Hamburger Abendblatt

2024
Moin.
HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT

How new ways of thinking about arts audiences have boosted subscription sales at Hamburger Abendblatt

This is the story of how the culture desk at Hamburger Abendblatt successfully tried to reach greater arts audiences, turned interested culture audiences into new subscribers - and also helped to overcome some newsroom-prejudices concerning the culture desk. The success of the culture desk is now inspiring change in the wider newsroom, and we hope it will inspire you too – this is about how local journalism can benefit from a focus on readers’ needs.

Presented by Maike Schiller, Head of the Editorial Culture Team
The people of Hamburg are totally into Hamburg

What moves Hamburg is a topic in the Hamburger Abendblatt – in the printed edition as well as on abendblatt.de, also in various newsletters and podcasts

With a strong local focus, it reports on all parts of the city, the people and their stories
HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT
The number one in the north of Germany

Regional competence and well-founded reporting on national and international incidents make the HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT and abendblatt.de a leading information medium and the leading advertising marketplace in the north.

481.000 readers daily*
15.71 Mio. PI's/month (IVW)

1.357.000 user monthly**
6.94 Mio. Visits/month (IVW)
2.46 Mio. Unique User (AGOF)

79.6 %* 1 383.000 are exclusive readers!
(doesn't read Bild HH, Welt HH and Mopo)

Paid circulation (IVW 2022/Q4)
124.675 (Mo-Fr) 1 148.735 (Sa)

QUELLE: *MA TZ 2022; **B4P 2021 III, IVW MÄRZ 2022; AGOF NOVEMBER 2021. VERBREITUNGSGEBIET HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT GESAMTAUSGABE.
**ONLINE AT HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT**

From start to now

- Start abendblatt.de  
- First paid article  
- PI since 2016

- 1996
- 2009 (first in Germany)

### Yearly PI/day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PI/day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>672.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>663.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>426.669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>370.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>420.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>328.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>361.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>410.384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- First podcast was a culture podcast („Elphidility“)
PODCASTS AT HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT

4 podcasts from the culture desk
HAMBURG

City of culture

- 40 museums
- 60 theatres
- at least 100 clubs

Most popular

- Elbphilharmonie
- Kunsthalle (Caspar David Friedrich, etc.)
- Musicals (The Lion King, Hamilton...)
- Deutsches Schauspielhaus (largest theatre stage in Germany)
- The Beatles started their career at St.Pauli
- Reeperbahn Festival (80 locations, 700 events, Europe's biggest show case festival)
WHERE WE STARTED

The culture team changed in 2023
FROM "ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL“ TO LOCAL MARKETS, LOCAL AUDIENCES

From:
- **Print to online** - classic structure in departments: Articles are written and made fit to print for the newspaper
- An online-Team is preparing the content to be published online.

To:
- **Online First** - distinction between role of writer/editor and producer/channel manager
- Superdesk - distribution, quality and breaking news desk
- Team Hamburg – focus on local districts with small teams, goal is a rise in digital market penetration
- Culture, sports, business, politics – focus on certain sub-audiences
NEW STRUCTURE OF THE NEWSROOM

Superdesk

- quality management
- head of print
- editors
- photo
- Head of digital
- photo
- layout
- proof reading

Local markets
- Hamburg

Audience Team
- regional politics & economy
- regional culture
- regional sports

Happened 2023
WHAT WE DID (AND HOW)
OUR CHALLENGE

What we did

- Focused on serving **specific culture audiences**, ensuring that some of these are ‘younger’ (twenties through 40s). For each audience, identify as many ways as possible to enhance the quality of their cultural experiences and cultural lives.
- Used data (dashboard open to everybody)
- Practiced a core editorial workflow in culture that is **audience-and-digital first, print later** and (sometimes) better.
- Established a **workflow** that guarantees that reviews with **a high demand** in our readership (music, theatre) **always have priority** and should be online as soon as possible.
OUR CHALLENGE
What we did

