

TABLE 1: WDOR

FAST FACTS

- Public Radio Station
- WDOR, a charter member of WPR (Westeros Public Radio) serves the southernmost region of the Seven Kingdoms, including Dorne and the neighboring islands.
- Location: Sunspear, the capital of Dorne
- Staff Size: 50
- Existing products: multiple radio shows, events, podcasts, ravens
- Biz model: 30% through quarterly membership drives via on-air solicitations, 10% government funding, 20% business or corporate sponsors, 20% from foundations and local community trusts, 20% university.

NEWSLETTER BACKGROUND: You want to launch a newsletter product that will be the sister newsletter for a popular radio show: All Kings Considered. All Kings Considered is a daily radio show hosted by two, well-respected journalists. The show airs daily from 4pm to 6:30pm, and all the individual segments are currently posted on the show's website.

TABLE 2: The Winterfell Free Press (freep)

FAST FACTS

- Legacy metro newspaper, for-profit
- Location: Winterfell
- Staff Size: 250
- Existing products: Daily print paper, regularly updated website, 2 podcasts, 2 newsletters
- Biz model: 50 percent advertising, 35 percent audience revenue, 15 percent other

NEWSLETTER BACKGROUND: You want to launch a new newsletter product to serve the wildling and other populations north of your typical audience. You think that this audience is currently underserved by the more “mainstream” WFP coverage.

TABLE 3: The 7 Kingdoms Post

FAST FACTS

- Legacy national paper, for-profit
- Location: King's Landing
- Staff Size: 750
- Existing products: Daily print newspaper, constantly updated website publishing more than 100 stories per day, 15 existing newsletters
- Biz model: 15% print advertising, 12% digital advertising, 30% digital subscriptions, 30% print subscriptions, 13% other

NEWSLETTER BACKGROUND: As a new administration takes over the 7 — er, six — Kingdoms, the 7 Kingdoms Post wants to create a pop-up political insider newsletter focused on the ins-and-outs of the new reign of Bran the Broken.

TABLE 4: Dothraki Digest

FAST FACTS

- Local digital startup, for-profit
- Location: Essos
- Staff Size: 15
- Existing products: Publishes two original stories per day, daily digest newsletter, actively curated social media.
- Biz model: 25% foundations, 20% individual donors, 20% corporate sponsorship, 15% events, 10% membership, 10% digital advertising.

NEWSLETTER BACKGROUND: After the recent conquests, the Dothraki Digest thinks its readers have an abundance of leisure time. To capitalize on this new audience interest, the site plans to launch a weekend guide newsletter.

TABLE 5: Inside Exploration News

FAST FACTS

- Non-Profit Single-Subject Site
- Location: Arya's boat
- Staff Size: 7
- Existing products: One major investigative story per-quarter and one or two other shorter stories per week.
- Biz model: 85% foundation, 10% membership and small dollar donors, 5% events

NEWSLETTER BACKGROUND: Inside Exploration News wants to create a more regularly published newsletter product to grow its audience. Inside Exploration News is not sure exactly what to put in the newsletter, because of its limited editorial output.

WORKSHEET 1: “The Kickoff”

- Please write a few words or sentences below about your team’s vision for your new newsletter.

- Who is the target audience for this newsletter? If you don’t know, how would you determine your target audience? Please write your answer below.

- Below, please assign members of your team to each task associated with the launch and maintenance of a new newsletter. If you have a smaller team, you may assign team members multiple roles. Throughout the game, please approach each challenge from the lens of your role.
 - Who on your team will write the newsletter? _____
 - Who will edit? _____
 - Who will populate the copy into the ESP? _____
 - Who will hit “send”? _____
 - Who is in charge of reviewing the metrics and performance? _____
 - Who will handle business development for the newsletter? _____
 - Any other tasks to be assigned? _____

- SELECT: How many hours of staff time will this newsletter take to produce, per week?
 - 0 - 5
 - 5 - 10
 - 10 - 15
 - 15 - 20
 - 20 + hours

