

CASE STUDY

HOW IGNORING 90% OF READERS GOT AMEDIA **MORE YOUNG** SUBSCRIBERS

Amedia's boldest experiment didn't involve new content formats or platform tricks. It simply involved measuring the right thing — and letting that change everything else.

Amedia is a dominant force in Norwegian media. With over 110 newspapers, 1,000 reporters, and 829,000 subscribers — 580,000 of them digital-only — it reaches more than two million people each day.

But for all that reach, one number stood out. Not in a good way.

They had more subscribers over 80 than under 40.

This wasn't just a quirky statistic. It was the symptom of a deeper problem: despite years of effort and digital transformation, Amedia's younger audience wasn't growing.



WE HAVE FOCUSED ON SUBSCRIBERS UNDER 40 FOR YEARS — WHY DON'T WE SUCCEED?

— Janne Rygh, Editorial Content Developer, Amedia



This simple, honest question marked the beginning of a radical shift.

STOP CHASING EVERYONE. START PLEASEING THE RIGHT SOMEONE.

At the heart of the experiment was a deceptively simple idea: instead of trying to please all subscribers equally, what if the newsroom focused only on the ones they were struggling to reach?

"What if we ignore the old folks and let solely our subscribers under 40 decide?"

This question wasn't just a provocation — it became a strategic commitment. Amedia's editorial leadership gave two newspapers, Halden Arbeiderblad and Romerikes Blad, the green light to test what would happen if they optimized exclusively for under-40 subscribers.

Everything would be built around that focus — from metrics to content selection.

FROM KPI CONFUSION TO CLARITY — POWERED BY KILKAYA

To support the experiment, Amedia turned to Kilkaya, their real-time content analytics platform. But this wasn't just about tracking more data. It was about tracking the right data — and letting that shape editorial behavior.

Most analytics tools are built around total traffic and general engagement. Kilkaya works differently.

It has a flexible data model, allowing each publisher to define what matters most:

- What events are logged

- How audiences are segmented
- What goals the dashboards visualize
- And which metrics each journalist sees on a daily basis

Kilkaya believes tools should adapt to the publisher — not the other way around.

In this case, that meant creating dashboards that showed only the behavior of readers under 40. All other signals were filtered out.

The dataset was smaller — but infinitely more valuable.

The project teams also added specific widgets to track:

- The current share of under-40 readers
- Which stories had the most young readers live
- Whether they hit their young reader targets each day

This reconfiguration made the dashboards a kind of editorial compass, pointing everyone in the same direction.



YOUNG READERS ARE IMPATIENT. THEREFORE KILKAYA IS OUR MOST IMPORTANT WHEN TRYING TO GET THEM TO READ.

— Gunnar Paulsen, Front Page Editor, Halden Arbeiderblad

THREE THINGS THEY LEARNED

1

THE NEWSROOM CHANGED DIRECTION — AND DIDN'T LOOK BACK

The biggest transformation wasn't in the data — it was in the newsroom culture.

Before, a journalist could hit their KPIs by appealing to loyal, older readers with familiar topics. But now, the “green numbers” in Kilkaya only turned green if **the under-40s were reading**.

Reporters began asking new questions: “Will this reach young people?”, “Is the headline appealing to them?”, “Are the images making it easier to connect?”

To succeed, journalists had to write with a **different mental picture of the reader**. They sought out younger people to focus stories around. They chose photos of young women rather than older men. They found language that resonated with a digital-first generation.

Even experienced writers, like **Thor Fremmerlid (59)**, saw their habits shift: **“I have had to leave old habits behind – but I can tell that it's working!”**

What had started as an external change in dashboards became an internal change in behavior.

WHAT YOU MEASURE IS WHAT YOU GET

Amedia's internal mantra is simple: **“The more you read, the less you churn.”** But they realized something more profound during this project:

What you choose to measure determines what kind of journalism you produce.

By shifting their KPIs toward young reader engagement — and by using a tool like Kilkaya to surface only those signals — the newsroom naturally began to change its instincts, priorities, and decisions.

It wasn't a gimmick. It wasn't a campaign. It was a new way of working.

And it delivered.

2

THE OLDER READERS STAYED — AND MANY APPRECIATED THE SHIFT

One of the risks going into the experiment was losing the current audience. After all, older subscribers made up the bulk of the readership.

But the opposite happened. Amedia saw no wave of cancellations. There was no backlash.

Instead, **older readers continued to read — and often enjoyed the more streamlined, visually driven, and sharply written stories** that were designed to win attention in a crowded newsfeed.

“Our subscribers over 40 do not abandon us — they love the content we provide them.”

The lesson? Making a product better for one group doesn't have to make it worse for others. In fact, editorial clarity often benefits everyone.

3

THE YOUNG AUDIENCE RESPONDED — BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

Perhaps the most exciting result came in Romerikes Blad, where the share of readers under 40 rose from **6% to 13%** — more than doubling in a short period.

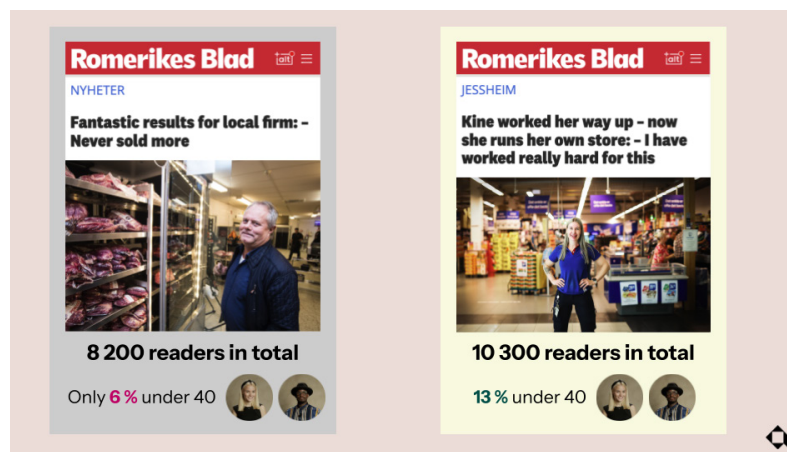
These weren't just fleeting clicks. These were engaged, returning readers, forming habits around a local newspaper that suddenly felt more relevant to them.

And while the total audience didn't explode, **the composition of the audience changed** — precisely the goal the project had set out to achieve.

“

FOCUSING ON YOUNG SUBSCRIBERS IS THE SMARTEST THING WE HAVE DONE IN A LONG TIME — IT HAS MADE OUR PRODUCT BETTER OVERALL

— Mads Yngve Storvik, Editor in Chief, Romerikets Blad



A ROADMAP FOR ANY NEWSROOM

This project proved that young readers are not unreachable. But they won't engage with a product built for someone else. To reach them, publishers need more than good intentions

They need:

- A clear editorial focus
- Tools that support that focus
- And the discipline to measure what matters