



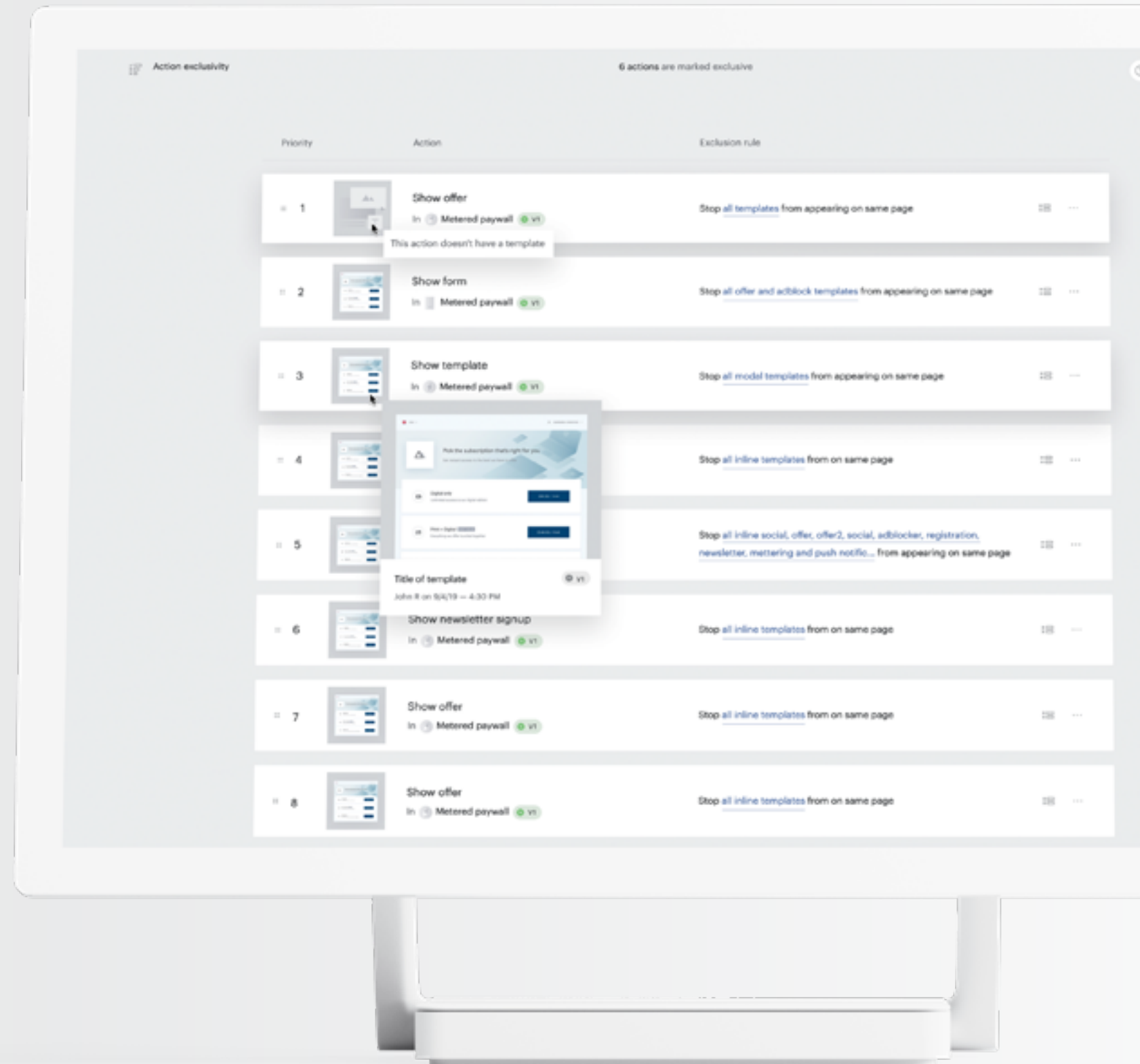
Driving digital contributions at Der Standard

How Piano powered the launch of a new
revenue stream, exceeding annual goals in
a matter of months

First founded in 1988 and launched digitally in 1995, DER STANDARD is a German-language daily newspaper published in Vienna, and one of the widest-reaching digital news outlets in Austria. In 2019, amidst a site relaunch, the digital team began looking for ways to add to their monetization efforts. They wanted to continue to expand their ability to finance quality journalism without impacting their advertising reach.

“No Austrian daily earns as much with digital ads as DER STANDARD, so we didn’t want to reduce traffic to the site,” says Florian Stambula, Head of Digital Subscription Products for DER STANDARD. “We wanted to strengthen revenue diversification, not weaken our strongest revenue stream.”

