

THE IRISH TIMES EXPERIMENTS ON OUR GROWTH ROADMAPS

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THE IRISH TIMES

2015

**Subscription model
launched**

.....

130,000

Subscribers

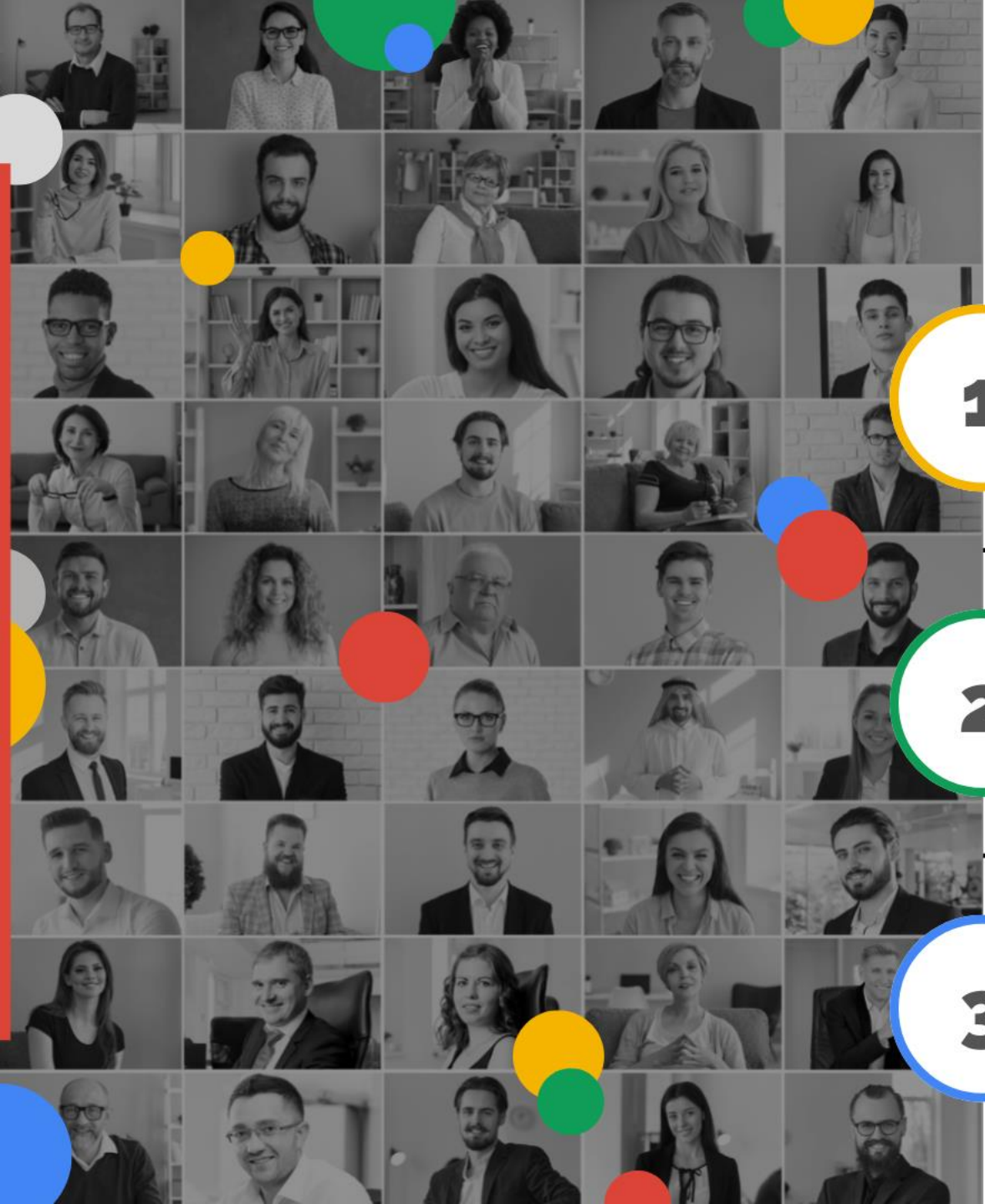
THE IRISH TIMES - INFO



CLÍONA MOONEY

**SUBSCRIPTIONS AND
READER INSIGHTS
DIRECTOR**

THE IRISH TIMES



Agenda

1

Experimental Process

What was done differently?

