4 Key Factors to Build and Grow an Email Newsletter Media Company

👀📹👉 Brief video orientation to this document.

Media companies are increasingly becoming email based. Creating a great email newsletter that engages readers with a personality builds a strong media property.

Email newsletters are a great tool for subscription businesses as the improve long-term subscription retention and they can serve as a strong lead generation tool enabling you to lower ad costs and increase subscriber acquisition rates.

Why would you want to create a newsletter?

Here's a few new clips and profiles to brief you on the growing email newsletter media business opportunity.

An Investor's Guide to the Newsletter Industry - Trends by The Hustle
What is an Email Newsletter, and Why is it So Important for Your Business? | Campaign Monitor
Insider Inc. buys majority stake in Morning Brew in all-cash deal (axios.com)
An inside look at Morning Brew's growth story | Morning Brew
Morning Brew tops 4 million subscribers as it looks to expand with M&A (cnbc.com)
Facebook (FB) Unveils Newsletter Platform Bulletin for Writers | Nasdaq
HubSpot acquires media startup The Hustle
Milk Road: From 0 to Acquisition in 10 months | beehiiv Blog

Picking The Right Email Platform For Your Indie Newsletter | Inbox Collective
The 10 Best Newsletter Niches (newsletteroperator.com)

There are four important phases to consider when launching a newsletter.

🧲 Attract - how are you going to generate traffic from new prospective readers.
🚀 Convert - what's your landing page going to look like and what upsells will you offer your new subscribers.

🎢 On ramp - building a relationship with your new subscribers and offering upsell opportunities.
📈 Retention - ongoing content to continue to engage for the long-term.

🧲 Attract

These are great resources in describing how to attract readers and advertisers to a newsletter.
The Four Newsletter Growth Quadrants
A deep dive into the subscriber and advertiser marketing for Morning Brew.
How I Grew My Newsletter To 5,000 Subscribers (newsletteroperator.com)
An "Inside Look" into the newsletter business published from the people who created The Hustle.

7 Ways To Get Your First 1000 Newsletter Subscribers
Here's how I got 10k subscribers in the first 100 days of my newsletter
Roadmap To 100K Subs (marketingexamined.com)

▶ The Duo Behind the FUNNIEST Business News on the Internet - Morning Brew's Youtube strategy, very well done.

