and search)

Persona-

- **Persona 1:**

Identity Snapshot - Rohit, **The Curious Explorer**, mid-20s, Data Analyst from Delhi.

Goals / Motivations - Uses podcasts as both entertainment and learning tools during travel or free time. Enjoys content that creates relatability and emotional connection rather than structured learning. Categorizes podcasts into educational (serious, full listens) and entertainment (casual, skip-to-parts).

Behaviors - Discovers podcasts through Instagram and YouTube snippets, using Spotify purely as a playback tool. Prefers lengthy podcasts for uninterrupted travel listening and values chapters/timestamps for navigation. When a guest resonates with him, he becomes deeply invested often binge-listening late into the night. Has a strong preference for video content when available. Prioritizes topic relevance over ratings/reviews. Responds to catchy titles, emotional triggers, and guest relatability more than topic or popularity. Demands search convenience—podcasts must appear in top 3).

Frustrations (Pain Points) - Spotify's discovery system feels repetitive and lacks topic-based recommendations.

Quote - "If I have to sit and plan which podcast to listen, it would be better to watch a movie instead".

- Persona 2:

Identity Snapshot - Sahil, **The Knowledge Seeker**, early 30s, Engineering Manager from Bangalore.

Goals / Motivations - Consumes podcasts as learning resources aligned with his career stage and intellectual interests. Values depth and credibility in content. Listens to short news podcasts during workouts instead of music to stay informed. Views podcast listening as productive multitasking.

Behaviors - Discovers podcasts through YouTube trends and validates guest credibility before investing time. Uses YouTube & Instagram for discovery, with occasional browsing on Spotify. Previously relied on Spotify's "What's New" section for news updates until the feature was removed. Prefers longer podcasts (50+ minutes) for depth, finding shorter content too superficial. Seeks intent-based recommendations and personalized categories, though for news specifically prefers brief daily updates (under 10 minutes) and follows channels for timely content. Values guest expertise, host credibility, and content relevant to his life stage more than ratings, but for news prioritizes timeliness over depth or presenter. Values simplicity and consistency.

Frustrations (Pain Points) - Generic homepage instead of direct podcast hub; overly random Spotify recommendations. No quick-access "latest updates" view, forcing users to scroll through irrelevant content.

Quote - "If only there was a way by which Spotify can understand my podcast needs based on my life situation and current interests".

Prioritization of problems-

Problems	Population	Intensity	Frequency
Poor podcast discovery on-platform	High	High	High
Brand perception as a "music app"	Medium	Medium	Low
Navigation & catalog issues	Medium	Medium	Medium
Content categorization gaps	High	High	Medium
No context-driven experiences	Low	Low	Low
Time-to-decide barrier	Low	High	High
Search friction	Low	High	Medium

Problem statement-

"Podcast listeners find it difficult to discover which podcast to listen to on Spotify, which leads to user dropping off thereby decreasing user acquisition."

Root causes:

- Cluttered home page
- No directional queues
- Endless scrolling

Market research:

Opportunity size-

- Improve discovery and personalization:
 - Introduce snippet-based podcast recommendations similar to Instagram reels or YouTube Shorts.
 - Build intent/mood/life-stage based recommendations (e.g., "career growth," "news update," "light entertainment after work").
- Chapter-based navigation: Adding chapters within episodes would help listeners skip to relevant sections, especially for long podcasts.
- Context-driven experiences: Curated playlists for daily routines (e.g., "Morning news digest," "Commute shows under 45 minutes") to address use cases like workouts or travel.
- Reputation layers: Highlight credibility of podcast hosts and guests (background, verified credentials) since this is a factor that heavily influences trust.
- Platform positioning: With more than 50% of surveyed users already on Spotify Premium, there's an opportunity to cross-sell podcasts more effectively by surfacing them alongside music, tying discovery directly to existing listening habits.
- Feature revival & innovation: Bring back "What's New" for latest content in followed channels and create better search filters to find old episodes quickly.

Competitive research (value proposition)-

Strengths

- Seamless playback features: Ability to play in the background with screen locked and resume where left off are highly valued by users.
- Audio quality and fewer ads: Users cite Spotify audio quality and relatively fewer ads for podcasts compared to YouTube as reasons for preference.
- Offline access: Download functionality for premium users makes it convenient during travel, a major use case for podcasts.

