

The Results of Buffer's Build Week: Introducing our Open Beta Program and new Transparent Roadmap (+16 More Projects)

For one week in July this year, the full Buffer team did something rather unconventional.

All 80 of us paused our day-to-day work, cleared our calendars, and dedicated a whole week to projects outside of our usual tasks.

It's Buffer's annual Build Week.

Why did we do this? At Buffer, we believe that the most exceptional ideas often emerge from outside the confines of conventional work structures.

We've always been a company unafraid to experiment with different work styles. We've embraced self-management, played around with OKRs (and even scrapped them), and we're known for our four-day work week. In fact, it's not our first Build Week; we had our initial Build Week last year and created 10 new features.

How we set up Build Week this year

Two weeks before Build Week, Bufferers across the company submitted their ideas for Build Week projects. Anyone can submit an idea, but we have to keep in mind the limited resources of having just four days to work on them. The ideas varied, from minor product improvements to entirely new landing pages.

We all voted on the ideas that resonated with us, and then we formed 19 small teams, each with four to six members, ready to breathe life into these ideas.

Throughout the week, we kept everyone updated on our progress. Our dedicated #build-week Slack channel was buzzing with Loom videos and prototypes as teams showcased their work.

After four dedicated days, around 32 hours, and the collective efforts of 80 teammates, we had a bunch of new projects to show off.

Announcing a New Open Beta Program and Feedback Hub

With so many new things being built, it made us wonder; **how can we get our community more involved?**

Many of the projects weren't 100 percent finished, and would significantly benefit from user testing and feedback. We needed a better way to give users earlier access and empower them to share their thoughts on the future of Buffer.

We decided to add two new Buffer tools to help our community shape the Buffer product.

1) Open Beta

Buffer users can now access new features before they're launched, and help us shape the future of Buffer, by simply toggling a switch in Buffer. The new Beta features page lists features to test, links to share feedback, and an invite to our community. We'd love to see you there!

2) Buffer Suggestions

Buffer Suggestions is our new feedback hub, where you can submit new feature ideas, vote on existing ideas, and follow along with our progress.

Existing suggestions are sorted by the most upvotes, so the most popular suggestions will be at the top.

You can see our current roadmap by switching to the Roadmap view. In this view, suggestions are sorted into kanban-style columns. You can comment, vote, or subscribe to a post from this view, too.

In addition to the new Open Beta program and Buffer Suggestions, we have 16 other projects we worked on – many of them already live.

We tried to broadly categorize all the projects we worked on into three buckets

1. New Buffer features
2. Community improvements
3. Culture projects

New Buffer features

Schedule Facebook Reels

With 36 percent of the global population using Facebook each month, it's still far and away the biggest social network out there. And Facebook Reels are one of the fastest growing content types on the platform.

Each month 140 billion Reels are watched, meaning it's one of the best places for you to share your message. With the introduction of Facebook Reels direct scheduling in Buffer, you're primed to reach millions, if not billions across the world's largest social network.

Available in beta.

Mastodon analytics

You can now see the number of Mastodon comments, shares, and favorites right in your sent post queue. Quickly check which posts resonate on the platform to adjust your content strategy appropriately.



Available in beta.

Collect email addresses using Start Page

Building a list of email subscribers is one of the safest and best marketing strategies for any small business. It gives you a direct connection with your audience and more control than posting to social media. With Start Page's new Mailchimp integration, you can now collect email addresses and build a list of subscribers directly from your page.

[embedded content]

Coming soon.

Add Notes for yourself or your team

Ever wanted to leave a note for yourself or your team? Brainstorming and collaboration on your drafts is now easier than ever with Notes.

Coming soon.

Navigate around Buffer in halve the time

With our brand new Quick Navigator, you can quickly jump to your channels or commonly used pages, just by using your keyboard. Open up the Quick Navigator using CMD + K on Mac, or CTRL + K on Windows.

[embedded content]

Available in beta.

Upload HEIC images

You can now upload HEIC images to Buffer. No more converting your iPhone pics to jpegs!

Refer-a-friend and get rewarded

For a long time we've been asked about a referral or affiliate program, especially from our most passionate community members. We're excited to share that every Buffer user now has access to a simple referral code that they can use to invite friends or clients. We're keen to offer an incentive too but we aren't sure what that should be. If you're an educator, influencer, or agency that often refers folks to Buffer, we'd love your thoughts!

