

Subject: Magnetic Substack Tricks for Beginners



Dear NAME

Last week I wrote to you about Substack and got an amazing response.
(if you missed it, you can check it out [here](#)).

This is a thriving 'all in one' platform for publishing content.

Not only does it give you a website platform to create blog posts...

But these posts also get sent out to subscribers' inboxes as an email newsletter.

You can choose to put your best, most valuable content behind a subscription paywall – and you also get control over your own growing subscriber base.

Which means you can not only earn directly for your content...

But also promote links to affiliate products or directly sell them your own digital information products, like planners, eBooks and courses.

And yes, AI content DOES work on Substack, generating lots of likes, shares and comments. So this is something you can do, even if you're not a writer or an expert.

I got such a great response to last week's email on this topic, that I've decided to give you some practical free training to help you grow a profitable Substack business.

Okay, so let's imagine you've read the above and set up your first Substack account...

Let's take a look at how you can attract subscribers.

The Free Content Model

The basic principle is the same as the one I've used for decades to grow my online publishing businesses.

You create valuable FREE content that gets you noticed, and shows what you have to offer...

Once you've established trust, you then convert that trust into a paid product.

In the case of Substack, that might mean the higher level content that people pay to access... or digital products, which you sell to your subscribers using an affiliate link.

So your free Substack content as has **three jobs**:

1. **Discovery** (get found on the Substack network)
2. **Trust** (prove you're worth following)
3. **Conversion** (give a reason to subscribe)

Which means the first step of a successful publishing business on this platform MUST begin with the free content.

What Makes a Compelling Substack Post?

To pull in readers, a good post needs to be:

- Useful – it must offer something that the reader can use in their life somehow, either in the form of a practical idea or an insight.

- Urgent – there should be a good reason why they need to know this information. This might be because it's timely, seasonal or topical. Or it could mean that knowing it now will save them from pain, cost, disappointment or failure.
- Ultra-specific – make sure you focus on a specific idea, and then back this up with details (e.g. dates, prices, studies, expert quotes) that show you've done some research.
- Unique – there needs to be a unique angle, based on your specific experience, opinions or worldview.

You should also embody these four qualities in the title of your piece, which is always going to be the first (sometimes ONLY) thing that people notice.

It will appear as a headline on your Substack page, encouraging clicks to read more...

And it will appear in your subscriber's email inboxes, where it influences how many people will be keen enough to open it.

Substack treats titles as critical enough to offer **title testing** (known as A/B testing) once you have over 200 subscribers, which shows how important it is.

Here are some ideas...

1) The specific promise

- "A 15-minute system for ____"
- "The 3-step way to ____ without ____"
- "How to ____ (even if ____)"

2) The contrarian angle

- "Stop doing ____ — do this instead"
- "The real reason ____ doesn't work"
- "Everyone says ____; here's what actually happens"

3) The curiosity gap

- "The mistake that's quietly costing you ____"

- “I tried ____ for 30 days. Here’s what changed.”
- “This is why ____ feels harder than it should.”

4) The reader mirror

- “If you’re ____, read this”
- “For anyone who’s stuck on ____”
- “You’re not lazy. You’re ____.”

You can, of course, feed these templates into an AI tool like ChatGPT and get it to generate your copy you can use.

The post itself should contain:

- **A Lead** – an opening line or two that connects with a goal or problem that the target reader has... or which tells a compelling story that quickly sets a scene.
- **Practical Advice** – you can offer steps, recipes, a strategy, or a single piece of advice that helps them reach their goal or solve their problem.
- **Personal opinion** – include personal insights, point of view or examples from your everyday life experience.
- **Proof** – make sure that whatever you tell them is backed up with some facts and figures, quotes or studies. This enhances the perceived value, because the reader can see you’ve done some research.
- **Examples** –use real life examples, either from your own experiences or via newspaper articles, magazine profiles, case studies, historical events and stories.
- **Call to action** – get the reader to do something, whether that’s adopting a new habit, trying out the tip, clicking on a link, or going somewhere for more information.

Make sure that you write in short paragraphs, with regular subheads to break up the text. And always use simple, layman’s language, avoiding fluff and jargon.

If you use AI, I recommend writing the raw material for the post FIRST, then using the AI to enhance, shape and edit for clarity. This will help maintain your voice.

