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NEWSPAPER

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supplement



Ferial Haffajee on the art of news reporting – pg 15

“ETHICS IS NOT A SCIENCE, BUT A CONTINUOUS JUDGMENT CALL”

Spring cleaning the news office

The latest buzz word on the lips of the journalism fraternity all around the world, is undoubtedly ‘ethics.’ Yet, how good, or bad, is the situation in South Africa *really*?

BY MAGDEL FOURIE

Think before you speak

Professor Anton Harber believes the answer for preventing questionable journalism practices, lies in newsroom and editorial transparency. “Gone are the days when editors can make arbitrary take-it-or-leave-it decisions and wield a top-down power with little accountability to their audiences and publics.” In the age of interactivity and participative and social media, editorial practices need to adapt, he stresses. “What they demand from others with power in terms of openness and accountability, they have to practice themselves. If editors have to explain and account for their decisions, then they will be forced to make them with more thought, care and fairness. And journalism will improve.”

In addition to more editor-led debate in newsrooms, Berger points out there should be more debate in the classrooms too - not only in journalism schools, but in all schools. And, he adds, the social media participation will, fortunately, grow and help keep journalists sensitised. “But accountability like this should not lead to journalists losing autonomy and personal responsibility.”

Yet for Wasserman it's quite simple. The local press simply mustn't give the government any reason to want to limit media freedom. “I get the feeling ethics are seen as something that has to be circumvented. But it's not simply a list of ‘don'ts.’ It also offers ‘can's’ for journalism to function better and make a positive contribution to the media landscape in South Africa.”

When Britain's biggest selling newspaper, *News of the World*, collapsed so spectacularly due to the phone-hacking scandal this year, a ripple of shock was felt by journalists worldwide. For one, disbelief reigned due to the fact that a legendary thriving enterprise such as that could come to an end so quickly, and so ungracefully. There was also awe at how such a prominent leader in international media could err so badly. But it was also the realisation that anyone of our own titles could make a mistake as well, and that the consequences might be very dire indeed.

Anton Harber, Caxton professor of journalism and media studies at WITS, states that he doesn't think there is widespread practice in South Africa of the kind of ‘grossly unethical and even illegal conduct’ one has seen in ‘the worst of the British tabloids.’ Having said that, he points out, it is also important to see that the changes in media technology, the challenges to privacy brought by social media, and the financial pressures on newsrooms have created new ethical challenges and difficulties around the world, and South Africa is not immune to this.

“We have a particular problem in South Africa in that there has been a pattern of

government appointing or promoting ethically-challenged journalists or those who have been involved in corrupting journalists and journalism. I have in mind here how Ebrahim Rasool was made ambassador after being accused of handing out ‘brown envelopes’ to journalists, and Vusi Mona was made deputy head of government communications after being dismissed as an editor for conflicts of interest. There appears to be a pattern of rewarding those involved in corrupting the work of journalists - and this is very worrying.”

The Eric Miyeni/David Bullard/Kuli Roberts cases show a particular problem too, he says. “It appears to be a case of poor editorial management which allows for controversial material to get into their papers without proper scrutiny.”

However Herman Wasserman, professor of journalism and media studies at Rhodes University, remarks that in his view media bodies in South Africa generally have become more aware of questions around ethics in the last decade. He highlights the appointment of a press ombudsman, as well as companies like Media24 developing internal ethics codes, as evidence thereof.

In turn Professor Guy Berger, from the school

of journalism and media studies at Rhodes University, highlights that ethics is not a science, but a continuous judgment call - and one that is often contentious. In his view there is no evidence that fewer ethical decisions are being made today than previously, or that there are more controversies about such decisions than there were in the past. “Storms come and go, but we do not have climate change as such - unlike the torrid micro-climate within the UK media. Generally, I believe South African journalists do weigh up whether it is in public interest to run, or drop, a particular story or angle on the story.”

Sometimes though, he says, this judgment is clouded by commercial interest and a belief that sensation sells. “But on the whole, one can state that the public is the better off for some sensitive disclosures such as some of the information around the late Manto Tshabala-Msimang.” On the other hand, there is a question whether the rush to be first, like publishing a Public Protector's report before it is officially released, is really justified. He points out that if this action revealed lapses or bad practice within the Protector's office that would be a different story, but other than that, journalists could show more respect to the integrity of an office such as this.

Who is the culprit?

Ethics is ultimately an individual's call, says Professor Guy Berger, as a journalist can contest and decide to resign if an editor violates professional or other ethics. On the other hand, an editor cannot abdicate responsibility entirely, and may need to ask a journalist to retract, amend or withdraw, he says. But publishers should not be involved in ethical issues. “Editors cannot govern by micro-management - they need living systems and policies within which journalists operate as part of their conditions of employment. That means regular revisiting and debating around ethics is needed in the newsroom - and editors should lead this.”

In Anton Harber's opinion editors have in fact been negligent in not sufficiently promoting ethical discussions, debates and awareness in their newsrooms, and in not

acting firmly or consistently when there have been breaches. “I also think editors have allowed rules about freebies and gifts to become loose and flexible, and this has not helped.”

But without any hard research here, it is tricky to say if journalism's ‘reputation’ has been damaged, says Berger. Public voices are increasingly joining the mass communications fray, and are often critical of cases of journalism. On the other hand, these voices have also been very strong against statutory regulation of journalism and against official secrecy, he points out. “That suggests that public opinion respects media freedom even despite some unhappiness. Also, trouble in selling newspapers is a function of other issues, I believe, than ethical performance. Issues like cost, availability, content mix, stale

content (compared to electronic and social media), are the drivers.”

Harber on the other hand believes damage was done. But, this is at least offset in South Africa by some of the ‘very brave and excellent investigative reporting’ one has seen, he stresses. “For every example of dubious conduct, I can point to half a dozen great and important news stories which have built journalists' reputations and played a very important role. It is important to keep this perspective and not generalise the problems.” Wasserman has a similar view, highlighting the positive. “It is also unfair to compare our tabloids with international tabloids, because I think ours are actually doing very well. One shouldn't restrict this scrutiny to only one sector of the media. Mainstream newspapers can be just as much at fault.”

