

# Retention

**Toby Collodora | Sr. Manager of Engagement and Retention | Star Tribune**

LMA Accelerate Local Conference | Growing Digital Subscriptions Workshop | February 2021



# Why focus on retention?

- » **Retention is core to our success**
  - Build a culture of retention
- » **A lift of 5% in customer retention can increase profits more than 25%.**
  - Take a little pressure off acquisition
- » **Test. Everything.**
  - The big things.
  - The little things.
  - And everything in between.
  - Fail fast. Learn always. Make adjustments.



# Call Center Stop Save Incentives

## What Worked

- **EZ Pay Retention Rates**
  - Lower rates for moving to auto pay (Still subject to yearly price increases)
- **One-Time “Stay-at-Home” Rates**
  - Initial COVID response to economy in flux in April 2020
  - 13-week term | Rates renew at normal
  - In addition to “Switch to Digital”
- **Fixed Credit with Renewal**
  - Apply a set amount of credit to a user’s account with an upfront payment OR a move to auto pay
  - Available to subs already on auto pay

## What Did Not Work

- **Gift card with renewal**
  - Upfront payment required
- **Digital Only: 4 Weeks Free with Renewal**
- **Digital Only: Monthly Billing**
  - Standard renewal: 13 weeks
  - Theory: Would be popular for people who are calling to cancel after initial promo term

Note: Star Tribune does not do rate negotiation.

We only allow our subscribers to cancel via phone, unless explicitly required.




# Subscriber-Only Emails

## » From the Editor Monthly Email

- Email sent once a month from our Editor, detailing an initiative or providing insight from our newsroom. Includes a “meet the team” spotlight and a couple of promotional spots.
- +4.4% improvement in retention across all delivery schedules, both print and digital.

## » Subscriber Rewards

- Monthly email sent to all subscribers with a valid email address with opportunities to win tickets to events around town (a lot easier in 2019!) or other items.
  - Box to a sporting event
  - Theater tickets
  - VIP sports tickets
  - Coffee mugs
  - Star Tribune-licensed books



**THANK YOU**  
*Subscriber*  
**REWARDS**  
★ ★ ★

**Enter to Win**

Subscriber Perks ID: Example Account


Example Name First

How is September already here?! Though we had to forgo many summer activities that would typically fill our days, this summer sure has flown by. Many of us are now adjusting to a back-to-school lifestyle, whatever that may look like. September is also all about enjoying the temperate weather before the cold and holiday season sweep in.

While there's still time, we want to share some opportunities for you to spend some time in the ballpark stands, in person or "in spirit", or bring some sunshine into your home with some little celebrations of our beloved -- and greatly missed -- State Fair.

This month's subscriber reward opportunities feature a chance to win our State Fair Gift Pack, VIP tickets for an opera experience outdoors at CHS Field and a spot for (a very large version of) your face in the crowd at an upcoming Twins game.

As always these contests are free to enter, no strings attached, as our thanks to you for being a valued Star Tribune subscriber. Just click on the offers you'd like to win and be sure to enter your Subscriber Perks ID listed above.



**MN Opera at CHS Field**

Enter for your chance to enjoy an evening of opera outdoors at majestic CHS Field in downtown St. Paul. The evening will include music from Carmen, The Marriage of Figaro, modern classics and more. Four (4) winners will each receive 2 VIP tickets for the performance Thursday, Sept. 24 at 7:30 p.m. VIP tickets include complimentary food and beverages.

Entry Deadline: 9/18/20

**ENTER**



EDITOR'S UPDATE

Our newsroom's mission is to provide in-depth coverage of local news that you can always trust.

But for us, local no longer means only the Twin Cities metro.

  
Rene Sanchez  
Editor and Senior  
Vice President

Eighteen months ago, we expanded our reporting staff to Duluth and began producing a digital newsletter every weekday filled with coverage of the city and the North Shore. We've published hundreds of stories focused on Duluth in that time, and readers there have expressed appreciation for it. We thank them for having confidence in our work.

Now, we are also turning the same attention to another community in our state, St. Cloud.

On March 1, we will debut St. Cloud Today, a weekday digital newsletter that we intend to fill with news from that city and surrounding region. You can sign up here. We have hired a journalist who has reported in the community there for years, Jenny Berg, and we will also include coverage from others on our staff.

It's another big step in our drive to be a vital news source for Minnesotans across the state.

