

# Manifesto audience-centric media

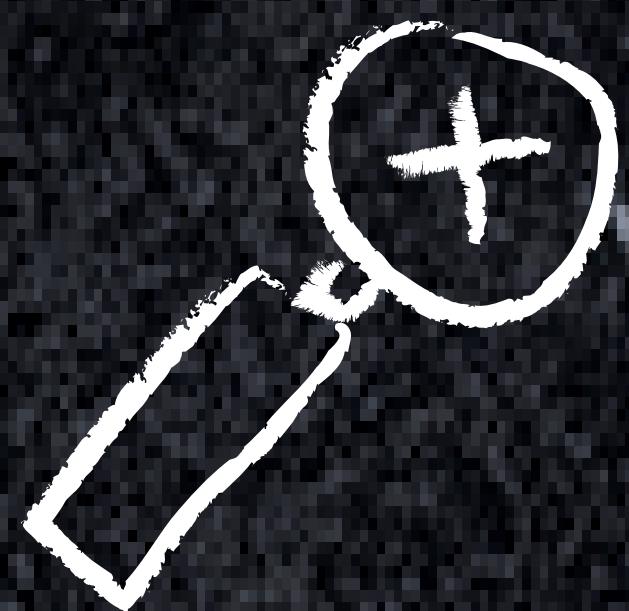
smartocto

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contribute!

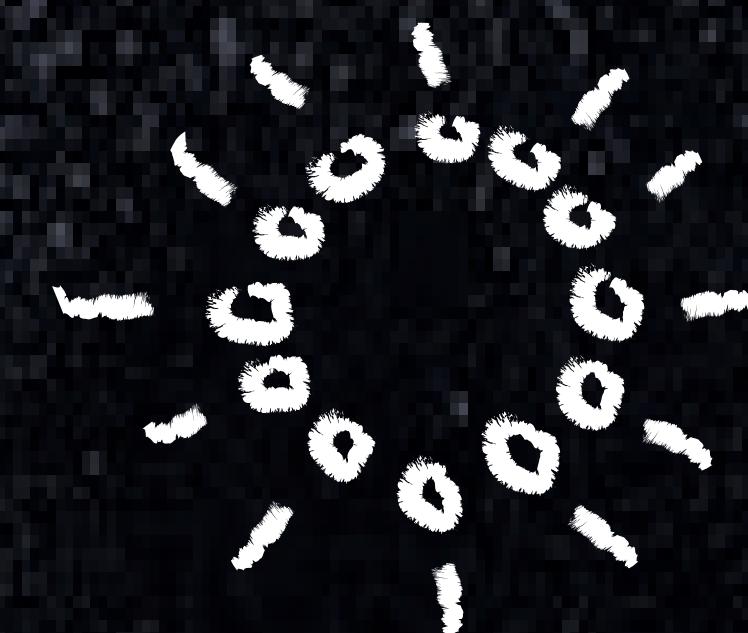


# 1. Knows who you are

understand why people come to your platform



**analyse the 50 best** - and worst - performing articles from the same topic over a longer period of time. This will reveal strengths & weaknesses.



**ask the million dollar question:** what would your audience lose if you no longer existed tomorrow?

**create your own user needs framework\***  
based on these findings and insights.

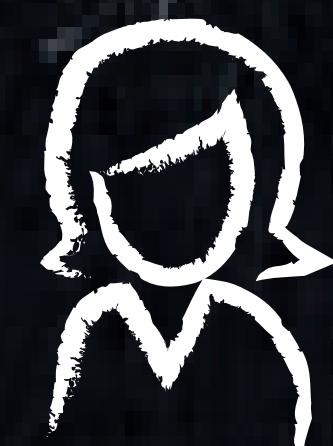
\*Maybe even add in some brand-specific user needs if they fit your USP better?

*“User needs are the proxy for audience centricity.”*

Dmitry Shishkin

## 2 Change the culture

tools are useful, but mindset is vital



**Appoint newsroom ambassadors:**  
members of your team whose job it is to ask which user need is being served - and who can actively push to collect questions and feedback from users



**Embed the change** you're trying to make in all aspects of newsroom life to make it stick

**Pay attention to language.**  
This isn't about management, it's always journalism first, so think audience engagement editors, ather than managers



*“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”*

Peter Drucker



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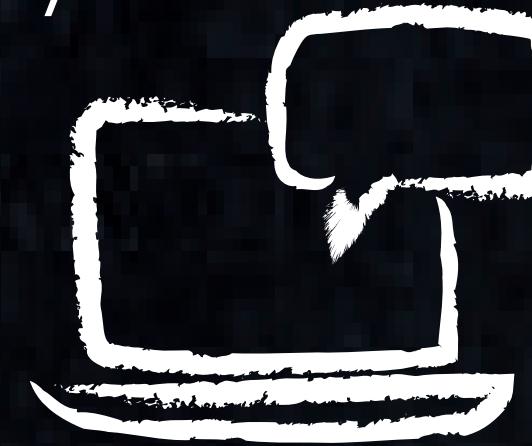
# 3 Talk to your audience

