### Building an Audience-Centric Culture

Digital Growth Program - Audience Development

## Introduction

of a series of resources that aim to help news organizations — particularly small and midsize publishers: Gain a deep understanding of their readers' behaviors and information needs with News Consumer

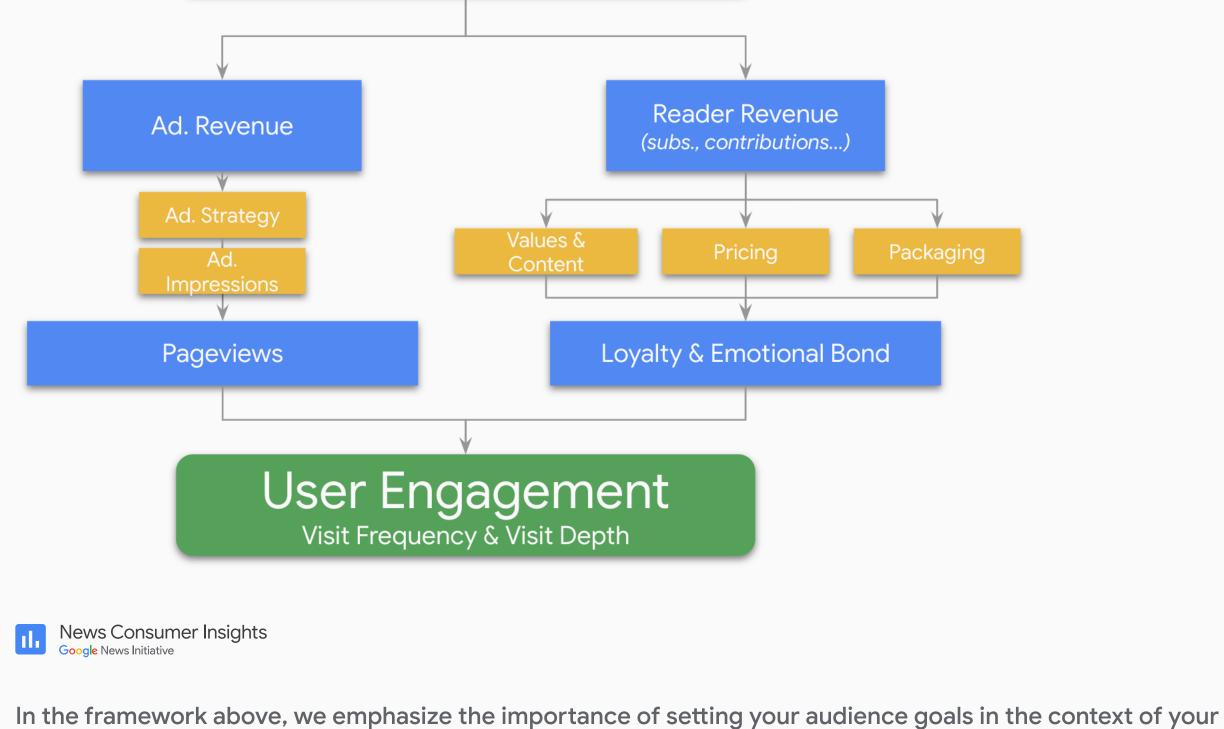
Welcome to the GNI Digital Growth Program 'Building an Audience-Centric Culture' guide. This guide is part

- Insights (Understanding your Audience Guide) Become stronger with data analytics tools and capabilities through the **News Consumer Insights** tool
- (Growing Reach and Deepening Engagement Guide) Set clear audience goals and objectives (this guide)
- Overview Of Audience-Centric Culture

#### 1. Setting Clear and Actionable Goals and Metrics

Performance

#### **News Business**



revenue objectives — whether you have a reader revenue model or an advertising revenue model. How do you set clear actionable goals for audience development? Let's look at some metrics you should evaluate when setting those goals.

5 metrics to focus on while growing your audience: **Monthly Active Users** The number of unique readers that visit you monthly

Unique Monthly Active users, divided by the number of total households

There are a couple of ways to determine the number of households. If you

cover a geographic community, this will likely be the number of households

you serve.

