



CASE STUDY

WHO: KAREN PEARSON

WHAT: AUDIO EXPERT/CEO

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cast of thousands

Meet the podcast queen who's embraced new technology and turned it into a profitable business

Who would have thought that podcasts would have taken off in such a massive way? Well, Karen Pearson, that's who. Predicting an audio revolution, Karen set up Karen P Productions to satisfy the growing demand for tailored audio content, and now produces radio adverts and high-quality podcasts for everything from clubs to big brands such as the BBC and Red Bull. So how did it all begin?

With a CV that any radio wannabe could only dream of, Karen established her 'audio' reputation at the age of just 23 as the youngest producer at Radio 1, where she worked with stars such as Björk, Dizzee Rascal and N.E.R.D.

"When I was in my teens, I pestered Radio 1 for work experience for about a year and eventually they gave in," she says. "Working on *The Evening Session*, I sat next

"Audio works on a different level to print and creates a very intimate relationship"

to John Peel. I was so impressed – he actually listened to everything that was sent through to him and it was incredible to work with him so early on in my career."

From there she worked on legendary DJ Gilles Peterson's show for seven years, helping him take the show to the next level and producing his *BBC Sessions* album.

moving on up

Her 10 years at the BBC proved invaluable, but she decided to go solo and set up her own venture a year ago. "It was daunting to leave the security of a big company. No one really knows the future of audio. But I'm passionate about it and fascinated by how it's used from country to country – it's really exciting times."

So what is the allure of audio content for businesses and their customers? "I love it," says Karen. "It works

on a completely different level to print and creates a very intimate relationship. Audio, especially the podcast, creates a small space for both of you, whether it's the radio when you're driving, listening to your MP3 on the way to work or a podcast on your computer – it's just you and whatever content you choose to listen to."

the speed of sound

Karen sees podcasting as the future for companies wanting to communicate directly with their customers. From a business perspective, audio has a very fast turnaround – much faster than print: "You can have an idea and turn around good-quality content in a couple of days," she says.

"Plus, people keep good audio content, download it to their MP3s, pass it around to friends and upload it on the web, which means it reaches a much wider audience on a smaller budget. Add the fact that great audio can help people feel good about a brand and it's easy to see why targeted audio content has taken off."

