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Google News Initiative



SEIZING THE DIVERSITY OPPORTUNITY: ENABLING GROWTH IN THE NEWS BUSINESS

Findings from the Audience Diversity Academy 2022

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OVERVIEW

Diversity is no longer something that publishers can ignore. As well as the evident moral justification for representing a cross-section of society, there is a growing commercial motive too. News media businesses are beginning to recognise its benefits for attracting talent, understanding audience needs and refining content and product offerings.

At the Financial Times, audience diversity has been a fixture of our subscription strategy since 2015, when we first conducted research about how women perceived the brand. Since then, our efforts to appeal to new audiences have yielded significant growth, although there remains lots to do.

That journey makes us well placed to help other publishers reach traditionally underserved demographics, including younger audiences, women, diaspora and ethnic minority groups.

At FT Strategies, the consultancy arm of the FT, we think about diversity as **reaching the state of being a representative news organisation in the context of the target audience that it serves**. However, we have found **common issues** that prevent publishers seizing the diversity opportunity.

These include:

- A lack of clarity about how it fits into overall business objectives
- Limited internal representation and empowerment of women and younger staff
- Blind spots in understanding target audiences' needs and behaviours
- Capability gaps that mean diversity initiatives have limited impact.

With the support of the Google News Initiative, the inaugural Audience Diversity Academy (ADA) has sought to address these challenges by providing a clear roadmap to becoming more representative. Six publishers from five European countries have taken part in the programme over the past six months with the goal of improving audience diversity and making steps towards more equal representation in order to supercharge future growth. This report captures our **key learnings** from the programme.

These include but are not limited to:

- The crucial role of senior leadership in incorporating diversity into a wider company strategy
- How clearly-communicated audience insights can lead to greater understanding of the target segment
- Why having a diverse workforce, and listening to staff, can unlock ideas that enable better content creation and audience growth.

You will walk away with an understanding of why diversity is important, an overview of the challenges that the publishers faced during the programme and, crucially, how you can use our proprietary Audience Diversity framework to assess your own diversity maturity. **Case studies** dotted throughout the report also provide practical examples of experiments that you can do yourself to improve diversity.

These include:

- Integrating segmented data into editorial dashboards
- Creating content designed for younger audiences on TikTok
- Optimising email onboarding flows to be more representative.

Diversity in the media is a complex topic and we are grateful to have been able to draw upon the foundational work of organisations and institutions, including the [Media Diversity Institute](#) and [Women in Media](#), as well as the Financial Times' own efforts.

We hope that this report is a useful entry point for publishing executives and decision makers who want to understand the topic of diversity more deeply and begin implementing related practices into their business.

FOREWORD FROM GOOGLE

The Audience Diversity Academy is a unique, practical six-month experience that has challenged participating publishers in the early stages of audience diversity to maximise the social and commercial benefits of greater internal and external representation. Each leaves the programme with an ambitious diversity goal, a series of tangible customer and organisational experiments and an actionable plan for the future.

Google News Initiative is proud to support the programme as part of our ongoing partnership with FT Strategies. Together, we will support more than 500 publishers in over 50 countries over the next three years across topics that include Reader Revenue, Data and Product.



Sulina Connal, Managing Director for News and Books Partnerships for EMEA Google, said: *"The Google News Initiative exists to support publishers in their efforts to produce impactful work for a wide range of news consumers and to help grow new monetisable audiences. Audience diversity is a key component of that and we're grateful to FT Strategies and the participating publishers for their work over the last six months."*

PARTICIPATING PUBLISHERS:

**TU TEKNISK
UKEBLAD**

El Confidencial
EL DIARIO DE LOS LECTORES INFLUYENTES

Kauppalehti

Espresso

JutarnjiLIST

negocios

PART 1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS MORE THAN EVER



Diverse newsrooms are essential for informing the public and reflecting the concerns of society at large. That has become all too apparent in the wake of global events, such as the #MeToo movement and the murder of George Floyd, which have forced publishers, and their employees, to think hard about whether they are representative of the communities they serve.

In short: Are publishers serving the needs of all news consumers or just the select few?

Industry research suggests a lot of work still needs to be done. Almost

two thirds of US newsroom employees are men and less than one in four are people of colour¹. News sources and imagery are overwhelmingly white, as are the majority of publishing executives and senior leaders².

It's no surprise that the typical news consumer is a white male and the average age of news subscribers globally is 47 years old³.

But, beyond fulfilling journalism's social mission, there is a clear and growing business case for publishers to make diversity a central part of their strategy.

The newsroom uprisings are partially about the lack of minority employees in key jobs and leadership positions but also how stories about race are reported and framed, and who gets to do the reporting and framing. Some argue that mainstream news organizations are long overdue for a cultural change.

