

CASE

GREEN BELARUS

STUDY

Making Green Hot Again:
Using Audience Surveys to
Deliver Targeted Content

IN SHORT

Greenbelarus.info conducted audience research, tested new content formats, and explored innovative ways to engage its readers on climate and environment topics, including experimenting with a non-branded social media account.

ABOUT THE NEWS OUTLET

Green Belarus Info was established in 2008 as a platform created by a coalition of environmental NGOs to promote eco-friendly values, civic participation, and sustainable practices. The newsroom consists of about 10 contributors, many of whom have been with the outlet for over a decade, ensuring stability and continuity. Before 2020, its audience was primarily Belarus-based readers aged 25–45 interested in environmental and social issues.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Green Belarus aimed to reassess its audience after major political and social shifts, better understand changing reader needs, and re-engage interest in environmental topics. The project sought to test new formats, platforms, and tones to make climate content relevant, accessible, and safe.



IMPLEMENTED SOLUTIONS

The team conducted audience surveys and interviews, tested new content formats, and experimented with alternative distribution channels, including a non-branded social media account. By diversifying platforms, adjusting tone and themes, and prioritizing practical, relatable content, they identified more effective ways to reach different audience segments.

WHY THIS PROJECT?

The newsroom realized its understanding of its audience might be outdated after 2020, when circumstances and audience composition changed. The team wanted to systematically assess audience demands through a survey (something they had never done on such a scale before) to adapt better to the new context and regain engagement.

HOW DID APPLYING DESIGN THINKING PRINCIPLES HELP?

In-depth interviews allowed the team to communicate with their audience directly for the first time. Colleague surveys provided insight into internal workflows. Marketing and brand analysis helped them understand trends and plan content. Testing new social networks and asking for user feedback guided their experimentation.

DID GREEN BELARUS'S APPROACH CHANGE ENGAGEMENT WITH ITS AUDIENCE IN ANY WAY?

Yes. By experimenting with new formats and platforms, Green Belarus managed to reach different segments of its readership and understand what resonated most.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID GREEN BELARUS ENCOUNTER AND HOW DID IT ADDRESS THEM?

To address the challenges it faced (from limited survey responses to lower-than-expected engagement and safety risks after being labeled “extremist”), Green Belarus diversified the ways it delivered information. The team explained clearly to the audience which platforms were safe to use and which were not, maintained several social media channels in addition to the website, and even experimented with creating separate sub-brands not directly linked to Green Belarus to reach people more safely. They also adapted their content, emphasizing practical, everyday materials that helped readers feel more in control, and introduced shorter, more personal formats that proved to be more relatable.

HOW WAS GREEN BELARUS'S PROJECT RECEIVED BY ITS AUDIENCE?

The audience response was mixed. Some prototypes, like the non-branded Threads account, worked very well and received positive feedback, while our Instagram experiments gained fewer views than expected despite favorable survey responses. Interestingly, content related to crises or “apocalyptic” themes, such as how to prepare for war, attracted far more attention than lighter topics like sustainable fitness. Other experiments, such as a series of true crime videos, also performed strongly, showing that the project gave us a valuable opportunity to test different formats and confirm which ones resonated best.

WHAT INSIGHTS OR LESSONS DID GREEN BELARUS GAIN FROM THIS PROJECT?

After surveying its audience, the team realized that Green Belarus was perceived as a bit outdated, but at the same time the audience was attracted to its quality content and solid reputation. Also, after being designated as “extremist” by the Belarusian authorities, which can lead to the prosecution of readers simply for “liking” content on social media, environmentally oriented content on the non-branded Threads account proved quite popular.

WHAT DOES GREEN BELARUS PLAN ON DOING NEXT?

The team is analyzing recommendations, considering ways to maintain the non-branded Threads account, adjusting its thematic focus based on the survey results, and testing new ideas such as true crime podcasts. They also plan changes to visual presentation, tone of voice, and the balance between website and social media content.

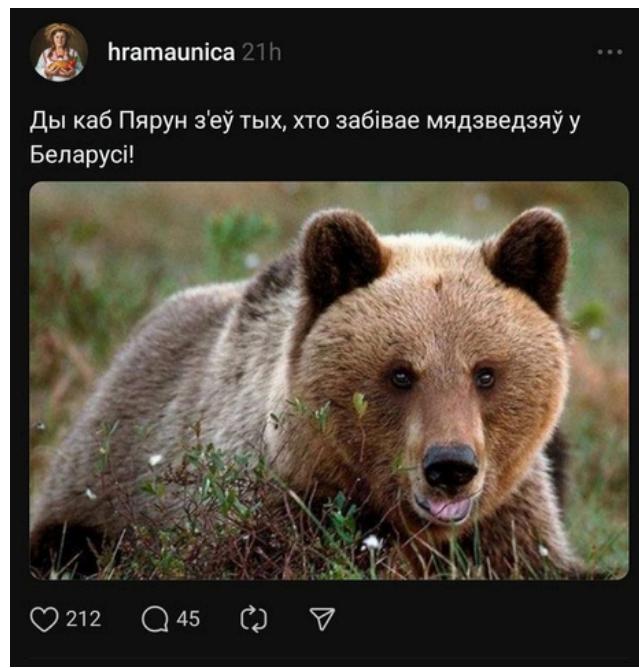
WHAT ADVICE WOULD GREEN BELARUS GIVE TO OTHER JOURNALISTS OR ORGANISATIONS CONSIDERING A SIMILAR PATH?

It's worth conducting audience surveys even if the methods aren't perfect, because the insights and impact can be more valuable than purely academic results. Involving the whole team in the process (from designing the surveys to discussing the findings and creating prototypes) helps ensure that the results are actually put to use in practice. Collaboration within the newsroom made it possible for Green Belarus to translate research into action, and that, in the end, proved more useful than having a perfectly executed study that stays on paper.



ЗЯЛЁНЫ
ПАРТАЛ

VISUALS FROM
THE PROJECT



Symbolic wildlife posts were used as low-risk content experiments to test emotional engagement and reach audiences under restrictive conditions.