The New Age nears its 1st birthday

– pg 10



ED'S NOTE

Newspapers headline

BY MAGDEL FOURIE, SUPPLEMENT EDITOR

Newspapers have been in the news a lot lately. In my view newspapers have actually been one of the big newsmakers of the year so far. Take, for one, the *News of the World's* spectacular crash-and-burn that was splashed on front pages the world over. Then in South Africa Eric Miyeni's much debated column in the *Sowetan* saw him getting sacked and the acting editor, Len Maseko, resigning, which also sparked off international headlines - and set Twitter alight with debate.

Then the *Sunday Times* attracted criticism when they led with an outdated frontpage story and image of a so-called 'Facebook racist' - a story that other local media already broke in 2008.

None of these incidents reflect favourably on newspapers, or the journalism industry. Yet it did place newspapers firmly in the spotlight and served as the subject of much talk around the water cooler. I suspect even the non-readers of newspapers took notice.

To me, in an age where there is a lot of discussion about newspapers 'disappearing,' this is at least some positive outcome to very negative publicity. Not that I'm saying unprofessional journalism is a good thing, or that it should continue in any way. But at least newspapers and their role in society are still hotly debated. Now *that's* a good thing.



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Pressure mounts in the bell jar

BY GORDON PATTERSON, MD STARCOM MEDIAVEST GROUP AND DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE ABC

While the most recent circulations confirm that print remains vital - thus adaptive and receptive to change (positive and negative) - there can be little doubt that holistically print remains under significant pressure.

With a few exceptions we see that most categories are in decline and while there are titles even within declining categories that are growing, it's fair to say that the mood in print is sombre at best.

Initially the declines that were presented to the industry were largely driven by economic pressure and the exposure of questionable deal driven distribution bulk, but those days have largely passed, and the declines continue.

And boy oh boy do the declines continue.

Can it be that people are tired of reading news? Is it new technologies? Or is it that the faith in print and newspapers in particular

are being undermined, or is something else happening? Time will tell, but rather than speculating in these areas let's look at what we know is happening.

In terms of newspapers, compared to previous periods, this category is down significantly and in a surprising development, Afrikaans press is taking a real beating, down 17% versus the category decline of 8.4%. In previous reports we've noted the resilience of Afrikaans press but this seems to have changed. Critically we'll have to watch and see if this result becomes a trend, like in the case of English language daily press.

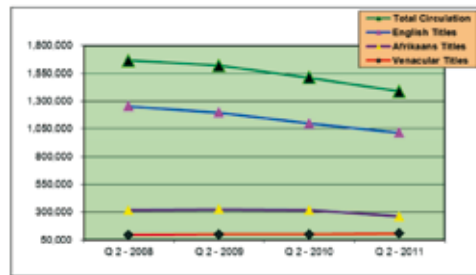
My own belief is that this result is too dramatic to be a valid measure of market rejection. Something else is going on and if it's not a reflection of external forces then it must be an internal distribution or accounting matter within the titles. If it is an accounting matter,

then advertisers are still receiving benefit, albeit that this cannot be validated by the ABC process. If it's a distribution or logistical issue, then swift corrective action is necessary.

By comparison, vernacular press is growing which not only bodes well for newspapers going forward but also for the survival of these languages.

Interestingly enough I expected the *Sowetan* to grow given its reader profile, but this was not the case. Single copy sales dropped and while the total circulation was only marginally down it was boosted by a questionable (and unexpected) distribution of 14 059 copies at less than 50% of the cover price - which in my opinion effectively renders this worthless. Copies distributed at less than 50% of the cover price should be seen by the industry as promotional activity by the title and should not support CPM arguments.

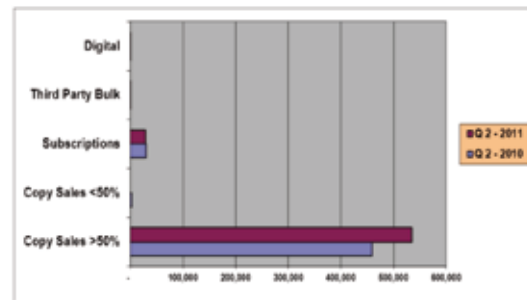
Trend Analysis - by language:
Daily Newspapers



Comment:

- Afrikaans titles declined the most in percentage terms (-17%), while vernacular titles gained slightly.

Q.2 - Composition Comparison:
Weekly Newspapers



Comment:

- Copy Sales increased by 16.4%.

ABC's also reveal good news

On the weekly newspaper side we see solid growth where it counts, ie in single copy sales. Specifically *Ilanga* (vernacular) up 34% in single copy sales (at more than 50%), *Soccer Laduma* (English), up a whopping 19% and *Mail & Guardian* up a credible 8.6% - perhaps proving that the affluent still enjoy the tangible characteristics of print.

Not surprisingly perhaps we see weekend press continuing the downward trend set over many years. Vernacular titles however leapt 15% while Afrikaans titles suffered the biggest losses, down 10.5% in terms of copy sales at more than 50% of cover price.

In terms of the Sunday purchasing poll (single copy sales at +50%), it's interesting to see that despite *Rapport* dropping some 10.9% in copy sales, the gap between this title and *Sunday Times* is only 24 000 copies. Makes you think!

Overall single copy sales for the category dropped by almost 75 000 copies while promotional 3rd party bulk copies (given free by 3rd parties) leaped 38%.

The winners in terms of growth were again vernacular, in the form of *Isolewezwé NgeSonto*, up 19%, and *Ilanga Langasonto*, up 11%.

Afrikaans titles generally declined.