Source: 1. World Economic Forum, 2. World Economic Forum, 3. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

THE WASHINGTON POST, 2020

THE COMMERCIAL RISKS AND REWARDS OF AUDIENCE DIVERSITY

Publishers are under mounting pressure to diversify revenue streams and provide value to consumers as a result of three broader trends that we've seen over a sustained period of time:

	What is the situation?	How does audience diversity help to address it?
Changing consumer behaviours	Further declines in media trust have led users to migrate towards personalised news, brands and creators that align with their personal values and content and campaigns that speak to them in an authentic tone .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables deeper understanding of and commitment to serving new and underrepresented audiences Puts emphasis on internal collaboration and empowering talent which helps to mitigate the risks of alienating the target audience
Increasing financial pressures	Disruption to the digital advertising model, increasing operating costs and a maturing, competitive subscriptions market has been compounded by a global cost of living crisis. Consumers are spending where they see personal value and on products and services which solve specific needs .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates growth among new audiences beyond the core demographics, which can then be engaged and monetised Focuses efforts on creating products and experiences that have clear value for the target segment
Battle to find and retain talent	The Great Resignation has led to a competitive market for highly-skilled workers. Companies face a renewed demand for a work/life balance , clear career progression and a collaborative culture , particularly from early career workers and women, who place high value on these benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights the importance of fair pay and working practices and investment in staff skills and personal development Forces businesses to optimise how they create and empower diverse teams through formal and informal structures



In this context, it is no wonder that diversity will play a larger part in publishers' strategies over the coming years. For example, one third of leaders who participated in the [Changing Newsrooms 2022 report](#) said becoming more inclusive of gender and ethnicity was the main focus for their organisation.

The Financial Times, the parent company of FT Strategies, has already seen significant growth as a result of a sustained focus on broadening its appeal beyond its core readership, reaching 1 million subscribers in 2019 ahead of schedule.

Since then, it has continued its focus on cultivating female talent and younger audiences through new product initiatives, such as the [Long Short Short](#) newsletter and the launch of the [FT Edit app](#).

However, as the [FT can attest](#), the path can be very challenging. The first step of embracing diversity is to understand the reasons for under-indexing with certain audiences and the key challenges you are likely to encounter in addressing those.

BUSINESSES THAT COMMIT TO EMBRACING DIVERSITY BENEFIT FROM BRAND RECOGNITION, CONSUMER SENTIMENT, TALENT, CULTURE AND EVEN REVENUE, RESEARCH SHOWS:

80%

of consumers say they are more likely to purchase products and services from brands whose values align with their own.

[The Drum, 2022](#)

19%

higher revenue for companies that have a more diverse management.

[Boston Consulting Group, 2018](#)

76%

believe diversity is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers.

[Glassdoor, 2021](#)

PART 2

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A DIVERSE ORGANISATION AND AUDIENCE

Although the need for diverse news organisations has become more acute, many publishers have failed to meaningfully engage audiences beyond their core demographic.

In the course of researching the topic and developing this programme, we have identified a number of common approaches to diversity that fail to realise its complexity and potential:



We want to focus on diversity but we don't know how to incorporate it into our strategy

Most senior publishing executives we spoke to are either trying to create diverse organisations or would like to. However, it is often deemed secondary to commercial goals and not included in the organisation's North Star strategy.

The North Star methodology helps businesses of all sizes create a single shared and ambitious objective that brings clarity, focus and strategic alignment. Read more about it on [FT Strategies' website](#).



We just need to hire more diverse talent

While creating a diverse workforce is known to be a key step on the path to audience diversity, it is not sufficient on its own. The benefits of a diverse workforce comes when talent is provided with clear and structured opportunities to contribute to the business and empowered to bring their unique experience or expertise to the table. This happens all too infrequently.



We don't understand what underrepresented audiences want

Despite the rise of audience development teams and functions, systematically listening to audiences, let alone non-traditional ones, is not commonplace and engaging with user feedback is often sporadic. This results in a limited understanding of the target audience and how they view the product and brand.

