



How Metro UK Uses Newsletter Personalization to Drive Engagement

The Rebooting Webinar Summary – April 23, 2025

Hosted by Brian Morrissey of The Rebooting and sponsored by Marigold, this webinar explores how Metro UK transformed its newsletter strategy in response to decreasing search and social traffic.

Facing challenges from Google algorithm changes, AI search summaries, TikTok trends, and data privacy shifts like Apple Mail Privacy Protection, Metro UK has leaned heavily into email personalization as a reliable, owned channel.

Nikki Perry, Director of Customer Success at Marigold, and Sophie Laughton, Newsletter Editor & Emily Shackleton, Product Specialist at Metro UK, walked through using Sailthru's personalization engine to launch daily personalized newsletters (Horoscopes, Football, and TV). These newsletters deliver content tailored to users' interests and behavior with minimal editorial lift, and they're outperforming traditional newsletters significantly both in growth and engagement.

The strategy? 🧠 Collect zero-party and behavioral data, keep onboarding simple, use smart automation, and turn fans into superfans 🌟

Want to watch the replay yourself? Here's the [link](#).

Key Takeaways:

Market Shifts & Strategic Response

- Search & social traffic is declining due to:
 - Google algorithm changes
 - AI-generated search summaries
 - Behavior shifts toward platforms like TikTok
- Newsletters offer a direct, owned channel to connect with audiences.
- Apple & Google privacy updates (e.g., Mail Privacy Protection, cookie deprecation) are making behavioral data harder to access, zero-party data is now critical.

Personalization Strategy

- Metro launched personalized newsletters for Horoscopes, Football, and TV.
- Used preference-based onboarding (e.g., birthday, favorite team, TV shows).
- Personalization includes:
 - Behavioral data (what users read)
 - Declared preferences (what users say they like)
 - Real-time filtering (e.g., removing read content)
- “Just ask” model: Instead of guessing, Metro directly asks readers about preferences.

Engagement & Performance

- CTR of 24–50% on personalized newsletters- far above industry averages.
- High open rates from habit-forming newsletters (e.g., daily horoscopes).
- One-tap interactions (vs. multi-step forms) drove much higher preference completions.

Operational Wins

- Automation via Sailthru allows personalization with zero added editorial lift.
- Re-engagement flows prompt inactive users to re-select interests or adjust preferences.
- Only one editor writes horoscopes- proof that personalization doesn’t require big teams.

Growth Strategy

- Cross-promotions inside newsletters (e.g., “Hey Sagittarius! Want your daily horoscope?”) drive multi-newsletter signups.
- Focus is on activating existing fans, easier and cheaper than acquiring new ones.
- New content verticals (like puzzles or soaps) are next in line for personalization.

Watch Outs

- Don’t over-personalize hard news, risk of filter bubbles is real.
- Don’t use personalized send times for breaking news, it must be timely.