And last but not least (but maybe it is been over looked in the past), the hybrid category. This category includes titles both sold and given away as part of subscriptions to other titles. Remarkable results have been recorded here, specifically from *The Times*. Single copy sales have skyrocketed tenfold in recent years to over 38 000 copies! Truly astonishing! In fact year on year the growth is sixfold. Over and above this performance the lack of advertising clutter should make it attractive to advertisers so it's puzzling why this is not the case.

It's time for reflection

In summary, looking at the performances within the major paid for newspaper categories we see a number of trends, namely:

Afrikaans is down, and if it's not market related then could it be self-inflicted - ie cannot count the sales, but they're there? Who owns these titles? Who distributes these titles? Are there any common denominators? Should advertisers embrace the opportunities or avoid them? I know my view, and I'm sure many of my peers will already have joined the dots and will be leveraging benefits.

Subscriptions are down, and I mean real subscription - those purchased by people, not corporates. This trend will increase exponentially as the influence of the time lag comes through. My belief here is that readers don't want to be tied in - no matter what the subscription offer is. Choice is key and trustworthy, consistent and professional editorial will eventually triumph.

In conclusion, there's no doubt in my mind that print remains a platform for serious consideration. The growth in vernacular circulation should inspire confidence in the future and guarantee (if media owners leverage the opportunity) an increase in advertising revenue.

Afrikaans newspapers still in the game

According to the latest ABC's, Afrikaans newspapers have shown the largest decline of all dailies, for the very first time. We asked Tim du Plessis, head of Media24: Afrikaans news, if this is cause for worry

BY MAGDEL FOURIE

According to the ABC circulation figures for April to June 2011, Afrikaans daily newspapers have declined by 17%. A proportion of this drop in the ABC's of certain Afrikaans titles, Du Plessis says, are due to prolonged and serious problems with the distribution system that Media24 newspapers put into place last year. It damaged the subscription channel especially, to such a degree that a newspaper such as *Beeld* lost more than 20% of its subscribers over a period of time, and *Die Burger* not much less - bearing in mind that sales via subscriptions form the backbone of both these newspapers' sales.

"However sales from agents and on the street remained relatively stable, which tells us that the readers haven't disappeared because they don't want to read the newspapers anymore. They're just not getting it through their channel of choice."

Yet, he points out, the system is 'flawed' to such a degree that at some of their titles they now have a situation where they can show the money gained from sales, but as they, in



accordance with the ABC's rules, don't have 'proof of sale' they can't include it in their audited sales. "And if you have printer's ink in your veins, then you'll know how terrible this is for editorial teams, as well as the other

departments that put heart and soul into the product every day, just to see how the sales drop due to factors outside of their control."

However, the system that caused these problems has meanwhile been stabilised, and is urgently in the process of being replaced, he stresses.

So he's not worried. He remarks that newspapers such as *Beeld*, *Die Burger*, *Volksblad*, *Son* and *Rapport* are tightly woven into their respective communities. "If these readers avoided those Afrikaans papers for some reason, the editors and others in the field would have realised it."

In addition, the traffic to *Beeld's* web-newspaper, *Beeld.com*, increases monthly and currently has more than 500 000 unique visitors a month. It contains the same content as the print newspaper, just without having the problems mentioned above. This, he states, is more proof that the problem with shrinking ABC-figures doesn't lie with the content and approach of the newspapers.

"A drop in sales of established, so called

'heritage newspapers,' is a worldwide phenomenon that is also seen in South Africa. The Afrikaans market is experiencing the same thing as all the others."

Yet there is no magic formula, other than working even harder and smarter to ensure they offer quality products to Afrikaans news-readers who, just like most people all over the world, prefer to read, listen to and watch news in their mother tongue, he states. "Quality is still their first requirement. All our readers can read English. Therefore first class newspapers are our main goal. Because, if the Afrikaans titles aren't good enough for those people who want to read a newspaper in Afrikaans, they will start buying English newspapers."

Meanwhile Afrikaans newspapers still play the same role as all the other local newspapers that serve the broader community. "They inform, entertain and convey the world around us to our readers. Together with other media they form the blood circulatory system of the democracy, also by playing the role of a watchdog."



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Sources: AMPS 2010B, ABC Apr-June 2011
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Preventative measures put into place

Mpumelelo Mkhabela barely took his place in the editor's chair at the *Daily Dispatch* when he got the call to become the *Sowetan's* new editor in lieu of former acting editor, Len Maseko, resigning due to Eric Miyeni's controversial column. We just, managed to catch up with him

BY MAGDEL FOURIE

Mkhabela, the man, misses the *Daily Dispatch*. "I left behind a great team of dedicated and talented journalists. I had put together an editorial strategy, incorporating some of the best practices I inherited and injecting some fresh ideas and new approaches to title-editing. I would have liked to see the strategy being executed in full." But, he adds, he is happy that he now has the opportunity to develop an editorial strategy for the *Sowetan* too. And he doesn't have any regrets. "Both titles have a rich history. Generally, journalists would love to be associated with these brands of historical repute, commanding a huge, influential market share."

He now looks forward to leading another team of 'dedicated journalists' to produce a quality newspaper that is relevant to its target market. "I would like to see it grow in both reach and influence. True to its traditions and history, it should set the national news agenda on a consistent basis."

The immediate challenge is to draw up the paper's editorial strategy and set up internal systems to ensure editorial quality control, he remarks. But, as he joined the team at quite a tender stage due to the Eric Miyeni-upheaval, they've already begun a conversation with staff members about the importance of instituting measures to ensure checks and balances, he reveals. "We have a team of hard-working journalists who have learned lessons from the Miyeni chapter, closed it and moved on. The measures we are instituting are not necessarily

new. They exist in the form of Avusa's editorial Code of Conduct and Ethics. We are just putting in place systems and processes to implement the Code."

To further try and prevent a similar situation, he says, they will hold regular workshops to sensitise all staff members in the entire editorial value chain about the importance of complying with the editorial Codes.

This because, he says, it is a joint responsibility. "However, in the final analysis, the editor is responsible, not because he or she is expected to read everything even when he is on holiday, but that he or she should be able to establish processes and systems of checks and balances where risks are identified and dealt with prior to publication.

