



18MR



DID YOU EAT YET?

BUILDING A NEWSLETTER AS COMMUNITY CARE



18MR is driven by its mission statement to – “bring Asian American communities together online and offline to reimagine Asian American identity with nuance, specificity, and power.” As a digital-first advocacy organization, the internet is both a tool and a place to elevate the voices of and mobilize our members to take action on issues that matter to them.

At 18MR we believe that the internet isn’t just a medium of communication, but it’s also an engine for culture and collaboration. Here’s how we brought 18MR’s philosophy to life in our members’ inbox every month.



ROLES

Campaign Strategy

Digital Strategy

Social Media Campaign

Content Development

Content Strategy

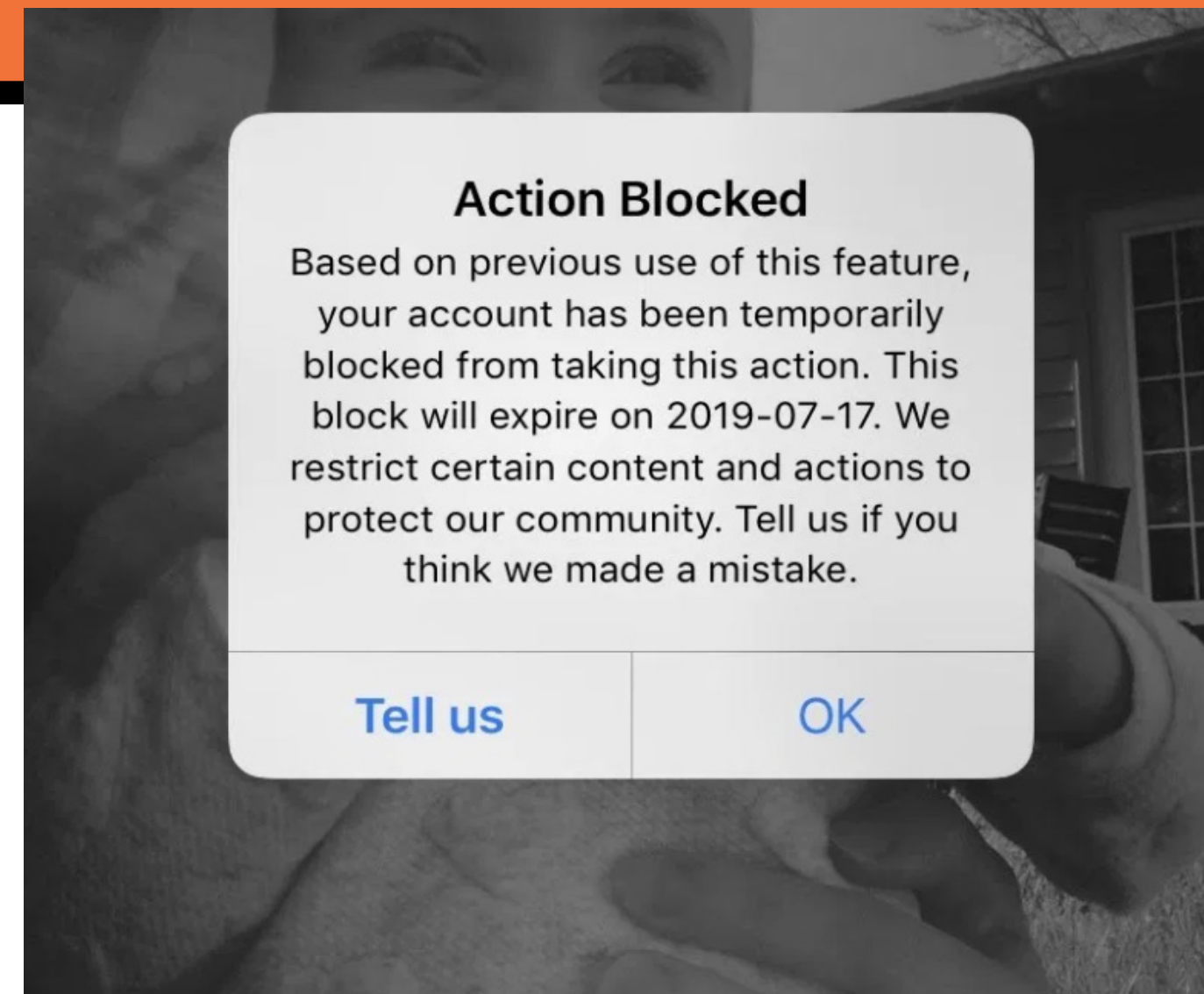
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We are seeing corporate social media evolve into platforms better designed for purchasing than community organizing. Algorithms, shadowbanning, outright censorship, and content moderation already and will continue to undercut digital organizing efforts in the future. 18MR uses technology as a tool for organizing and is always adapting our tactics to respond to the changing online landscape.



