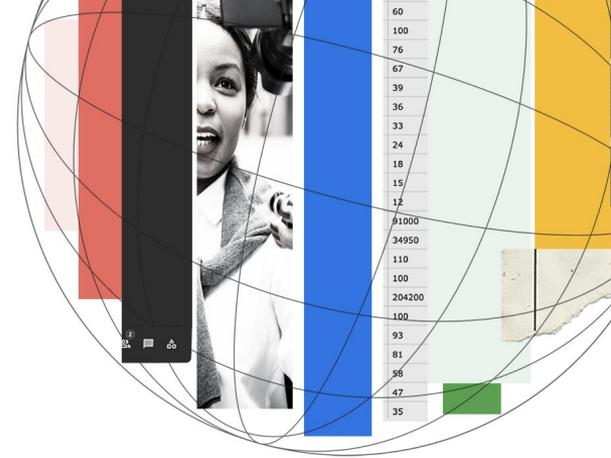
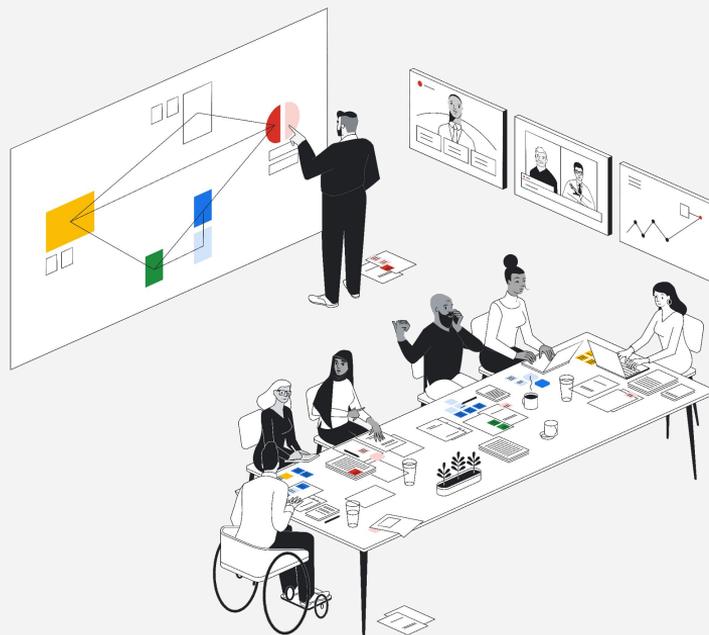


# GNI Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025

June - November 2025



**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 and audiences, drawn from the incredibly diverse print and digital news organisations across the region. The programme will help each publisher define an ambitious vision for their digital subscription businesses and build the engine that will take them to their goal through experimentation.

## Expert delivery

Subscriptions 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 45 publishers across five previous editions of the Subscriptions Academy in EMEA. Previous participants have seen strong improvements across a number of key metrics in their subscriptions businesses, including increased conversion rates and lower churn.

**GNI and FT Strategies are excited about welcoming the next cohort of eight publishers to the 2025 edition of the Subscriptions Academy EMEA, and look forward to receiving your application.**

## Previous participants:

### 2021



### 2022



### 2023



### 2024



# Programme phases



## DISCOVERY

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

***June - August***

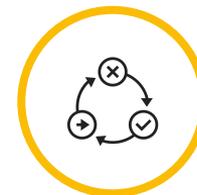


## NORTH STAR

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

***September***

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

***September - November***

# 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, 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

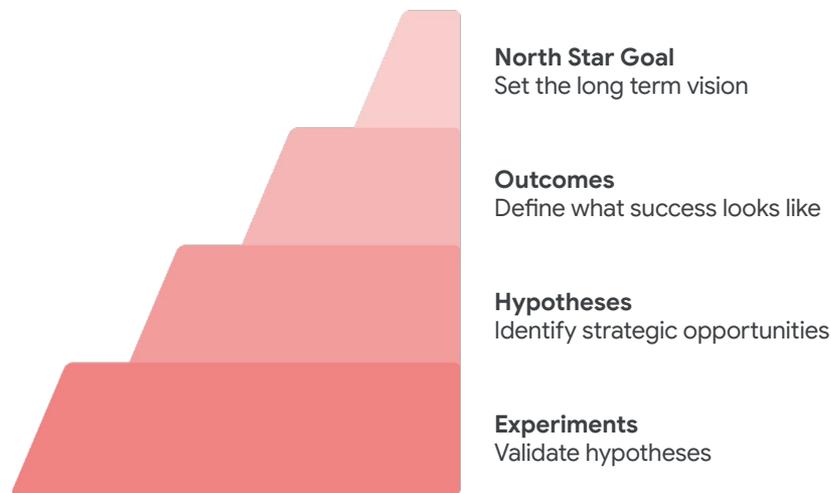
For prioritising, planning, and mapping the roll-out of all your ideas

# 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

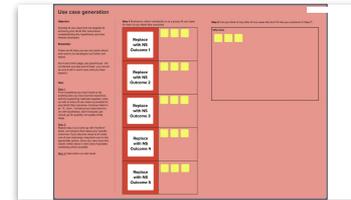
### Increased AI Literacy

*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

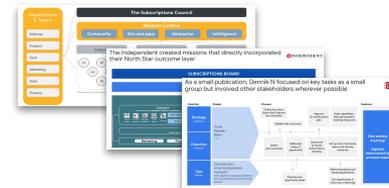
### High-impact experiments

*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)
  - Assign a project lead, and working team across key functions, including tech and editorial
- ✓ **Time commitment** throughout
  - Ready to commit the core team to ~6 hours of engagement on a weekly basis (varies from week to week) throughout the programme
  - 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 programme has been incredibly helpful in allowing us to dive deeper into subscriptions, particularly in terms of engagement and retention.*

*We gained invaluable insights into the latest trends shaping the subscription economy, such as personalised experiences, flexible pricing models and the role of AI. Now we feel much more confident in our ability to implement our ideas."*

Digital Subscription Retention Manager  
Rzeczpospolita



*"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



*"Thank you for the support you have given us these past few months, it was important for us to be a part of this programme.*

*As a legacy publisher, it has been very helpful to access this playbook with subscription best practices and the various benchmarks from other publishers across Europe."*

CRM Manager  
Kathimerini



*"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:



[2024](#)



[2023](#)



[2022](#)



[2021](#)



[2020](#)

# About us

## FT STRATEGIES

**FT Strategies** is the specialist media and publishing consultancy from the Financial Times. FT Strategies' deep expertise enables its clients to future-proof their business, empower their teams, and fulfil their goals with our proven data, digital and change consulting expertise.

## Google News Initiative

The **Google News Initiative** represents Google's largest-ever effort to help journalism thrive in the digital age. In collaboration with editors and journalists worldwide, the Google News Initiative (GNI) strives to foster a more sustainable, diverse, and innovative news landscape.

Through a comprehensive suite of programs, digital tools, training, and resources, the GNI empowers journalistic endeavors, enabling journalists to effectively discover, verify, and narrate compelling stories while upholding the highest standards of quality journalism.

To apply for the programme,  
please fill in the application  
form

**Thank you**