

Module 4: Interview with Pedro Doria | Co-founder and editor | Meio

[00:00:08] **Jospeh Lichterman** Hey everyone. Thank you for joining us for our Q&A here in module four. Again, I'm Joseph Lichterman. I'm here with Pedro Doria of Meio in Brazil. It's a Brazilian newsletter, and we're so thrilled you could be with us. And I was hoping you could start by giving us an overview of the newsletter for people who might not be familiar with it.

[00:00:28] **Pedro Doria** We were born, we launched in October 2016. That was just between the first and the second rounds of the elections. The mayoral elections all over Brazil. So we actually chose the Monday following the Sunday - Election Day, the first round. For most large cities in Brazil, we have two rounds. But anyway, our main proposition is to give people a make-me-to-read early in the morning in which they will know what's most important for you to know that day. So we'll have quotes from the columnists in most newspapers, we'll have snippets with little synopsis of the news, every single one of these texts who have links for people to follow through to newspaper sites, to television sites, or sometimes to social media postings, because sometimes the quotes that we'll have, we try and mix news and quotes. And the reason we do this is so that we can offer not only a glimpse of the news, but also a glimpse of what analysts are saying so people can interact and have some tips on how to think about the news. Over the years, we've been gathering quite a following. The newsletter is divided in four sections, which cover whatever we believe is most important for people. The first section is usually politics, and that covers both politics and economics. We try to cover mostly national politics, although sometimes local politics can have a national influence. In those cases, we'll try and follow those news stories as well. The second section is usually what we call Vivir, which translates as life. And that's lifestyle, but that's also climate change. That's also cities, how urbanism is changing the way we think about cities in the 21st century. It's not politics, but it's how people live, the sort of families that are being put together because of gender discussions, of racial discussions, of, you know, we feel life has been changing a lot because of the way the whole 21st century simply took us and is taking us to different places and the interesting places, so we feel it's quite important to cover those as well. Third section, culture. And we cover everything. We can cover the Internet, we can cover for music, but we also cover what's hot on Netflix because, of course, that has also changed. And the last section is what we call (?) Digital, which could be loosely translated as the day-to-day life with digital stuff around us. And of course, that's not really a technology section in the sense that we won't be covering necessarily the latest computers or the latest cell phones, but we'll be covering things like if WhatsApp has changed something in their software. And WhatsApp is quite important in Brazilian life, then we'll cover that. If we're talking about antitrust involving big tech, we'll be covering that. But of course, because Samsung phones are quite popular, because iPhones are quite popular, those new models will also cover them. But it's pretty much everything that has to do with your day to day life with digital stuff. Those four sections, it's usually in this order, politics, life, culture and digital, but it doesn't have to be. If the lead story, and that's been happening a lot with COVID, if the lead story is in life, that will be the main headline in the newsletter, so politics will be the second section. And, we both have subscriptions. We have something that we call the premium subscription, and those subscribers, they pay for a subscription, it's 10 reais monthly or, it's about two bucks. Or, that can be 100 reais yearly instead of 120. Those readers who pay, right now in the print edition, we have something like 115-120 thousand subscribers. And then, of course, it's one email after the other, which is sad. So people in the end of the line will sometimes receive the newsletter eight o'clock, 8:30 in the morning. We launched each edition at 7 a.m.. Paid subscribers also get their newsletter first. They get to jump the line to the first place. Many of our paid

subscribers, we believe are paying for the Saturday edition, but many of them are just simply paying because they think that in the days of this information, to pay for journalism is important. In the end, you'll see I believe that if there was an overview of Meio, that's what Meio is.

[00:07:17] **Jospeh Litherman** That's so fascinating, and there are so many interesting parts there as part of Meio, and it was really exciting to hear you describe each of the four key sections. Was that always your intention to have those key topic areas or has the focus in the area of coverage evolved over time? And how have you thought about that?

[00:07:37] **Pedro Doria** Well, that was just like that from the beginning. I have this personal feeling that when you launch a publication, and it's really unimportant if the publication is digital or not, you have to come from a way to look at the world. There's the way you build that publication, and you choose the topics that you cover. They have to have a world view behind it. By late in the year 2020, by October/November, advertisers started showing up again, en masse. A lot more than we had ever seen, and suddenly we had money to hire more journalists. So now I'm not the only single senior journalist. We have a second editor who writes most of the parts in the newsletter I usually wrote. He's in charge of that now. I still usually write the Saturday editions, but I'm doing more video. We also hired a video journalist that's helping me, so we have video shows on YouTube now every single day of the week. We have a technology podcast now that covers tech mostly. Which is anchored by me, I'm both a political and a tech journalist by trade, but its co-anchor with (?), which is probably the most veteran tech journalists in Brazil. So there's more seniority in our journalism now, which is fantastic. I'm not alone anymore, it feels good in that way. We also hired someone to run the advertisement side of the business. Vitor, who is my partner, my business partner. he was doing that. But, that's not really his specialty, so we have now a saleswoman who actually knows how to sell and knock on ad agencies and knock on marketing departments and start showing off Meio and et cetera. We are also hiring now, right now a growth marketer, a growth analyst to find ways in which we can grow. And we are preparing to launch around (?) of investment, so that we can get money to grow our free base, mostly. Because in the end, this business is a funnel, advertisement goes for the free base, which should be large. But of course, something around 7-8% of our subscriber base are also paid subscribers. Those are actually pretty high numbers. Our churn is from the ones we know in the Brazilian market, one of the lowest. That's one of the things that actually make us quite happy about how the product is developing. It's easy to read. It's also fun to read. It's fluent. And people really seem to enjoy it and really seem to get from Meio something that they are not getting from other news products. So the future is to reach for more platforms, to get more professional on video, to get more professional on audio, and to have people understand we are not only a newsletter anymore and finally to get some money to grow a bit faster.

[00:12:06] **Jospeh Litherman** Well, excellent. Thank you so much, Pedro. Again, we're here with Pedro Doria, the founder and editor of Meio from Brazil. Thank you so much for sharing your insights, and we really appreciate it.

[00:12:19] **Pedro Doria** It was a great pleasure. I hope I'm helping inspire some journalists.

[00:12:24] **Jospeh Litherman** Yes, absolutely. I know I learned a lot and things I will take for my own work. So I'm sure the students will as well. Thank you.

[00:12:32] **Pedro Doria** Thank you so much, Joseph.

