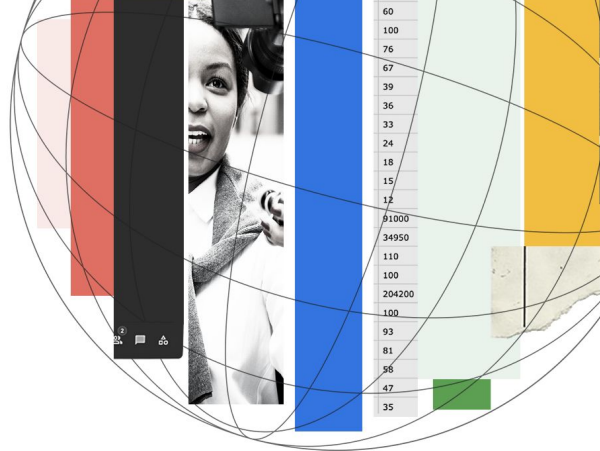
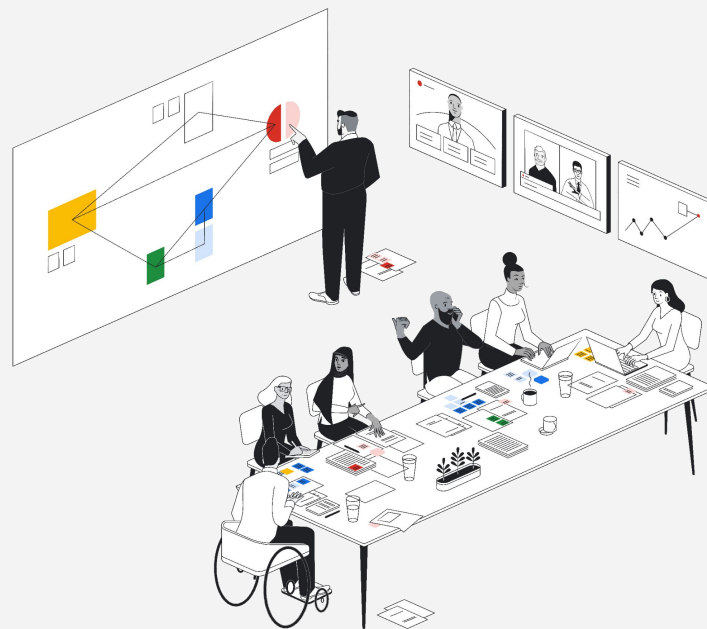


GNI Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2024

January 2024



Subscriptions Academy helps news publishers **accelerate their reader revenue streams** by assessing their current performance, **defining an ambitious vision for their digital subscription business** and **building the engine** that will take them to their goal.



Objective

The Subscriptions Academy EMEA programme is designed to engage a selected group of eight publishers of varying sizes, countries, and audiences, drawn from the incredibly diverse print and digital news organisations across the region. The programme will help them define an ambitious vision for their digital subscription businesses and build the engine that will take them to their goal.

Expert delivery

The Academy is an ambitious, intensive five-month experience that addresses each step of digital subscriptions, from traffic acquisition to subscriber retention, and the organisational skills publishers need to succeed. Google News Initiative and FT Strategies work in partnership during the programme to help participating publishers reach their goal, each providing expert advice to publishers.

Participants will receive dedicated 1:1 support and learn from the shared experiences of other cohort members. Delivery will be mostly digital, with an in-person visit from FT Strategies consultants to be scheduled.

Strong historic results

We have now worked with 32 publishers across four previous editions of the EMEA Subscriptions Academy. The programme has received consistently excellent quantitative and qualitative feedback from previous participants, and publishers have seen strong improvement in key subscriptions business metrics.

GNI and FT Strategies are excited about welcoming the next cohort of eight publishers to the 2024 edition of the Subscriptions Academy EMEA, and look forward to receiving your application.

Previous participants:

2020



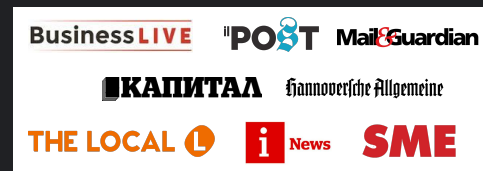
2021



2022



2023



Programme phases



DISCOVERY

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

March - June

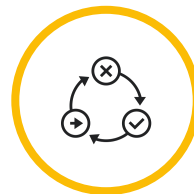


NORTH STAR

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

June

This phase includes a module on how AI can be leveraged towards subscriptions growth



TEST & LEARN

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

June - July

Discovery phase

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

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

Outputs

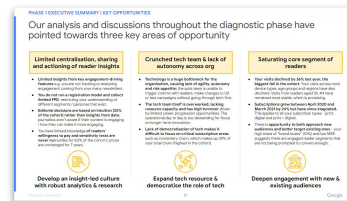
Diagnostic workshops

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 and achievable **subscriptions-focused goal** for your organisation to rally behind over the next 3-5 years

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

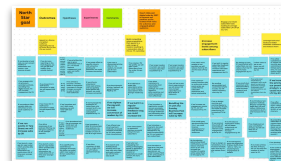
Choosing from template experiments to address your high-impact, low-risk opportunities