Newsletter referral program: https://sparkloop.app/

🚀 Convert

1/ Five tips for newsletter signups

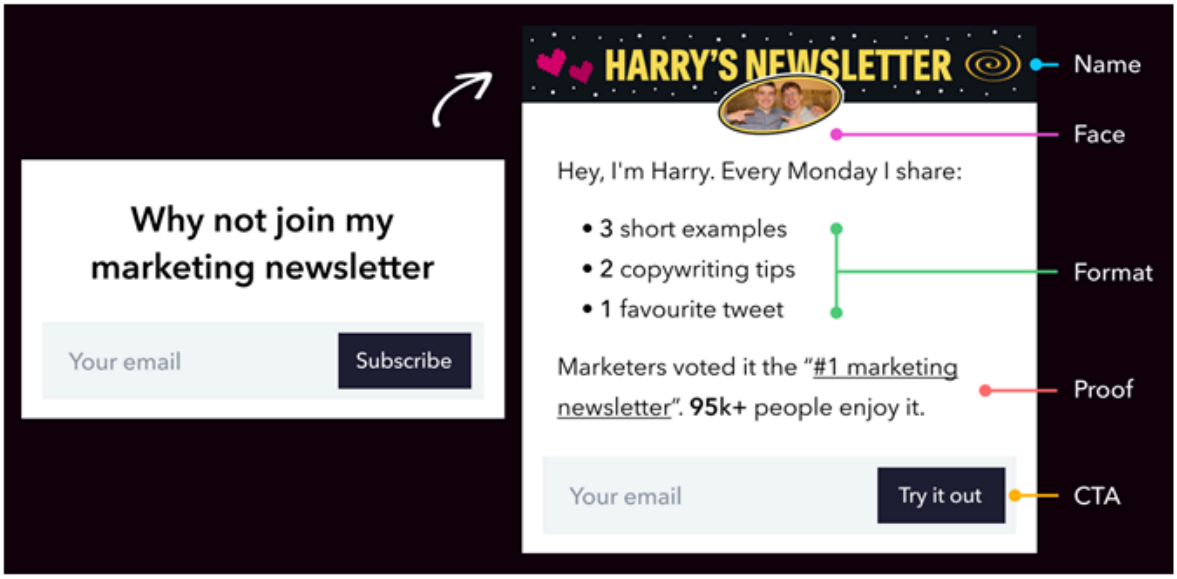
1/ Give it a name

2/ Give it a face

3/ Give it a format

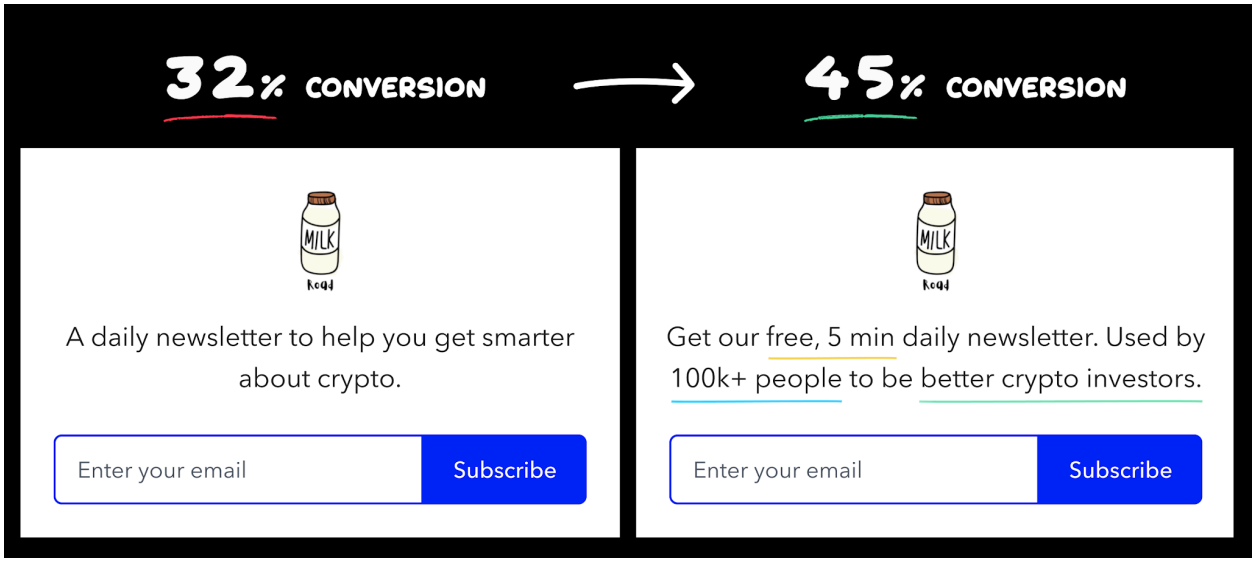
4/ Use social proof

5/ Soften your CTA



Here's a few example sign-up pages:
Stansberry Research - The Stansberry Digest form confirmation link confirmationemail
A Library Of 5 Minute Reads To Make You A Better Marketer | Marketing Examined
One detail: Love that it says, Your Email = Growth in the email dialog box.

Split test landing page example from Milk Road:



Great newsletter signup /bonus plus thank you w/upswell example.
https://contrarianthinking.co

Sales Espresso | Homepage - Gift with subscription offer.

London Tourism Publications - Thank you page includes an offer. Very centered on the target reader of THIS publication.

Stacked Marketer - Good value build, copy is optimized throughout.

🎢 On ramp

Newsletter | Startup Core Strengths - strong onboarding emails for new subscribers.
Examples: WelcomeEmail1, WelcomeEmail2 and WelcomeEmail3

The Marketing Examples Newsletter - Tight interesting marketing newsletter. Here's their simple welcome email.

📈 Retain

This is what most people want to think about, what's going into my newsletter. Here are some expanding examples to spur thinking.

The Morning Brew

Although this is a stand alone media company they have "cracked the code" on how to create engaging email newsletters today. These newsletters are replacing social media as the source for news information at a shocking pace. We have the opportunity to create "The Morning Brew for _____." I love their "view online" option includes posting content on a website for the SEO benefits.

The Hustle

The email newsletter that was my first favorite. They are important to study because they have more than a million subscribers to their free daily email newsletter. Plus, they have a paid newsletter called, Trends that reportedly has more than 16,000 subscribers. They have experienced significant staff turnover since they sold to Hubspot in January 2021 for reportedly $27 million. Thus, writing and strategy is not as solid but the remnants are still going strong. Here's a self congratulatory twitter thread with some thoughts from the current team, which is only about 40% as smart as their previous team.

One really strong part of Trends, is they curate threads within the Trends community to publish at the end of the weekly newsletter. This gives recognition to those who engage in the community and prompts other members to visit the community who wouldn't otherwise engage.

1440

This has been my personal favorite daily email for many months as it distills actual news stories without political rhetoric. I recommend you subscribe for your own sanity. And, unsubscribe from Facebook.

Stacked Marketer

There's a lot of digital marketing resources out there, but the three things I love about Stacked Marketer is the lack of hype, the international perspective and their paid "Insights" subscription offer. Most marketing resources use news events to scream at you about buying products, coaching and seminars they offer. Stacked Marketer provides news updates and analysis without the constant upsell promos. The international perspective helps me get out of my USA bias. It opens me up to what's happening and how I can best serve international clients. I was one of their first subscribers to their monthly Insights publications. Very few free daily newsletters have a paid subscription

offering. Watching how these media companies balance free content with paid content is useful for anyone in the subscription business. Plus, these are useful information giving insight into one company's marketing approach or a coverage of a marketing discipline.

Chartr
Another favorite newsletter is Chartr. Data-driven insights into business, tech, entertainment and society. Our visual newsletter takes 5 minutes to read and it's completely free. They do create custom charts for organizations as part of their business.

Newsette
Ranked 16th on Inc 500. Coverage by The Hustle Trends.

James Clear
Brief and valuable newsletter format that could be a great template for anyone building their authority from the author of the #1 worldwide bestseller, Atomic Habits and creator of the Habit Journal.

Not a Newsletter
A Google Doc based guide to writing emails. Fascinating because it doesn't need to be formatted within an email. You may send a Google Doc if that's more convenient for you and still establish yourself as an authority. Sign up for Not a Newsletter

The Daily Upside
For financial investors who want to follow important market news without reading Wall Street Journal each day. Newsletters don't have to be short when they are thoughtful and entertaining. But, their subscription confirmation page and the page after you confirm your subscription could be a lot better.

No Mercy/ No Malice by Professor Galloway
A strong example of a B2B guru platform. A newsletter/Youtube/website/blog can be as simple as creating a chart from some data, then add commentary. Simple and effective.

Bluburry

Here's a company that offers tools to individuals who create and publish podcasts that engages with their audience through a newsletter. This newsletter features news about the podcast media platform, promotes content Bluburry offers to further engage readers, gives readers tips on promoting their own podcast, includes a perspective from "Todd" to add personality and then promotes Bluburry products. This is a great example of what a newsletter for a company can become.

General Assembly

As a publisher of courses, these newsletters focus on opportunities subscribers can take advantage of. Here's a historical example of the newsletter as well as a recent edition. The older newsletter is closer to a typical newsletter format with several content articles as well as advertisements for the courses they are offering.

Zumba

You may not consider Zumba to be a "competitor" to study, but they are offering courses to an audience. Recent newsletters have demonstrated support for the LGBTQIA community as well as offering courses at an introductory discount to get readers engaged.

