

Google News Initiative

Digital Growth Programme

Subscriptions Academy India

Programme Explainer



March 2023

This document explains the...

What

Objectives, target outcomes and programme overview

How

Project design and required commitments

Who

Google and FT Strategies project teams

Subs Academy overview

Programme objective

Engage a **group of selected publishers** in a journey that will help them define an **ambitious vision** for their **digital subscription business** and **build the engine** to drive them to their goal

Programme overview

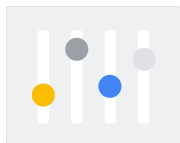
An **ambitious, intensive six-month experience** that addresses **each step of digital subscriptions journey**, from traffic acquisition to subscriber retention, and the organisational skills publishers need to succeed

Publisher experience

Participants will receive **dedicated 1:1 support** and **learn from the shared experiences** of other participants as well as from Google and FT Strategies. Programme delivery will be **mostly virtual**.

*The programme is **fully-funded by Google News Initiative**
The only cost to participants is the time and effort necessary to realise its full impact*

Target outcomes



Business performance

In time, an increase in total digital subscriptions **revenue and growth rate**

Levers to deliver immediate improvement in **key subscriptions metrics** (e.g. conversion rate, average revenue per user, retention, etc.)



Capability building

Successful **implementation** of technical and business recommendations made during the program

Adoption of a **continuous optimisation process** based on the North Star methodology

Programme phases



DISCOVERY

Understand your organisation's **strengths and opportunity areas** in order to get the entire team on the same page

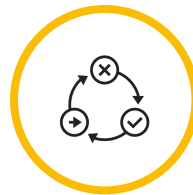
April - June



NORTH STAR

Co-create an ambitious, yet achievable **subscriptions-focused goal** for your organisation to rally behind over the **next 3-5 years**

June - July



BUILD, TEST & LEARN

Run **end-to-end experiments** to put your North Star **framework into practice** and set the organisation up for post-programme success

July - September

Discovery phase

Understand your organisation's **strengths and opportunity areas** in order to get the entire team on the same page

Discovery Phase core elements

Quantitative and qualitative analysis

Analysis of your Google Analytics (or equivalent), data request and in-person visits to interview key stakeholders

Cohort masterclasses

Presentations on the fundamental principles of each stage of the reader lifecycle, including FT and industry best practice

Publisher workshops

Sessions with each publisher to discuss diagnostic results and identify areas for improvement

Output

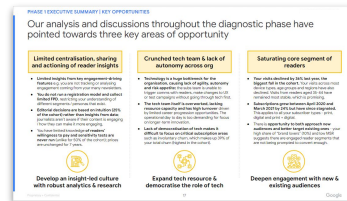
Diagnostic workshops

Covering cohort & publisher analyses, FT & industry best practices across the lifecycle



Executive summary

Covering key strengths, opportunities and proposed solutions



North Star phase

Co-create an ambitious, yet achievable **subscriptions-focused goal** for your organisation to rally behind over the **next 3-5 years**

North Star Phase core elements

North Star strategy

Intensive workshops to develop a fully-fledged North Star framework to drive you towards your ambition

12 month action plan

Creating hypotheses for growth and prioritising them in a roadmap for the first 12 months of your North Star plan

Initial experiments

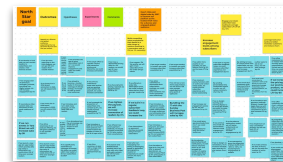
Choosing from template experiments to address your high-impact, low-risk opportunities