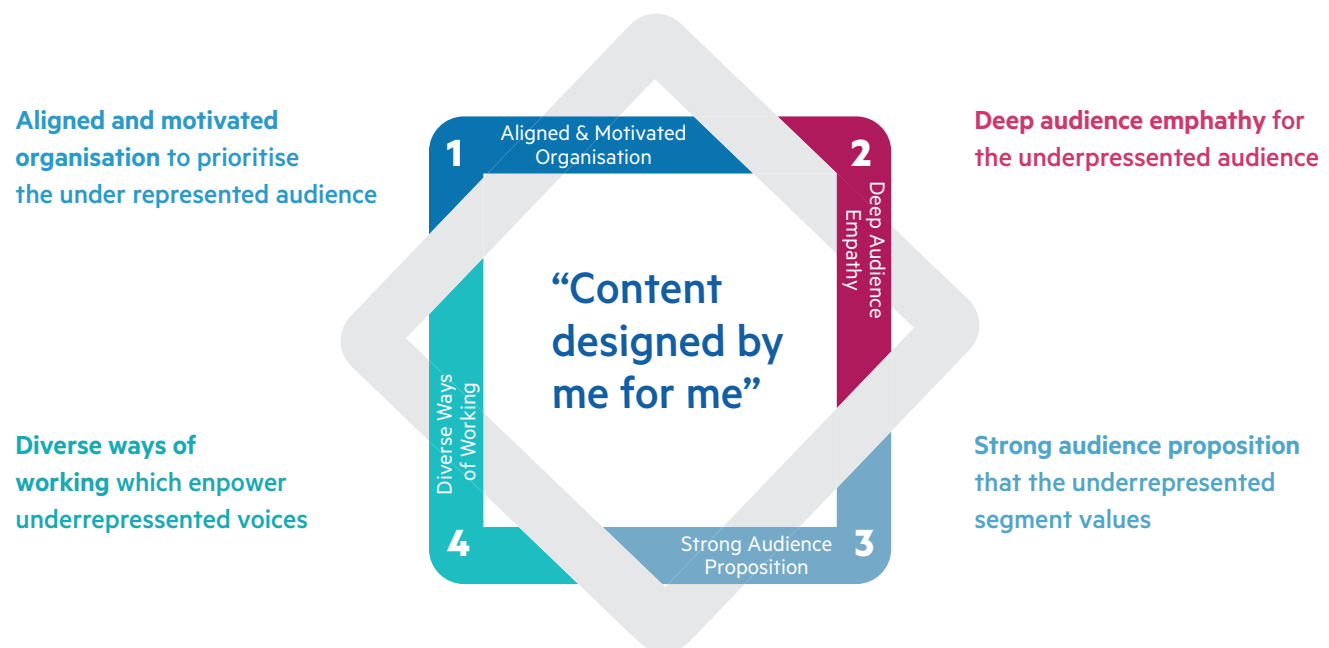


We'll get more users if we make our proposition cheaper

Some publishers fail to understand the appeal of their proposition to the target audience and spend time and energy optimising price without thinking about value. This is often the case with younger readers. However, this approach underplays the importance of understanding an audience's needs and building and communicating value.

OUR POINT OF VIEW

To address these challenges and make the concept of diversity tangible for our publishers, we have designed a proprietary framework to inform their thinking and strategy. This framework is based on FT's own diversity journey, industry research and FT Strategies' experience from working with clients.



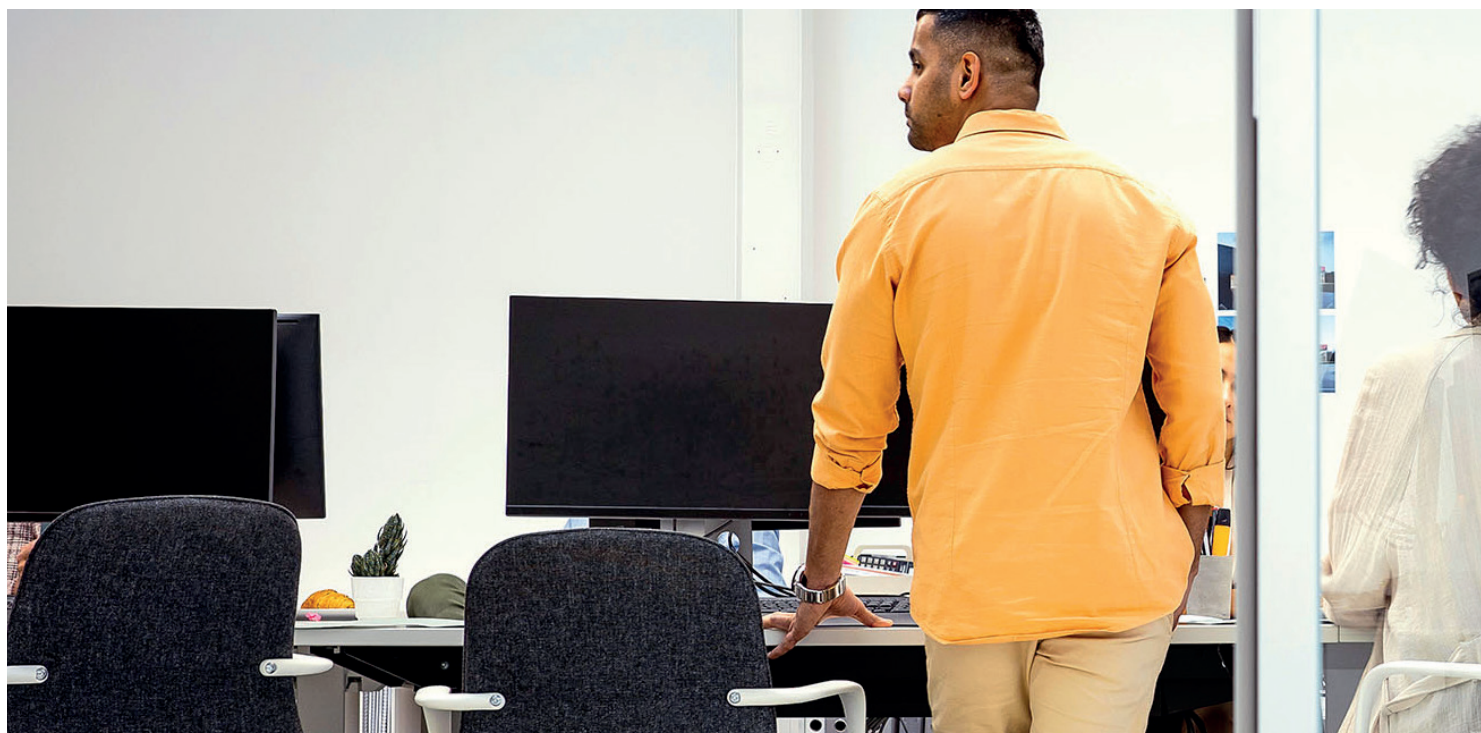
The Audience Diversity Academy framework comprises four interlocking competencies that publishers must establish and hone in order to become empathetic organisations equipped to attract female or younger users. It is designed to:

- 1** Help publishers **evaluate different functions of their business** and align on areas that may be prohibiting its diversity drive.
- 2** Illustrate the **strong connection between internal and external** competencies, which we have found can often get lost in the focus to commercialise a target audience.
- 3** Provide a **set of practical initiatives** that can be worked on by cross-functional teams across the business to reach and engage new audiences.

We found that publishers that were more advanced along the path of diversifying their organisation and audience had common characteristics:

	The characteristics of a mature publisher	Example metrics for success
Aligned and motivated organisation to prioritise the underrepresented audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A North Star goal that is fully integrated into the wider strategy and metrics to measure progress An employee network or working group who can champion diversity across the business Leaders who visibly advocate for diversity and regularly communicate its strategic importance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of an Audience Diversity goal High % of the organisation that are aware of it High level of motivation by large % of staff
Deep audience empathy for the the target segment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular and meaningful conversations with the target segment that focuses on their specific needs Segmented data and business insights that inform business strategy A brand that recognises, values and celebrates diversity and the target segment specifically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % increase in knowledge of user needs Journalists having at least 1 interaction / week with a user of the target audience Net Promoter Score (NPS)
A strong audience proposition that the underrepresented segment values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinctive content that addresses specific needs and is created by representatives of the target segment An marketing strategy that speaks to the values they care about Tailored product experiences and user journeys that take into account the target segment's specific behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % Unique Visitors % Quality Visits (or another engagement metric) NPS score; willingness to pay. Note: ideally, if data is available
Diverse ways of working that empower diverse talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring, retention and promotion practices that empower diverse talent to succeed A culture that recognises a variety of experiences and expertise and fosters collaboration A well-defined diversity programme that encompasses training, experience sharing and data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender or age pay gap % of younger audiences; acquisition and retention rate of younger and female talent % younger people in managerial and senior Editorial positions

Each area of the framework contains sub-competencies that help publishers ascertain whether they are on the right track. If you'd like to know more details, please [get in touch](#).