consultation and conversation makes for stronger engagement

**Facilitate dialogue**  
through webinars  
or live events



**Gather feedback**  
through surveys



**Use your audience's  
words/language**  
in your navigation and sections

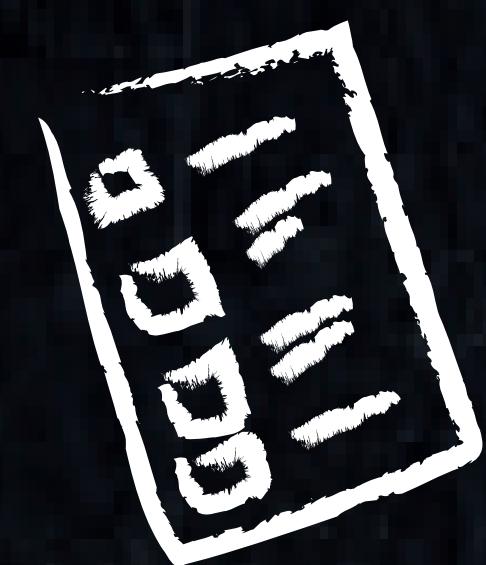
*“Decision makers should be part of this conversation themselves - or at the very least, be able to witness it first-hand”*

Marcela Kunova

ience  
engagement

# 4 Co-create

use the wisdom of the crowd



## Show you've listened:

use what your audience  
has told you in your  
reporting



**Create opportunities**  
for genuine audience  
engagement



Ensure you have someone in the  
newsrooms who's focused on  
audience engagement and **keeping**  
**track of comments.**

*“Seek first to understand, then to be understood”*

Stephen R. Covey

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# Aim for loyalty

for a long-term, meaningful relationship with your audience, think loyalty first



Loyalty should be the key outcome you **optimise for**



Remember! **Loyalty is as much about sustaining a habit as it is about forming one.** Make sure that you create opportunities for both.

*“Loyal users return more often, consume more content, and are more willing to contribute and pay.”* Ilija Susa



**Define and prioritise the metrics** that will help you understand this: reading time, sessions per month or pages per session.

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## Treat sections as 'mini brands'

start seeing your most important sections as individual brands



**Position your sections**  
around specific user needs



Take care to give  
each section its own  
**character and identity**



**The big four all play a role.**  
Make a checklist:  
Timing, channel, navigation  
and format all play a role

*"Readers who prioritise reading the arts and leisure section will likely have different expectations to those turning to sports first. The user experience should be reflected in how each section presents itself"* smartocto



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Ilija Susa

# 7 Make use of smart editorial analytics

systems and tools are not gimmicks: they're weapons in your newsroom's arsenal. Deploy them.



**Mindset is key:** these tools are there to help you improve your work, not hand it over



**Start small** if this is new to you - or if you're changing systems.



**Customise your analytics set up.** Spend time setting them up so they work for your situation and be very **actionable**.

“Most people use statistics like a drunk man uses a lamppost; more for support than illumination”

Andrew Lang

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## 8 Actively build niches

niches offer an opportunity to double-down on specific areas that your audience values



**Claim topics** that matter to you and build authority by ensuring that you cover them from multiple angles



**Pay attention** insights and **analytics** - and then feed those back into future work



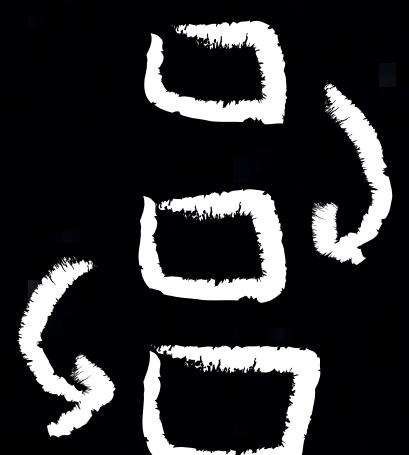
If niche subject matter proves tricky, **niche moments** (your own brand-centric response or take on something more standard) are a useful reframing

“There will be a handful of major news sites left, such as The New York Times, and a large number of small ones. Everything in between will have to fight for its survival.”

Derk Sauer

# 19 Keep going

don't expect instant miracles - it'll take time. And that's fine.



**Integrate** audience centric thinking into as many parts of your workflow as you can



**Growth hacks** will help you build small wins - and take those learnings to other areas. Use them

*“Digital transformation does not happen overnight and if done properly will never be finished.”* smartocto



**Take the long view.** Take a look at data from at least 3 months and don't draw strategic conclusions at an article level.

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Content is King, but Audi

# 10 Fail Forward

innovation and experimentation go hand in hand



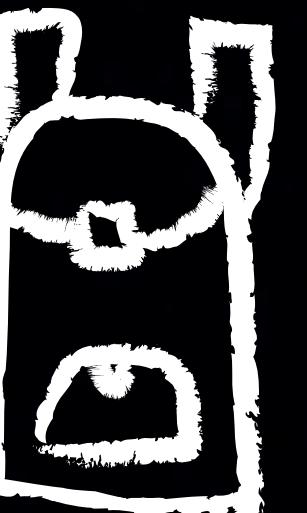
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**Actively look for new ways** to reach and engage with people



Normalise running growth hacks: even if they fail to 'work', it'll build **a culture of learning and iteration**

Reminder: **all outcomes are learning opportunities**. Even if your results aren't positive, there's still much to take from those experiences

*"Dare to break things. Dare to make mistakes. Just make sure that when you do, you take time to learn what not to do next time."*

smartocto



King, but Audience is Queen