Outputs

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

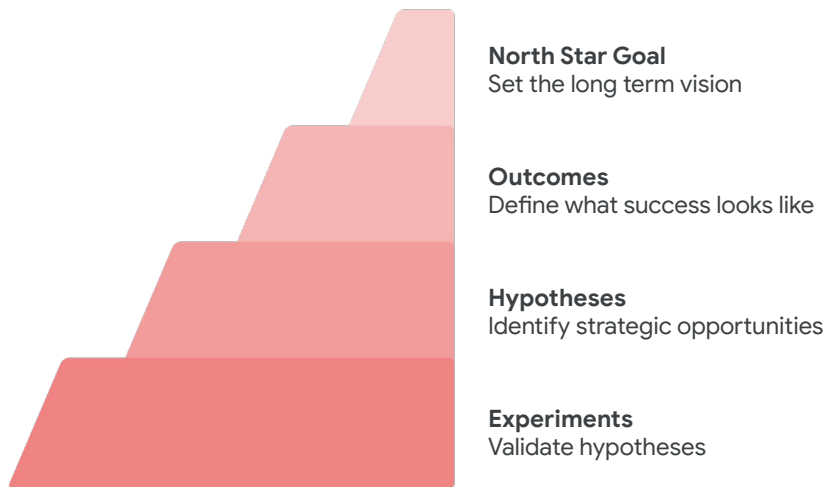


North Star phase

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:

- Promotes **organisational alignment** by using a single shared goal to align resources
- An outcome-driven approach that enables **focused prioritisation** on what truly matters, eliminating non-critical projects
- Sets **ambitious goals** that promote bigger and bolder ideas among the whole company



Artificial Intelligence Module

An introduction to how AI can be leveraged to accelerate your progress towards your subscription goals

Core elements

The AI opportunity in news media

A comprehensive overview of how AI can be responsibly deployed in news media

AI use case development

Understanding how to navigate AI use cases specific to the media industry and journalism

AI use case identification and prioritisation

A workshop aimed at helping you identify and prioritise AI use cases which can help you achieve your North Star Goal



Outputs

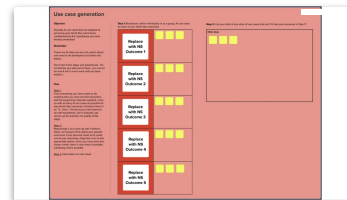
Increased AI Literacy

A thorough understanding of how to leverage AI



A prioritised list of AI use cases

For consideration in future experiments



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

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

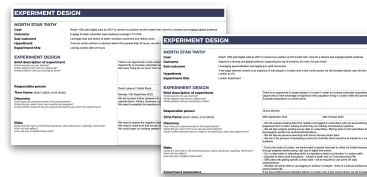
Organising for subscriptions growth

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

Outputs

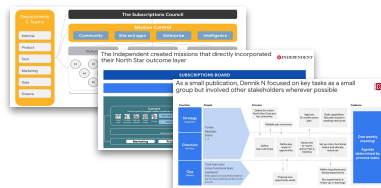
High-impact experiments

Identifying, selecting, designing, and running extensive organisational tests



Capabilities roadmapping

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



Test & Learn phase

Examples of experiments run during previous Subscriptions Academies:

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

Previous programmes have included coaching and experimentation across a number of additional themes including content strategy, organisational change and communication, op model design, pricing and visual journalism

Required commitments



Digital subscriptions are a **strategic priority**

Digital subscriptions must be a top-three strategic priority
Must have launched a digital subscriptions business more than 12 months ago and are currently seeing growth



Senior management is bought in

CEO or similar C-Level stakeholder agrees to participate in and attend 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 for (anonymised) cohort benchmarking purposes
Agree to contribute to industry report

Testimonials



"The joint expertise and background of the partner teams are outstanding. The FT's unique North Star methodology enables organizations to thrive in the reader revenue business."

The programme is a unique crash-course in setting ambitious goals, empowering people, and bringing innovations that ensure the sustainable development of quality media."

Head of Subscriptions
Gazeta Wyborcza



"This is a new form of consulting! You're coming with the brains and FT experience."

First time in my entire career I've worked with consultants that already know the business before they come into the situation and work in this impactful way."

You're changing consulting for the better!"

Chief Technology Officer
Groupe Bayard



"In an awful long time of working, I have never been involved in anything quite as rigorous as this."

It is like a 10,000 piece jigsaw made of beans that is now all coming together."

I think what you are doing with us is really quite brilliant."

Chief Marketing Officer
Irish Independent



"The project had from the beginning very clear goals and processes. All the steps which we have taken led to the final goal."

This programme changed the mindset in the company as well. Our paywall project got a much higher importance in our company because of the knowledge we developed during this programme."

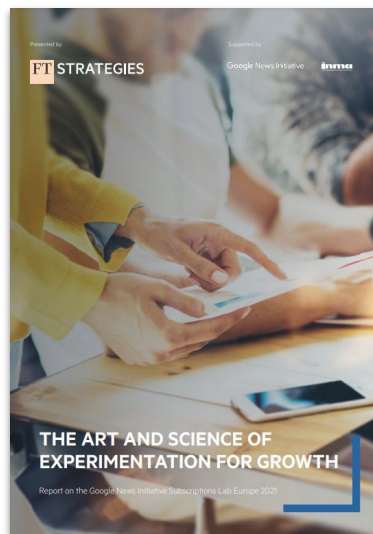
Head of Subscription Marketing
Vltava Labe Media

Reports from previous editions

Click below to read the full reports of the previous EMEA Subscriptions Academies:



[Subscriptions Lab Europe
2020](#)



[Subscriptions Lab Europe
2021](#)



[Subscriptions Academy
Europe 2022](#)



[Subscriptions Academy
EMEA 2023](#)



About us



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](#) is the consulting division of the Financial Times. FT Strategies has 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 the programme,
please fill in the application
form

Thank you