

BuzzFeed News

About BuzzFeed and BuzzFeed News:

BuzzFeed is the world's leading digital media company, which leverages data and innovation to reach hundreds of millions of people globally. Their massive cross-platform network includes BuzzFeed News, a news organization focused on breaking news, investigations, and big impact.

About News Consumer Insights:

The News Consumer Insights framework and dashboard emerged out of a series of findings from Project Fuse. Project Fuse was an initiative in 2017 to help publishers better understand their audience segments – and the value of individual users – to inform data-driven, decisions on audience growth.

RESULTS

In partnership with News Consumer Insights, BuzzFeed News was able to test one-time contributions to gauge audience interest with an average contribution of \$20, BuzzFeed News was able to launch a recurring membership program based on learnings from the one-off contributions within months.

News Consumer Insights and BuzzFeed News: Launching a membership model that resonates with readers

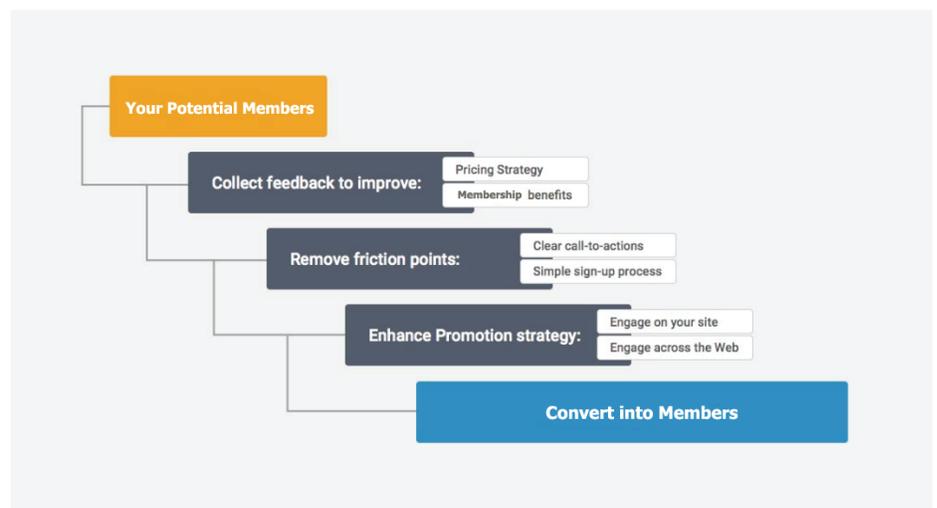
In the effort to diversify revenue streams, not all news publishers are ready to limit access to their content by implementing a paywall. In some cases, paywalls go against the news organization's mission, resulting in advertising loss, or even pushing audiences to consume news content from other sources.

While paywalls are common, they are not the only way news publishers can generate additional revenue.

Membership programs have emerged as a way for news organization to receive financial support and deepen their relationship with readers. Launching a successful membership program is no easy task. Publishers must build a loyal reader community, assess the appetite for contribution and offer benefits and experiences that make paying for a membership worthwhile.

With the launch of their membership program, BuzzFeed News overcame many of these challenges using the News Consumer Insights framework and recommendations. With News Consumer Insights, BuzzFeed News built the foundation for an innovative consumer membership approach.

