

Subscription Accelerator™ ***guide***



 LEAKY PAYWALL

Subscription Accelerator™



Hi, my name is Pete and I help news and magazine publishers grow their audience, build paid subscriptions, and create new digital products with our [Leaky Paywall](#) subscription platform.

The purpose of this Subscription Accelerator™ guide is to help you convert your casual website visitors into paying subscribers and customers.

Our mission goes beyond software. We help publishers grow their digital revenues.

So let's jump right in.

In this guide you will learn how to easily:

1. Build your email list
2. Leverage your newsletter
3. Convert paid subscriptions



Subscription Accelerator™

Your casual website visitors are your largest opportunity

Over 60% of your website traffic are new

Your new visitor typically lands directly on one of your articles from a web search or from social media. You need to *engage this new casual visitor* immediately.

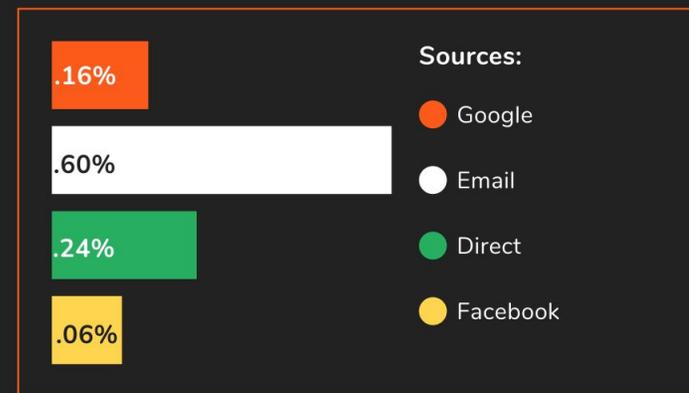
So how do you engage them?

The secret is to capture their email address and build your relationship with these readers *over time*. They need to experience more of your content to build a stronger relationship with you. This approach builds trust with your content, which increases the chance they pay you for premium access down the road.

And email has the highest paid conversion rate among referring sources (see chart).

Email has the highest conversion rate

Top referring sources



A flow that works

(The Subscription Accelerator™ method)

Let's look at an example of how a new website visitor becomes a loyal paid subscriber:

1. Someone searches in Google or follows a link to your article from Facebook.
2. This **casual visitor** reads your article and decides to click to a second article.
3. The second article is restricted by your paywall and triggers a **free subscription message** that promises immediate access to the current article and offers (for example) 3 premium articles each month.
4. This visitor decides to register (for free) to gain additional access and is added to your email list. After registration they are taken back to the now unlocked article. This quickly builds your email list.
5. The free registered subscriber starts receiving **your email newsletter** which drives them back to your site to explore new content each week.
6. Reading more content consumes their 3 free article allotment. Reading the 4th article triggers a **paid subscription message** which, encourages them to subscribe for full access.
7. This messaging happens each month and a few months later they decide to **upgrade to a paid subscription** for full access.

Next: Step #1 of the Subscription Accelerator™ process: **Offering a free access level**

1

Offer a free access level

“Casual readers who register and join your email list are 2-10x more likely to become paid subscribers. And casual readers are your largest untapped source of potential subscribers.”

A reader who registers for free will gain the perk of accessing a limited number of premium articles to read each month. This is the start of their relationship with your publication. As you send your newsletter to them over time, it drives them back to your website to read more articles. When they run out of their free article allotment, it triggers your paid subscription message.

The longer someone receives your newsletter, and sees your subscription messages, the higher chances are they will pay for full access.

Next: The benefits to your publication



Benefits of a free level to you

What does the free subscription level accomplish?

1. **More paid subscribers:** This is what you are here for. Be patient. Over time you will be able to grow your relationship with these new free subscribers with your newsletter and gently remind them that your content is premium and requires payment for full access.
2. **Increased email sponsorship revenue:** You will attract more sponsors of your email newsletter. As your list grows it becomes more valuable to advertisers. The free registration approach builds your email list faster and with more engaged readers than any other method.
3. **Reduced payment friction:** One of the hidden benefits of having a free registration available is that once a free level subscriber is ready to pay, they are already logged into your website and their personal information is pre-filled on the checkout page. All they have to do is enter their credit card information. This boosts the chances of a paid transaction.