**Market Penetration** 

	in your geography, whether local, regional or national. If you cover a specific topic, this will be an estimate of the number of households interested in your topic. This metric is important for defining who your market is and tracking if you're getting better at reaching them over time.		
Monthly Active User Growth Rate	nique Monthly Active users at the end of last month divided by unique nonthly active users from the prior month. This is important to track or news organizations that are still in a growth phase.		
Number of Loyal & Brand Lovers	This is a metric you can find in News Consumer Insights (Loyal Readers visit your website 2-14 times per month; Brand Lovers visit your website more than 15 times per month.) We encourage you to build engagement segments that make sense for your business, given how many articles you publish and how frequently you publish them. This is particularly important for news organizations with reader revenue models.		
Source of Traffic	Tracking how people are coming to your website — through social, search, social media, newsletters — can help you understand which channels you should focus on for growth. You can track this using your own data with NCI.		
5 metrics to focus on	hile deepening engagement w	ith your audience	
Average Visits per Reader (Monthly)	A strong indicator of willingness t	o subscribe Target Benchmark: 2	
A D D I	Face a fall of the state of the	al lavaira a cons	

to increase pageviews

Average Visit Length (Time Spent per Visit)	A stronger indicator of willingness to subscribe than pageviews, less strong than visit frequency		Target Benchmark: 2:20	
Known Unique Readers (Unique Visitors you have emails for divided by Unique Monthly Active Users)	Important for developing direct relationships with readers		Target Benchmark: 10%	
Newsletter Subscriber Rate (Newsletter subscribers Divided by Unique Monthly Active Users)	10x more likely to subscribe than casual readers; important for deepening relationship with readers and reader revenue success.		Target Benchmark: 5%	
How to pick which goals to focus on  There are two factors:				
		2		

Especially important to track for ad businesses

Target

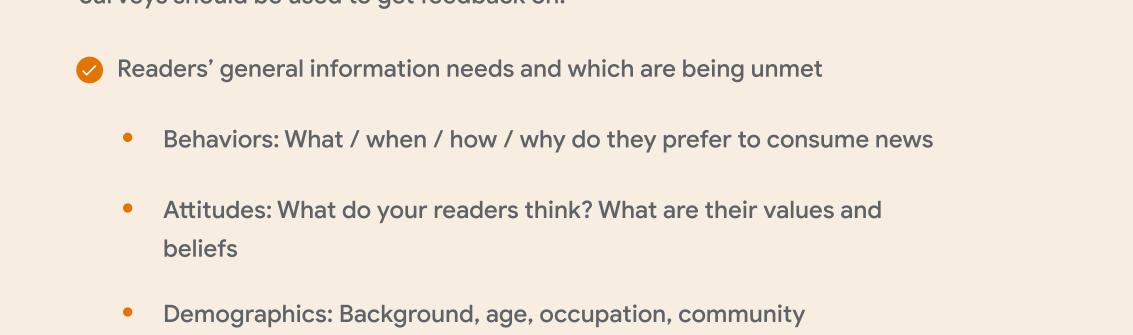
be done

Benchmark: 4

Average Pages Read per

Reader (Monthly)

Surveys are the most widely used method in audience research. They can be used to solicit valuable, open-ended feedback. In addition to getting information from your readers, surveys can also signal you're genuinely interested in meeting your readers' needs and are a great opportunity to strengthen your



This is Tucson, a digital native publication based in Arizona, built two personas

to help focus their membership program around their target personas' needs.

Angela:

restaurants

Facebook user

Likes to be the expert in her circle

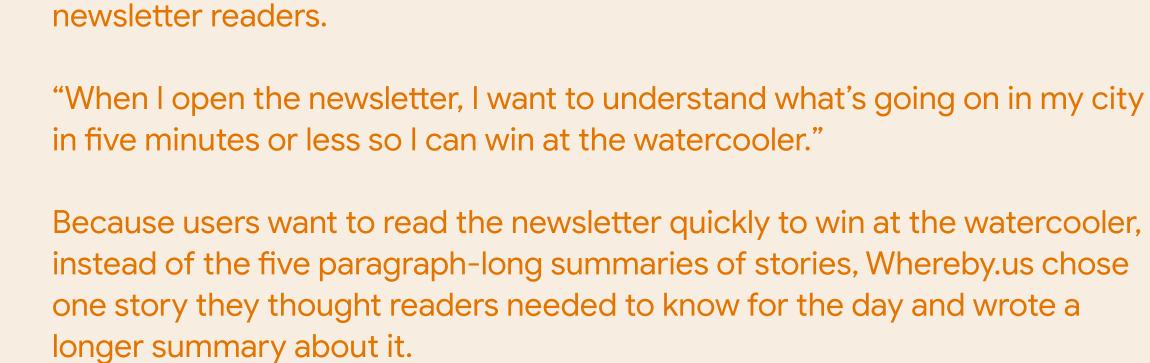
and will share stories frequently

Still working Has a job, but it doesn't rule her life Loves Tucson and wants to go to events Loves Tucson and the outdoors, yoga and (especially live music) and discover new

**EXAMPLE:** 

Jessica:

Older millennial living in a house (rented Late Gen Xer with grandkids or owned) with a partner and kids



value.

**EXAMPLE:** 

# Once you identify your list of jobs-to-be-done, make sure to prioritize them by evaluating the level of effort

organization can rally around."

related to audience development.

Sponsorships and

Advertising

Manager

Marketing and

Communications

volunteering, but hates the heat and traffic

Family budget is around \$37,000 a year

Plans her weekend on Wednesday nights

Eats out and cooks at home

- involved in performing that job and the value it drives in meeting the information needs of your key personas. You have discrete resources, so you want to be sure to start off focusing on low effort jobs that drive high
  - **Executive Director** Bridge HR and Editor-in-Chief Director of Director of Accounting Business Audience Manager Development Development Managing Editor President & CEO

Investigative

Reporter

Investigative

Reporter

3. Reinforcing audience-centricity across your news organization

Set clear, actionable goals and metrics around audience development that your

Adopt an organizational structure that aligns your organization around those goals — which

Create clear workstreams – with clear roles and responsibilities, and clear owners for tasks

There is no one-size fits all organization structure but you should ensure that voices advocating for audience

development have a strong connection to editorial and business development teams. Here is an example of

Journalist-D2

Journalist-D3

Journalist-D4

Journalist-D5

Journalist-D6

Journalist-D7

Journalist-D8

Journalist-D9

Philanthropic

Development/Relations

Investigations / Projects

Data / Demographics Reporter

Managing Editor

Editor

Senior Reporter/ Education Specialist

Lansing Watchdog

West Michigan / General

Engagement Director

Engagement Coordinator

(10%)

two organization structures (a News Revenue Hub chart on the left and a real-life example from Bridge

An organization that's committed to audience development needs to:

could also mean building an audience-focused team.

Michigan on the right) that shows you what this can look like.