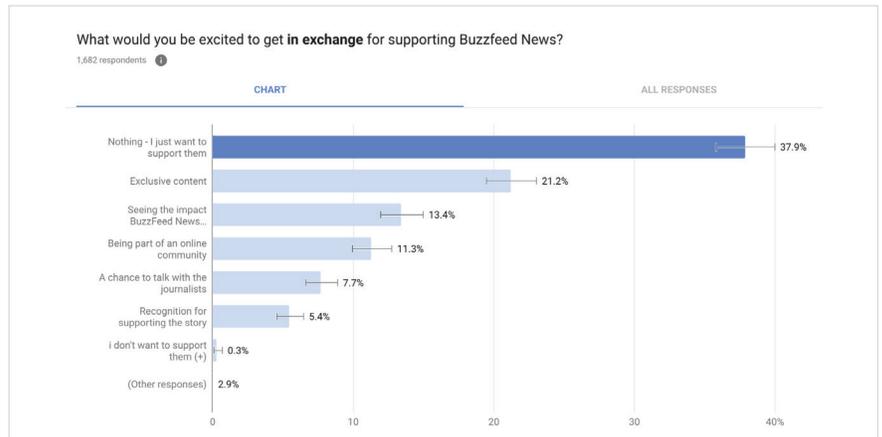
Leveraging the [News Consumer Insights](#) recommendations to build a membership model, the BuzzFeed News team started with the optimization of their reader funnel by implementing audience development tactics to grow their potential member user base. [The Consumer Revenue best practices](#) chapter from the News Consumer Insights playbook was adapted for the launch of an initial test of one-off reader contributions that BuzzFeed News used to inform its eventual membership program.



Here are the main best practices that were uncovered and implemented during the partnership:

1) Assessing membership appetite and optimizing the value proposition via Google Surveys

Using [Google Surveys](#), BuzzFeed News gained insights directly from their readers. The team collected user feedback regarding the potential appetite for financial contribution. This helped them quickly kick-off internal conversations and launch a contributions test within weeks.



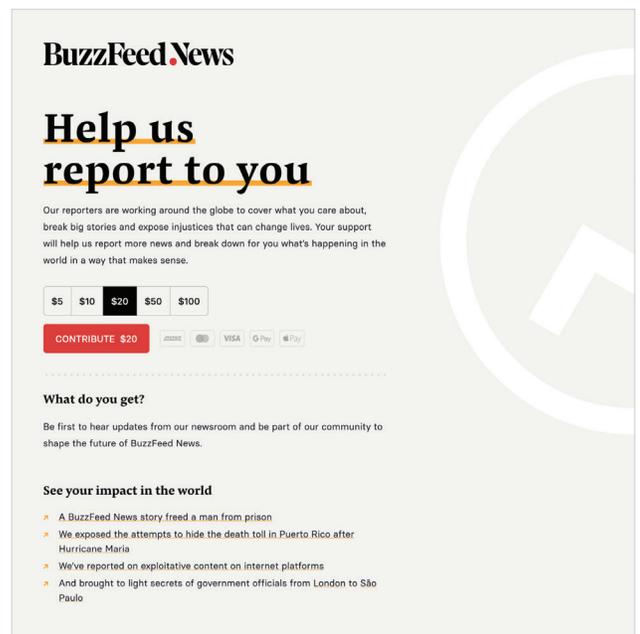
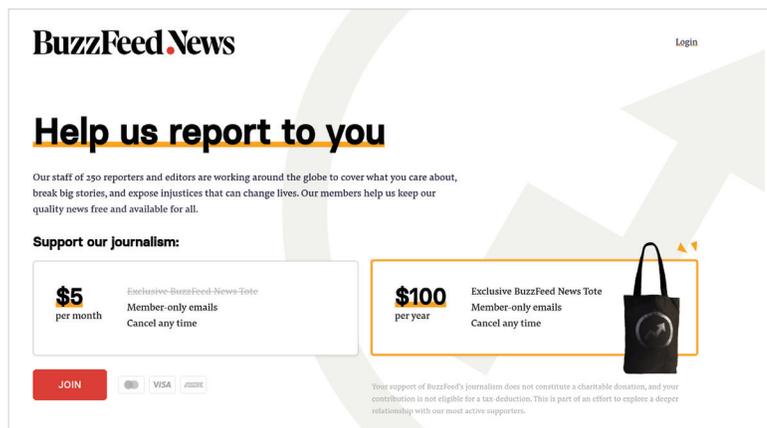
They then asked about what benefits their readers expected from a membership and discovered that a significant portion of respondents were happy to contribute simply to support the publication's journalism.