Output

A North Star framework

Defining your North Star goal, outcomes, sub-outcomes and hypotheses



Action plan

For prioritising, planning, and mapping the roll-out of all your ideas

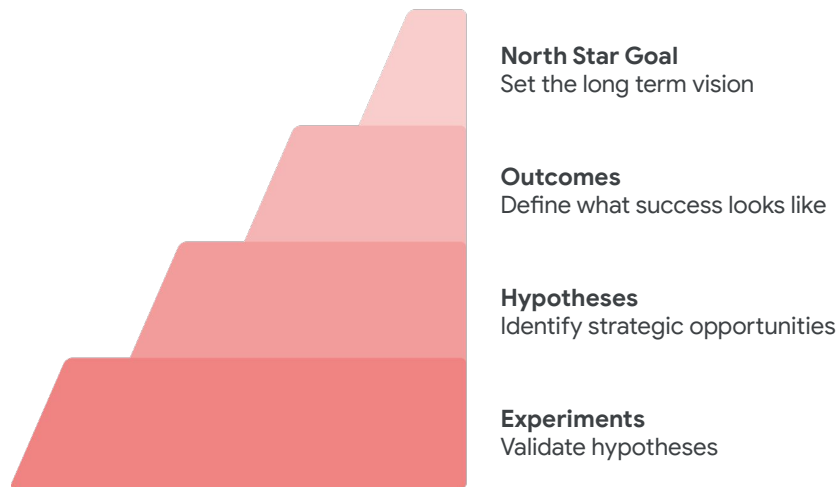


North Star phase

North Star is the strategic model used by the Financial Times that helped achieve the goal of 1M paying subscribers in 2019 a year ahead of schedule.

Key Benefits

01. Promoting **organisational alignment** through a single shared goal to align resources
02. An outcome-driven approach that enables **focused prioritisation** on what truly matters, eliminating non-critical projects
03. Setting **ambitious goals** that promote bigger and bolder ideas among the whole company



Test & Learn phase

Run **end-to-end experiments** to put your North Star framework into practice and set the organisation up for post-programme success

Test & Learn Phase core elements

Bespoke end-to-end experimentation

Developing, implementing and analysing experiments that address your greatest long-term areas of opportunity

Subscriptions business foundations

Uncovering strengths and gaps in your technology, digital skills and organisational capabilities

Organising for subscriptions growth

Building a strong governance structure to manage the North Star framework and realise its full impact within your business

Output

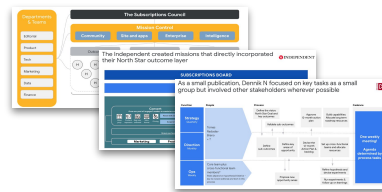
High-impact experiments

Identifying, selecting, designing, and running extensive organisational tests



Capabilities roadmapping

A concrete plan for development over the next 3-5 years to support North Star



Test & Learn phase

Example experiments:

Paywall

Recent examples:

- ★ Simplify the messaging / value proposition on the paywall
- ★ Reduce the number of articles a reader can read for free before being asked to register / subscribe

Product/Editorial

Recent examples:

- ★ Removing advertising on the website and replacing with more content to encourage more engagement
- ★ Launch a new newsletter aimed and new audiences to increase their loyalty

Marketing

Recent examples:

- ★ Reduce the onboarding series of emails from 6 to 4 to be more concise and increase overall engagement
- ★ Marketing email to lapsed subscribers with an offer to re-subscribe

Data/Insights

Recent examples:

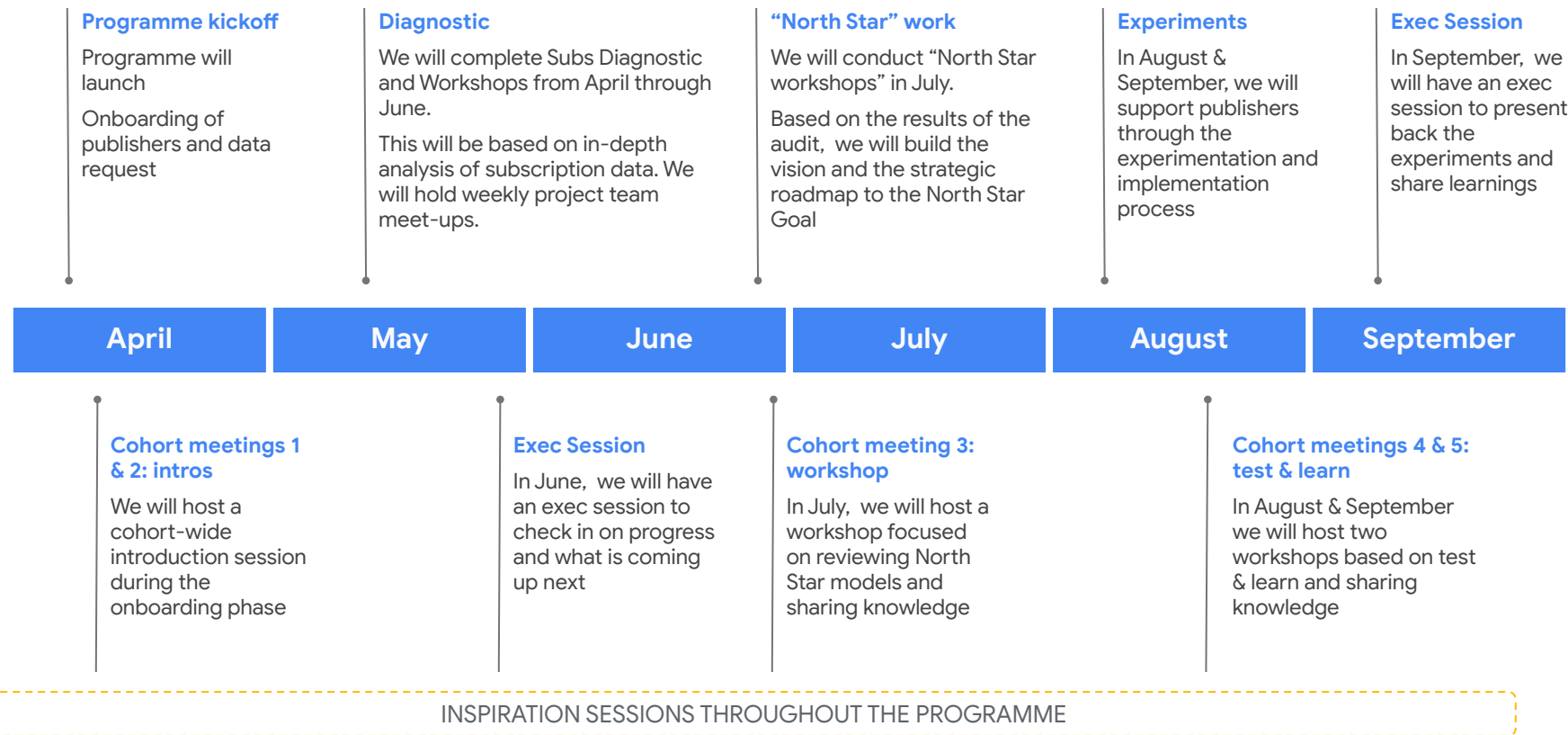
- ★ Correlate an engagement metric with churners to better understand who to target to re-engage
- ★ Survey our trialist at different points of their trial to understand if they're happy with us and how to improve conversion

We are also able to coach and test across additional themes including content strategy, organisational change and communication, op model design, pricing and visual journalism

