Iașul nostru

CASE

STUDY

From Newsletters to Instagram: Reaching Younger Audiences Where They Are

IN SHORT

Iașul Nostru expanded from its newsletter roots to Instagram, using visual storytelling to reach 18–34-year-olds. The project strengthened the outlet's brand identity, boosted engagement, and clarified how to connect effectively with different audience segments.

ABOUT THE NEWS OUTLET

Iașul Nostru was founded in 2021 as a newsletter-first community-focused publication based in Iași, Romania. It delivers clear and civic-minded local reporting — blending practical updates, cultural highlights, and stories of everyday citizens. The platform aims to build a more informed, connected, and empathetic community.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To expand Iașul Nostru's reach by establishing a strong Instagram presence, developing a consistent visual identity, and engaging younger audiences through creative and data-driven storytelling.

IMPLEMENTED SOLUTIONS

The team worked with two national social media editors and a local design agency to create content templates and a posting strategy. Using Canva prototypes and analytics-based refinements, they launched carousel posts, stories, and visual infographics, aligning each with feedback from followers and newsletter surveys.

Transitions

WHY THIS PROJECT?

Iașul Nostru sought to explore Instagram as a method for spurring growth and increasing engagement. Recognizing the platform's growing influence — especially among younger audiences aged 18-34 who primarily consume news through social media — the team aimed to test how visual storytelling and strategic content distribution on Instagram could enhance engagement, strengthen brand identity, and extend the outlet's impact beyond the newsletter format.

HOW DID APPLYING DESIGN THINKING PRINCIPLES HELP?

Iașul Nostru consulted external experts and refined its approach based on audience feedback. The team consulted two social media editors from major independent Romanian outlets, who contributed to the creation of a focused strategy and a content calendar. This collaboration helped optimize time and resources. Additionally, Iașul Nostru partnered with a local design agency to prototype Instagram carousels, developing four or five adaptable post templates in Canva. These were continuously refined based on performance metrics and feedback from followers.

DID IAȘUL NOSTRU'S APPROACH CHANGE ENGAGEMENT WITH ITS AUDIENCE IN ANY WAY?

The team harnessed insights from an annual newsletter survey, where about a third of respondents said they wanted more Instagram content. This feedback played a major role in the decision to ramp up activity on the platform. By focusing on visual storytelling and trying out a variety of post types, like carousels and stories, they generated more interaction with their audience.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID IAȘUL NOSTRU ENCOUNTER AND HOW DID IT ADDRESS THEM?

The main challenge was converting Instagram followers into newsletter subscribers. Despite strong engagement metrics, growth in followers was comparatively slow. Most new followers came through posts going viral, which was found difficult to consistently replicate. One format that tended to perform well was a carousel-style, monthly local-events agenda.

HOW WAS IAȘUL NOSTRU'S PROJECT RECEIVED BY ITS AUDIENCE?

Over two months, Iașul Nostru's Instagram following grew by more than 30%, gaining nearly 1,400 followers. Views increased by 1,275% to over 345,000, and the account's reach expanded by 2,405%, hitting over 131,000 unique accounts. Viral posts — such as infographics on presidential election results — achieved around 70,000 views each, helping solidify Iașul Nostru's status as the most engaging local news brand on Instagram in the city. Beyond the numbers, this performance suggested that a segment of the audience, particularly those who prefer consuming content on platforms rather than email, valued having a trusted, accessible source for local news and events.

WHAT INSIGHTS OR LESSONS DID IAȘUL NOSTRU GAIN FROM THIS PROJECT?

One key insight was that visual, data-driven, and localized content can yield high engagement with fewer resources than traditional reporting. Experimenting with formats and producing timely content helped increase the chances of reaching new audiences. Another important takeaway was to be less rigid about platforms. This project solidified Instagram as an important vehicle for reaching younger audiences and demonstrated that Instagram can draw users to alternate forms of engagement like the newsletter. Focusing on the platform's strengths — like carousels instead of video — also made content creation more manageable and impactful.

WHAT DOES IAȘUL NOSTRU PLAN ON DOING NEXT?

Iașul Nostru plans to continue growing its Instagram platform. The outlet aims to build on the organic momentum from the project by experimenting with more types of posts and stories, including video content. To support this, the team plans to begin working with a videographer to further explore formats like video carousels and reels. They also intend to use Instagram engagement metrics to strengthen partnerships with local businesses and develop a more sustainable advertising-based revenue stream.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD IAȘUL NOSTRU GIVE TO OTHER JOURNALISTS OR ORGANISATIONS CONSIDERING A SIMILAR PATH?

The organization recommends meeting people where they are, stressing that younger audiences tend to be more active on social media rather than email. Building out to other platforms is necessary for content to reach certain audiences.