There isn't a magic word count but 800–1,500 words is long enough to feel substantial, but short enough to read on a phone or tablet in a break.

You can also consider longer, authority posts of 1,500–2,500+ words, that contain a lot more advice. These are ideal for becoming 'evergreen' posts that pull in new readers.

To make one, create a new post titled something like "Start Here" or "Essential Reading", then add 3-5 detailed, opinionated posts that show what you're about.

Add this to your homepage using Substack's 'Feature' option.

SEO Boosting Tricks

To give your content the best chance of being picked up by Substack's algorithm, write brief descriptions for each linked article.

This helps with SEO and gives new readers a clear idea of what to expect from you.

To maximize your Substack's search visibility:

- Use clear, descriptive titles that include your target keywords
- Keep titles under 60 characters for optimal chance of a high ranking in search results
- Write compelling meta descriptions for each post
- Keep descriptions between 150-160 characters

Match the URL to your post title when possible, but make it shorter (3-5 keywords maximum).

Separate words with hyphens, rather than underscores (example: "diet-tips-2026"). And avoid special characters, numbers, or dates.

Another way to boost your SEO is to get more inbound links (these are links on other sites that direct readers to your Substack.)

If you already have a website, then try and put a link on that. You can also embed your email signup form directly onto an existing site. (The HTML code can be found in 'Settings'.)

If you're on social media, add your Substack URL to your biography or profile pages, and pinned posts.

You can also help drive more 'traffic' to your Substack by including links to previous posts inside your editorial content and email newsletters.

One good technique is to ask readers to click on a link at the end of the email that takes them to a related article in your Substack.

Getting In Front of More Subscribers

As I've shown you in previous emails, Substack is hugely popular now, with an ever-growing readership and lots of clout.

This means there are people actively seeking out Substack accounts that appeal to them.

And Substack will show your writing to other people's audiences if the algorithm considers it relevant to them.

As with Google and Facebook algorithms, there's no way to 'trick' or 'jam' the system. But you can gear your posts accordingly when you know how the system works.

For instance, there are a few ways that your content can get a wider audience on the platform.

- **Restacks**

This is Substack's equivalent of a repost/reshare option on social media. When someone restacks your post it means that:

- It appears in **their subscribers' feeds**
- It may appear in **their followers' home feed**

And if they add their own positive commentary, it gets a boost from their endorsement.

This can trigger 'secondary restacks' if their fans like it too.

Restacks are more likely when your post has a distinctive angle on a subject...a strongly outspoken opinion.... or highly useful info that people can quickly and easily use.

One way of upping your chances of a restack is to restack other people's posts with your own commentary.

The authors of the post will almost certainly notice you doing this. Some will check your profile and potentially restack you back.

- **Notes**

Notes are the social media-wing of Substack, or near enough to it.

The idea is that they're short, free posts that the public can see, and reply to, which helps get your account noticed by new people.

They can include:

- Short text with a topical insight, a piece of advice or nugget wisdom.
- Quotes from influential people
- A small sample of one of your best recent posts
- Images and photos
- 'Behind the scene' peeks
- Restacks of posts or comments
- A question to start an online conversation

These notes appear in the Home feed of people who follow you...

But they also crop up in the home feed of people who follow writers you interact with.

This is why it's important to engage with the notes of other content-creators in your niche.

Substack clusters writers and readers by the following criteria:

- Who they follow
- What they read
- What they restack
- Where they comment

So try and follow 20–40 content creators whose audiences overlap with yours.

Regularly read their stuff, like posts, reply to their content, and occasionally restack their work.

However DON'T sp*m them and don't overdo it!

- **Recommendations**

When someone recommends your publication, new subscribers see that recommendation during their sign-up process.

However, existing readers will only see it on your profile and welcome page.

For a chance of getting recommended, find the best 5-10 publications in your niche and recommend them, along with some thoughtful comments.

With any luck you will get a few reciprocal recommendations!

Over to You...

Okay, so that was your crash course in getting started on Substack.

There is plenty more I could share with you, including:

- How to find an in-demand niche on Substack
- How to give yourself a unique voice and personality so you stand out from the crowd
- How to use AI to help you write brilliant posts and newsletters that DON'T look like AI at all.
- How to plan, research and schedule high quality content

If any of these are of interest, let me know!

Best regards

Nick