- How will you grow your newsletter audience? What are your growth goals? Please write your answer below.
- Which metrics will you pay attention to in order to monitor your email list's health and success? Please write your answer below.
- What are the main “sections” of your newsletter? What is the general outline? (Sketch it out below!)
- Give your newsletter a name:

WORKSHEET 2: “The Game”

Intervention Name:

Answer:

Intervention Name:

Answer:

INTERVENTIONS

1. **DATA:** Your newsletter has been live for a few months now. You run a metrics report on your list. See the results below. As a group, decide on two things to test or change with your newsletter based on the data below. On worksheet #2, record your response.
 - List Composition
 - 70% subscribed
 - 30% unsubscribed
 - Overall open rate: 15%
 - Overall list size: 30,000
 - % of list inactive over last year: 20%
 - % of list who opens >80%: 5%
2. **DRIVE TIME:** The head of development/subscriptions tells you that your spring fundraising/subscription drive is approaching. You're asked to write a solicitation that can be sent to your newsletter list. They say they want the language to be "targeted" to your audience, but also convey a serious tone. Write your best solicitation in worksheet #2.
3. **WELCOME SERIES:** You're noticing that a lot of new subscribers are unsubscribing shortly after signing up for your newsletter. Your best guess is that it's because the material in your newsletter is pretty niche, and it might be difficult to jump right into the content. Your team decides to launch a welcome series — or an automated few emails that will be sent to a new subscriber to welcome them to your list. As a group, discuss the content and process for your welcome series, and then write an outline or draft of your welcome series message below in worksheet #2.
4. **EMAIL ACQUISITION -- PARTNER EXPERIMENT:** Your email is performing well, but you've been disappointed about the size of your email list. You want to work with a partner newsroom to pitch your newsletters to each other's email lists. Find the other newsroom that has the partner experiment card and ask one person at the partner newsroom to join your team. (One member of your team will have to join their group as well.) Then, together, write a first draft of your email pitch that will be sent to your partner's list to encourage new readers to subscribe.

After you write the copy, your partner will need to return to their team and get final approval before this challenge is complete.
5. **EMAIL ACQUISITION – WEBSITE:** Your team is disappointed about the size of your email list. You want to design and implement a new email sign-up box on your website. As a group, discuss your strategy for where you'll place the sign-up box (and how you'd test this location). Decide whether the email box will be a pop-up, a standstill box, or something in between. Then, write the copy for the email sign-up box.

6. **A/B TEST:** You've been sending your email newsletter to your list for a month or so now, and you want to start testing a few key components, like subject line, send time, and sender name. Pick 1 or 2 things to test and as a group determine the best process to implement and track the test. See below for your metrics report from your last email sent.
 - Sent: 5:00pm on Friday
 - Subject line: Livestock and grains near you
 - Sender name: Your newsroom's name
 - Overall open rate: 15%
 - Click rate: 5%
7. **BRANDING:** Your newsletter is performing well, but when you survey your readership, they don't know that your newsletter is a product of your newsroom. Your team wants you to design a unique brand for your newsletter that also incorporates the newsroom's name. Sketch out a new newsletter header design in worksheet #2.
8. **LIST CLEAN:** You've been sending your newsletter for more than six months now, and you notice that there's a large portion of your list that hasn't opened a single newsletter since signing up right after the launch. You want to clean your list, or manually unsubscribe the inactive users from your list. Before you do, you want to give these users one last chance to open with a final email message targeted to this inactive group. As a group, discuss how you'll segment this group of inactive users, and write your email copy for this attempt to re-engage your list.
9. **USER RESEARCH:** Your newsletter has been going for several months now, and you want to learn more about your newsletter audience. See below for your most recent metrics report. Based on this data, think of a short survey that you'll send to your list. As a group, discuss the process for sending out the survey, collecting responses, and analyzing results. Then, write the first few questions of your survey on worksheet #2.
 - List Composition
 - 80% subscribed
 - 20% unsubscribed
 - Overall open rate: 30%
 - Overall list size: 40,000
 - % of list inactive in last year: 20%
 - % of list who opens >80%: 15%