Where there is a slippage after publication the editorial Codes are clear on redress, he explains. This does not mean that mistakes won't happen, as systems would require human beings to implement it, and human beings, like all species, are prone to mistakes. "However, some risks are too glaring not to be spotted."

He remarks, from a personal point of view, that it's important that journalists stick to ethics. But there will always be what is termed 'ethical dilemmas' in journalism, where reporters are faced with two or more competing 'ethical choices'.

"For example, was Kevin Carter (Pulitzer

Prize winning photographer) correct to wait for 20 minutes before chasing the vulture targeting the starving toddler, and thereafter took the picture that shook the world? In cases like these, there are no universally correct answers and journalists are called upon to make an ethical call on the spot."



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→ In terms of sector size by average circulation for April to June this year, **free newspapers are in third place** (after custom and consumer magazines) with a circulation of 5 729 469 between 188 publications, which results in an average circulation of 30 476

→ **Weekend newspapers are in fifth place** (after advertising brochures) with a circulation of 2 456 327 between 27 publications, which is an average of 90 975

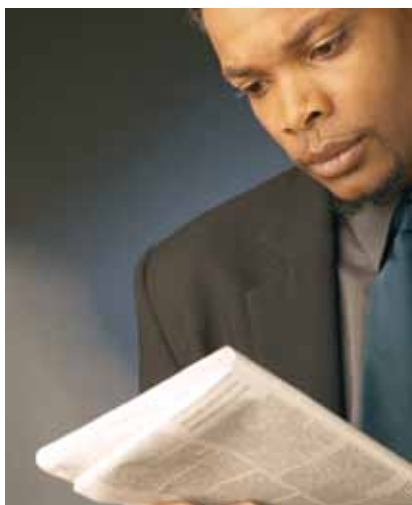
→ **Daily newspapers are ranked sixth**, with a circulation of 1 727 630 amongst 26 publications, which gives one an average of 66 447

→ **Weekly newspapers are in eighth place** 682 467 between 12 titles that results in 56 872 copies. Hybrid newspapers are in tenth place at the bottom, and totals at 157 275 between four publications, at an average of 39 319 copies

*ABC April to June 2011

Times are a'changing

Interesting amendment to the ABC's rules, as a reflection of our times: "In respect of weekly newspapers, application for exclusion may be made regarding organised stayaways etc, provided the loss exceeds 15% of the average of two comparative weeks."



The challenge of trust

BY RAY HARTLEY, EDITOR OF THE SUNDAY TIMES

The scandal which has enveloped Rupert Murdoch's media empire is compelling evidence of the dire consequences of using illegal methods to gather news. And it illustrates the power that readers have in the new age of social networking. In the highly competitive UK tabloid market, the hacking of phones and the payment of bribes to police officers conferred competitive advantage on titles such as the *News of the World*.

They broke big stories, but they also broke the law and deserve to be punished for doing so. But the *News of the World* broke something else which is vital to the health of a newspaper: the trust of its readers and its advertisers.

Readers bought the newspaper trusting that its reporters were gathering the news in the tradition of public investigation, only to discover that it had placed ethical considerations aside in pursuit of the big story.

Advertisers placed credible brands on its pages only to discover that they were now associated with hacks who intercepted the voice-mail messages of a murdered teenage girl.

When Murdoch closed the newspaper down, it was already a shadow of its former self. Its readership was in decline and its advertising was falling off the edge of a cliff.

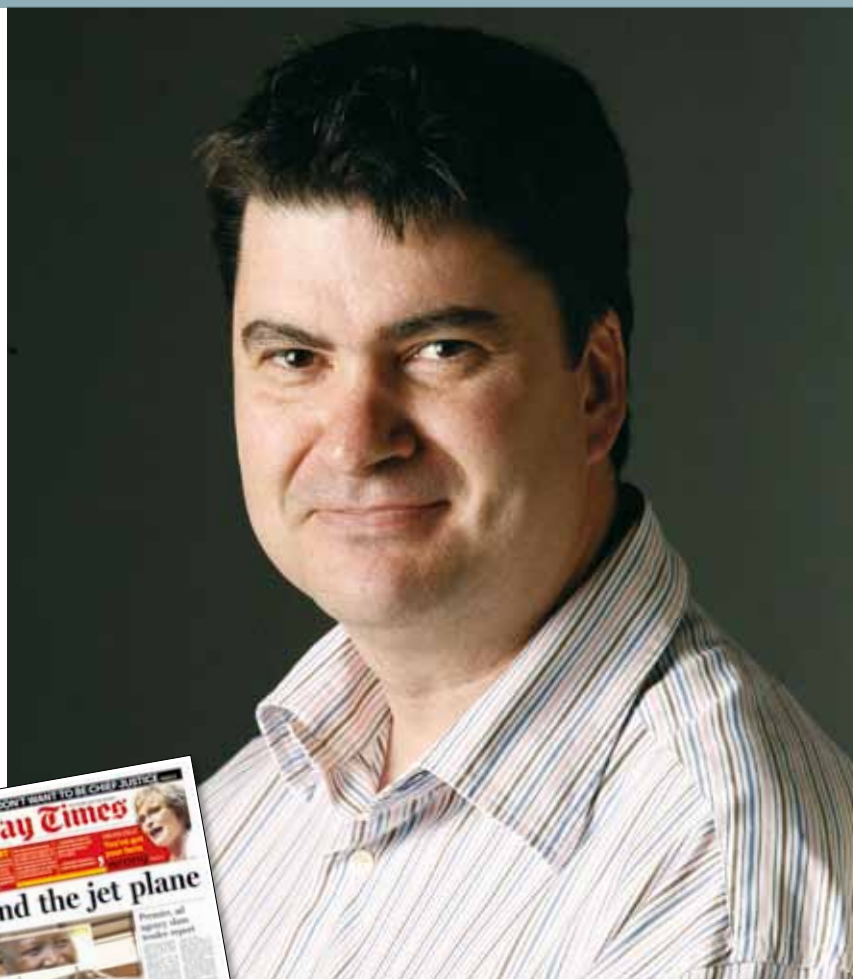
The message to journalists and news managers is simple and obvious: they deserve every support against efforts to close down the public reporting space, but they must operate within the law.