Take a sneak peek at what we're building here.

Flag suspicious Start Pages

Occasionally, we see people using Start Page to host content that violates our terms of service. This might include content that is false or misleading information presented as truth, hate speech, abusive or harmful content, astroturfing, phishing, and spam. Now there is an easy way for anyone to report suspicious pages.

Available here.

Quick wins for customers

As is tradition, we had one Build Week team dedicated to small items that our customers have requested over the past year. Although each item might be small, when you add them up they make for a big improvement to the user experience in Buffer. Here are some of the "quick wins".

- “Share to feed” toggle is on by default for Instagram Reels scheduling.
- More accurate tooltips for analytics data.
- Links to published posts, so that you can quickly view them natively.
- Reel impressions are now included in Post summary data.
- LinkedIn analytics can now be sorted by date.
- A clearer alert if you exceed a character count for a Twitter post.

Improved accessibility for all users

Ensuring our product usable for all people, no matter their abilities or circumstances, is one of our goals at Buffer, and Build Week is a great opportunity to tackle areas of the product that could be more accessible. We started the week with 49 accessibility-related issues to fix, and ended the week with only seven left. Some of the improvements we made include:

- Better navigation on the sidebar and profile sidebar.
- Listening to keyboard event on the select component.
- Adding alt tags to images.
- Adding ARIA labels to modals.
- Closing the composer with the ESC key.
- Cleaning up unnecessary ARIA attributes where we use semantic elements.

We’ll continue working on the remaining accessibility items throughout the rest of the year.

Culture Projects

Get to know us better! Learn about our journey, mission, and values

Our About Us page has been spruced up with more comprehensive details about Buffer’s journey, mission, and values. We

realized that the old page was lagging behind, with outdated images and information. The new update not only brings you fresh, engaging content, but also includes a fascinating timeline highlighting Buffer's evolution over the years.

Coming soon.

Where your money goes when you buy a Buffer subscription

Transparency is one of the cornerstones of Buffer. Whether it's about our salaries, hiring process, or revenue, we've always believed in openness. Now, we're extending this transparency to our pricing as well.

We've always wanted to provide you with a clear picture of how your investment in Buffer is being utilized. Our new Transparent Pricing page does just that, breaking down how we allocate each dollar you entrust to us. No hidden costs, no surprises!

Coming soon.

Show off your Buffer love with some cool Buffer merch!

If you've ever wished to flaunt some cool Buffer merchandise, we've got you covered! We're thrilled to introduce our brand new Buffer Swag Shop, filled with a delightful collection of Buffer merch. For now, this novelty is exclusively for the Buffer family, but stay tuned – we'll soon open the doors for everyone to show off their Buffer love!

Take a sneak peek here →

Want to join the Buffer team, but don't see an opening? No problem!

Ever dreamt of joining the Buffer team, but found no open vacancies? We've built the solution for you. Our Evergreen Hiring Page is where you can apply for jobs even when there's no specific listing available.

Although the page isn't live yet, it soon will be. We review applications each week, so don't hesitate to drop yours. We might not get back to you immediately, but rest assured, we'll have your details safely stored for suitable opportunities.

The first talent pool is available [here](#).

An interactive, fun way to engage with our team

Buffer's team, though 100% remote, is a cohesive unit that spans the globe. We cherish our annual retreats, which offer a rare opportunity to interact face-to-face. However, as it's been quite a while since our last retreat, we decided to bridge this gap digitally.

We're introducing Buffer Team Jeopardy, an interactive quiz app that tests your knowledge of your colleagues. It's a fun way to connect with the team (and compete with colleagues to top the leaderboard!).

A new dedicated app for Buffereros on retreat.

To take our annual retreats a notch higher, we've designed a dedicated Buffer Retreat Mobile App. This exclusive app is aimed at helping us manage the event seamlessly and keep everyone in the loop. By building it internally, not only have we managed to save on costs, but also tailored the app to suit our unique needs perfectly.

More to come...

These projects are just the start. We have other updates in the pipeline from Build Week that remove out of beta soon. To keep an eye on all we're working on, check out our brand new Roadmap.

Now we're wondering, what do you think? Have you tried a Build

Week before? Did you see similar results? Tweet (or Xeet) us and let us know.

And if you have ideas for our next Build Week, we'd love to hear them! Drop them here.

<https://buffer.com/resources/build-week-2023/>