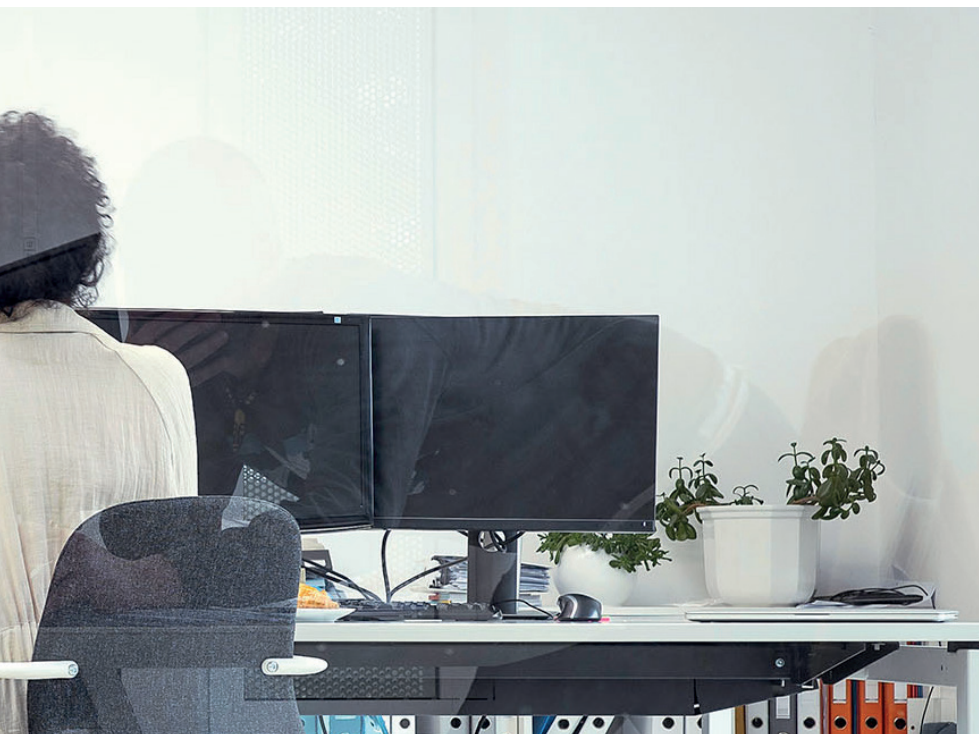
THE AUDIENCE DIVERSITY ACADEMY PROGRAMME

This framework has been used as the basis of the Audience Diversity Academy (ADA), a new programme made possible by the Google News Initiative and FT Strategies.

ADA is an ambitious, intensive six-month experience designed to help six publishers build a more diverse business. The objective is to help news organisations reach underrepresented demographic groups through internal and external interventions, develop an experimentation mindset and create a tangible strategic roadmap.

With full funding from the Google News Initiative, publishers were able to participate without cost and investing only the time and effort of their staff. The six publishers for the inaugural programme were:

Publisher	Country	Focus
TU TEKNISK UKEBLAD		Age diversity
El Confidencial <small>EL DIARIO DE LOS LECTORES INFLUYENTES</small>		Age diversity
Expresso		Age diversity
JutarnjiLIST		Gender diversity
negocios		Gender diversity
Kauppalehti		Gender diversity



Throughout the programme, a team of FT Strategies consultants worked with project teams from each publisher to:

- **Produce** a detailed diagnostic report covering content analytics, customer data and organisational survey results to understand areas of opportunity
- **Create** a clear diversity goal using the North Star methodology to align leadership and empower staff
- **Start** to build an internal culture that focuses on diversity through experimentation
- **Establish** a 12-month action plan and prioritised list of diversity hypotheses that can be tested after the programme ends.

At each stage, the project teams and our consultants have collaborated to analyse business data and processes through the lens of age and gender.

This has enabled the publishers to measure the impact of interventions, such as amending onboarding messaging, implementing daily data reports in the newsroom, and informing future initiatives.

“Above all, we learned the methodology of conducting experiments, which will facilitate all future processes in the organisation.”

Jutarnji List employee

Read on for more details about our publisher’s experiments during the ADA programme.

THE SCOPE OF OUR WORK

It is important to recognise the first iteration of the ADA programme focused on:

AGE AND GENDER

This focus was a direct response to publishers, who told us they wanted to reach these underrepresented audience segments. We expect many learnings to translate to other forms of diversity including racial and sexual diversity. However, we recognise that more data is required to validate our publishers’ findings before we do so.

THE EUROPEAN MARKET

The publishers come from five countries across primarily Northern and Southern Europe and joined the programme with a particular understanding of diversity. We are aware this may be different in other cultures and demographics and we look forward to validating the programme in other parts of Europe and Asia Pacific later this year.

SMALL TO MEDIUM PUBLISHERS

The programme has been tailored for publishers with mid-sized workforces, audiences and resources (some publishers sit outside of this categorisation). While we believe the learnings and the framework will scale to larger publishers, we may find it more difficult to experiment in an organisation where new processes and thinking take more time to embed. Again, this needs validation.

PART 3

OUR FINDINGS AND CASE STUDIES

During our work with our publishers, we have built up a series of findings about prerequisites needed to be a diverse publisher. We are sharing some of these crucial building blocks here, which take inspiration from our framework.