Spotify

While this is a good example as it's a subscription company that uses a newsletter to engage its audience of paid and free subscribers it has less "personality" than the rest.

Blanc Media

Shawn Blanc offers courses on productivity. His newsletter reflects a minimalist aesthetic. He provides "useful content" while all of the key takeaways promote his goal of encouraging readers to buy and use his productivity methods.

InVision

Although this example is sparse, it's another example of an education company that uses a newsletter to deliver content that builds the value of the courses it offers. This newsletter focuses on generating clicks to the publisher's website.

Ben & Jerry's

Yes, a newsletter to sell more ice cream. The point is to engage your audience so when they think of a need that your products answer, that consumer thinks of your brand.

Local news
The classifieds were disrupted by Craigslist, now the entertainment section is being disrupted by 6AM City. Local news without the politics and crime beginning to scale across America.

💰 Advertising / Sponsorship

Our Services — MadRev - sell advertising to newsletters as a service

Example Media Kits
https://newsletteroperator.notion.site/newsletteroperator/Best-Media-Kits-db547dabff4840c8a5944d93df615692
Best Media Kits (notion.site)

How To Make a Great Media Kit + Advice From 3 Newsletter Ad Sales Experts

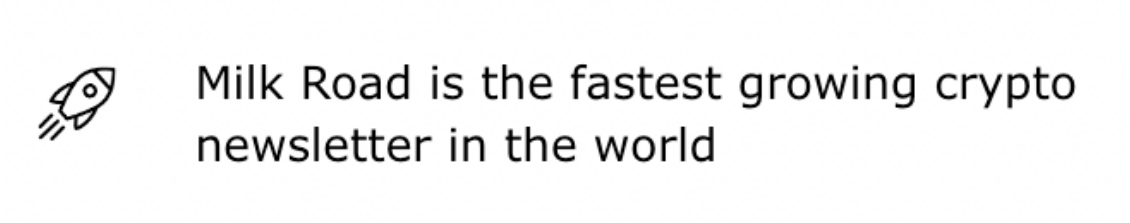
You need a sponsor page and media kit to sell ads in your newsletter.

I curated the 20 best media kit and sponsorship page examples **here**.

Here's what the best have in common:

Introduce your brand

Explain what your newsletter is. Who it helps. And show how your newsletter is different or better than others in your space.