What we know is that the larger your email list is and the more time that goes by, your chances of converting paid subscribers increases dramatically (2-10x).

Next: Let's look at an example of an effective in-article free subscription message:

An example

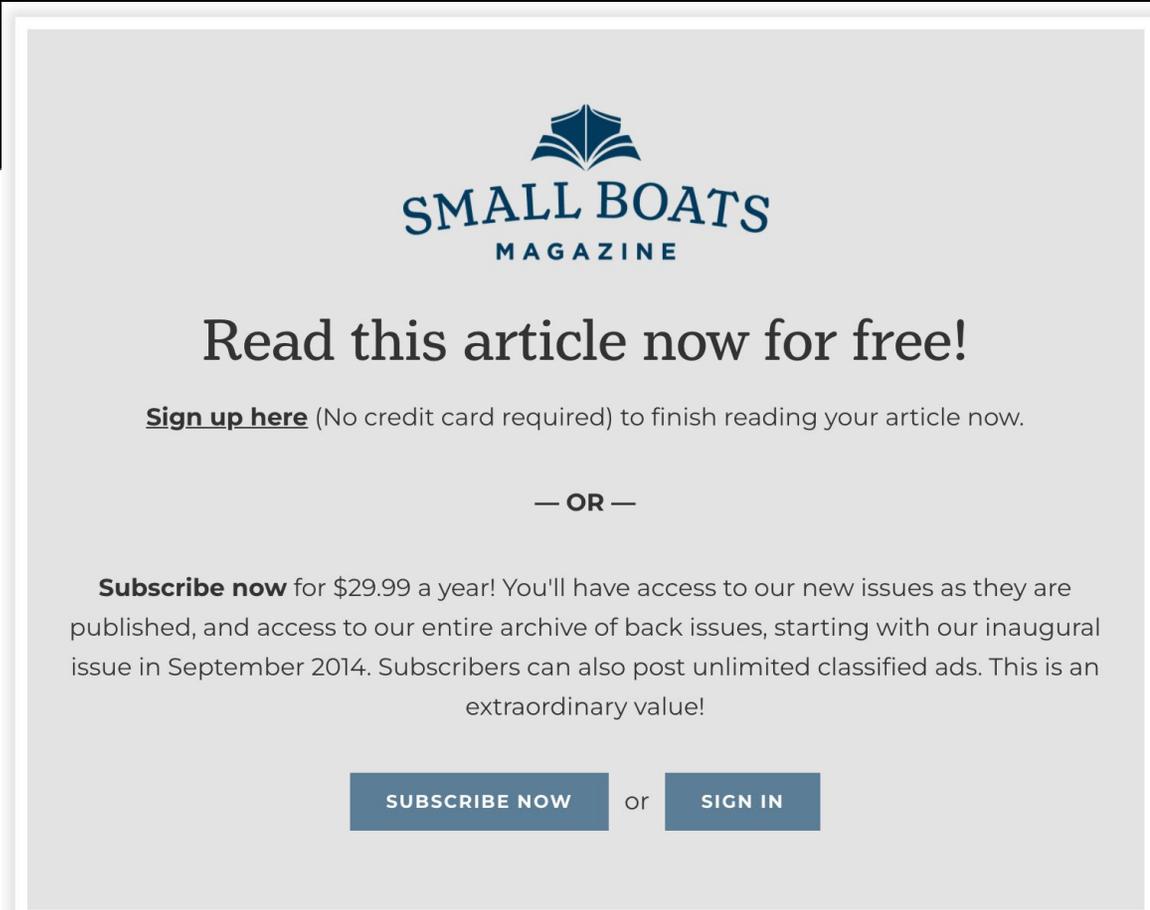
Here's an example of a free level subscription message that is presented *in the article* a visitor wants to read.

After using up their free articles the visitor must register in order to unlock the next article.