Weaknesses

- Poor podcast discovery on-platform: Majority of users discover podcasts on YouTube and Instagram, not on Spotify. Recommendation system is seen as repetitive (same artists) and not intent-based.
- Brand perception as a "music app": Users strongly associate Spotify with *songs*, while for podcasts, YouTube feels more natural (video + trending discovery ecosystem). This limits organic adoption.
- Navigation & catalog issues: Users find it difficult to filter long podcast episode lists, lack of chapters makes skipping harder, absence of "latest release" section, and redirection to songs every time the users opens the app adds friction.
- Content categorization gaps: Lack of action-oriented, intent-driven personalization (based on life phase, interests, or context like workouts vs. travel) makes it harder for users to find relevant shows.

Threats

- YouTube dominance in discovery: YouTube clips and trending culture give it an entrenched advantage along with the relevant recommendations and industries best search algo; Spotify remains a secondary consumption platform.

- Platform associations: Users naturally associate YouTube with *video podcasts* and Spotify with *music*, which is hard to change without strong product repositioning.
- Time-to-decide barrier: If discovery feels difficult, users may choose other entertainment formats altogether (movies, TV shows), bypassing Spotify entirely.

Business outcomes:

The primary business outcome is to increase the acquisition of podcast listeners on Spotify. This will be achieved by transforming Spotify from a consumption-only platform to a discovery hub for podcasts.

Secondary outcomes:

- Reduce user drop-off during podcast discovery phase
- Shift perception from consumption-only to discovery + consumption platform
- Increase time spent on platform through better recommendations
- Drive Premium conversions through enhanced discovery experience

Metrics (Phase 1):

Metric Type	Metric Name	Definition	Why it matters
Key Metric	Podcast completion rate (new user)	% of new users who complete listening to a podcast after selecting a podcast from the home page	It directly correlates to ease of discovery on the home page
Secondary Metric	Time taken before first play	Time taken by the user once they are on the home page to play a podcast	Indicates if we are providing the user with bias for action with improved discovery mechanism (if time is less than previous average)
Secondary Metric	Trailers viewed	% of new users viewed trailers before starting a podcast	Shows further interest in the recommendations enabled by easy discovery
Guardrail Metric	Podcast drop off rate	% of users dropped off viewing less than 25% of the podcast	Let's us know if the recommendations within categorization are as per user preference

Product details/Solution details:

Solutions-

Solution	Short Description	Key Assumption	Category
Decide what to watch quiz	Answer 4-5 questions to get relevant recommendations, it gives 5 recommendations with tags such as most relevant, most recent etc.	User gets better recommendation and is highly likely to choose from the suggestions.	Low Confidence

Solution	Short Description	Key Assumption	Category
Describe what you want	LLM based suggestions based on the query that user inputs, 5 recommendations at max with an option to regenerate the output again or tweak the input and regenerate the output again.	As people are becoming habitual to use LLM's, it can help to integrate the same within Spotify catered to the specific need of discovery.	Moonshot
Short snippets discovery section	A functionality like Youtube shorts with short snippets from podcasts to hook users, to prevent random scrolling and have bias for action an option to take the quiz or describe your preference after 5 snippets.	Discovery happens through Instagram reels so we are promoting the same behavior but on Spotify with bias for action.	High Confidence
What your friends watched	Option to add friends on Spotify while signup by providing access to contact info, recommendation based on what the added friends have listened to in the past.	Social feature can drive trust and provide bias for action.	Low Confidence
Playlist by influential people	A section with playlist curated by influential people in their respective fields.	Let's user to get a sneak peak into what their role models are consuming and drives aspiration to listen to the same content.	Moonshot
Intent and mood oriented categorization	Categorization of podcasts similar to Netflix, having top 10, new on Spotify, most searched, only on Spotify, everyone's watching etc.	A proven discovery method used by Netflix, to feed its recommendation engine. In line with the current user behavior.	High Confidence
Home screen selection based on content consumption	Giving user an option when they open Spotify to choose between music or podcasts, the user journey start based on user input based on preference.	Differentiating the two offerings on Spotify, can help with new users with discovery and clarity based on preference.	Low Confidence
Separate search window	Search window customizes based on user selection of music or podcast, if podcast selected shows only search history for podcast and the search results are also only for podcasts.	Search on Youtube is the second major form of podcast discovery and this functionality help to give user the option to search exactly what they are looking for within a defined section.	Low Confidence
Pop up window for trailers	When the user opens a channel on Spotify they can click on the podcast within the channel and a pop up window with the trailer of the podcast will appear from where they can decide to watch the podcast or not.	Can build trust and hook user if the trailer is effectively curated.	High Confidence
Category based filtering with channel page	Option to select one category to filter the podcasts related to that within the channel.	Easy filtration and prevent endless scrolling.	High Confidence
Preferences selection on signup	Similar to Netflix user can provide their preferences when they signup so that they receive better recommendations.	Provides insights into user intent and preferences and helps to narrow down interest areas.	Low Confidence
Tags on thumbnails	Tag like recently added, new episode, top 10, leaving soon can be added to the podcast thumbnails.	Gives visual queues to the user to select based on their preference.	High Confidence
Search window recommendations	If it's a new user and they have not searched anything, we need to provide recommendations in the search section even if the user has not searched for anything and	Provide bias for action even if the user is not confident of what they want to search.	Low Confidence