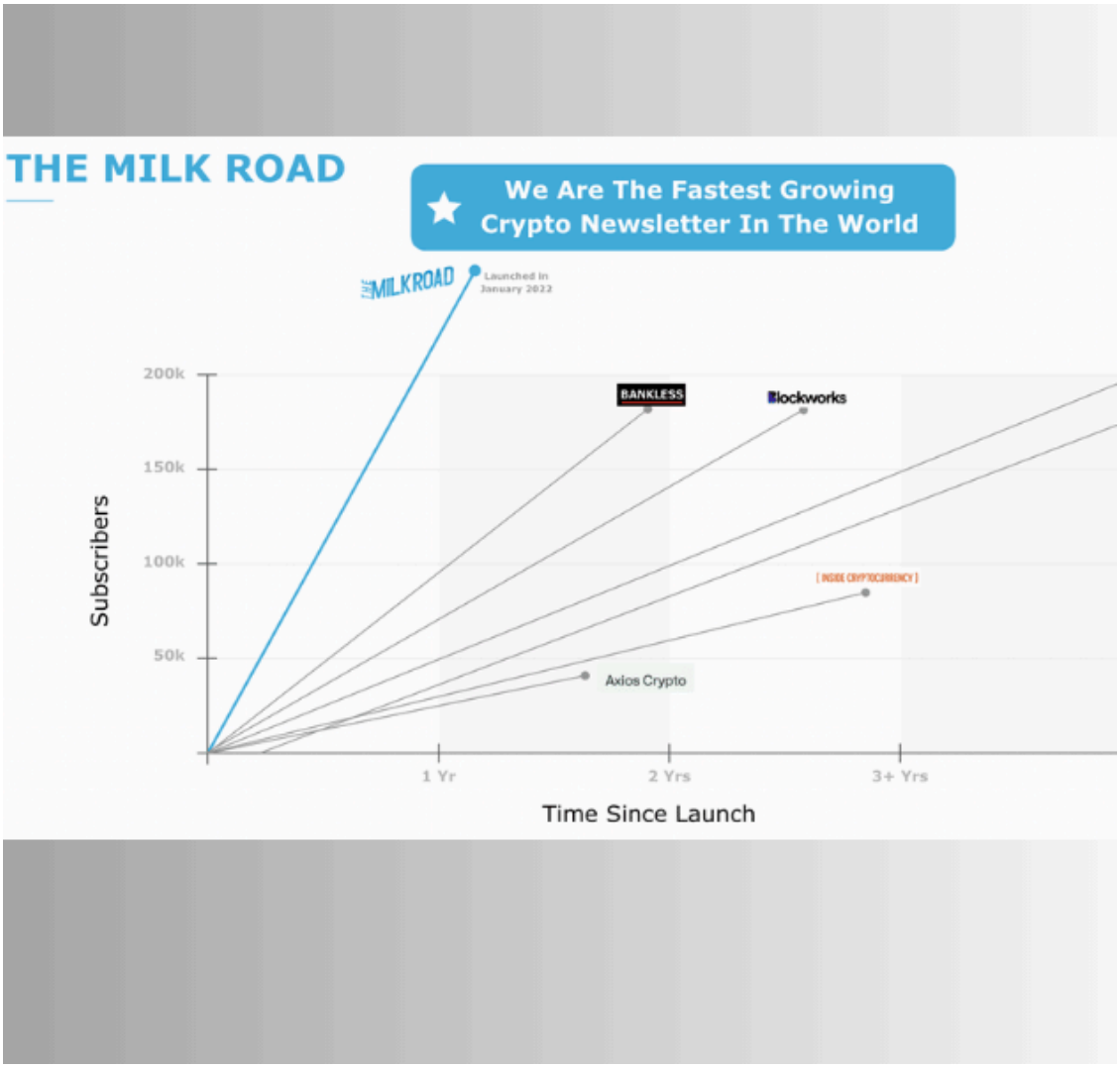


Example from the Milk Road media kit

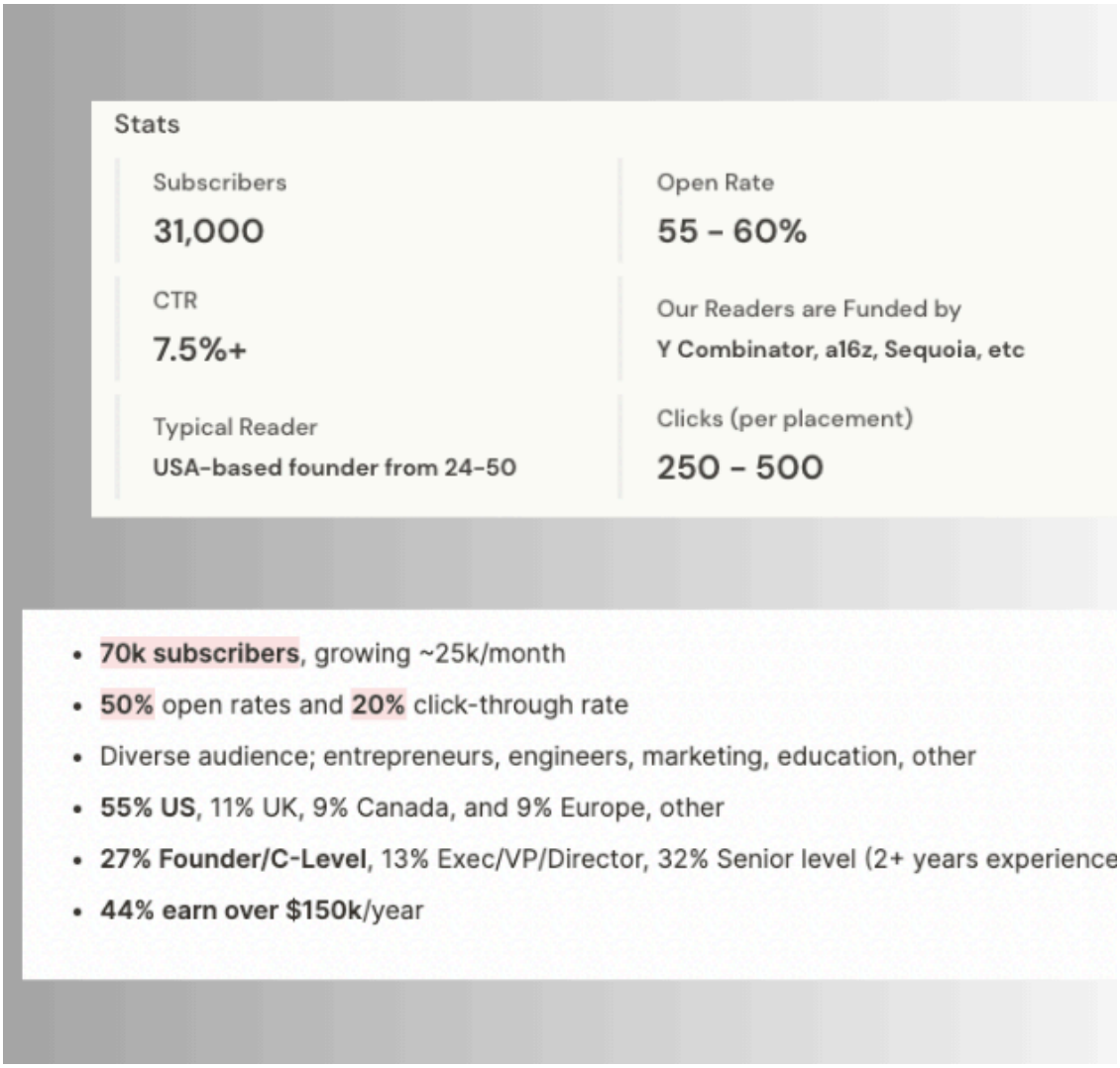
Keep this section short and sweet:

- *"Milk Road is the fastest growing crypto newsletter in the world."*
- *"Houck's Newsletter is the go-to weekly advice column for founders."*
- *"Newsletter Operator is the #1 industry news and growth advice source for newsletter-first media companies and content creators."*
- *"TLDR is a daily newsletter read by over 1,000,000 software engineers, tech executives and decision-makers, and other tech employees."*
- *"2.3M open-minded subscribers wake up to 1440 every morning. We're committed to delivering facts without motives."*

Milk Road takes this a step further by showing how its newsletter compares to competitors with this chart:



Your numbers and audience



Example from Ben's Bites and Houck's Newsletter

Include:

· Total subscribers

· Unique Open Rate

· Unique CTR

· Unique ad Clicks (per placement)

