# Introducing Personas To Our Newsroom

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# The value of personified audience data

- → **Specifies** who are the audiences we care about
- → **Describes** what audiences need from WSJ
- → **Informs** whether our coverage is reaching those audiences
- → **Guides** where to experiment with coverage

# Constructing our primary audience personas



Stakeholder Interviews



Data Modeling



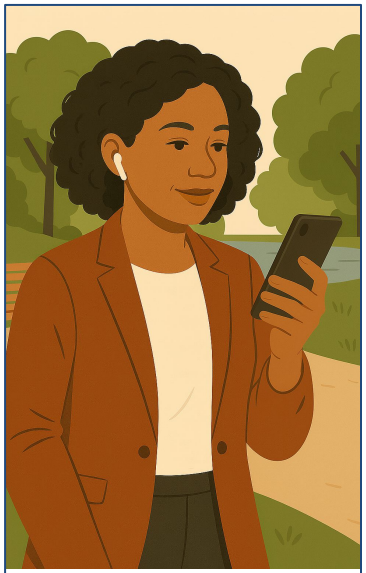
Survey Development



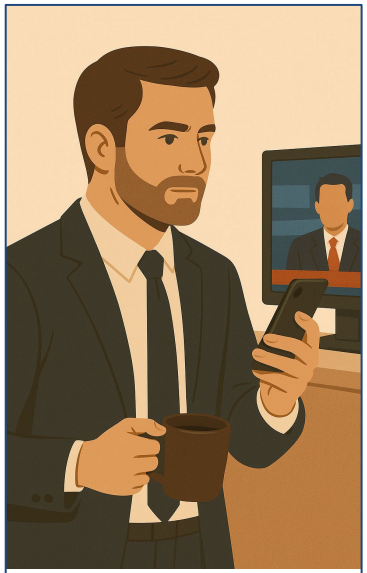
Audience Profiling

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# Five priority audience personas



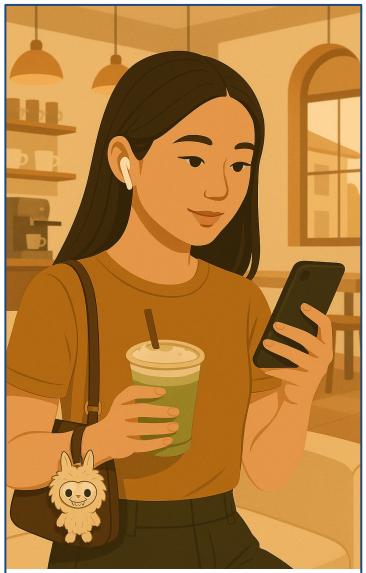
**Explorers**
*Moderately engaged*



**Pre-Suites**
*Most engaged*



**Current Core**
*Longstanding subs*



**Next Gen**
*Cohort of the future*



**C-Suite**
*Niche and loyal*

📷: ChatGPT

# What we know about them

| Explorers | Pre-Suites | Current Core | Next Gen | C-Suite |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Educated millennials charting their own path.**<br><br>As the most socially motivated segment, they pursue success beyond just career.<br><br>As moderate news readers, they'll be drawn to the Journal's ability to help them build credibility with peers while fueling their unique path to personal and professional growth. | **Early to mid-career professionals striving for higher status.**<br><br>Avid news enthusiasts, willing to pay for news that gives a professional edge. Above all else, they value being first-to-know.<br><br>As habitual news readers, they'll be drawn to the Journal for its ability to provide trustworthy analysis, insight, and applicability. | **High-achieving intellectuals, late career or retired, with innate interest in business and finance.**<br><br>Their focus is on continuing to learn, spending time with loved ones, and reaping the rewards of their hard work.<br><br>With an innate interest in business and finance, they'll appreciate the Journal's ability to expand their intellectual horizons while being a reliable source for financial intel. | **Readers under 30 or students seeking to grow in their careers.**<br><br>Intellectually curious, eager to understand the forces shaping business, technology and culture, and motivated by impact and ambition.<br><br>They engage with news in formats like vertical video and audio, and they'll value the Journal's authority, voice, and connection to the professional world in a noisy digital landscape. | **Decision-makers at the top of their organizations, who value strategic foresight.**<br><br>These globally connected readers value sharp, agenda-setting reporting. They use WSJ for exclusive insights, market-moving news and context.<br><br>Selective but loyal readers, they turn to WSJ to save them time, provide trusted intelligence and deliver consistency in a significantly changed media landscape. |