Leadership alignment is vital in order to transform ad-hoc diversity efforts into part of a company-wide strategy

*“There are loads of initiatives but **not in depth at all and no alignment** on the strategy. There’s no common plan”.*

ADA participant

Our findings showed that employees often felt stretched between a competing number of commercial priorities, with diversity often being low on the agenda. Some of the reasons for this is leadership’s lack of a clear business case for diversity, how it fits within the growth strategy and lack of top-down communication.

To address these, we recommend:

- Create a North Star diversity goal with measurable and ambitious targets
- A governance group who take accountability and focus on diversity
- A clear communication strategy, across the organisation and with customers.



CASE STUDY

TU **TEKNISK**
UKEBLAD

INCORPORATING A DIVERSITY OUTCOME INTO THE NORTH STAR

THE CHALLENGE

Teknisk Ukeblad sought to grow its subscriber base of 21,000 technology professionals by attracting younger audiences who valued its premium content. However, it had seen engagement of their younger audience drop over the last two years from 29% to 23%..

THE APPROACH

During the diagnostic phase of ADA, we found that diversity was not a strategic priority for TU and staff believed that its senior management was not motivated to improve it. The leadership team worked hard during the North Star phase to define a diversity goal and to incorporate it into the wider company strategy to ensure buy-in from the wider organisation.

THE RESULT

As a result of the programme, TU has set a diversity goal for the company to have the share of its audience aged 18 to 34 years old reach 35% by 2025. It has also set diversity outcomes for its workforce, including 20% of management positions held by staff under 35 years old, and been presented to the board as a key audience growth initiative for the coming years.

When the North Star becomes an operational tool, this forces us to think differently, and we are now far more conscious about lifting and giving space for the young voices in internal discussions.

SVEIN-ERIK HOLE, HEAD OF DIGITAL



A lack of audience insights meant teams struggled to understand the needs of Under 35s and women

*“We need more **collection data analysis** to realise what audiences want.”*

ADA participant

Editorial, Product and Marketing departments had disparate strategies and mechanisms to collect audience feedback and transform it into actionable insights. While some tools were used regularly, such as surveys, results were not shared across departments and this resulted in siloed knowledge and limited strategic impact.

Most publishers lacked an advanced, multi-faceted insights approach or customer-centric tools to enrich stereotypical perceptions of needs and behaviours.

There is scope to address these by doing the following:

- Run focus groups and interviews with women and younger audiences to enrich survey results and test ideas
- Utilise surveys, social media, comments and events to listen to and engage with women and Under 35s
- Distribute insights to staff through dashboards and dedicated, organisation-wide communications.



CASE STUDY

JutarnjiLIST

JUTARNJI LIST'S DASHBOARD SHOWING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT ON SITE HELPS JOURNALISTS CREATE CONTENT THAT SERVES THEM BETTER

THE CHALLENGE

Jutarnji List has become one of the leading news websites in Croatia through a deep focus on politics, sport and entertainment. It has more than 2 million visitors a month, but a declining number of women consuming its content. During the diagnosis phase, we found that women consumed less content and read for less time than male counterparts.

THE APPROACH

The project team identified that staff had a limited understanding of women's needs and did not have access to data about their reading habits and behaviours. To address this, a dashboard was created for the editorial team showing the most read stories by women. This was shown during the weekly editorial meeting and prompted discussion about content creation and curation.

THE RESULT

The dashboard was used by a wide range of editorial staff during the experiment phase. A third used it four or more times a week and a further 50% used it up to three times a week. One in four staff claimed the dashboard was influencing their editorial decision-making and helping them to commission content that resonated with women readers. The dashboard will enable Jutarnji to continue shaping their content strategy to engage women. To help all journalists produce more representative content, the newsroom has also curated a registry of over 400 women sources.



Content typically engaged core audiences rather than the interests and needs of new audiences

*“They should have content that is **simpler & explained in an easier way** to the young. Maybe short video clips & analyses of trends”.*

Anonymous reader, under 35

All publishers tended to focus most of their time and resources on topics and formats that appealed to their core audience (older, more male). There were gaps in the types of content that women and younger people read and, in some cases, a lack of diversity in the use of pictures, sources and even writers.

This led to limited engagement among these target segments and a lower perception of value.

The way we recommend tackling this is by:

- Running complementary analyses, from customer research to website analysis, to capture key content needs and highlight differences in audience behaviours
- Having diverse talent produce content that address these needs as well as operations that support diverse content production, such as a sources directory
- Creating ongoing conversations with the audience where they can feed back on how the content can be enriched further.



CASE STUDY

Expresso

EXPRESSO'S UNDER 35 CONTENT TEAM FOCUSED ON UNMET EDUCATION AND CAREER NEEDS

THE CHALLENGE

Expresso is renowned for its political and economic coverage in Portugal and has built a strong base of over 45,000 paying readers. Earlier this year, it celebrated its 50th anniversary, but the future generation of readers is less sure: just 21% of its monthly visitors are Under 35 and too little of its coverage appeals to younger readers.