Solution	Short Description	Key Assumption	Category
	an option to directly play the podcast from there itself.		
Recommendation based on topic post user dropping	If a user drops from a podcast we can provide a you might like dropdown with podcast related to the same or similar topic but with different host and guest.	Interest in a topic can assist cross recommendations to assist the user in selection.	High Confidence
Direct view of episodes instead of channels	Provide the user with direct view of episodes instead of channels so that they do not have to go first select a channel and then select an episode from the channel.	Removing one step in the user journey can help in quick selection.	Low Confidence
Credibility badge for guests	Add a credibility badge for guests if they are renowned experts on the podcast topic.	This might remove hesitation and help the user trust the guest and the value the podcast can provide.	Moonshot
Trust makers by users	Trust markers of why users who listened to the podcast liked the podcast, they need to be displayed under the podcast in boxes, examples - easy to understand, deep conversation, insightful etc.	Social proof can help user to be confident of their selection.	Moonshot
Cross recommendation from music	If the artist that the user listens to appears on a podcast they must be recommended to the user.	Making use of a connection that already exists and providing high intent recommendations.	High Confidence

Solution Prioritization-

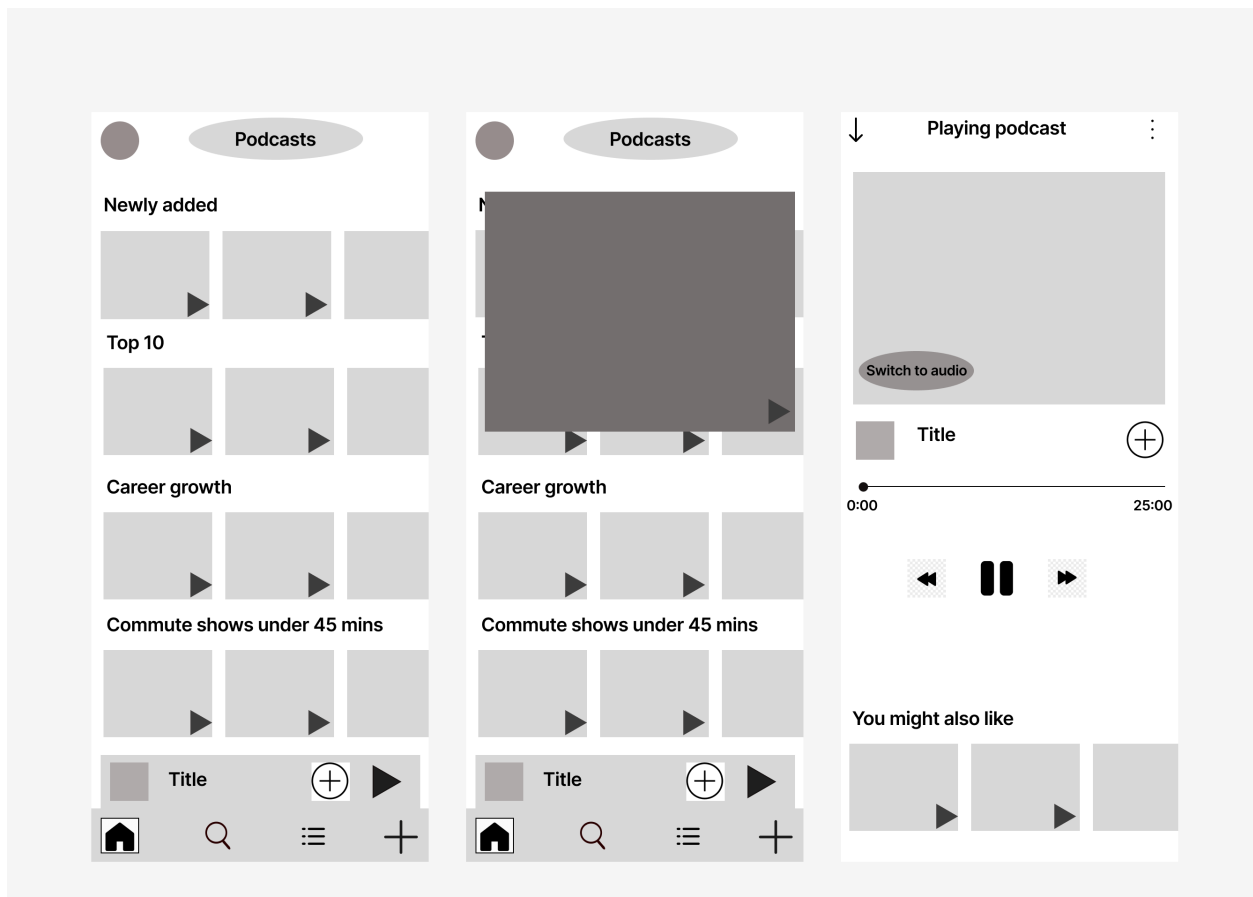
Solution	Reach (1-3)	Impact (1-3)	Confidence (1-3)	Effort (1-3)	RICE Score	Notes