# Pre-Suites & Explorers



📷: ChatGPT

| News Engagement | Motivation | What they want from WSJ |
|---|---|---|
| **Extremely engaged** with the news. Visit trusted news websites **several times a day**. Morning is their prime time.<br><br>Very likely to **pay for exclusive content** and extra news products | **Making it to the top of their profession and making more money** *(very career-oriented)*<br><br>**Feeling more powerful and redefining what success looks like** *(like being a pioneer)* | Help me get **in-depth insights** and **advance my career**<br><br>*Engaging formats include...* **Q&As, solutions angles, advice, video, profiles** |



📷: ChatGPT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mostly consume news and information on **mobile**<br><br>Very engaged on **social** and with **influencers** | **Learning and being in the know** *(more likely to pay extra for products that help them)*<br><br>**Charting their own paths** *(cares about self-expression, community and creativity)* | Help me stay informed on **global and national news**<br><br>*Engaging formats include...* **Human-led stories, audio, interactives** |

# Operationalizing the data

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# The persona scores are in the newsroom dashboard

- We moved away from raw pageviews to focus on four contextual metrics: Subscriber Interest, Subscriber Engagement, Purposeful Reach, and Conversion Rate
- With personas, we added an additional layer where we map our individual U.S. paid subscribers to one of these five cohorts.
- Our editors have the context they need, answering the most critical question in our newsroom: Did this story actually reach the readers we meant it for?

| . | Headline | Explorers Interest | Pre-Suites Interest | Current Core Interest | Next Gen Interest | C-Suite Interest |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | The Billionaire Whose Ships Are Braving Missiles in the Strait of Hormuz | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
|  | What Young Workers Are Doing to AI-Proof Themselves | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
|  | Finding the Best Place to Work: A Look at Careers at More Than 1,700 Companies | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
|  | Should You Take a Statin? A 10-Minute Scan Can Help You Decide | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
|  | 4 Financial Scams Targeting Seniors to Watch For | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 |

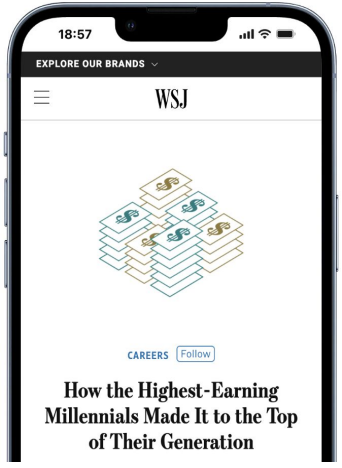
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# How we use this new data set

- Our success metric (subscriber engagement) isn’t changing. Persona scores are giving us **more context.**
- As always, this audience data is **directional**, not prescriptive.
- **Not** every story should serve every audience cohort.
- **Focus on the needs** of these audiences rather than their age or gender.
- Test assumptions and **hypotheses** about our audiences.

# Shared needs, not ‘target’ demographics

The financial and economic challenges **facing different demographics** resonate far wider than the generation we’re writing about. We do often see strong interest from this group, but **reader needs are similar across cohorts: Show me others’ economic experiences**—including ones which may help future-proof my own life.



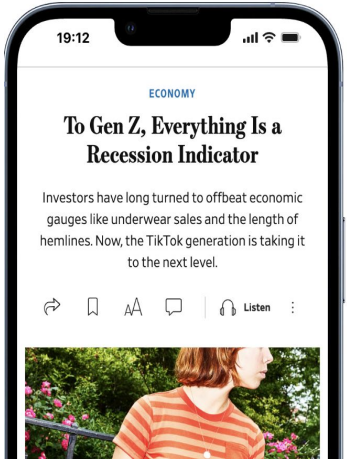

*Next Gen read data dive on millennial wealth*

| | |
|---|---|
| Explorers: | 4 |
| Pre-Suites: | 5 |
| Current Core: | 3 |
| Next Gen: | 4 |
| C-Suites: | 4 |




*Explorers read retirement vignettes*

| | |
|---|---|
| Explorers: | 5 |
| Pre-Suites: | 4 |
| Current Core: | 5 |
| Next Gen: | 4 |
| C-Suites: | 4 |




*Pre-suites read Gen-Z’s recession gauges*

| | |
|---|---|
| Explorers: | 3 |
| Pre-Suites: | 4 |
| Current Core: | 4 |
| Next Gen: | 4 |
| C-Suites: | 3 |