This approach is compelling as it promises the visitor:

1. Instant access to the article being read, and
2. Future access to more articles each month

Next: Step #2 - Your email newsletter



The screenshot shows a light gray rectangular box with a white border. At the top center is the logo for 'SMALL BOATS MAGAZINE', featuring a blue icon of an open book above the text 'SMALL BOATS' in a serif font and 'MAGAZINE' in a smaller sans-serif font below it. Below the logo, the text 'Read this article now for free!' is centered in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Underneath this, the text 'Sign up here (No credit card required) to finish reading your article now.' is centered in a smaller black font. In the center of the box, there is a separator '— OR —' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the separator, the text 'Subscribe now for \$29.99 a year! You'll have access to our new issues as they are published, and access to our entire archive of back issues, starting with our inaugural issue in September 2014. Subscribers can also post unlimited classified ads. This is an extraordinary value!' is centered in a black font. At the bottom of the box, there are two blue rectangular buttons with white text: 'SUBSCRIBE NOW' on the left and 'SIGN IN' on the right, separated by the word 'or'.



The most powerful direct marketing tool in your possession is your newsletter

To keep the relationship going with all your readers, your email newsletter helps your casual reader:

1. Over time be reminded of your existence in their email inbox
2. Over time scan you headlines
3. Over time click and be directed to new articles on your website
4. Over time see multiple subscription messages that encourage them to subscribe (after they use up their free article allotment)

Notice the use of 'Over time.' It is important to remember that to get the casual reader to ultimately pay for a subscription they need to warm up to your publication's content at a slower pace than your dedicated fans.

Your newsletter content

So what should your newsletter look like? Your newsletter should be structured with::

1. Titles of your articles
2. Excerpts of your articles
3. Email sponsors (your growing email list will attract advertisers)

Should I include feature images in my newsletter? We get this question all the time.

Yes and no. For a magazine publisher with branding considerations the answer is typically yes and it's worth investing in a branded newsletter design. If you publish daily news the answer is generally no, it's not as necessary as readers generally want a simple, scannable newsletter that helps them quickly decide what they want to click on and read further.

*Automation note: News publishers that use a simple layout should consider a huge workflow saver: [RSS-to-email](#). Your email news provider (such as Mailchimp) can scan your website every day and automatically send your news for you to your list. You schedule the delivery time (Ex: 7am daily) to your selected audience.

Next: Let's look at a couple of successful newsletter examples:

A news example

Here's an example of a daily local newsletter that is highly effective.

Serving a rural section on NH, Daybreak grew to over 10,000 subscribers in just over a year.

It's easy to read and shows up every weekday around 6:30am. If you dig in you will see that a wide variety of local 'news' sources are used: listservs, college news, Facebook groups, etc.

View the [entire newsletter](#),



GOOD MORNING, UPPER VALLEY!

Sunny, but cooler. The high pressure that brought us yesterday afternoon is moving off, and though we'll climb above freezing pretty quickly this morning, the high won't get much above 50 around here. Still, plenty of sunshine for most of the day—until we start seeing the forerunners of tomorrow's system late in the day. Clouding up in the evening, rain possible overnight.

Frost up close... and far away. The meandering lines of the first hard frost in a West Fairlee field and the scene as cows graze in the early-morning light along Middlebrook Road the same day, both by John Pietkiewicz.

“Our vetting process to determine which submissions were valid did not happen early enough and was not thorough enough.” It's back to a nearly blank slate for Hanover High's mascot selection committee, reports the *Valley News's* Benjamin Rosenberg. After nine potential designs were disqualified for lack of originality—including one of the two in a possible runoff—the HHS Council has voted to restart the selection process. The committee is seeking new designs for the Huskies, Maroon Crush, Trailblazers, Hawks, and Bears.

Homes listed for sale in Woodstock... only they're not. In October, a woman came to *Omni Reporter* blogger Gareth Henderson's door, wanting to tour his house. It was listed for sale online, she told him. So, it turned out, were several others in the neighborhood, Henderson discovered—mostly on Craigslist. Scam rental listings, he reports, aren't uncommon, but a realtor tells him "the fake for-sale scenario 'is pretty new,' but could have the same goal of falsely collecting some kind of deposit." Henderson adds that there have been no reports of successful for-sale scams in the Woodstock area recently.