Breaking the public's trust by abandoning ethical reporting is foolhardy.

This is more so today than ever before because of the incredible empowerment that results from digital platforms such as the internet and mobile phones and the social networking that they enable.

There are some who still feel threatened by these platforms, dismissing Twitter as 'twits tweeting to twits' or proudly telling all that they do not have a Facebook profile.

They fail to understand that these social networking platforms are not just a fad. They are the primary method of communication



used by those who have access to the necessary technology. In South Africa that means everyone with cellphones and

everyone who reads newspapers.

In the case of *News of the World*, it was death by a thousand tweets as the readership organised a boycott and the public expressed disgust within seconds of each new revelation.

The second - and equally poor - approach that is often heard is that social networking can be 'used' to promote material or as a brand building platform.

This attempt to reduce social networking to an environment for aggressive marketing fails to understand that the primary engagement on a social network is personal. Imagine a friend who started every conversation with you trying to sell you a used car. You wouldn't be friends for long.

A much healthier approach is to accept

the reality of social media, understand how it brings value to readers and to engage with humility and a little curiosity.

Opening up a conversation where you are open to criticism on social networking will give you rich and instantaneous feedback. In the case of the *Sunday Times*, I hear very quickly about what people liked about the last edition of the paper. But I also hear about distribution problems, spelling errors and sometimes, disapproval at choices about content.

But mostly, I love listening in on the national conversation in real time as news issues are punted about, digested and dismissed with wit or fury.

The days when news media 'owned' this conversation are long gone and that's a good thing. Readers are more empowered and the media are more accountable.

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Spending money to make money

BY NIC DAWES, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE MAIL & GUARDIAN

It is an anxious time to be a journalist in South Africa. If it weren't enough that the economic model of our profession has been turned on its head by new publishing technologies, the basic freedoms underpinning our work are under attack.

We seem, then, to be fighting on two fronts.

Like our colleagues around the world, we are trying to understand how best to use the extraordinary digital tools that are now at our disposal, even as those tools chip away at the revenues that sustain us.

Meanwhile we must face draconian secrecy legislation, proposals for a politically appointed media appeals tribunal, and harassment from police and intelligence services that treat journalists like criminals.

Both are profound, even existential, challenges for news organisations, but I believe, and the experience of the *Mail & Guardian* shows, that it is precisely in the anxiety of our current situation that we can find the resources to ensure that great journalism not only survives, but flourishes and develops.

For us, the intersection of a commitment to investigative journalism, and openness to new tools for both publishing and reporting, are the foundations of the future.

The *M&G* has grown strongly over the past decade, breaking out of what we call the 'quality ghetto' of stagnant or declining circulation below 40 000 that is occupied by most 'upmarket' newspapers. Depending on the time of year our circulation hovers around 50 000, and is continuing to grow in the face of broad circulation decline.

There are probably several reasons for this unusual trend, but at its heart is our commitment to investigative journalism, which

is critical to our ability to create the highly relevant news packages that readers want.

Clearly high levels of relevance engage readers. They are also the reason for the sustained political attack on the press: news that matters, is very often news that discomfits. Only news that people care about is worth suppressing.



In past year, for example, the police leasing scandal exposed by the *Sunday Times*, revelations in the *Mail & Guardian* of the fast-growing business interests of President Jacob Zuma's family, and the exposure of Julius Malema's empire of 'tenderpreneurship'

to overdue public scrutiny have powerfully shaped the national discourse. In the not so distant past, the arms deal, Oilgate, and the Jackie Selebi affair acquired their politically explosive character only because persistent attention from journalists created space for other institutions of democracy, including political parties, law-enforcement, and the courts, to take action.

All of these stories have emerged from what we still call (largely for reasons of history and convenience) the 'print' sector. No doubt that is why the governing ANC makes clear in its proposals for tighter media regulation that it is newspapers that are most in need of curbs.

There is another set of pressures on investigative reporting, which are less easily explained. These stem from internal weaknesses within individual news organisations and across our media landscape.

The SABC, with its clear public service mandate and large news staff, no-longer undertakes substantial investigative journalism (with the honourable exception of the environmental show, 50/50). That leaves a profound gap. Auckland Park's more thinly resourced private broadcast competitors are unable, and often unwilling, to try to fill it, which leaves newspapers to shoulder both the workload, and the political pressure.

Unfortunately they must do with resources sapped by years of budget and staff cuts



that have too often led to the neglect of the investigative agenda. Those factors are partly, but not solely, to blame for a weakly rooted ethical culture in too many newsrooms, that has led to some serious and credibility-threatening mistakes.

These are real problems that can only be addressed by a combination of investment, honesty, and really hard work.

The critical thing for media owners to understand, however, is that readers want stories that matter to them. Their choices manifest, albeit in inchoate ways, the realisation that is at the heart of our constitution: freedom of speech and of information are critical to the realisation of our other rights from human dignity to access to water.

What does this all mean? Very simply, that you have to spend money on real journalism, including investigative journalism, if you want your readers to spend money on your news products. And you have to be where they are, in print, online, on social media, on tablets and in the public square.

It also means that the campaign against the protection of information bill and the media appeals tribunal is of existential importance for all of us. The threat to journalism's most vital democratic functions is also a threat to its commercial future.