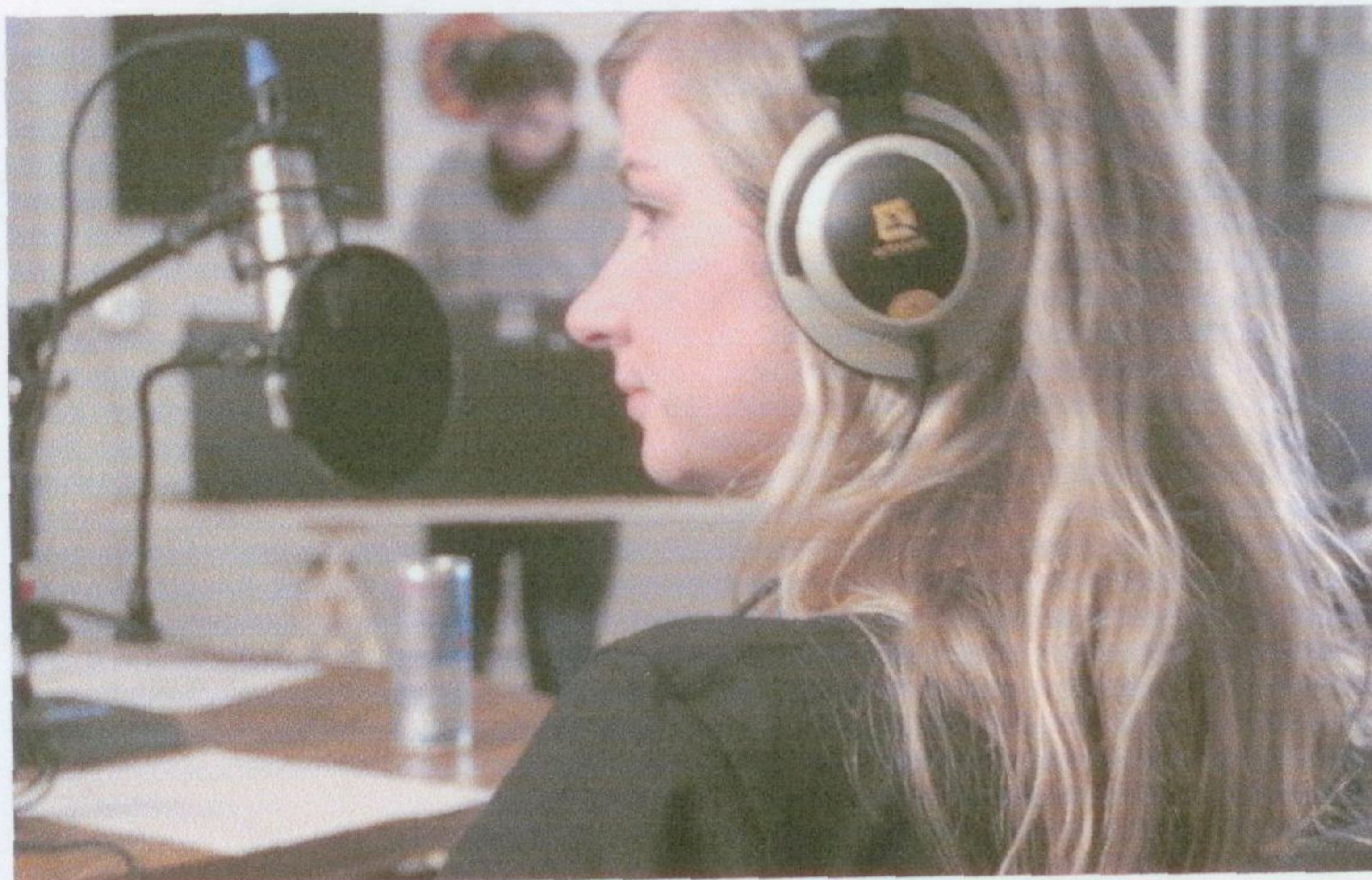
When it comes to the success of her company, Karen attributes it to a number of factors. "First and foremost, we provide high-quality audio. But the big appeal is that

I can't live without...

As an Orange customer, Karen uses the **Nokia E611**, which has proved invaluable for emailing, downloading and playing music when she's on the move.

She also uses her mobile as a **modern for meetings and presentations** where she needs to play radio clips to prospective clients.





Karen set up her own studio to help her produce the audio she's now famous for

"I'm ready for new things, so there's always something innovative to offer my clients"

we provide a one-stop shop – not only producing content but also helping to develop and market it.

"We also find all the right platforms. So if we produce a podcast for a client, we have the contacts and marketing skills to syndicate it across the world. Many companies want audio content but have no one in-house to do it, so they come to me knowing they'll get a high-quality product plus help developing it – the whole package."

Karen is always on the lookout for the next big thing and is currently developing high-quality audio web content for mobile phones. "I'm

ready for new things – TV, radio, whatever – which means there's always something new and innovative to offer my clients."

As a self-confessed technology nerd, Karen's also keen to use the latest technology to stay connected to clients and friends, and uses iChat and email on her Orange mobile to communicate with people globally.

looking forward

So what's new for this ambitious audio pioneer? Try DJing in Miami, producing a new CD compilation, launching a new club night and setting up a radio training programme for young people. Phew! If there are enough hours in the day and the right technology to do it, watch out world, here comes Karen P... ■

three tips for creating great audio content

1. make it relevant:

Aim to create something that's tailor-made to your specific audience but also welcoming to new listeners.

2. be surprising:

When broadcasting over the net you have greater freedom than with conventional radio, so it's a great opportunity to be experimental, unusual and have a sense of humour.

3. offer a bit more:

Audio can add unique value that you can't find anywhere else – like a DVD extra. Whether its special offers or cutting-edge news, surprise your listeners by offering exclusivity.



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