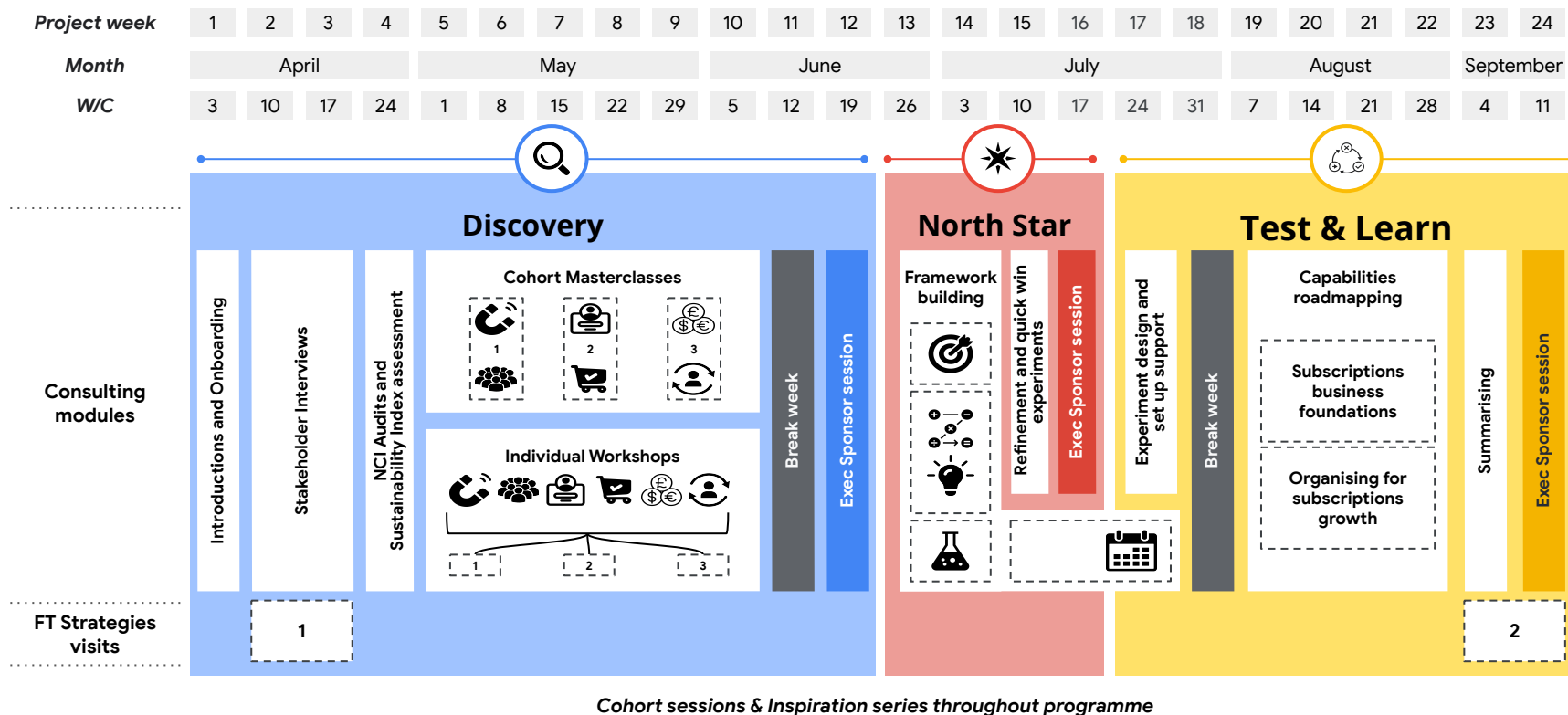
Required publisher commitments

✓	Digital subscriptions is a strategic priority	Digital subscriptions is a top three strategic priority Launched a digital subscriptions business more than 12 months ago and seeing growth
✓	Senior management is bought in	CEO or proxy agrees to participate in the executive summary sessions (maximum of three sessions)
✓	‘Skin in the game’ operationally	Assign a project lead, and working team across key functions, including tech and editorial Ready to commit the core team to ~6 hours of engagement on a weekly basis (varies from week to week) including a recurring update meeting Commitment to designing and launching live experiments during ‘Test & Learn’ phase Fully participate in cohort activities over the programme duration
✓	Willingness to share knowledge with ecosystem	Be a full participant in an ongoing ‘community of success’ Share subscription performance data with cohort for benchmarking purposes Agree to contribute to industry report, appear in case studies

Programme timeline



Programme timeline



Please note that all timings are indicative and subject to speaker availability, public holidays and programme requirements

Programme stakeholders

Google News Initiative Digital Growth Programme

The [Digital Growth Programme](#) is an initiative within GNI (Google News Initiative), to help publishers grow their digital business online. The programme offers multiple labs, workshops and tools, of which Subscriptions Academy is a part of.

Google teams will:

- ★ Manage success of overall programme, providing advice and expertise as needed
- ★ Leverage the News Consumer Insights tool in the customer research phase

FT STRATEGIES

FT Strategies is the consulting division of the Financial Times. FTS have deep expertise in reader revenue, customer engagement and advanced analytics

FT Strategies team will:

- ★ Lead execution of programme including managing all modules and project phases / deliverables
- ★ Lead cohort in the development of their North Star Model, experiments and other deliverables
- ★ Introduce FT subject matter experts via cohort meetings

To apply for for the programme,
please fill in the application form

Thank you