Witness-group spreads its wings in KZN and Eastern Cape

Media24 has announced earlier this year that the Witness-group is launching several new community newspaper titles. Other important changes are also imminent. In the Pietermaritzburg area the *The Echo* is to appear as three separate titles, *Echo Pietermaritzburg Central*, *Echo Edendale* and *Echo Hammarsdale*. *The Mirror* is also changing its name to *Maritzburg Fever*. In the Durban area three titles within strategic

markets are being launched under the Fever trademark. *Forest Express* will from now on be known as *Hillcrest Fever*, while *Coastal Express* is changed to *Durban North Fever*. *Ballito Fever* is to be distributed along the North Coast. After *East London Fever* launched in the Eastern Cape, the number of Fever publications in this province is now four in total: with *Mthatha Fever*, *Isolomzi Fever* and *Uvo Lwethu Fever*.

↑ Inflation soars

While total and print rate inflation are similar, the ROI being derived from print has dropped by a further 13.47%, Ibis' quarter 1 Media Inflation update has revealed. Daily newspapers' inflation is now almost five times higher than overall MIW inflation. Community print is the only print platform tracking against the norm.

Print	%Rate	%Perf	MIW Index
Business to business	6.59	-2.41	10.57
Community	4.41	0.62	3.81
Consumer Mags	6.56	-3.81	13.56
Daily	8.79	-6.85	17.48
Weekly	6.80	-4.99	13.30
Total	7.18	-4.51	13.47
Final Total	8.81	7.92	3.56

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Getting better with Age

After several months *The New Age* is still with us. Yet they're not stagnating, but choose to keep looking for ways to surprise

BY MAGDEL FOURIE

When you read this, *The New Age* will be in its ninth month, not far from its first anniversary. This is extremely heartening to them, as they've passed what they consider to be the critical period that determines either success, or failure. "It's in those first six months that competitors try to kill a newcomer title," says Lucille Jacobs, deputy CEO of TNA Media.

Before it hit the shelves, competitors labelled *The New Age* as being a 'government mouthpiece.' The title had internal problems as well - its introduction to the market marred by early staff walkouts and various postponements of its first publication. "Those accusations that *The New Age* was controlled by government, have died down lately. That is mainly because anyone can go through the newspaper and see that that's not true. As we've said before, the proof is in the reading," she states.

BEAN COUNTERS MATTER

On reflection, Nazeem Howa, CEO of TNA Media, confidently remarks that, whilst they are in constant evolution, they are quite 'chuffed' with their performance. Which would then

naturally be followed by the question of what the circulation figures show. This, however, is where Howa balks. He explains fervently that *The New Age* is neither registered with the ABC, nor will they release their figures - just like when the *Daily Voice* was launched under his supervision as operations chief at Independent Newspapers. "As soon as I say a number, it becomes our defining number, which does not come close to representing the number of copies being read by consumers who will respond to advertisers."

What he will say though, is it's growing and is certainly not the 7000 that he saw reported in the (other) media. "Where do they get that? If it was, we won't be sitting here. We'd have already closed shop."

He goes further to add that they send out 100 000 newspapers nationally every day. When the title first appeared, it was 150 000, Atul Gupta, executive chairman, concedes. But whatever the case may be, they set out each day to get the newspaper into as many hands as possible - which doesn't exclude handing some out for free on occasion, remarks Howa. The low cover price (R3.50) also forms part of this strategy, adds Jacobs.

Yet what carries the most weight regarding the title's performance, in his view, is the advertising. "So many brands are advertising with us, such as Game and Outsurance, that really measure performance - and none of our advertising is free. Plus we get many renewals. So why else advertise with us if not because we're doing well?"

CHANGING SPOTS

Yet it is not all about selling newspapers. For them at *The New Age*, it is mostly about setting a trend for where South African media needs

to go, Howa stresses. Throughout the 'launch and fix' process, as he calls it, they've gone from a 'conventional' South African newspaper to one with more of an international style, in part due to its interaction with the *Times of India* (shareholder and strategy partner).

"We're not scared to try something new," he interjects. Spreading out the newspaper, he points out how the paper's layout has been 'reinvented.' Moving away from the broadsheet-style

of having three or four stories on the front page, *The New Age* now regularly has seven or more. In addition, apart from the longer main story, the rest are short snippets, so that it



Atul Gupta, Lucille Jacobs and Nazeem Howa

has a similar appearance as that of a news website. "Bear in mind that this newspaper is targeted on young people, between the ages of 25 and 39, who are used to a lot of stimuli. We are the only paper in this young and modern format, and the only one that is full colour too, as our readers are visually inclined. Everything just pops," Jacobs remarks, clearly proud.

Yet Howa admits to making one mistake, which was taking too conventional an approach at the start. "In April it dawned on me, and so we immediately changed the business strategy. Everything, from our content to our advertising model to our distribution model, are going to be trendsetting from here on. It's all new and fresh."

DIFFERENT STROKES

But although the print title is important, it is not the main attraction, Jacobs says. This is illustrated by them first launching the website. And it is now available on iPad, as well as a free e-paper. "We are not afraid of celebrating other platforms - we are right in our readers' world." In addition every part of their offering complements one another, says Howa.

This strategy is working well for them, she remarks. According to Nielsen's figures for July *The New Age's* website is the fourth largest news site in the country, ranked above IOL, Mail & Guardian Online, Times LIVE, and Business Day amongst others. In the same month, it was third on Media Hack's South African Newspaper Influence on Twitter Index (Saniti). It also has over 700 subscribers on iPad.

TRUE COLOURS

The New Age, however, has not swayed in its editorial approach that has borne the brunt of so much criticism. Gupta plainly states that South Africa's own newspapers write so negatively about the country it could be mistaken for foreign press.

"Our aim is still to contribute to building the country. There are wonderful things happening out there too, such as great entrepreneurship. So yes, we are proudly pro-South African people, and pro-ruling party, and encourage good achievement. However we

"WHY ADVERTISE WITH US IF NOT BECAUSE WE'RE DOING WELL?"

are committed to reporting news in a balanced, constructively critical way that is also fair."

Howa goes on to argue that this in no way means that they practice 'sunshine journalism.' Yet bear in mind that their readership is mostly people that are too young to have any apartheid baggage. "So let's celebrate what's good in South Africa too. Why beat ourselves up?" Which is why, Gupta adds, they also don't unnecessarily publish crime stories. "It is not good for the family to always see such things. We don't want to horrify our readers."