THE CHALLENGE

OBJECTIVE

Build meaningful places for members to engage that circumvent algorithmic curation as the determining factor facilitating content and interaction.

We decided to create a newsletter that would provide custom content to our members. A newsletter is a cost-effective tactic that leverages an existing tool (email) to build relationships away from social media platforms. As an incentive to our members, our newsletter includes content that can't be found publicly elsewhere and is specifically curated for our base.



SOLUTION

BUILD

our newsletter to become a valuable place to access Asian American leadership and analysis.

REACH

our audience that is not on social media or whose algorithms prevent them from seeing our content.

UTILIZE

untapped free digital space to promote thought leadership, provide analysis, and strengthen relationships within our community.

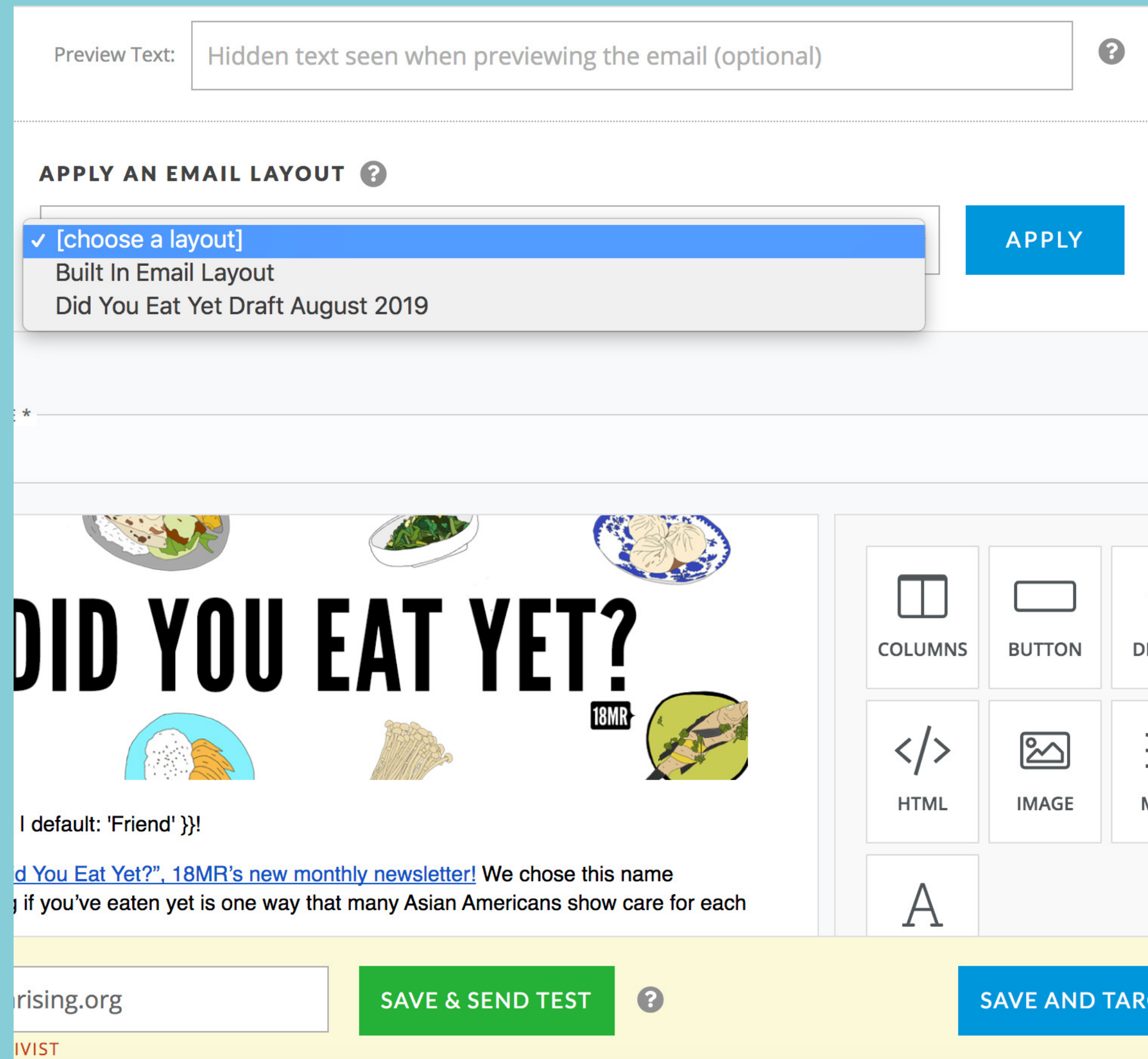
ENGAGE

with our members by maintaining a consistent 15 - 20% open rate in the first year. Our mid-term goal of 2-3 years is to maintain a consistent 25 - 35% open rate.



GOALS

PROCESS



Choosing A Platform

We used Action Network as a platform to build and maintain our newsletter. Action Network has a suite of features that supports our needs.

Drag and Drop Email Tool: Easy way for technical and non-technical staff to build a template. Creating a template with the drag and drop editor made it possible for anyone on staff to be able to prepare and send the email each month. Additionally we were able to do AB Testing to see what formats performed best.

Subscription Page: Action Network's form feature was a quick way to create a subscription page where our members could subscribe to the newsletter.

CRM management and security: By using Action Network we were able to build a separate segment alongside our typical segments to compare engagement month to month. Additionally, the Action Network toolset is a secure way to store members' contact information.

BROWSER TABS

Developing Our Design