A magazine example

Here's an example of a monthly digital magazine newsletter that is highly effective.

This newsletter makes you want to take a break and enjoy the beautiful photography.

When Small Boats added their free registration level they saw their email list and paid subscriptions grow by approximately 20% per month.

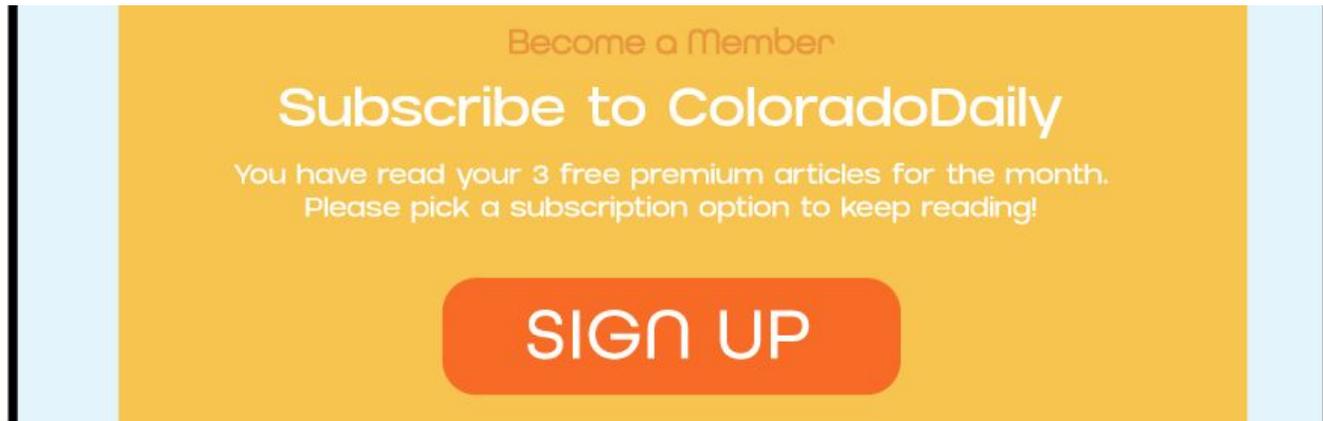
View the [entire newsletter](#). Now let's talk about converting these free subscribers to paid:



Join today and receive unlimited access to all *Small Boats Magazine* content.

We share your passion for boats and we'd like you to be a part of our community. As a member, **you'll have access to the entire searchable archive of articles**—going back to our launch in 2014—and our popular classifieds, plus some great new features we'll be rolling out later this year. And, you can cancel at any time.

Join us today!
Christopher Cunningham, Editor



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Upgrade to paid

Your free level subscribers are using up their free level access. How do you get them to pay?

Once you have a registered subscriber that has used up their free-level access you will want to display a subscription message to prompt them to pay for full access.

As with the free-registration-message, this paid-subscription-message shows up in-article. Blocking the article they want to read motivates them to pay for access.

Emailing your newsletter to your free subscribers encourages them to click and return to your site to use up the few free articles they receive each month. Over these weeks/months your paid subscription messages are triggered multiple times increasing the chances that your reader finally decides to pay for access.

Next: Let's take a look at a paid subscription message example:

Your paid Subscription message

Here's an example of an in-article subscription message that encourages the free level subscriber to upgrade to paid.

It appears after the extra free articles are used up and encourages a paid subscription for full access.

Keep in mind your newsletter drives readers back to your site. This organic pestering over time increases the chance of subscribing by 2-10x.



Upgrade your account

Subscribe now for \$29.99 a year! You'll have access to our new issues as they are published, and access to our entire archive of back issues, starting with our inaugural issue in September 2014. Subscribers can also post unlimited classified ads. This is an extraordinary value!