But, Howa interjects, since 20 to 30 million voters gave the government the mandate to rule the country, it will always be their job as media to make sure the government delivers. "We will keep them accountable, and at all times act in the best interests of the country." What they also aim to create is debate, and the search for solutions, remarks Jacobs. In addition all readers of all races will be able to find a home in the paper. It's about tolerance, she points out. "We don't have any hidden agenda."

With the end of Henry Jeffreys' term as editor ending at the end of May, Ryland Fisher has stepped in as acting editor. So far this works well for them, he says. "One needs different editors for the different life stages of a newspaper. Jeffreys was what we needed at the start. But Fisher is the right man for now."



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Matching Brands to Markets

Getting the timing right – and giving people what they want

BY MAZWI XABA, EDITOR OF ISOLEZWE

If I had to use one word to describe *Isolezwe's* amazing growth since launch in 2002, I'd say it's timing. But with timing you need the right product for the gap in the market. The year 2002 was a time when confidence was high among black people, including millions of isiZulu speakers. They were beginning to see the fruits of the new-found freedom of 1994, with the economy performing well and the winds of the renewed 'African renaissance' reviving pride in our people's culture and language. In the music industry people were returning to their own 'local is lekker'. *Isolezwe* came at the right time. What better way for the newspaper industry to go local than to produce a newspaper in a local language spoken as widely as isiZulu?

In putting together the newspaper, we had to ensure that we were not politically biased towards any group and generally gave people what they wanted and had been missing for years. The absence of a contemporary Zulu title had led to the misconception that there was 'no culture of reading' among the Zulu

population. So, in the past nine years we've been talking to these modern Zulu people in a language they love and our circulation has been growing higher and higher. This sense of pride and the desire to help promote and protect our language and culture also provided the fuel that was required to build this brand to what it is today. The amazing team of journalists, subs, photographers, and others were willing to go the extra-extra mile to ensure that *Isolezwe* was launched successfully and grew as it did over the years.

This is not to say this historic and huge success was achieved without any challenges. For any newspaper there's the 'juniorisation



of the newsroom' phenomenon. In our case, there was the additional complication of language because some of the younger generation go through school without proper isiZulu education. But we embraced the 'youth' and their energy and creativity made up for their language limitations. Through training and mentoring they quickly picked up the basics.

At the start, we had a few but crucial people around. Such as the founding editor Philani Mgwaba, who by then had more than 10 years of writing experience as well as newsroom management. I had the benefit of years of involvement with workshopping the idea of a new publication targeting the black section of the market well before launch.

Similar to Mgwaba, I had also accumulated 10 years of experience at sister newspapers the *Daily News* and *Sunday Tribune* prior to *Isolezwe's* launch.

Isolezwe as a brand quickly became so popular because of the platform that we provide for people to talk about issues affecting them directly. Many would phone us first - before contacting the police - or use our name to demand better service in government centres such as clinics. We provide an accessible platform that people trust to tackle issues affecting them in their own language.

And we're growing, not just in circulation. We're expanding our editorial team even further to cater for this budget-exceeding success. We now have a weekend editor, Slindile Khanyile, for example, who looks after our Sunday edition and will steer the launch of our latest addition to *Isolezwe's* growing family of newspapers, *Isolezwe ngoMgqibelo* (on Saturday) last month. So soon we'll be closing that gap in the market and I'm confident the Saturday edition will just grow and grow like the others.

see how over two million people enjoy the reporting, commentary and insight offered by our titles and their

Title	Readers/Members	Sales
Daily News	430 000 daily readers	35 071 sales*
Isolezwe	696 000 rising stars	108 138 sales*
THE MERCURY	275 000 key players	32 920 sales*
POST	429 000 community members	43 798 sales*

Media freedom in peril

GASANT ABADER, EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF CAPE ARGUS

Protest marches, sit-ins at parliament, debates and columns and letters in the opinion pages of newspapers - are all consequences of a creeping onslaught on our press freedom.

Last year marked the start of a difficult time for the print industry, and in particular newspapers. Leaders in the ANC were increasingly calling for the ruling party's executive to act on a Polokwane resolution to establish a Media Appeals Tribunal.

But the proposed introduction of a tribunal was not the only threat to press freedom: the Protection of Information Bill perhaps posed a much broader and far-reaching encroachment on the rights of all South Africans. The bill in its current form will give civil servants the power to classify government information and make it a crime for ordinary citizens to acquire and possess documents that are deemed to be 'State secrets'.

It is obvious that the moves by government and the ANC have been directed at newspapers in this country.

Newspapers continue to be the most robust medium



in the country because it leads the agenda and breaks the stories that form the basis of our national

discourse. It has been particularly strong over the years in exposing government corruption and excesses, perhaps making it a natural target.

But newspapers have not been without fault and the way some newspapers have chosen to respond to mistakes and inaccurate reporting had left much to be desired. Critics accused editors of burying apologies or corrections and, for example, not giving these the same prominence of the original, offending article.

The facts, however, indicate that the Press Council and the

ombudsman have made strides to improve accountability and recourse.

This August, the Press Council released a report that suggested further ways to strengthen the ombudsman's office. These included:

- Introducing a director to drive public engagement on journalistic standards
- Creating the position of a public advocate to help members of the public to formulate complaints
- Reviewing the Press Code every five years
- Providing more details about under which circumstances the Press Code finds it acceptable to use unnamed sources
- Strengthening the protection of children by the Press Code

The future of our free press is at a crucial junction and doing away with self-regulation in favour of a tribunal will have far-reaching.

One of the criticisms directed at the print media, by ANC leaders arguing for a tribunal, was that it was unpatriotic. But being patriotic does not mean presenting an artificial veneer of only positive news and hiding the truth from the public.