Describe what you want	3	3	3	3	9	Helps the user to get exactly what they want, will take a long time to build and perfect
Short snippets discovery section	2	3	3	2	9	Promotes the current user behavior on our platform, we already have the snippets just need to create a discovery section and compile them based on user preference
Playlist by influential people	1	3	2	3	2	Creates an aspiration drive if the user likes the individual, difficult to bring individuals on without an incentive

Solution	Reach (1-3)	Impact (1-3)	Confidence (1-3)	Effort (1-3)	RICE Score	Notes
Intent and mood oriented categorization	3	3	3	2	13.5	Better categorization helps user to discover what they want quickly, need to rearrange some categorizations and create new ones
Pop up window for trailers	1	1	1	3	0.33	Gives a glimpse of the podcast but makes the user journey complex, difficult to get compelling trailers
Category based filtering with channel page	2	2	2	1	8	Helps user to filter content within a channel assuming they have decided which channel they want to visit, easy to categories already existing podcast within the channel
Tags on thumbnails	1	2	2	1	4	Helps user to identify content recency or popularity on the thumbnail itself, drives selection bias, easy to put tags on podcasts thumbnails
Recommendation based on topic post user dropping	2	3	2	2	6	Can narrow down recommendations based on topic selection by user, new screens required to view the recommendation to user
Credibility badge for guests	1	1	2	3	0.66	Difficult to define credibility as it might be subjective to user