· How many subscribers you add per month

· Who your readers are

· Where your readers work

· Where readers are located

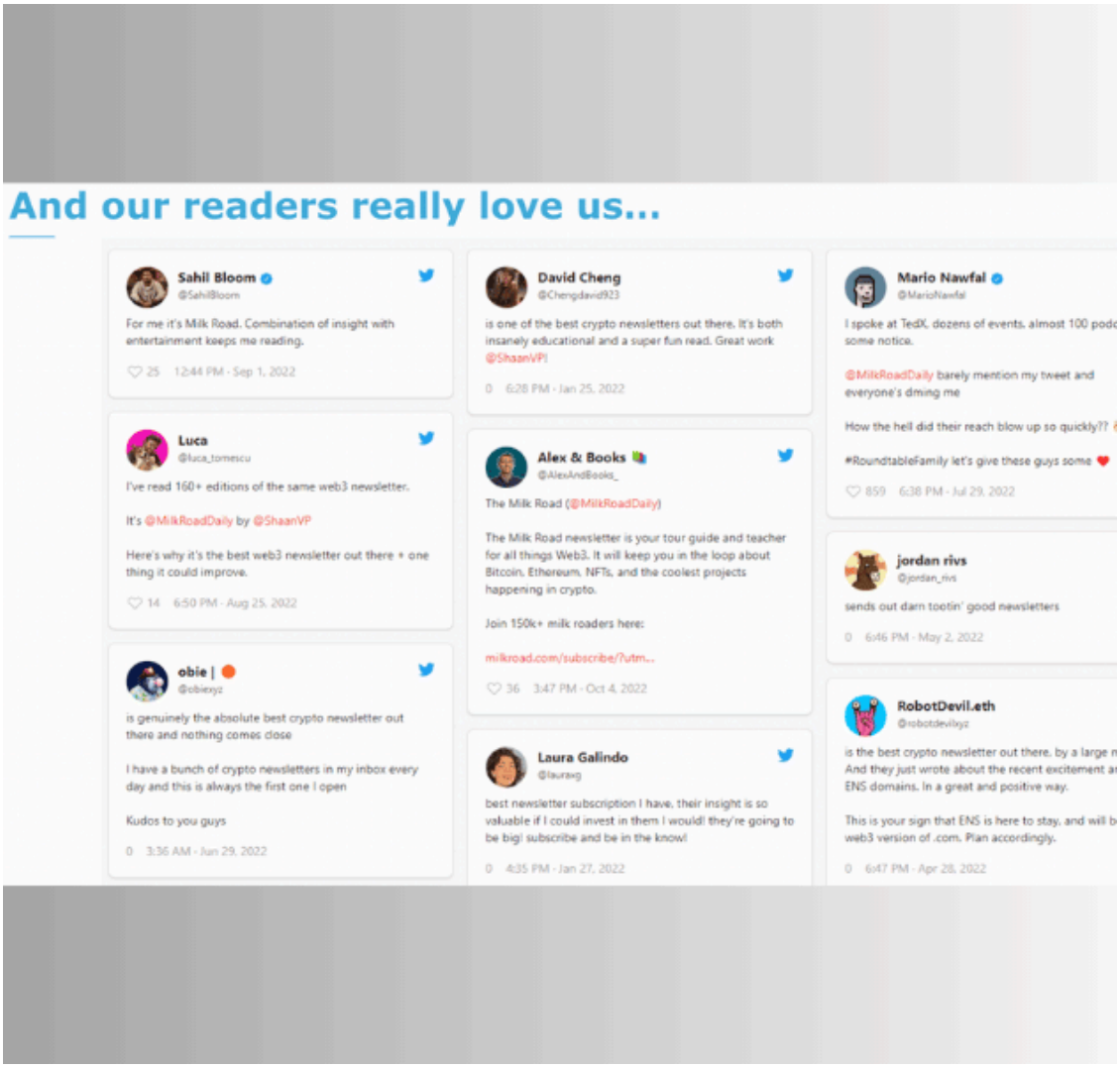
· Job level and titles

· How much readers earn



Example from Milk Road

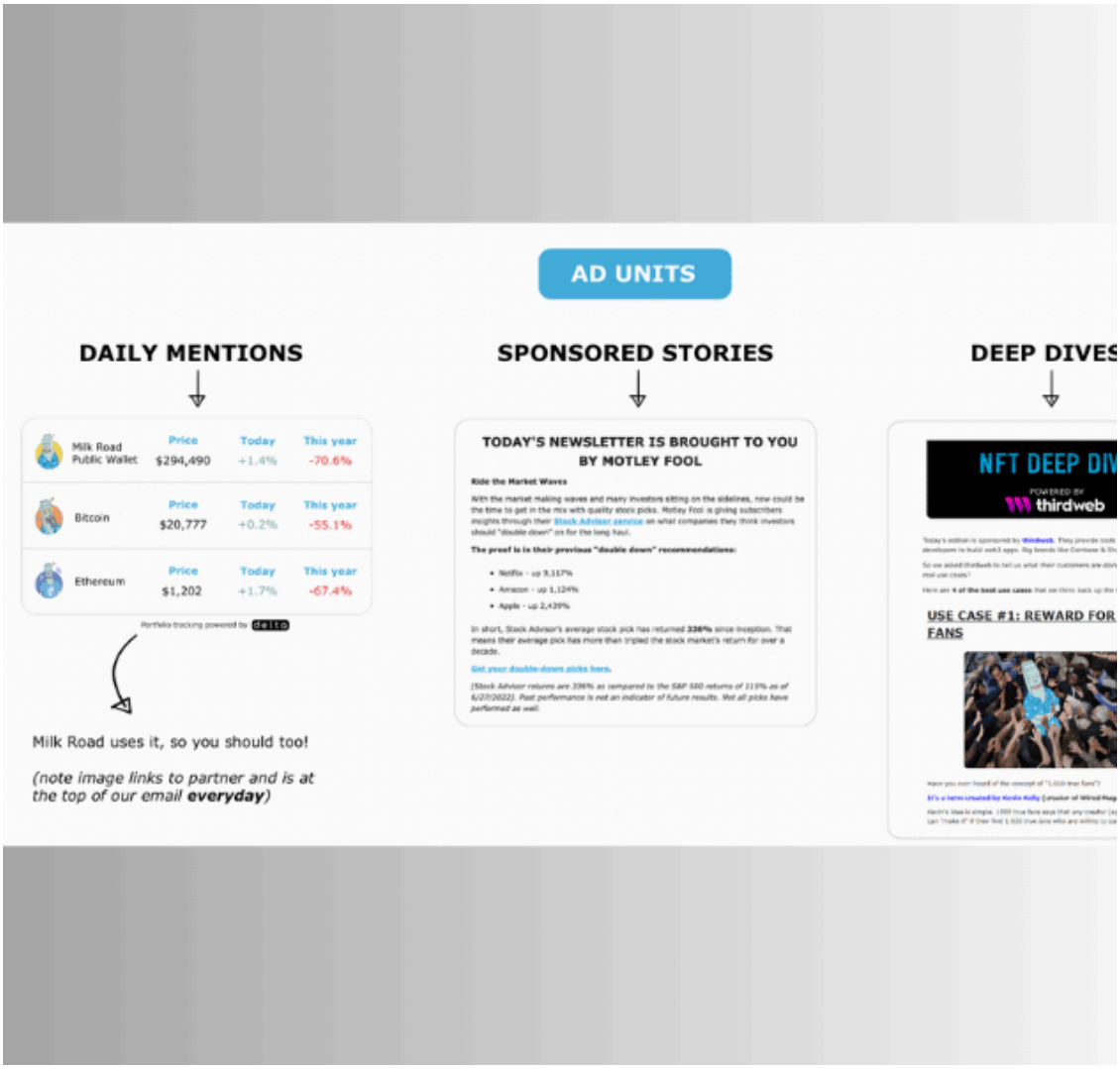
Show your impact



Example from Milk Road

Showcase reader testimonials, awards, and features in other publications.

Ad units



Example from Milk Road

Show and explain what sponsorship options you offer and what they look like.

Rate card / ad pricing



Rate Card

Ad Unit	Placement	Products	Cost	CPM	Estimated Clicks	Esti CPC
Primary	Top Section	Developer tools, B2B SaaS, Fintech & Consumer Tech	$18000	$20 CPM	2500-4500 Clicks	Esti $4-$