As a digital-first organization we know that visually forward content performs well. We designed our newsletters to emphasize eye-catching, visual and interactive content in a mobile-first format. Using the drag and drop email editor we created a ready-made template to simplify the process of creating a newsletter each month. This has led to a strategic and streamlined newsletter publication process for 18MR that cuts down our staff time, and makes it easy to plug in new or guest editors.



CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

A fundraising campaign graphic for 18MR. It features a teal background with a yellow progress bar on the left showing a dollar sign at the top. The text reads '\$2,398 RAISED!' in large white letters on a black background. Below this, it says 'WE'RE FUNDRAISING \$3000 TO HELP SAVE HOA BINH PLAZA FROM GENTRIFICATION.' To the right, a woman is holding a sign that says 'DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT'. The 18MR logo is in the bottom right corner.



Plaza, a luxury
will lose
businesses
a beloved
been forced
represent
to make
need to

Imagine if the government disappeared and detained the entire city of Chicago. That's the scale of violence happening in China right now. Since 2014, an estimated 3 million Muslims in China have gone missing or been forced into concentration camps in the region known as "Xinjiang." [Say no to China's prison camps for Muslims. Demand Congress pass the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act now.](#)

Centering Our Community

Each month we have a dedicated author, often a member of the staff or a guest editor from the community to write the newsletter which lends to the newsletter's tone and voice. The newsletter not just a platform for 18MR announcements, but also an opportunity to host community voices, resources, and responses to current events and campaigns. Each month we choose a loose but relevant theme – healing, Thankstaking, abolition, etc – to base the newsletter content around.