• Turned the **culture desk into a minipublishing team** that also included key people from marketing, tech and data (need to do better in social media)

• **Went beyond content:** our miniP culture team created Abendblatt brand value through events, sponsorships and more (i.e. selling tickets)

• Identified audiences we **did not reach enough** and target them (e.g. age group from 20 to 40 -> club culture, young families -> exhibitions suitable for children)

• Modify the approach on stories/sections that are not successful yet (usually do not lead to subscriptions, do not find more than 1000 readers)

• If possible - do more follow-ups on stories that are a success
"ZUGABE": every Thursday, 5000 subscribers, 30+% opening rate, advertisement sold for every issue

- Developing the already existing newsletter

- Developed a special discounted subscription offer for newsletter subscribers and advertise exclusively via the newsletter (Just for a short term) -> still to be done

- Questionnaire to our newsletter readers combined with a prize competition to understand what they want to read about -> will do this year
WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED
at the culture desk

- We have a sharper perspective on what we do
- We work more closely with the marketing department
- We have more people at the culture desk who are with us on the same page
- We have a better appreciation in the newsroom

- Because of the numbers
## NUMBERS

culture desk subscribers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>April – Sept. 2022</th>
<th>April – Sept. 2023</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>published articles</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subs</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>+37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subs per article</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>+49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles with more than one sub</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>+32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## NUMBERS

**culture desk reach**

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published articles</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page views</td>
<td>2,210,000</td>
<td>3,950,000</td>
<td>+79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page views per article</td>
<td>2.344</td>
<td>4.575</td>
<td>+95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW WE GOT THERE

Make life easier for specific culture audiences

- **Example I**
  Advice for concert audiences on a regular basis ("What you need to know")

- **Example II**
  More than just a concert review for artists with large audiences
  *(Bruce Springsteen concert)* -> In total: more than 60 subscriptions + reach of 116.000

- **Example III**
  Caspar David Friedrich, huge exhibition at the Kunsthalle (art museum)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>article</th>
<th>user</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caspar David Friedrich: Lohnt sich die große Ausstellung? - Hamburger Abendblatt</td>
<td>30.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurator: „Bestimmte Ausstellungen müssen teils übervoll sein“ - Hamburger Abendblatt</td>
<td>23.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nachfrage zu groß: Caspar David Friedrich sorgt für Ernüchterung - Hamburger Abendblatt</td>
<td>24.553</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW WE GOT THERE

- Pop-up sub-audiences (Harry Potter)

- Practice a core editorial workflow in culture that is audience-and-digital first, print later or not at all

- You love reviews of classical concerts and theater? You got it!

- We don’t allow ourselves to be restricted by the capacity of the print edition
WHAT’S NEXT?
PLAN FOR THIS YEAR 2024

- More “online first thinking” inside and outside the culture desk
- Online commitment in the bonus agreements of other editors
- Intensify working closely with departments as sales, marketing, and distribution
- Get people on board (numbers & fun)
- Get a proper social media team
- Stop doing
- Target more specific audiences (e.g. Reeperbahnfestival, choir singers,...)
Around 40,000 people singing in choirs in Hamburg

More than 100 choirs are organized in Chorverband Hamburg

Different angles:
- Manual that answers beginner’s questions like “Which of the many choirs is right for me and why?”, “Do I have to be able to read sheet music to sing in a choir?”, “Am I too old to start singing in a choir?”
- Portraits of choirs and their leaders, from professional to strictly amateur
- Interview with a psychologist/therapist: The healing force of singing
- Listing: Most interesting choir concerts of the month

Idea 1 concert at Elbphilharmonie (2100 seats): “The Long Choir Night, presented by Hamburger Abendblatt” (ticket presale for subscribers)

Idea 2 foundation of Hamburger Abendblatt Reader’s Choir
THANKS AND TSCHÜSS

Questions? maike.schiller@funkemedien.de