2

The London Experiment

Rationale, method, indicators of success

3

Benefits of Experimentation

What are the broader benefits of taking a structured approach to experimentation?

1

EXPERIMENTAL PROCESS

WHY EXPERIMENT?

1

Enables accelerated learning

An iterative approach to experimentation helps publishers test assumptions and mitigate risk in the appropriate order, driving them towards their ambitious goals.

2

Saves money

Experimentation helps guide publishers away from investing in technology that they are not sure they need, and committing resource to projects needlessly.

3

Promotes reader-centricity

The process of designing experiments forces publishers to consider reader behaviour and to prove that testing is delivering measurable and tangible benefits.

4

Builds a data-driven culture

Results can be socialised with the entire organisation, building the credibility of the process by demonstrating impact, and empowering all departments to get involved.

EXPERIMENT 101

DEFINE THE CONTEXT

- 💡 What exactly are you testing?
- 💡 What opportunity are you exploring?
- 💡 What problem are you looking to solve?

DO YOUR DISCOVERY

- 💡 How have you experimented in this area before?
- 💡 What did you learn from your results and analysis?
- 💡 What further research do you need to do before you start?

IDENTIFY THE RISKS

- 💡 What are the risks in the following areas: Value, Business, Usability, Technical.
- 💡 Who will this affect?
- 💡 How will you mitigate these risks?

SET THE PARAMETERS

- 💡 Use the hypothesis format: if.. (variable), then.. (result), because... (rationale).
- 💡 Consider factors such as target groups, control groups and sample sizes.
- 💡 When will you do this and how long it will last?

CHOOSE YOUR METRICS

- 💡 What are your main metrics?
- 💡 What will your secondary metrics be?
- 💡 Who is going to measure them, and can you do it?

WORK OUT WHAT'S NEXT

- 💡 What are your success thresholds?
- 💡 What follow up analysis will you need to do?
- 💡 How will you socialise the results?

SHIFT IN APPROACH

Pre-Programme

Previous approach was:



Ad hoc and siloed

Experiments took place within particular departments and with no regularity or system.



Unstructured and inconsistent experimental approach

Not tight with parameters, dates, and objectives.



No real experiments culture

Communication was limited about learnings, successes and failures.

Post-Programme

Subs Academy approach:



Defined methodology

Experiments are now developed through a robust methodology which considers variables, parameters, metrics etc.



Forward planning

Through the use of a 12 Month Action Plan (12MAP), a selection of experiments, having gone through a prioritisation process, are being scheduled for the following months.



Collaborative and cross-functional

Experiment teams created from across different departments to work together, from defining the experiment parameters right through to final results.

2

LONDON EXPERIMENT

LONDON EXPERIMENT



North Star outcome

Appeal to a diverse and global audience, growing monthly users to x million per month.



Hypothesis of London experiment

If we target relevant content to an audience of Irish people in London, we will increase readership and engagement from London.



Irish population

There is a significant Irish population living in the UK (370k Irish nationals).



European perspective

As the only English-speaking country in the EU, Irish publications have a unique opportunity to provide a European perspective on world events.



Acquisition and engagement

Targeting readers in London with relevant content could increase subscriber acquisition and engagement through an improved value proposition.

THE EXPERIMENT

Published **eight “Irish in London”** articles along with **eight control articles** over a 4-week period.

Both the London and Control articles received identical post-publication treatment along with **paid promotion through social channels**.

Observed the impact of London content on **the traffic and engagement levels of readers in London**.