DER STANDARD chose Piano Composer to fuel the new initiative, combined with Piano Launch Services to get results as quickly as possible.



Before turning to Piano, Stambula's team started experimenting with a contribution model in 2019 — trying it out on a test audience first to determine how best to reach those willing to support. While they saw contributions in the four digits from the test audience, they found they weren't able to communicate the contribution model effectively across their site, and it was close to impossible to experiment with new messaging under their existing technology infrastructure.

They needed a better way to see what messaging worked and what didn't — and to put the right message in front of the right user.

"We wanted a system that was strong at dialogue with our readers and allowed us to test, iterate and improve quickly," Stambula says.

Piano Composer was the answer.

After partnering with Piano in December 2019, DER STANDARD was eager to launch the new supporter-based program as soon as possible, and leveraged the help of Piano Launch Services to do so. The Services team guided DER STANDARD's strategy and improved their plans at every iteration, analyzing the results and making optimization suggestions to accelerate success. With their assistance, DER STANDARD was able to get up and running in just a few weeks, starting to roll out the contribution model site-wide in February 2020.



“ The early success of our contributions effort was a spark of hope throughout the organization during the trying times of the coronavirus crisis,” says Stambula. “Piano Launch Services has been a game-changing experience for us and I would highly recommend it to others that want to accelerate their go-to-market and growth.”

DER STANDARD had already launched and was seeing rapid success when the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded — a time when many publications worldwide saw a bump in traffic and subscription revenue. The Piano Services team was able to speed up the launch plan from six months to only a few weeks, ensuring that DER STANDARD could benefit from the surge in traffic and readers' increased willingness to pay for journalistic content.

By the end of the second quarter, DER STANDARD had surpassed their annual 2020 contributions revenue goal, with:

- 10x increase in contributions within the first full month, after go-to-market with Piano, compared to the 2019 test period
- 23x increase in contributions and 7.5 times more contributors over the first half of 2020 compared to the test period

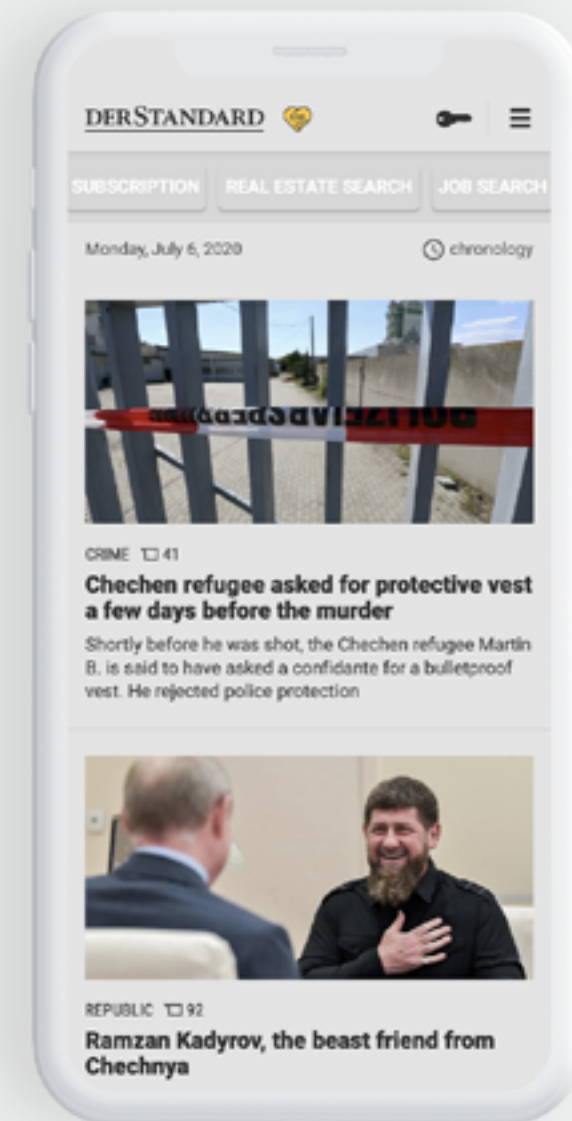
10x

INCREASE IN CONTRIBUTIONS
WITHIN THE FIRST FULL MONTH

7.5x

INCREASE IN PAYING CONTRIBUTORS

And that's just the start of their plans. With the help of Piano, the team will introduce better segmentation to target messaging based on first-party data. "We want to double the amount of active registered users, in order to double down on first-party data, direct promotions via newsletter and, of course, convert more users to contributors," Stambula says.



23x

INCREASE IN CONTRIBUTIONS REVENUE