

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF A PAID
SUBSTACK NEWSLETTER

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1 Progress Summary

COMPLETED THIS WEEK

This past week was focused on pivoting to a different type of digital product offering: a paid Substack newsletter meant for the Adirondack farming community. The pivot came from the difficulty in finding a viable means of making a newsletter template. The idea came from listing the templates on my own Substack account and making it a kind of fill-in-the-blank template for my audience to fill out. I also created a logo and website page, connected to Stripe for paid subscriptions, and started finding photos.

PERCENTAGE OF PRODUCT COMPLETION

The product is 70% completed. The most time consuming part of the process was back-filling [my Substack page](#) with free content for my audience to see before committing to paying for the service. Following that, I needed to build a subscription-based newsletter posts that could be hidden behind a paywall. The plan moving forward with this newsletter is to offer a free version and paid version, with higher quality and more substance offered in the paid versions.

PROFILE PICTURE



BANNER IMAGE



2 Toolset & Workflow

WHAT PLATFORMS WERE USED THIS WEEK

The newsletter was set up on Substack, as forementioned. I also connected the account with Stripe, which is partnered with the platform to allow for paid subscription models. I opted in for sales tax and a 1.5% carbon emission payment to help the planet once I hit \$50 in subscriptions.

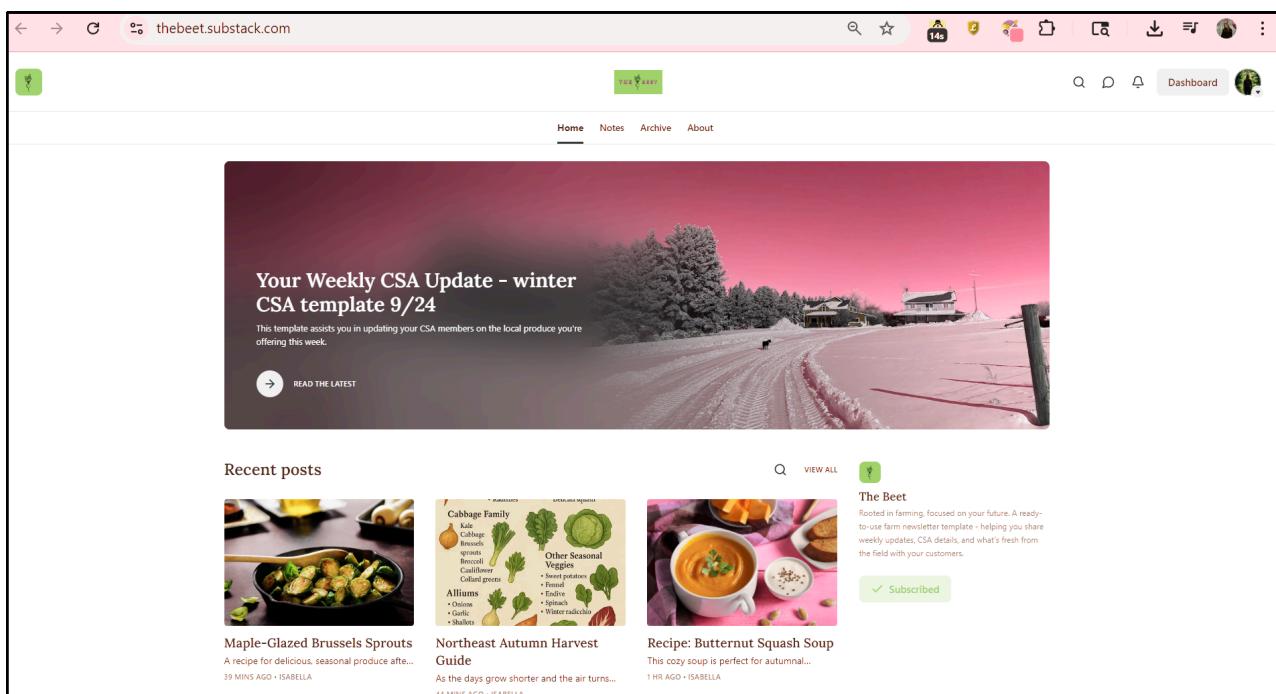
WHAT WORKED? WHAT DIDN'T?

Everything seems to be working just fine. The only thing I need to further research or test is the paid subscription, as I don't yet have paid subscribers. I am also wondering if there are codes that could be input for discounts.

NEW TOOLS OR TECHNIQUES

I started by [pre-publishing free content](#) for my current subscribers so they can see what type of content they'll be receiving in the paid version. The paid version will be implemented during phase three, as my user testers don't need to pay to test this platform for me.

SCREENSHOT OF THE SUBSTACK PAGE



3 Challenges & Problem Solving

CHALLENGES

Learning the backend of the Substack application, even though it was easy, was still a new experience. There are a lot of trial and error processes involved, especially with finding what looks aesthetically best in a simplistic newsletter. It's hard to come to terms with the fact that the newsletter can only be as customized as Substack allows.

ROAD BLOCKS, OR NONE?

There haven't been significant roadblocks besides the pivot to a [paid newsletter subscription](#).

4 User Feedback

TEST SESSIONS

User testers were some of my friends that have an existing interest in either farms, agriculture, or newsletters.

FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The feedback I received was quite positive. The user testers said that the product was clean & clear, with minimal need for change. The only thing suggested was making the fill-in brackets bold, so my audience could clearly tell what was to be input.

5 Reflection

WHAT I AM MOST PROUD OF

Back-filling content to show what kind of work I am capable of and to show that the investment in this would be a positive experience. I am proud that I was able to make up the work in a timely manner, since the original idea wasn't viable.

IMPROVEMENTS

I took into account the feedback I received from the user testers and implemented them. What I am really interested in adding is a media library for the paid subscribers. But I think that will be a separate journey in expanding the paid content bundle. I will keep the existing format of having royalty-free photos for farms to use in their newsletters.

UPCOMING OBJECTIVES

Phase 3 includes producing a marketing plan for the digital product. I have an idea of adding the link to the Substack to my existing business cards, which have a general [QR Code to my linktree](#), and pass them out at farmers' markets in my region or on farm visits for my other job.