Development Editor

Membership and

Community

Engagement Manager

Community Engagement

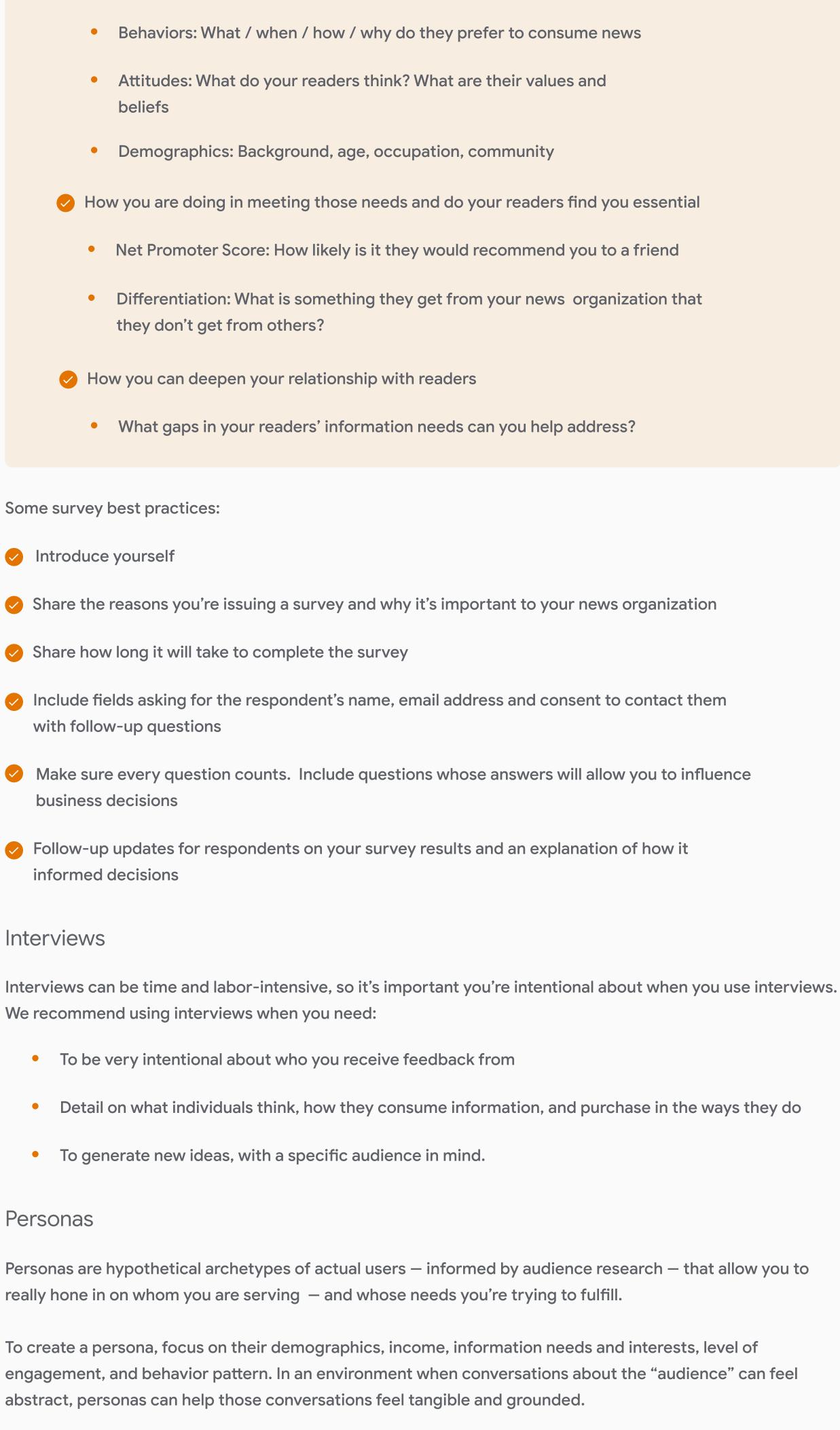
and Events Coordinator

Technical Manager

- Analytics Discoverability **Audience Work** Newsletters (30%) (20%)(30%)
- full editorial team must have clear ownership on key audience tasks, which can be achieved by: Establishing standard discoverability best practices and workflows in your newsroom Providing them with training and simple cheat sheets including: Headlines to optimize discoverability Photo/caption/alt text **Article summaries** Subhead and story length best practices
  - Inviting them to watch **Audience workshops** and check out **our resources**.

Thank you for your interest in the Google News Initiative Digital Growth Program. For more information and resources, please visit the links to the right.

News Consumer Insights Tool News Consumer Insights Playbook **Understanding your Audience Guide** Growing Reach and Deepening Engagement Guide [2] **Digital Growth Program Website** Digital Growth Program Workshop [2] Realtime Content Insights News Tagging Guide [2]