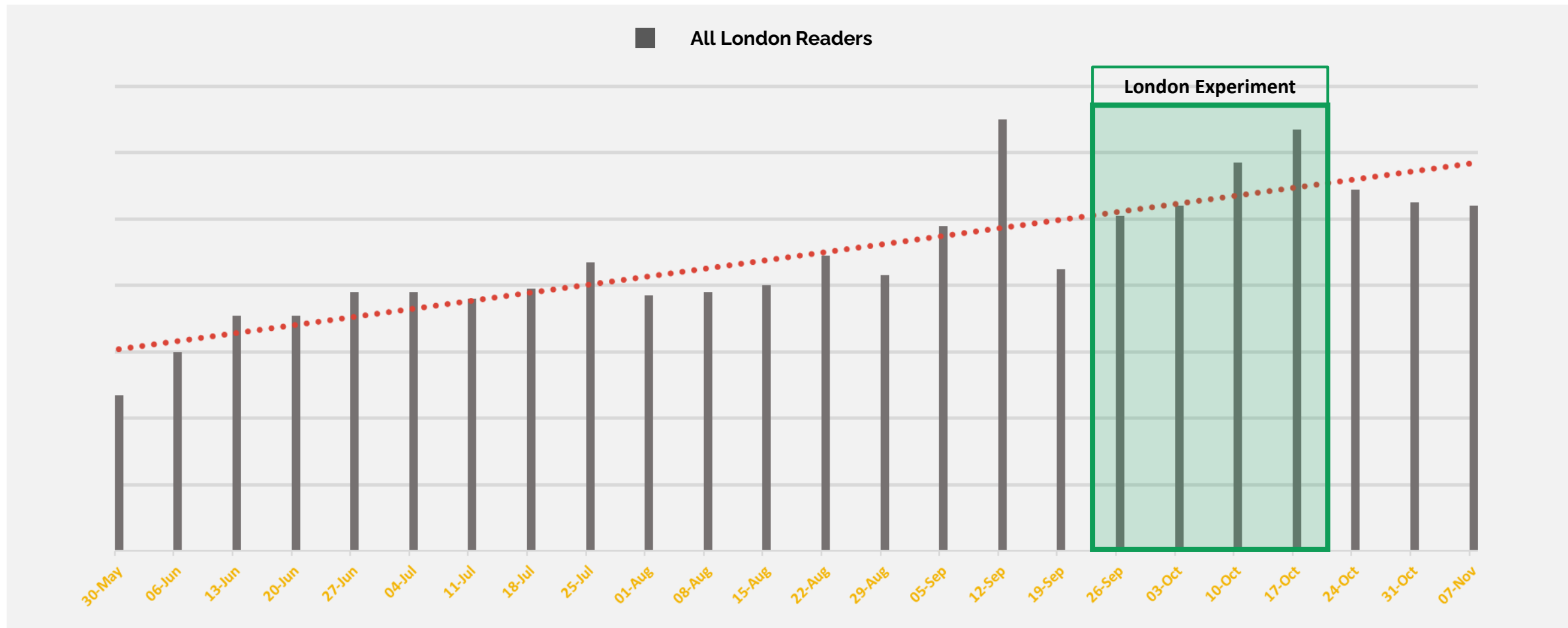
THE IRISH TIMES - LONDON EXPERIMENT



THE OUTCOME

- 💡 London content **drives more pageviews and engagement from London readers** than regular content and is most popular with London readers.
- 💡 Promoting **London articles to London readers is more than twice as efficient** as promoting non-London articles.
- 💡 There was a **spike in overall London readership** during the experiment.

EVOLUTION OF LONDON READERS



3

BENEFITS OF EXPERIMENTATION

BENEFITS OF EXPERIMENTATION



THE IRISH TIMES - BENEFITS OF EXPERIMENTATION

“Experimentation has helped us **learn what does and doesn't work** with our audience....
Don't be afraid of the term 'fail'. Choose instead to become a learning organisation.”

JOHN KUNDERT,
CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER, FINANCIAL TIMES

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BENEFITS OF EXPERIMENTATION

1

Easier to Communicate and Secure Buy In

Risk is alleviated by breaking down initiatives into manageable, bitesize experiments which informs future development with concrete results which can be socialised within the organisation.

2

Cross Functional Teams

By their cross cutting nature, experiments typically require the representation of different skillsets from across an organisation creating greater camaraderie, synergy, efficiency and, ultimately, well-rounded and definitive results and outcomes.

3

Structured Approach

Following a robust and structured methodology ensures that there is certainty around the experiment's hypothesis, variables, objectives, duration and metrics.

Most importantly, it guarantees that there is clarity about what is being tested (and what's not!)

4

Reader Insights

The experimentation process serves to broaden the understanding of readers and customers, ensuring that impactful decisions are made which enhance the customer experience and content offered.

THANK YOU!



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