[SUBSCRIBE NOW](#)

4

More revenue

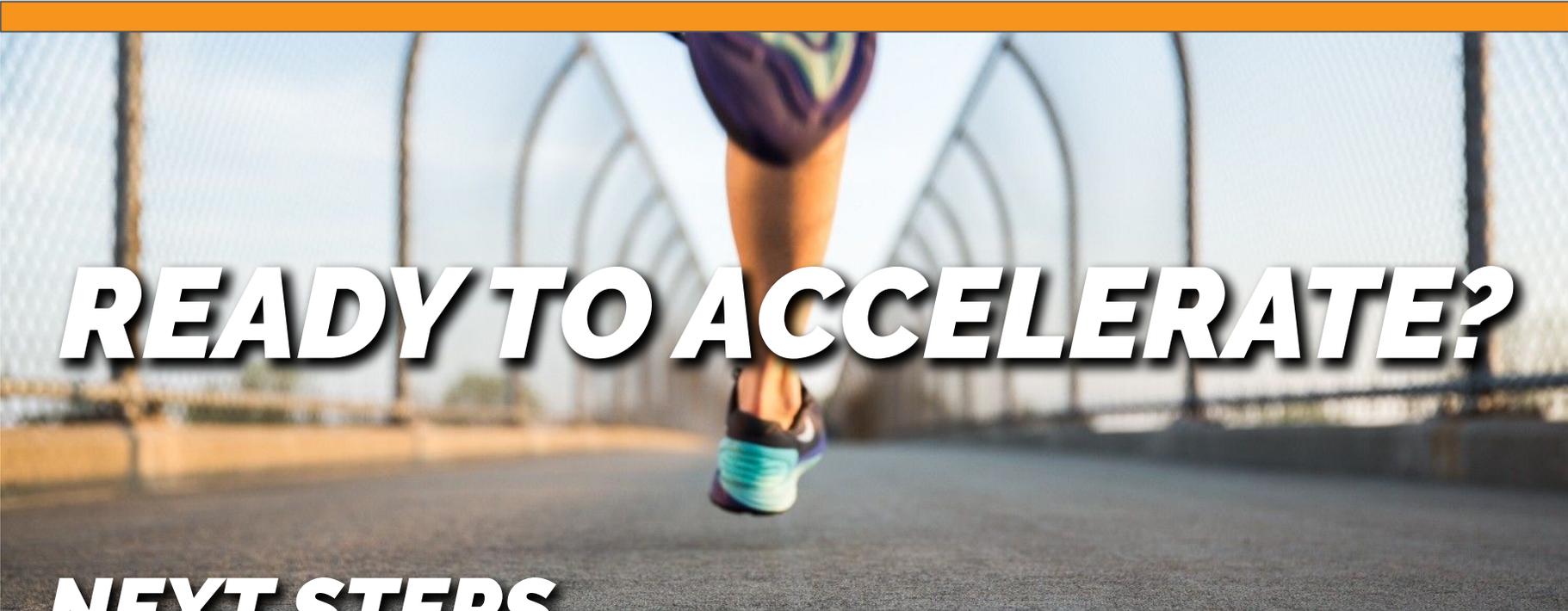
Most publishers we work with start by setting up a free access level and a paid subscription level. Some publishers want to develop a membership-style program to offer additional benefits. Other publishers are more donation-focused, appealing to the generosity of their readership.

Which approach should you use? Implement all three.

Sell paid subscriptions to your content, offer a member-level upgrade, *and* ask for donations (if applicable) at the same time.

1. Think of your paid subscriptions as your baseline income, the revenue you need to survive.
2. Member-level access appeals to those super-fans that want *everything* you produce. A member level could access special content, provide status to your members, hide ads, be able to post classifieds or events, be recognized with their comments and more.
3. At the same time, if it makes sense, you can extend the offer to donate. A percentage of your audience members will contribute to your cause if you ask them.
4. This article will give you [15 easy ways to boost revenues](#).

Next: Getting started



READY TO ACCELERATE?

NEXT STEPS

It's time to get your free registration level set up, start building your email list, and growing paid subscriptions.

The sooner you start the sooner your casual visitors will be on your email newsletter, receiving your content, and prompted to subscribe.

Not only will you be enjoying more paid subscriptions, you will also command a larger email list which sponsors love, and will pay more to be promoted on.

Need help with building out your subscription products?

[Join us for a free consult & demo](#)

We will help you figure out the best approach for your audience.

 LEAKY PAYWALL

[Get a Demo](#)