Developer	Programming Section	Developer Tools, Services, Jobs & Events	$12000	$13 CPM	2000-3000 Clicks	Esti $4-$
Startup	Quick Links Section	Startups and Simple Products/Events/Services	$6000	$7 CPM	1000-1500 Clicks	Esti $4-$

10% volume discount for sponsors who book **5 or more dates**

If you'd like to reserve sponsorship dates or if you have any questions please email us at **sponsors@tldr.tech**

Example from TLDR

List your price per placement here. To save the advertiser time, also list CPM, ad clicks, and CPC here.

Some folks recommend offering custom pricing and ad options based on the brand. Don't share pricing in your media kit if you want to do that.

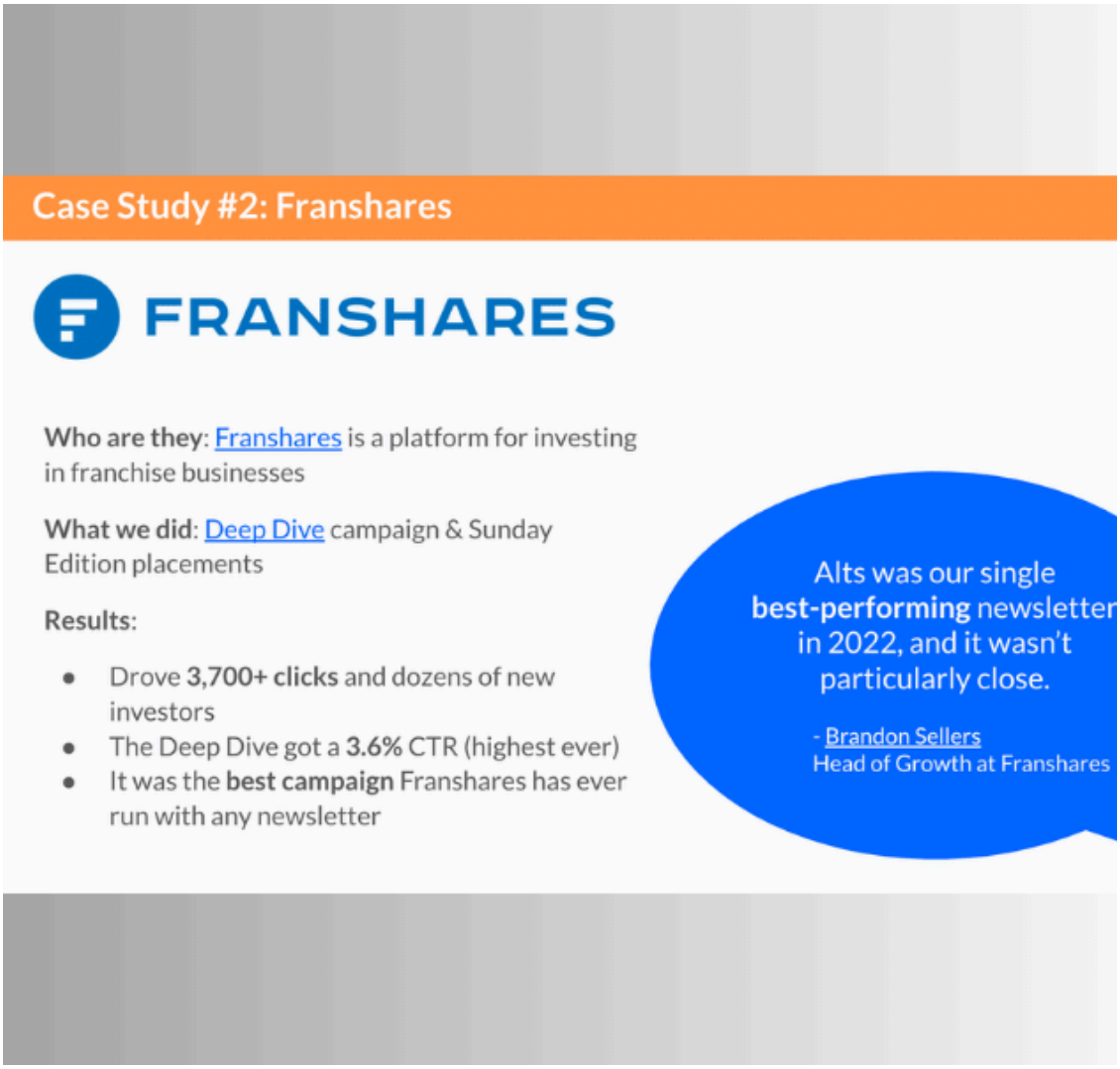
Past Sponsors, Sponsor Testimonials, Case Studies, and Repeat Sponsors



