PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

PHASE 3: REFINEMENT OF A PAID SUBSTACK NEWSLETTER

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1 Progress Summary

COMPLETED THIS WEEK

Phase 3, the final step of the design process of the digital product, is the final refinement period of the product. This is for the last edits made, the final ideas implemented, the additional features added, etc.

PERCENTAGE OF PRODUCT COMPLETION

The product is 95% completed, as my Substack page will never be 100% completed because of the nature of a paid newsletter.

CONTENT REFINEMENT

With free content being available for the inital audience, I've added some paid newsletters. The hope is that the free versions give the audience an idea on how great the paid versions will be.

I've added another type of paid feature for the audience to utilize: the long-form post. Many of the exisitng farms that have newsletters and I am in contact with, like the long-form type of newsletters. They're flowing and filled with lyrical details of running the farm and CSA details. By having a long-form type on the Substack, it shows them that they can maintain the format they love, while optimizing it for their audiences to capture and retain attention.

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 initially by pre-publishing free content for the audience, as stated previously. By also implementing paid content on the Substack page, I could test the process of it. There's a feature for the paid newsletters where you can show content up to a certain point (shown on the next page). I was able to push it to my subscribers (all 7 of them now!) by app and email.

3 Example Paid Newsletter

Last of the Harvest

A long-form template to give your audience an insider peak at what this time of year means for your farm

ISABELLA
OCT 3 · PREVIEW

READ IN APP ↗

The first days of October mark a quiet shift in rhythm across Adirondack farms. The heat of summer has passed, with nights being consistently cold now.

The wild urgency of September's harvest rush has begun to soften, and now farmers find themselves straddling two worlds: the abundance of late-season crops and the looming tasks of winter preparation.

October is a threshold. The air carries a crispness that hints at frost. Leaves ignite in color along the edges of fields, and barns fill with the last crates of cold storage crops. For farmers, this is both a season of gathering and of letting go...

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3 Challenges & Problem Solving

CHALLENGES

From the last phase, there was a question of if there could be a discount code or "giveaway for the newsletter. And in fact there is! Built into the payment tab of the application, there is a "Discounts" section. There, you can apply Special Offers, or even gift a premium membership to a subscriber. During the creation process, you can set the terms and <u>create a custom url</u> for the discount. After sending out the discount, you can check on the dashboard to see who has redeemed the discount.

5 Reflection

WHAT I AM MOST PROUD OF

That I was able to create a digital product from scratch and fill a niche need for the farmers in my region.

IMPROVEMENTS

Adding the long-format type of newsletter for the farmers to implement I think will really gain some interest. Many farms in my region already utilize Substack, but this is going to allow them to save time on this side of things during busy season, and maybe give them inspiration for the off-season.

UPCOMING OBJECTIVES

Phase 3 of 3 is now completed of the digital product design process. Now it's time to create a marketing plan to plan how to fully engage with my niche audience.