

# If the product is news: The New York Times case study

*The case for tighter newsroom and product collaboration – and a radical approach to building news organizations for the future*

By: Mariah Craddick

*This article is part three of a six-part series. New installments will be published over the coming weeks, so check back regularly for the next entries.*

[Joining here? Start with part one: The case for tighter newsroom and product collaboration](#)

## **The New York Times**

It's no secret that [The New York Times](#) has found a very successful (and profitable) path towards sustainability and growth through not only its consequential and comprehensive news coverage, but also through its expanded universe of lifestyle products. *The Times* has significantly diversified its product portfolio over the last decade through the launch of dedicated Games, Audio, and Cooking apps, as well as the acquisition of *The Athletic* and *Wirecutter*. This has enabled them to significantly [grow their subscriber base \(over 11.4 million\) and overall revenue \(\\$2.6 billion\)](#).

This success could arguably be pointed directly back to the publishing of the [Innovation Report](#) in 2014, the internal report that eventually became public which noted a need to “make developing our audience a core and urgent part of our mission” and to “collaborate with business-side units focused on reader experience.” This report clearly pushed the urgent need for the organization to break down silos and collaborate across divisions to create experiences and products that center its audience.

One team at *The Times* that has an explicit mission to continue to facilitate this ongoing collaboration, particularly between newsroom and product, is the Newsroom Development & Support (NDS) team. Brian Hoerst, a Senior Editor of Digital Storytelling & Training, noted how part of this team, which embeds with various news desks and leads training initiatives, operates as a liaison or facilitator and helps make connection points between product and news easier.

“I’m essentially a stakeholder that product can be in contact with more frequently who is there to help explain other parts of the newsroom,” Hoerst explained. “Product managers also have plenty of existing newsroom relationships, but we can leverage our deeper institutional knowledge and our relationships from being in the newsroom to help product, but also the newsroom.”

Hoerst noted that this type of team only exists in the newsroom, and there currently aren't formal teams that operate as liaisons like this for other functions like marketing or sales – perhaps signaling the unique and sensitive relationship between product and news teams.

Hoerst and a team of NDS editors embarked on a project last summer aimed at understanding how they could better operate as facilitators between these two worlds, conducting a listening tour with various product managers, designers, and engineering managers. Through this, they learned that a lot of the gaps that still existed were around communication and understanding who to go to for what and when, as *The Times* news organization is notably large ([about 1,700 journalists](#)).

Now knowing this, Hoerst says they're hoping to expand on their existing model of how NDS works with each product manager that works closely with the newsroom. The hope is that this helps clarify workflows and enables product teams to bring NDS, and therefore the newsroom, closer to their work, early and often.

“A really important part of this proposal that we're working through is that we don't want to create a layer between existing workflows and relationships,” Hoerst explained. “It's more, ‘Oh, you don't know who to talk to? I'll give you some suggestions or I'll connect you to people or I'll do this.’ So we'll still have all of the usual feedback loops that we have, we just hope that this will strengthen them.”

[Read the fourth installment of this six-part series: What newsroom and product collaboration looks like at Schibsted's Svenska Dagbladet.](#)

#### About the author

*Mariah Craddick is a product strategist with deep experience in the news and media industry. She's currently leading product strategy at The Atlantic with a focus on driving subscription growth and enabling retention through feature adoption and delightful subscriber experiences.*

*Previously, she led teams as product manager at The Wall Street Journal, McClatchy, and Crain Communications, playing a key role in building features that drive readership and engage subscribers. Prior to her product management career, she held several roles across the newsroom – from writing for the legendary Ebony and Jet magazines to executing social media strategy at Crain's Chicago Business.*

*This “If the product is news” blog series published via the News Product Alliance is part of a larger research study and project she conducted as part of the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY's Executive Program in News Innovation and Leadership which she completed in June 2025.*