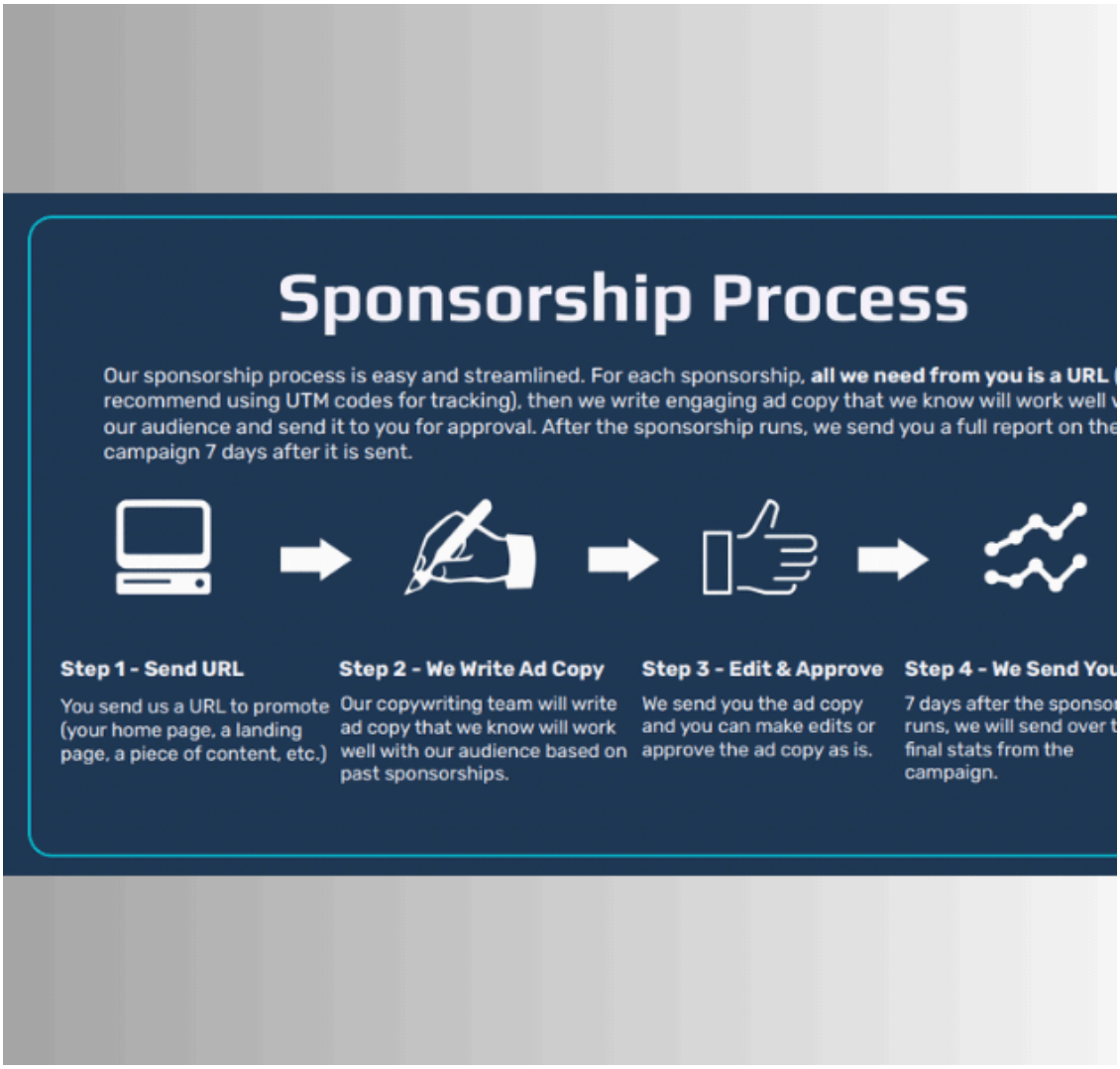
Example from TLDR

The more advertiser results you can show, the better.

Some newsletters include past sponsor logos and testimonials. Others make case studies like this example from Alts:



Sponsorship Process



Example from TLDR

Explain what working with you is like and what happens after someone buys a sponsorship.

What if you don't have all the information above?

That's ok. Include what you have now. Then, keep collecting information from readers and sponsors so you can add it to your media kit later.

What Experts Say About Media Kits and Selling

Okay, now you know the elements of a great media kit.

How do you turn that sponsorship interest into revenue?

Well, I asked 3 newsletter ad sales experts how. Here's what I learned:

Katy Huff, co-founder of MadRev

Save the brand time

"Tell advertisers how many clicks they'll get per ad. Not just your overall CTR. The best pages just list the ad clicks as a number amount. This saves the brand time from having to do the math."

Tell them which sponsors renew

“I love when newsletters include a list of brands that have run an ad more than once. Seeing who renews is a good signal for brands that might have similar target audiences.”

Incentivize the brand to buy more

“Offer a package discount. So list the price of 1 ad (for example, $1,000), and list the price of 3 ads ($2,750) with a discount.”

Justin Moore, founder of Creator Wizard

Get on the phone

“Ask for a call so you can learn their objectives (what if they want to become your title sponsor for the rest of the year?). You won’t know if all you offer is a package of 4 ad slots.”

