

The Post and Courier Achieves Key Subscription, Retention, & Revenue Targets with BlueConic

About The Post and Courier

The Post and Courier (P&C) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper that serves as the primary news source for Charleston, South Carolina, and the surrounding areas, including Columbia, Greenville, Myrtle Beach, Pee Dee, York County, Beaufort County, and North Augusta. With a proud legacy of high-quality journalism, P&C consistently seeks new ways to better understand its digital audience and drive sustainable revenue growth.

As part of this effort, P&C secured a grant from the Google News Initiative (GNI) to enhance first-party data collection and gain deeper audience insights. Their objectives were clear: fuel subscription growth and boost retention to drive revenue.



Challenges

Despite offering high-quality content, The Post and Courier struggled to fully realize its digital revenue potential. Previously, the company relied on data management platforms (DMPs) like Cxsense and Piano. While these platforms supported basic data aggregation and audience segmentation, they fell short in unifying and activating customer data across channels—preventing P&C from gaining deep audience insights and delivering personalized engagement at scale.

To overcome these challenges, P&C turned to BlueConic for a more sophisticated, integrated approach to first-party data. Their primary goals, established in partnership with GNI, were to:

- **Boost article engagement:** Increase the share of users consuming 5 or more articles per month by 30%.
- **Improve newsletter performance:** Increase newsletter click-through rate (CTR) by 33%.
- **Drive digital advertising revenue:** Increase digital advertising revenue to represent 25% of overall revenue.
- **Reduce subscriber churn:** Reduce subscriber churn by 35%, with an aspirational goal of achieving an even greater reduction.

Solutions

BlueConic gave The Post and Courier the power to turn audience data into growth opportunities. By unifying customer data and pairing it with the tools to segment and activate that data in real time, P&C could deliver more personalized content, trigger timely calls to action, and drive meaningful engagement. The result? Smarter strategies, stronger connections, and measurable revenue impact.

Here's how BlueConic helped P&C overcome key challenges and unlock new levels of growth:

- **Robust, multi-dimensional segmentation:** With BlueConic's advanced segment builder, P&C was able to create more than 400 segments based on value, affinity, engagement dimensions, and other key attributes for content and acquisition campaigns. Using BlueConic connections, these segments could then be automatically sent to GAM, Google Ads, Meta, LinkedIn, and Campaign Monitor for immediate activation.
- **Dynamic content recommendations:** P&C was also able to leverage these segmentation capabilities to create dynamic, behavior-driven content recommendations tailored to individual subscribers. By analyzing user behavior, P&C personalized the content experience, ensuring subscribers saw the most relevant articles, leading to deeper engagement and more frequent visits.
- **Personalized newsletter signups:** To convert non-subscribers into newsletter readers, P&C used to create targeted dialogues to personalize sign-up forms.

During Tropical Storm Debby, for example, P&C tested seven distinct form variations, each triggered at different scroll depths, with customized copy and calls-to-action. This personalized approach sparked higher audience engagement and a significant spike in newsletter signups. P&C is also currently testing open-time email recommendations in their newsletters to directly support their CTR objectives.

- **Unified promotional pricing:** BlueConic enabled P&C to synchronize on-site and off-site promotional pricing for the same audiences, ensuring a consistent offer across both their website and paid social ads. This seamless approach helped improve the customer experience and drive more conversions.
- **On-site churn prevention and retention dialogues:** BlueConic helped P&C reduce churn by delivering personalized, real-time messaging to subscribers at risk of canceling. These included prompts for renewal reminders for those with upcoming expiration dates, those without auto-renewal, and those with failed credit card charges. By addressing subscribers' pain points directly through relevant CTAs, P&C effectively mitigated churn.

Results

The Post and Courier's partnership with BlueConic led to significant, measurable improvements across all of their key goals:

- **Increased article recirculation performance:** Through personalized content recommendations based on

real-time data, P&C saw a 115% increase in content recirculation click-through-rate and increased the total share of readers consuming 5 or more articles in a 30-day period by 14.2%.

- **Improved newsletter signup performance:** P&C's personalized newsletter sign-up strategies resulted in 1,260 new subscribers to their Hurricane Wire newsletter during the Tropical Storm Debby coverage period. This accounted for 64% of all Hurricane Wire newsletter signups during that time, far exceeding expectations for newsletter acquisition. These strategies also contributed to a notable 13% increase in the newsletter click-through rate (CTR).
- **Boosted digital advertising revenue:** Leveraging segments based on user topic affinities in paid social campaigns, P&C has made significant progress, achieving 9% of its revenue goal to date while driving stronger campaign performance.
- **Reduced Churn:** By personalizing retention dialogues and targeting at-risk subscribers, P&C achieved a 40% reduction in churn, exceeding their target of 35% and solidifying P&C's base of loyal, paying customers.

BlueConic not only empowered The Post and Courier to make measurable strides toward their ambitious objectives but also positioned them for continued success in a rapidly evolving digital media landscape. As a key next step, P&C will leverage the valuable insights into audience preferences gained from the platform to refine their digital advertising strategy, make their ads more relevant and engaging, and drive growth in their digital advertising revenue while maintaining overall ad revenue levels.