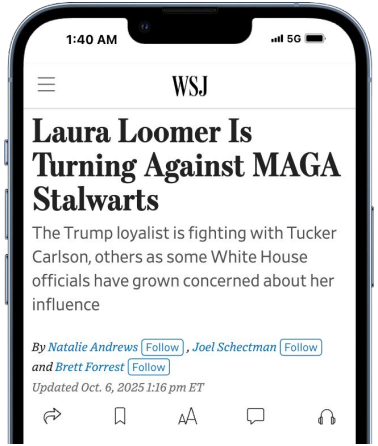



*Everyone wants to argue about who had it harder*

| | |
|---|---|
| Explorers: | 5 |
| Pre-Suites: | 5 |
| Current Core: | 4 |
| Next Gen: | 5 |
| C-Suites: | 4 |

# Benefits of covering people & personal angles

Political **profiles** have broad appeal, but they're an **especially effective entry point** for reaching our **Explorers** and **C-Suites** audiences.

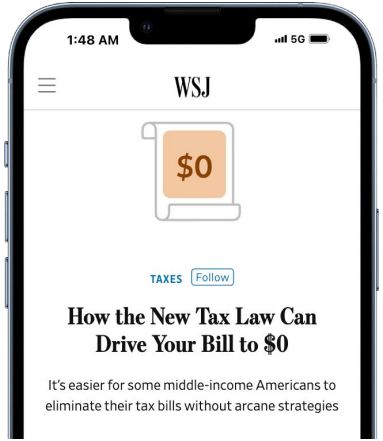



| | |
|---|---|
| Explorers: | 5 |
| Pre-Suites: | 4 |
| Current Core: | 5 |
| Next Gen: | 4 |
| C-Suites: | 5 |

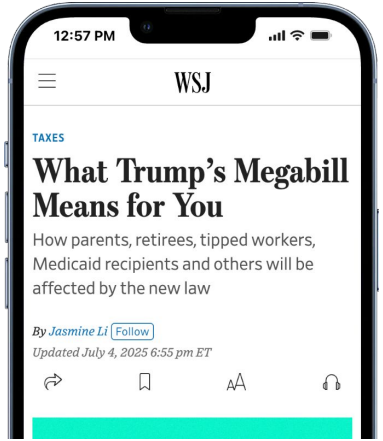



| | |
|---|---|
| Explorers: | 3 |
| Pre-Suites: | 2 |
| Current Core: | 3 |
| Next Gen: | 2 |
| C-Suites: | 3 |

**Next Gen** audiences respond more to policy stories that break down **how specific policies will impact them** than to less personal "what to know" explainers.



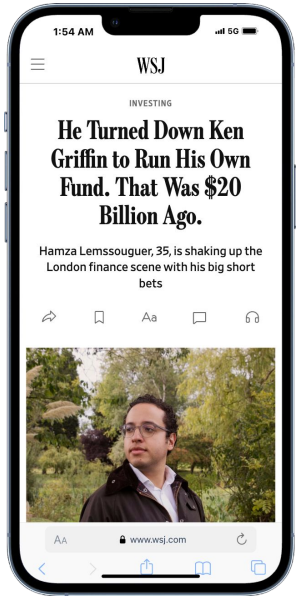

| | |
|---|---|
| Explorers: | 4 |
| Pre-Suites: | 5 |
| Current Core: | 4 |
| Next Gen: | 5 |
| C-Suites: | 4 |




| | |
|---|---|
| Explorers: | 5 |
| Pre-Suites: | 4 |
| Current Core: | 4 |
| Next Gen: | 5 |
| C-Suites: | 4 |

# Success stories engage Pre-Suites in every format

**Solutions-oriented** pieces engage all of our personas, particularly for our career-focused Pre-Suites who prioritize their own success, and this holds true **across all formats**.




**Profile**
**Pre-Suites engaged time: 5**




**Graphic**
**Pre-Suites engaged time: 5**




**Video**
**Pre-Suites engaged time: 5**




**Corporate Strategy**
**Pre-Suites engaged time: 5**

# More initiatives focused on specific personas

- Empowering the newsroom with new tools and investing heavily in visual-first stories to pull in our Next Gen and Explorer cohorts.

- Doubling down on the coverage our lighter readers respond to, such as wellness, personal finance, careers, and the intersection of politics and culture.

- Repackaging our most ambitious journalism into different formats (e.g., reporter-led video, data-led charts) to reach more personas and extend the shelf life of our reporting.

# Being truly audience-first

Priority One

## Think first, foremost, and always about the reader.

## Build undeniable daily habits.

Relentlessly push our understanding of reader motivations to create products that integrate seamlessly into their lives.

## People subscribe, not demographics.

Build lasting loyalty by solving for specific needs rather than broad statistical categories.

# Thank you!

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