Learn what outcomes they want

“Even if you have tons of subs, opens, clicks, etc. – realize that getting sponsorships has nothing to do with you. Your #1 priority must be to articulate how you can help the brand achieve a set of specific business outcomes. These outcomes are rarely as simple as ‘get more views or clicks’. “

Understanding the advertiser's options - show how you’re different or better

“How to understand your “BATNA” (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement) as well as the brands. Consider if the advertiser was not going to partner with you. What are their alternatives? Show the brand that your audience and sponsorship offerings are a better investment than the alternatives.”

Emanuel Cinca, founder of Stacked Marketer

Know your numbers and your sponsor's numbers

“Know your open rates and ad clickthrough rates, and get at least a rough idea of conversion rate from other sponsors if you can.

(This is hard if sponsors don't want to share much, but any bit of info helps!)”

Don't sell - strategize!

“You should go into this with the mindset of a strategic consultant and try to figure out how to promote their product to your audience best.”

Make it easy to reach you

“A contact page is a must-have, and just mentioning sponsorship opportunities in your regular newsletter, too, will help.”

Ask for feedback

"Don't forget to ask sponsors for feedback, and if they are happy, ask them to book more with you! More than 33% of our sponsors booked more than once with us. This number got better once we regularly asked sponsors to book again."

Milk Road pitch deck for advertising

I have given little thought to this. Most of what I've seen about selling and pricing ads is VERY primitive. And, the newsletters that have been purchased for big money were bought to access the list, not to capture the advertising revenue stream. As far as I can tell, the newsletters that have been purchased, the buyer has done away with the advertising, opting instead to promote their own products to the list through the newsletter.

While selling ads may be a way to get a newsletter off the ground, the real value is in the list.

But, as I see interesting ideas in the area of advertising, I'll add them.

Most ads are "in line" style. Meaning, they are meant to blend in with the content. The Hustle took great pride in writing ads for outside advertisers as they felt their writing was better than the advertiser themselves.

Anyways, here's an ad for a product that is an upgraded product sold by the newsletter publisher, this ad struck me as an interesting way to grab attention. I'd probably be more subtle than screaming, "You're missing out."

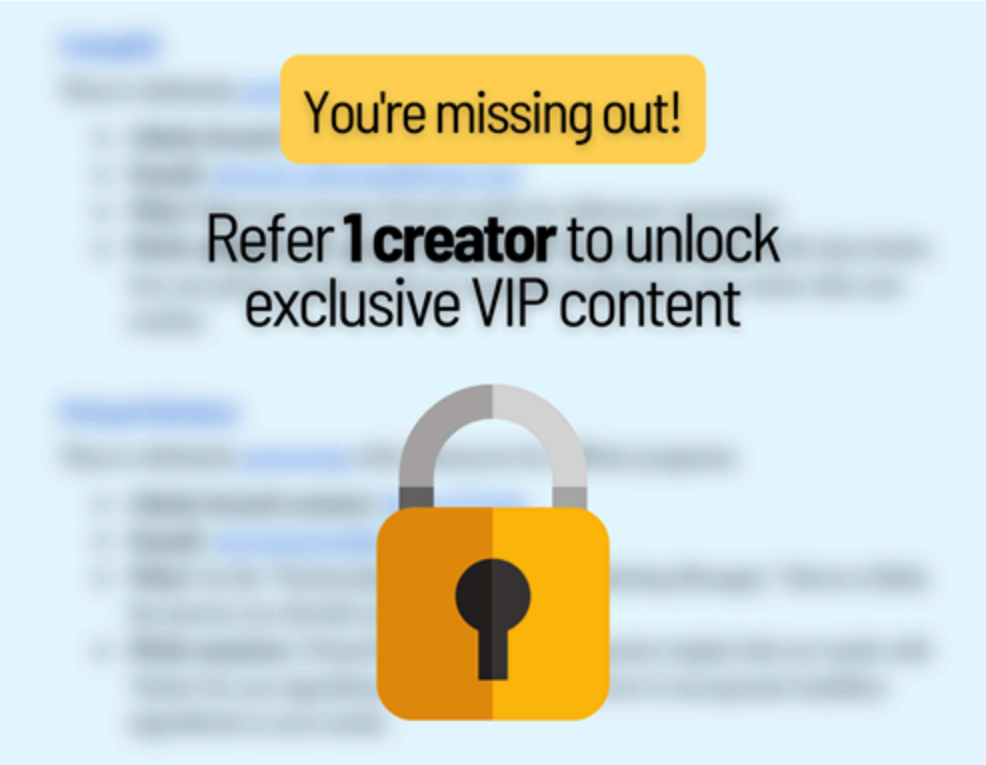
Want more sponsorship leads?

** Brands we researched this week: Logitech, Sally Hansen, Dulce Vida Tequila, Bounce Curl, and Melio. **

- Names/contacts
- Email addresses
- LinkedIn URLs
- Pitching angles

See below 👇

Join 242 other creators getting this week's Secret Brand Deal Research:



Your referral link to share:

https://sparklp.co/4746e316

Hint: a single IG Story or YT community post might do it!

Sponsorships I hunted down (June 16-23)

- Funterra (Paid)
  - Email: sawyer@deviatelabs.com

Additional resources

8 Ways To Get Newsletter Subscribers To Buy Your Stuff (newsletteroperator.com)

Morning Brew - Newsletter UX Checklist - CHECKLIST - How To Build A World-Class Newsletter

7 Best Email Marketing Services for Small Business Compared (2022) (wpbeginner.com)

Email deliverability becomes more important than ever.

https://newsletteros.com/ - If you already use Notion, this may be a helpful tool. Haven't purchased it, just collected it in case useful later.

Resources to grow communities https://mobile.twitter.com/5harath/status/1537827794842857472

Basic guide on creating newsletters by Hubspot

18 Email Newsletter Examples We Love Getting in Our Inboxes

Technology stack: https://mobile.twitter.com/5harath/status/1562209874385190912

They Got Acquired Editorial Funnel Walk-Through (Aug. 2022) (loom.com)