



Kickstarting a community on Substack

*For a publisher getting started with a
passion project*

[Start writing](#)

Step 1: Customize your publication

There are a few pages and emails that you should customize to communicate all the important things about your publication. All of these adjustments can be made on your Settings page.

❑ **One-line description**

Your logo should be square, at least 256 x 256 pixels, with a transparent background. It's small, more like an avatar, so aim for clear, crisp lines and not too much detail. Extend this logo aesthetic to your cover photo on your welcome page and wordmark on the top of your publication home page. [Canva](#) or [Looka](#) are great free tools to create visual elements. [Learn more.](#)

❑ **About page**

The About page tells new readers who you are, what you write about, and why they should subscribe. It's a place to concisely show off your writing voice and style, plus establish credibility with your readers. [Learn more.](#)

❑ **Welcome email**

When someone signs up for your list, they'll receive this email welcoming them and setting the stage. Use this space to highlight posts from your archive, solicit a direct reply from your new subscriber to introduce themselves, and explain to readers how to download the Substack app to read your publication on the go. [Learn more.](#)

❑ **Publication theme**

You can personalize the color, layout, and font styles for your publication. [Learn more.](#)

Step 2: Find your first subscribers

It's time to spread the word and find your first subscribers! Here are some steps to consider as you find your first readers.

- ❑ **Link to your publication everywhere**
Add your Substack URL to your email signature, personal website, and social media bios. On social media, pin a post about your Substack.
- ❑ **Add Subscribe buttons to your first posts**
In your first post—and every post!—use buttons and email headers and footers to ask readers to comment and share. Be sure you have a subscribe buttons in the top quarter of your post. These buttons can empower existing readers to take action and help your work travel further. [Learn more.](#)
- ❑ **Connect to Twitter**
We'll send an email to Substack readers who follow you on Twitter when you publish your first post. [Learn more.](#)
- ❑ **Email your closest supporters**
Don't be shy. Personally email or text a link to your first post to friends, coworkers, and acquaintances with a note that you've started a Substack.
- ❑ **Post on social media**
Post on social media—Twitter, Facebook, [Instagram](#), LinkedIn, TikTok, or YouTube—when you start your Substack and whenever you publish new posts.
- ❑ **Build your network**
Find someone whose work you admire and write a short (no more than 3-5 sentences) cold email or DM. Introduce yourself and tell them why you admire their work. No need to make a specific ask on your first contact, just start a conversation. [Learn more.](#)
- ❑ **Add tags**
Tagging your publication with keywords helps others discover your writing from search. You can add up to three tags and change them at any time. [Learn more.](#)

Step 3: Keep growing

There is a strong correlation between posting frequency and publication growth. If you want to keep growing, you've got to keep going with your writing and invest in collaborations with other Substack writers.

- ❑ **Publish consistently—ideally weekly**
Each new post you publish gives existing readers a reason to share your work and new readers a signal that they might bump into. Our data team recommends targeting one post a week as a benchmark if you want to grow your audience. The format type doesn't matter as much as this consistency. Your weekly post doesn't have to be a lengthy essay; it could be a short post, an audio note, or a discussion thread. [Learn more.](#)
- ❑ **Turn on Recommendations**
Endorsing and being endorsed by Substack writers you love, using Recommendations, is the most powerful tool for growth on Substack. This human-powered system helps writers suggest other writers to their readers via the subscribe flow, on their home pages, and in automated emails. Writers who make a recommendation are three times as likely to be recommended in return. [Learn more.](#)
- ❑ **Collaborate with other writers**
Guest posts, guest features, Q&As, and interviews can help you tap into new audiences. Collaborations not only encourage the discovery of great writing but are an opportunity for writers to form connections in a pursuit that can feel solitary at times. [Learn more.](#)



“I think it is easy to be like, “oh, this little digital newsletter.” For me, though, I spend hours each week reading articles, paying attention to my surroundings, all to wrap into the format of my weekly newsletter. So going paid was never really a question for me; it is part of how I am paid as a writer.”

—Marlee Grace, Monday Monday

Great writing is valuable

Consider turning on paid subscriptions. Writers have found success with a variety of approaches, including offering everything for free and putting everything behind a paywall. Your true fans will be excited to support your work, even if they don't get anything extra. [Learn more.](#)