**MEET OUR NEW COLUMNIST:** For more than two decades, no one has covered the Minnesota Twins with more depth and dedication than La Velle E. Neal. He has made the Star Tribune's coverage of the team indispensable. Along the way, La Velle also has been a close and thoughtful observer of the rest of Minnesota's sports scene, bringing his perspective frequently on local radio and television. Now, his expertise will be showcased in an exciting new role: sports columnist. La Velle became in 2013 the first Black president in the long history of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. He'll make history again with this move, becoming the first journalist of color to write a regular sports column for the Star Tribune in its 153-year history. "I am beyond thrilled to have this opportunity to communicate with readers in a different way," he said. "I'm joining an awesome team of columnists on the Strib sports staff, and I hope I can just keep up!" His column will debut Feb. 28.

**INTRODUCING A DAILY SPORTS PODCAST:** On Feb. 1, we launched Daily Delivery as an all-sports, all-beats, all-topics podcast hosted every weekday morning by Michael Rand. This is not only a new challenge for the writer many of you know as RandBall, it's a new challenge for our entire sports staff. Most often, our writers will be the featured guests, discussing hot topics on their beats. We hope you enjoy this new way to connect with Minnesota sports news and our sports teams. Learn more, and listen every day, at [startribune.com/dailydelivery](http://startribune.com/dailydelivery)

  
DAILY DELIVERY



**IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:** At the peak of 

# Email Welcome Series

- » Onboarding and activating new subscribers strongly correlates to retention.
- » Revamped our email welcome series for new subscribers in late 2020.
- » Added emphasis on behaviors known to influence retention:
  - Activation
  - Email Newsletters
  - Subscriber Benefits/Account management
- » Currently a 4-6 email series, depending on user actions.
- » Sunday-Only test: Open rate +13% vs. previous series.
- » Next: Testing personal welcome from Editor and Editorial Pages Editor

## Previous Version

**StarTribune**

### WELCOME TO STAR TRIBUNE! GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DIGITAL ACCESS

Thank you for subscribing to Star Tribune. We're glad you're here. Your new subscription gives you 24/7 access to Minnesota's largest newswoman, with hundreds of local and national news articles published daily.

Today is the first of a series of tips with important information on how to get the most out of your digital access.

**TIP #1**

**Activate your account now and avoid interruptions.**

**ACTIVATE NOW >**

Your StarTribune.com account is your key to unlimited digital access. If you have not yet done so, you'll need to activate your digital access by clicking the link above.

Once activated, you'll need to log on with each device you will want to access the news with. But once you've done this, you never need to log in again unless you log out.

**MEMBER CENTER**

Log in

Forgot your password?

Register for a StarTribune.com login

Once you've created your login, you can easily manage your account and subscription from any device.

Simply click on your user name and select "Manage Account" to make any updates including payment methods, email preferences, account info and more.

**StarTribune**

Now you're ready to enjoy anytime, unlimited access to the news on StarTribune.com and mobile apps.

Hopefully logging in was fast and easy. But if you need any assistance, please let us know at [feedback@startribune.com](mailto:feedback@startribune.com), or by calling 612-673-7447 or 800-328-4333.

Best regards,

*J. Bernard*

Jim Bernard  
Senior Vice President, Digital  
Star Tribune

P.S. Be sure to check your inbox for more ways to get the most out of your new unlimited access digital subscription.

## New Version

**StarTribune**

### GET WHAT YOU'RE PAYING FOR

Take advantage of your digital access.

**ACTIVATE YOUR ACCOUNT**

Welcome to You

Thank you for subscribing to Star Tribune. Your subscription represents an investment in your community, supporting our unmatched commitment to delivering more of what matters to Minnesota. Your subscription also unlocks a wide range of benefits for you. Make sure you have activated your digital account so you can connect with the news that matters to you — anytime, anywhere and on any device.

Sign in, start reading, it's that easy. Activating your digital account is as easy as 1-2-3

- 1 Click the **ACTIVATE YOUR ACCOUNT** link below.
- 2 Enter your **LAST NAME** and **PHONE NUMBER**.
- 3 Click on the **FIND MY SUBSCRIPTION** button.

Once you're signed in you'll have unlimited access to all of the breaking news, in-depth stories and engaging content you can find on [StarTribune.com](http://StarTribune.com).

**Activate your account**

**Insider Tip:**  
Sign in on all your devices

Once you've activated your digital account, make sure you sign into StarTribune.com on all of your devices — desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc. — so that you can always enjoy seamless access and never worry about hitting that pesky paywall.

**Download the App — Get Even More**

Your subscription includes full, free access to the Star Tribune app. The app puts even more of what matters — faster browsing, cleaner layout, real-time news alerts, immediate eEdition access — right on your home screen, just one tap away. Download now — and make a habit of knowing more, sooner.

# Driving Digital Activation

- » We strongly believe, and studies have shown, that increased digital engagement improves retention.
- » Focus in 2020 on audience activation: Getting print users ready for digital
  - Content-driven activation emails:
    - Targeting subs not activated with digital-only/digital-better content
    - Voters guide/election results
    - Up-to-the minute COVID information (March/April 2020)
    - Special reports/investigations
  - A1 activation banners
  - Invoice ads promoting digital activation
- » Added emphasis on activation in email Welcome Series
- » Activated accounts up +5.7% from January 2020 to December 2020.