It's been five months since the Mauna Kea protectors set up camp to defend the sacred Hawaiian mountain. **The Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) are not only protecting sacred land, but are showing us all the power of Indigenous self-governance.** Hundreds have set up a space complete with food, shelter, and provisions, organizers have founded [Pu'uhuluhulu University](#) to offer decolonial education. Kūpuna (elders) continue to hold space for ceremony, song, dance, and announcements, all while blocking construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope. [Show love for Mauna Kea protectors as they continue to fight for the Mauna.](#)

Using Our Voice

No matter who is our guest editor, our newsletter is written in 18MR's unique tone and voice. In our template, we include a brief guide for writers to refer to while they write. The tone is casual, a little vulnerable, personal, witty. We encourage editors to think of the email as a "thanks for checking in with us" instead of an authoritative report. We invite humor, we tell our writers "you can be a little cheeky."



RESULTS

Over the past year, we quadrupled the number of dedicated subscribers to the newsletter.

Action Network's Deliverability Guide recommends maintaining at least a 15% open rate over a 24-hour rolling period. In our most active segment, we surpassed our initial goal and have a 44% open rate and 4.5% click rate. Overall we are seeing a 24% average open rate and 2.7% click rate.

HIGHLIGHTS



Curate an experience

Make each month special and different. Themes helped to keep the experience novel. Themes that did really well with our members included: connecting history to legacy, Thankstaking, healing, and COVID-19. These themes responded to current events, seasons, and issues important to our members. Additionally, members particularly enjoyed hearing from community voices. Newsletters from guest editors like illustrator Ashley Lukashovsky (April) and movement elder Harvey Dong (May) yielded direct replies of thank yous, appreciations, and reminiscences from members.

Use Attention-Grabbing Language

These Asian American sex workers are organizing against pro-police rallies.

Add this book to your summer reading list.

And, here's how to slow the fuck down.



Ready to stop sleeping on transformative gaysian leadership in the US South? We are! And so is our filmmaker friend, [Ligaiya Romero](#). They're working on a new documentary, [Not Your Model Minority!](#), which features "intimate conversations with queer, rad, AAPI activists organizing against white supremacy, state violence, and the cis-hetero patriarchy in the South." You love to see it!

18MR: What are you reading right now?



This month, I'm excited to dig into [SFSX, a not-so-dystopian comic thriller written by sex workers for sex workers](#) about queer and trans sex workers of color resisting digital surveillance and moral crusaders under a fascist Christian regime. Sound familiar?

Lead with your most important link

The newsletter content with the highest engagement was consistently the first hyperlink and our campaigns and calls to action. As a result, we always place these at the beginning.

Cater to your most engaged segments

As expected, our newsletter subscriber segment and our most active segments perform the best with open, click and action rates.

We noticed our least active segments had very low engagement rates, but were interested in learning about campaign updates. So, we focus on campaigns at the top of the newsletter knowing there will be drop off afterwards.

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS



Why is a Japanese American covering up deaths in ICE detention? Japanese American activists from [Tsuru for Solidarity](#) are demanding Jennifer Nakamoto, CEO of a company that's certifying deadly ICE detention centers, **drop her \$16 million contract with ICE.**



What's invisible, yet everywhere, and can't tell Black & Brown people apart? **Facial recognition technology, developed by white supremacy's very own Amazon, is the most dangerous form of surveillance ever invented and is being used to police our communities. We're telling our lawmakers to ban facial recognition now.**

INSIGHTS

Bypass Algorithmic Curation

Email provides an opportunity for direct to member communication. Use this space to prioritize important messaging members are about: campaign feedback, announcements, response to current events, and pop culture happenings.

Build Intimacy

Our “Did You Eat Yet?” newsletter replicates the informal intimacy of social media platforms but gives us more control over what they see and when. Include content that comes from your community, focus on things that make members feel seen and heard.

Consider All Real Estate

The newsletter is designed to grow cross-engagement across platforms. Connect folks to content across platforms, include links to the website, blog, actions and petitions, social media, and events.

Want More?

Sign up for
our Newsletter!



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