THE APPROACH

A cross-functional team was created to produce stories that would appeal to the needs and preferences of younger audiences. The team included staff from Product, Data and marketing, as well as ten editorial representatives under the age of 35 years old, who were empowered to bring fresh topic and format ideas. New diverse columnists were also enlisted.

THE RESULT

By tailoring its content commissioning, Expresso has been able to increase the percentage of new under 35 readers from 27.8% to 30.3% without compromising its core audience. It has also developed a segmented data dashboard for the newsroom and a quality read score that more accurately demonstrates what content is engaging Under 35s.



It has been a revealing experience: we gained skills, ability to work across departments, focus on a specific audience and results (as well as brand awareness in these segments). The empowerment of a young team has revealed gains in experience and motivation.

DAVID DINIS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EXPRESSO

Audience data is rarely segmented by age or gender and the metrics tend to focus on volume over value

*“I don’t really have the **right metrics** to measure the impact of what we’ve been doing [across the business]”*
ADA participant

Most of the publishers were nascent in their data capabilities, especially in the Newsroom. Where data on content, platform or purchasing behaviours existed, it was often siloed across departments, and not used with the aim to inform commissioning decisions or strategic initiatives.

Further insight into underrepresented segments was also hampered by lack of technical ability to segment the data by age or gender. In the cases where data was used in the Newsroom, it mostly focused on volume-based metrics that measure traffic or ad impressions, rather than balanced with value-based metrics that show long-term habits.

Some of these challenges can be address through:

- Systematically collecting data points on target segments of readers (e.g. through surveys if the platform does not allow for this)
- Dissemination of those insights across departments in formal reports and meetings to inform strategic decisions
- Creating both value and volume-based key performance indicators (KPIs) to balance long-term and short-term focus and embedding these in the newsroom.



CASE STUDY

negócios

JOURNAL DE NEGÓCIOS USED SEGMENTED DATA TO INFORM EDITORIAL DECISIONS

THE CHALLENGE

Journal de Negócios is a digital media brand with a proud heritage of covering business and economics since it was founded in 1997. Being a recognised brand within Portugal’s business community is key to its strategy and that has led to a greater focus on appealing to the growing number of women business leaders.

THE APPROACH

Negócios editorial staff wanted to create content to appeal to women but lacked the real-time analytics to do so. New dashboards were created - which included a breakdown of page views per article and scroll depth - and shared with editors via the dashboard and daily emails.

THE RESULT

Negócios has proven the benefits of making segmented data available to editors during the commissioning process. 66% of news editors are using the gender segmented dashboard and supplementary daily email to inform editorial decisions, with 80% of those using it every day.

Negócios are now planning to share the dashboard with the wider newsroom and provide training to help their journalists understand how to derive insights from the dashboard that can inform their editorial choices.



Brand apathy stems from irrelevant content/marketing and, once lost, is hard to recover.

*“Stable, **formulaic**, **boring** - for me, the paper lacks the mood of keeping up with the times”.*

Kauppalehti woman reader

Women and younger audiences tended to be more ambivalent towards the publishers, largely as a result of producing content not deemed relevant to them in a tone that did not resonate with their values. In some cases, publishers were perceived as sensationalist or elitist towards underrepresented groups.

It is crucial for publishers who want to address this to create a brand that has an authentic and transparent tone that genuinely celebrates diversity.

This could be achieved through:

- Authentically communicating diversity efforts internally and to your audience to demonstrate commitment and progress towards them.
- Pursuing editorial commissioning and hiring decisions that speak to the commitments you have made, making sure that those are noticeable across all platforms.
- Working with partners that share your values and who can endorse and extend your efforts to reach new audiences.



CASE STUDY

Kauppalehti

KAUPPALEHTI'S ONBOARDING OPTIMISATIONS HELP IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION OF WOMEN

THE CHALLENGE

Kauppalehti is one of Finland's foremost financial publications and is widely read among the country's business leaders. It has a daily print and digital circulation of 118,000 but has had a majority of male subscribers since launching its premium proposition in 2012.

THE APPROACH

The diagnostic phase of the programme uncovered retention issues among women and found they were more likely to churn versus men subscribers of a similar tenure. The team sought to address this by increasing engagement in the early stages of their subscription. To test this, they optimised the email onboarding journey in eight different ways, according to survey findings on topics that appealed to women.

THE RESULT

To reach its audience diversity goal Kauppalehti aims to increase the proportion of subscribers that continue after 90 days by 10%. A larger dataset of new female subscribers is needed to definitively validate the experiment's impact.