2) Reducing friction points:

The BuzzFeed News team created the contributions landing page with input from [News Consumer Insights best practices](#) and mockups to select Call-To-Action button shape, position and colors. They also adapted the messaging and tone based on the initial survey results.

Less is always better: by limiting the number of steps required to contribute, the BuzzFeed News team was able to maximize their landing page conversion rate.

They decided to start with one-off contributions to test appetite. Learnings from that initial period allowed them to quickly launch a recurring program three months later.

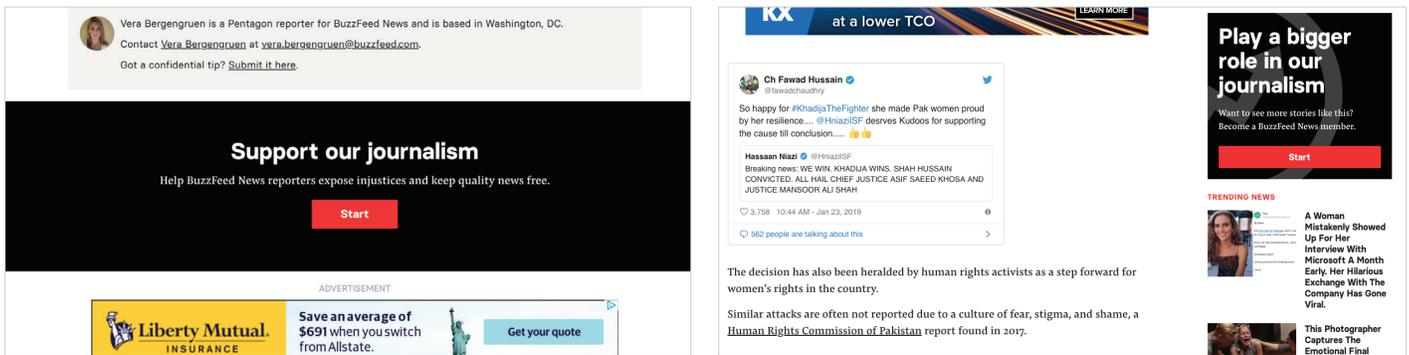


Moving from a one-off contribution model to a recurring one

3) Setting up the promotion strategy

In order to build awareness around the new contribution opportunity for readers, the editor-in-chief of BuzzFeed News sent an email announcing the launch to all newsletter subscribers. This was the perfect occasion to remind their audience of BuzzFeed News core mission (bringing their readers fearless reporting that holds the powerful accountable) and introduce the idea of contribution.

The team also developed promotional messaging highlighting the impact of BuzzFeed News reporting, aiming to raise awareness and drive users to the contributions landing page. They messaging tone and content was developed based on survey results. As a result of their data driven approach BuzzFeed News was able to launch a new revenue stream with an average \$20 contribution amount in only a few months, without negatively impacting readers experience on their website.



Inline prompt / Display creative on all articles redirecting to the membership landing page

“ BuzzFeed News is committed to original reporting with major impact on people’s lives — which is expensive, time consuming work. Launching a membership program has been a two-way street: Our members get to play a bigger role in the reporting they’re passionate about seeing in the world, and their financial support allows us to invest even more in covering some of the biggest stories in the world. We’re excited to continue to build a deeper relationship with our most loyal audience, seek their input in our work, and reach even more people with our journalism as the program grows.

ROXANNE EMADI
HEAD OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT, BUZZFEED NEWS

Looking ahead:

Encouraged by the initial results from one-off contributions, the BuzzFeed News team launched a recurring membership program in November 2018. The team now plans to further optimize their membership strategy through the following steps:

- 1) Optimizing value proposition: testing new membership pricings
- 2) Removing friction: adding new payment payment options: Paypal, Apple Pay, GPay
- 3) Enhancing promotion strategy: exploring paid acquisition on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Learn more about how you can partner with Google at g.co/newsinitiative.