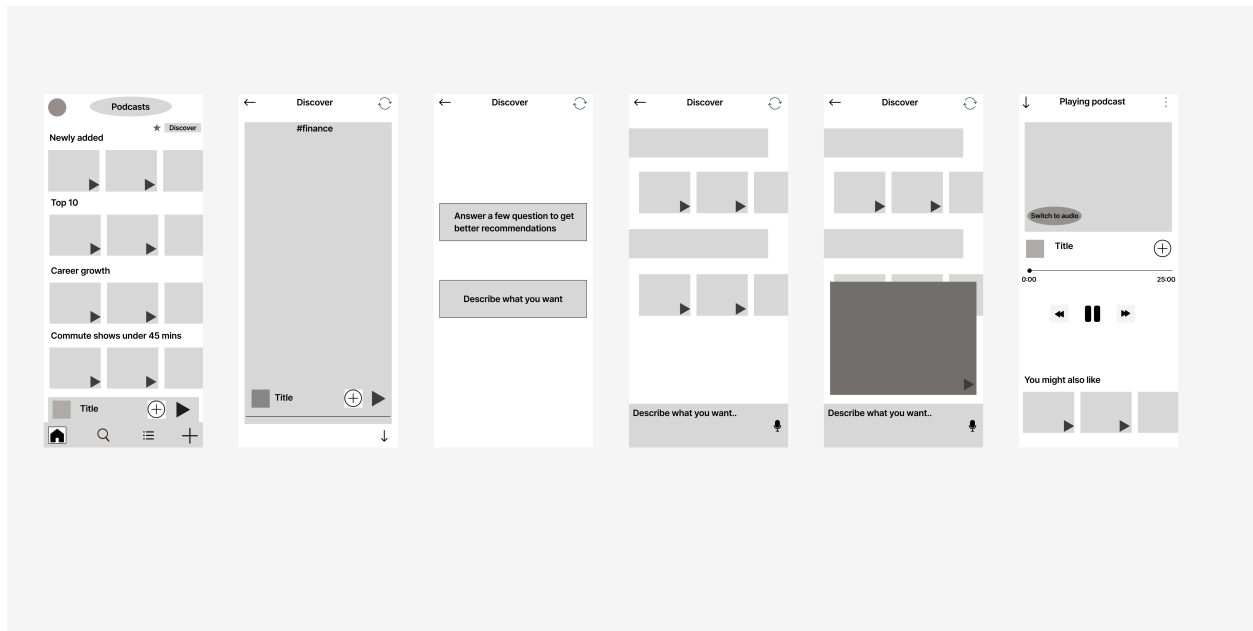
Solution	Reach (1-3)	Impact (1-3)	Confidence (1-3)	Effort (1-3)	RICE Score	Notes
						past experience and preferences
Trust makers by users	3	3	2	3	6	Social proof drives selection, difficult to get feedback from users, need to add markers in the podcast display section to draw attention
Cross recommendation from music	1	3	2	1	6	Use of listeners music history to drive recommendation, creates an edge for the platform based on already existing user data

Wireframes-

Phase 1 - Intent and mood oriented categorization



Phase 2 - Short snippets discovery section/Describe what you want



Flows (Phase 1)-

- User opens Spotify app → Podcast section
- Homepage displays categorized sections (Top 10, Trending Now, New Releases, etc.)
- User browses category → Selects podcast or long press to see short snippet
- Podcast detail page with play option or pop up window with the short snippet

Edge cases (Phase 1)-

Assumption at Risk	Failure Mode	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation	Detection Signal	Containment / Rollback
Users finds the Intent and mood oriented categorization useful for selection	User not able to select which podcast to watch even after going through the entire home page	High	Medium	Identify key users category of interest through a survey, provide fresh recommendations on every visit, shuffle category orders	Time taken before first play is higher than the average time before the new feature rollout	Push most popular and trending content as it is highly likely to nudge user to take action.
Users know how to use the trailer feature	User showed interest in the podcast and wanted to see the trailer but	Medium	Low	Tooltip for first time users in few initial sessions	% of trailer viewed before play	Long press to watch trailer foot note when user visits home page

	didn't know how					
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Timelines:

- Week 1 & 2 - Design
- Week 3,4 & 5 - Development
- Week 6 - QA and testing
- Week 7 - Beta launch
- Week 8 - Full rollout

Go to market strategy/Adoption strategy:

- In-app Banner
- Push Notifications
- In-app Tooltips

Link to other documents/Dependencies:

- Figma link for wireframes- <https://www.figma.com/design/bpY4f432dR9drzM9e5BiR9/HelloPM-Assignment-1?node-id=0-1&t=UdbvS4YhSEHneD3H-1>
- User Interviews-
- User Survey-

Open Questions:

- Category Naming
- Category Count
- Personalization Depth

Risks:

- Categories overwhelm users
- Podcasts miscategorized
- Music cannibalization

Success Metrics:

Goal - Increasing user acquisition by improving discovery.

Metric Type	Metric Name	Definition	Why it matters
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Pitfalls and Mitigations:

Assumption at Risk	Failure Mode	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation	Detection Signal	Containment / Rollback
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Users know how to use the trailer feature	User showed interest in the podcast and wanted to see the trailer but didn't know how	Medium	Low	Tooltip for first time users in few initial sessions	% of trailer viewed before play	Constant tooltip when user hovers over the podcast or pauses at the same point for a long time