However, the updated onboarding journey has already succeeded in conveying a more representative view of Kauppalehti's workforce and the prominence afforded to the new climate newsletter has resulted in a 6% increase in its proportion of women subscribers (33%), compared to the average across other newsletters (27%).

Audience Diversity Academy has challenged us to rethink and evaluate how we address women readers, how to better engage them and make Kauppalehti brand more relatable to women. We have had great conversations across departments, good co-operation and we've already started doing multiple, concrete tests based on our hypothesis and new goals

TIMO-JAAKKO RAUTAVUORI & ANNA JUVONEN, DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AND NEWS EDITOR OF KAUPPALEHTI



Workforce representation of the target audience varied but there was lots of scope to become a home for diverse talent.

“Improving recruitment would immediately give a new perspective. Given how many entrepreneurs with an immigrant background are in Finland, it is strange how we are weakly known [to this audience]”.

ADA participant

Attracting and retaining talent from the target segments was a challenge for most publishers, limiting their understanding of the segment's needs and ability to create representative content and product. The cause was often attributed to having an underdeveloped HR function, small hiring pools and an unclear career development and growth trajectory.

Here, there are opportunities to:

- Create an attractive employee value proposition by emphasising benefits relevant to the target segment
- Ensure that the hiring process is transparent, fair and representative
- Empower talent outside of their formalised job roles with more responsibility, freedom to develop their ideas and a budget.



CASE STUDY

El Confidencial
EL DIARIO DE LOS LECTORES INFLUYENTES

EL CONFIDENCIAL OPTIMISED ITS FEEDBACK PROCESS TO HELP ADDRESS ITS YOUNG TALENT CHURN

THE CHALLENGE

El Confidencial has attracted over 41,000 subscribers in two and half years by focusing on independent and trusted business and political journalism. Despite more than half of staff being under the age of 35, few stay at the publisher for more than a few years, suggesting issues with staff retention.

THE APPROACH

By conducting an organisational survey, El Confidencial learnt that younger staff were less likely to feel heard by the company or feel that their feedback was not being addressed compared to older colleagues. The project team ran an experiment to optimise the weekly Nailed staff survey, encouraging one team of Under 35s to share workplace challenges and ideas for improvement.

THE RESULT

During the four weeks that the experiment was running, there was no immediate change in satisfaction among younger staff as a result of the experiment. Further testing is required to know whether listening to staff under 35 staff or addressing their issue can help retain them.

However, as a result of their participation in the programme, El Confidencial has decided to train managers to improve 1:1 meetings and close the feedback loop between younger staff and leadership.





CONCLUSION

In this report, we have demonstrated that the business case for diversity is stronger than ever for publishers. We have shown that diversifying your workforce and audience can help publishers grow and become more resilient, bolstering both their social and commercial mission.

We have also shared our unique perspective in the form of the Audience Diversity Framework and made the link between internal and external diversity. The initial learnings from our publishers' experiments should also demonstrate

the upsides of creating content and marketing that speak to targeted audiences. This is not possible without clear and committed leadership and a diversity programme that brings staff along on the journey.

Creating a diversity strategy, and integrating it into wider organisational goals, is not easy or quick to achieve. But The Financial Times, and the publishers we have worked with over the last six months, have shown that the potential upsides to the business are significant enough to be worth the effort.

Google News Initiative

Seize the diversity opportunity

We're delighted to announce that the Audience Diversity Academy will run again in 2023, thanks to the support of the Google News Initiative.

Register your interest by filling out [this short form](#) on the FT Strategies website and someone will get in touch with you to share more information and discuss your suitability.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FT STRATEGIES

FT Strategies

FT Strategies is a boutique consulting firm within the Financial Times. Staffed by the experts who successfully transformed the FT's business model in the face of disruption, FT Strategies works with organisations looking to innovate using data, helping build sustainable digital businesses. Find out more at ftstrategies.com.

The Financial Times

The Financial Times is one of the world's leading business news organisations, recognised internationally for its authority, integrity and accuracy. The FT has a record paying readership of more than 1.2 million, three-quarters of which are digital subscriptions. It is part of Nikkei Inc., which provides a broad range of information, news and services for the global business community.

Google News Initiative

The Google News Initiative (GNI)

The Google News Initiative represents Google's largest-ever effort to help journalism thrive in the digital age. Through its partnerships, programs and products, the Google News Initiative works with thousands of organisations worldwide to support quality independent journalism, financial sustainability, and development of new technologies that drive innovation. Google allocated \$300 million over three years to energise these collaborations, and to lay the foundation for new products and programs for a diverse set of news publishers, to benefit the entire ecosystem. This includes supporting thought leadership on topics like consumer revenue, advertising and data that are critical to the future of the news industry.

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