

## Module 3: Audience Growth

[00:00:08] **Caroline Porter** Hi everyone, my name is Caroline Porter and I will be your instructor for Module three. We're going to be covering how to grow your audience and how to monetize your newsletter. We'll also provide examples and there are a few interviews for you to watch as well. I think it's going to be lots of fun! So, module three is all about growing your readership and how to build an engaged subscriber list that generates revenue.

[00:00:30] **Caroline Porter** A little bit about me before we jump in. Like I said, I'm Caroline Porter. I'm a journalist, I work on civic and business models for news and I'm currently studying the solutions journalism + collaborative model for Solutions Journalism Network. If you're interested in talking about this more offline, I would love to talk to you about it. So that's just one flag. I also co-author the Unpacking newsletter with Emily, as she may have mentioned. I do a fair amount of newsletter research, with examples being the Newsletter Guide and you can also check out some of our work on the Newsletter Wizards blog. Here are some links.

[00:01:06] **Caroline Porter** A bit of review, in module two Joseph covered how to launch a newsletter. You got into these nuts and bolts around what a tech stack is, your data and privacy considerations, goal setting metrics, how to make sense of all those things. So at this point, you are likely asking yourself, "OK, how do I take this email newsletter that I've built and grow it?"

[00:01:28] **Caroline Porter** So this module is going to talk about audience growth, paths to monetization, and we'll also offer some examples and interviews with AnneMarie Dooling of the Wall Street Journal and Delia Cai of Deez Links. So today, how to build an audience, which really we're going to talk about how to target the right readers, and we're going to talk about how to frame your approach, we're going to review different growth methods and also provide some examples.

[00:01:55] **Caroline Porter** So if you remember one thing about audience growth, it is to emphasize your Value-Ad. What do we mean when we say this? So essentially, we're more interested in having real relationships with our readers rather than growing at a giant list. So in this case, the goal is to know your readers and for your readers to know you, because having a more engaged list is going to ultimately lead to deeper and richer relationships, which will improve not only the value of your newsletter, but be of interest to potential advertisers and people who want to get engaged with your audience as well. Why am I showing a networked visual of the globe, a map? Basically, the point here is that while you may be interested in something that would otherwise be described as like, I don't know, a very specific subject that you want to cover in your newsletter and you think, gosh, how many people could be interested in this? Well, it turns out when you're on the Internet and you can connect with people all over, that can actually be a pretty big group. It's about being targeted and knowing your audience and knowing what you can offer them. What is your Value-Ad, and what specific subject are you covering and covering well?

[00:03:09] **Caroline Porter** So, lots of ways to reach your readers. I'm going to go through these one by one and then we'll provide some examples. So with your website and email, on your home page, you can obviously have a button or a link at the top that explains or mentions your newsletter and says to sign up. Same goes for article pages. Pop up boxes, I'm sure you've seen those. Those are very effective. Also adding it to your email signature is a great idea. You know, it's really just about making sure that there's eyeballs knowing

about the existence of your newsletter. On social media, organic posts are obviously a great call. You can also use paid advertisements. So that would be like, on Facebook, for instance, you could do a lot of different forms of advertisements that we've used in the past. That is definitely a more complex option and also requires money. So something to consider there. And of course, participating in the conversation of whatever it is that your newsletter is covering, and being part of that engaged conversation is going to lead people to your to your newsletter. Referrals is another great one. So with cross promotion, what we're talking about is, let's say there is another newsletter that is adjacent or complementary to the subject you cover. It might be a really neat opportunity to swap one week, and in that regard, you get to introduce yourself to a whole new list, a whole new email list, and potentially pick up some readers while also just gathering, I would say, information about what other readers might be interested in and how other newsletters function. So that's really cool. Subscriber referrals, I'm sure you've seen this when you read your newsletters, usually at the top and/or at the bottom. There are calls-to-action for you to send and share the newsletter with your friends or people who might be interested, and that's a really effective way too of growing your newsletter list. Classifieds, again, this one would cost money, but in this case, you could advertise your newsletter and someone else's newsletter. And fresh content is always, unto itself, a great way to bring attention and interest to the work that you're producing. So every time that you, for instance, let's say you do a Q&A with someone. Being able to link to that person on social and tag where to subscribe to your newsletter, you might just be able to then tag along with that reader's or excuse me, that source's social media group and gather more interest that way. Another thing is really being aware of what else is out there that's germane to what you cover, and being able to comment on that is just going to, again, widen your network and grow the number of people who are engaged with your specific subject of interest who may then want to sign up for your newsletter. Finally, a great example of something that would be new content, but also a way to gather more momentum for your newsletter is something like a book club, which can be a really fun way, especially as we are doing so many things virtually, it's pretty easy to have a book club over Zoom with lots of people from all over.

[00:06:16] **Caroline Porter** So the upshot here is, this kind of requires an attitudinal reset for a lot of journalists, but sharing is caring, so you don't need to be shy when you have great content and you want it out in the world. This is a great way to do it, and the best way to communicate is just to be direct and not miss an opportunity to share it over the various distribution methods that exist.

[00:06:42] **Caroline Porter** Next, we're going to show you some examples. So here with Morning Brew, you can see that there's a call-to-with referrals near the top. So that's one. Here's Classifieds. This is Ann Friedemann, her newsletter. This is a pop-up box sign up for newsletters, this is Hechinger Report. And it's an email signature example, and this is obviously Joseph and his newsletters with the Solutions Set. Recap, so when you're framing your approach to audience growth, you really want to be thinking about targeting the right readers. Who are the people you're going after? Why would they be interested in your content, and what can you offer them? Being really crystal clear on that is going to help you grow that engaged audience list. The next thing, we reviewed audience growth methods, and the upshot there was don't be shy. Finally, we did some examples where we're always learning from each other, so keeping an eye out for what you like or what you read and why it's going to be really informative. So next, we are going to cover paths to monetization in video two, and I look forward to seeing there.