**StarTribune**

It's Holiday Cookie Contest time! 2020: Bad, but not the worst. Essential Minnesota gift guide

**Activate your unlimited digital access today to enjoy these great articles and more!**

Last year, people stood in a long line just before 11 a.m. in the atrium of the Star Tribune Building, anxiously awaiting a taste of the 17th Annual Star Tribune's Holiday Cookie Contest winners. Which one would be voted People's Choice? And more importantly – would those in line get to sample at all? Winners before the cookie supply runs out?

The answers: We definitely ran out of cookies and the crowd favorite was these [Italian Cream Cakes Cookies](#).

Now in its 18th year, [join us virtually on Thursday, Dec. 3](#) to see this year's winners and hear about how judges choose the top cookie from 300 entries. While we won't be able to ship you a cookie to sample, you can pick up a few baking tips to use in your kitchen this year.

Can't wait? We have an [online cookie folder](#), filled with the recipes from past winners and finalists. Scroll through the recipes or filter for ones that fit your baking style: Easy, Chocolate, Fun with Kids, Bar, Hosted and more.

**Activate your Unlimited Digital Access!**  
It's included with your subscription

Enter your last name and phone number to get started. Then, follow the instructions on the screen. Having trouble with your digital access? We're here to help. Let us know by filling out the form [on this page](#).

Here are a few of our favorite recent articles for you to enjoy.



**StarTribune**

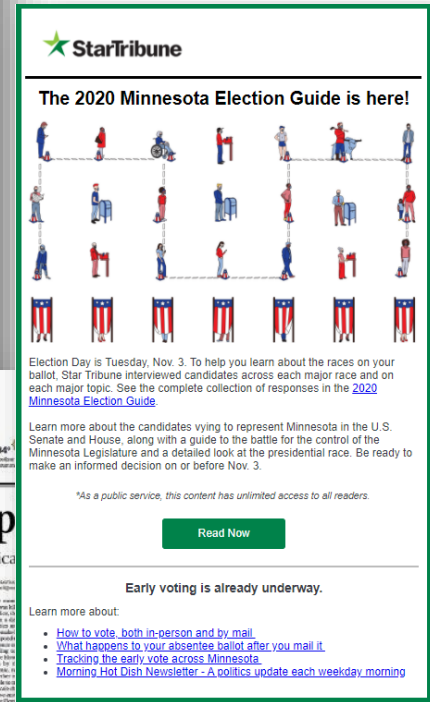
FRIDAY June 26, 2020

**Layers of crises strain Mps**  
A month after Floyd's death, calls for change meet complicated

**GEORGE FLOYD**

**HIS 'LIFE WAS GIVEN TO WAKE US UP'**

Star Tribune's Photo Editor, David J. Phillip, brought his teenage son to the memorial for George Floyd in Minneapolis on Thursday.



**StarTribune**

**The 2020 Minnesota Election Guide is here!**

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3. To help you learn about the races on your ballot, Star Tribune interviewed candidates across each major race and on each major topic. See the complete collection of responses in the [2020 Minnesota Election Guide](#).

Learn more about the candidates vying to represent Minnesota in the U.S. Senate and House, along with a guide to the battle for the control of the Minnesota Legislature and a detailed look at the presidential race. Be ready to make an informed decision on or before Nov. 3.

\*As a public service, this content has unlimited access to all readers.

**Read Now**

Early voting is already underway.

Learn more about:

- [How to vote, both in-person and by mail](#)
- [What happens to your absentee ballot after you mail it](#)
- [Tracking the early vote across Minnesota](#)
- [Morning Hot Dish Newsletter - A politics update each weekday morning](#)



# Collecting revenue

- » **eBilling: Started in late 2019. Currently in the growing audience/optimization phase**
  - Subject line testing
  - “Make a payment” button testing (color, location, etc.)
  - Escalating language in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> notices
- » **Reducing involuntary churn**
  - Partner with Edgil to run an automatic payment updater (Credit card expiration dates, etc.)
  - Send customers with expiring credit cards an email reminder to update their accounts
- » **Current test: Do digital subscribers want to get/respond to a paper bill?**
  - While nearly all of our digital subscription starts are on automatic renewal, a number fall off AR each month due to payment failure. Currently, those default to paper billing. But should they default to eBilling?



# Thank you!

**Toby Collodora | Sr. Manager of Engagement and Retention | Star Tribune**  
[Toby.Collodora@startribune.com](mailto:Toby.Collodora@startribune.com) | @collodora | 612-673-7175