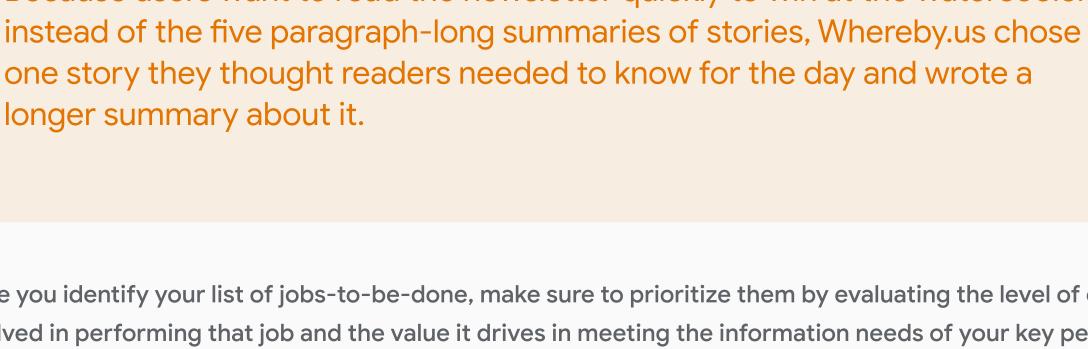


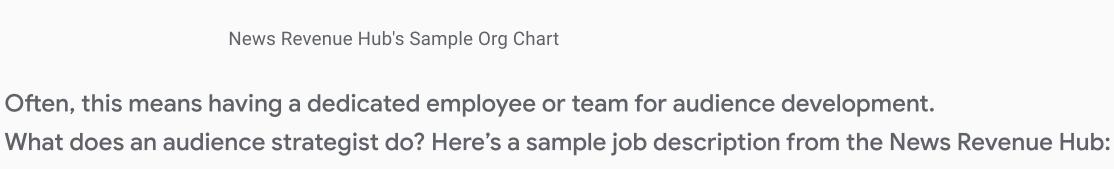
Which metrics will help you reach Identify which metrics you're underperforming against the target your revenue goals benchmarks: For example, if you're interested in reader revenue, you may want to prioritize visit If you have Google Analytics, you frequency or newsletter subscriber rate can assess this with News **Consumer Insights** If you're interested in advertising revenue, you may want to prioritize If you don't have Google Analytics, increasing pageviews or growing you can assess this with **User Funnel** monthly active users **Diagnostic** Share your priority goals across the entire organization Make sure you're actively tracking against those goals Integrate priority metrics in the newsroom Audience research is your organization's tool to collect feedback, understand audiences more deeply, and develop hypotheses on how you can better meet their needs. There are four activities publishers of all sizes can conduct: Identify jobs to

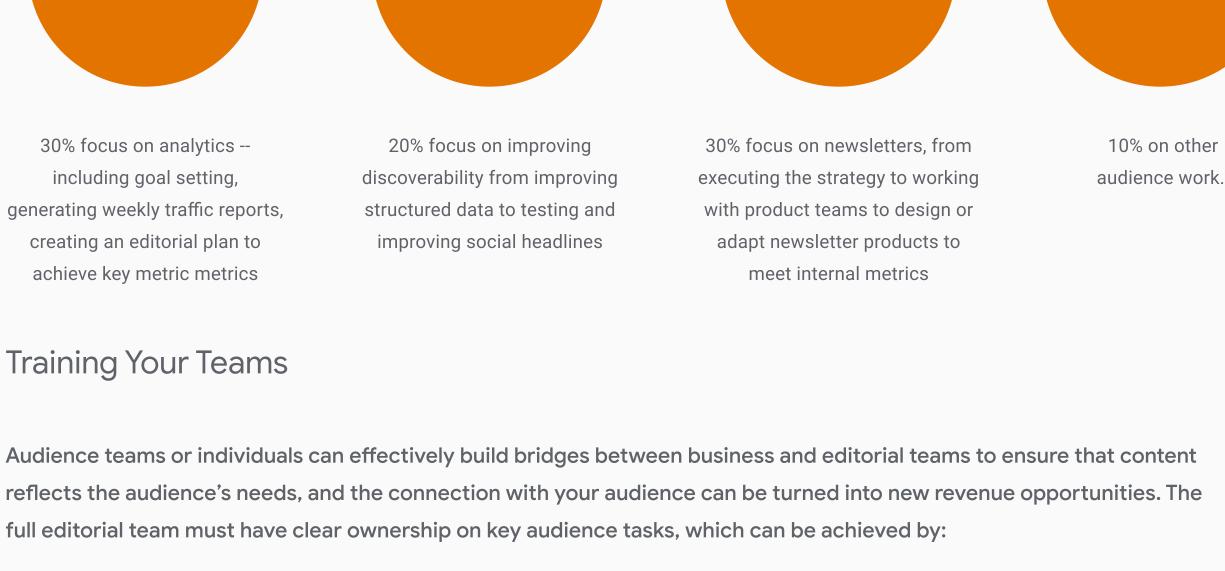
Jobs-to-be-done exercise The jobs to be done are the specific needs of your priority personas that your need to fulfill. Thinking about your readers' needs in the "When...I want to... so that..." format can help audience research translate to real decisions on your content strategy.

Whereby.us, a network of local newsletters based in the United States, used

audience research to hone in on the following jobs-to-be-done for their







Optimize keywords **URL** slug Links