The best way the print media can show patriotism is to serve the public and the country by living its role of being a watchdog and holding those in power accountable, giving a voice to the powerless and placing information in the public domain so that citizens can continue to make informed choices.

views

<p>280 000 weekenders 47 336 sales*</p>	<p>755 000 liewires 80 608 sales*</p>	<p>624 000 regional readers 85 131 sales*</p>
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The Business of online

BY PETER BRUCE, EDITOR OF BUSINESS DAY



People scoffed at the thought a newspaper could charge for access on the internet to its editorial but guess what? We can! Last year the *Financial Times*, a co-owner of *Business Day*, made more money charging through its paywall than it did selling advertising. *The New York Times'* paywall is already proving to be a huge success.

At *Business Day* we're going the same route and I am confident it will work. It isn't that our stories are unique or that they are uniquely well crafted. But the whole paper, taken together, is unique, certainly in this market. You cannot even remotely get our mix of news, editorial opinion and commentary in any other newspaper, print or digital.

As most people now know the BDFM shareholders have decided to merge the current INetBridge newsroom - around 25 people - into *Business Day* to effectively merge the *Business Day* and Business Live websites into a single digital unit called Business Day Live. For my sins I will become editor of a news wire, a daily newspaper and a digital business operation I expect to be world class and very profitable.

We already are. BDFMs digital operations will make some R14 million this year. The newspaper is profitable, with trading margins even as we return to some bleak times, of more than 15 %.

That's due to a combination of things, but mainly a very conservative and focused management and great people in my editorial team. I have met some of the folk joining us from INet and they are

terrific. I have no doubt the merger will be a great success.

Of course there will be difficulties. We operate on different editorial systems, both of which are dated, particularly *Business Day's*. So we need to make the two work together while, at the same time, we concentrate on a business-wide upgrade.

Merely finding room for an extra 25 people in an already tight newsroom is going to be tough, but it enables us to reorganise ourselves to better represent the kind of business we are going to become.

And most of all, people are at the heart of it. There is duplication of jobs in some instances and we have to resolve those in a way that gives journalists a rewarding reason to come to work in the morning and which enhances our competitiveness.

Competition for me as an editor is everything. We have a wonderful niche market as *Business Day* and I hold onto it with all the strength I have. Lots of media want what we have. I enjoy watching them waste their money trying to take it away from us.

I know very well that *Business Day's* digital offering, until recently, has not been great. Our web platform is so obsolete that we still have to come in to the office at 4am to hand-load the previous night's newspaper on to it. That will all soon change as we move *Business Day* onto the Escenic platform currently used by Avusa, our other owner, for



Anyone brave or foolish enough to own a newspaper will by now be at their wits end. Just as the green shoots of some kind of recovery were beginning to show on income statements following the credit crunch of 2008 and the subsequent recession, the market has in the last two months taken another turn for the worse. Call it double dip or just a little rotten luck, media revenues are heading south again.

In newspapers this hurts particularly badly because of the printing and distribution charges that are a part of the business. But there's a bright side.

Newspapers are survivors. Who would have thought that *The News of the World* was the first British newspaper to close in 30 years, internet and all? But it was. We've survived the first charge of the internet and we've begun to ride it ourselves.

Business Live and Times Live.

But we have made great strides developing really good Apple applications, and now have both iPhone and iPad apps, which are proving hugely popular. You can also subscribe to a *Business Day* E-paper.

Many of the exciting things happening at *Business Day* are the result of Avusa and Pearson, the two BDFM shareholders, reaching a common understanding of where the business has to go. I am so grateful to them both for that.

The rest of the excitement will be up to us to create and I know we will not let our readers and advertisers down.

LoweBull11186/e



Which is why you should advertise your brand in The Pink Tongue, Cape Town's free and only gay community newspaper. With a distribution of 15 000 throughout various gay-friendly establishments it's a sure way to speak to the power of the pink rand. Call the Pink Tongue on 021 488 4179 or email nassa.basadien@inl.co.za and get more pink for your brand. www.pinktongue.co.za



* LGBTI = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and intersex people. Stats from research by Freshly Ground Insights, commissioned by Pink Advertising.

The art of news reporting

BY FERIAL HAFFAJEE, EDITOR OF CITY PRESS

To be a successful newspaper, you have to be much more than a newspaper. *City Press* in the past year has stopped being a newspaper only and we are the stronger for it. Now you can access *City Press* via specially created mobi-sites, on an iPad application, through Twitter links and finally in glorious broadsheet on a Sunday morning. This is a trend for all of the print industry which in 2011 finally caught up with colleagues around the globe. It is a development no less formative for this industry than the founding of the printing press or the move to desk-top publishing.

As a reader, the new universe has also meant I can read the *Mail & Guardian* on my Kindle and soon will be reading SA's first tablet-only 'newspaper' - the *iDailyMaverick*.

Revolutions are heady things: they are demanding, exhilarating, exhausting and exceptionally rewarding if good is made of them. So it is to work in the media revolution. The old days of working toward a leisurely weekly print deadline is over and only the most dedicated journalists will make the journey with success. Now, to tell a story, you must tweet it, preferably live because readers want their news on demand. Then, you have to write a version of some depth for online. Finally, you have to dress it up with detail, meaning and investigation to make it last till the print edition comes out.

The challenges of this always-on journalism are great: burnout is an everyday risk and reality - editors must do a careful balancing act to ensure that in feeding the beast of the omnipresent deadline, you don't sacrifice quality, depth and range. In a country like ours, it would be easier to congregate around the urban centres and tell only the easily tweeted stories from venues with free 3G, but that would do a disservice

to the ethos. This is the ethos which demands that in-depth reporting from all corners of the country is the only way to ensure we stay true to our role as a fourth estate. In the media critiques which have reached a crescendo in the past two years, one of the legitimate concerns raised has been that we do not, with exception, cover the country in all its corners.

The challenges for the industry are numerous, since it is essential that we begin counting all the readers across platforms to reflect that while print circulation may be down the number of people reading is in fact growing exponentially.

Neither do we always give a balanced picture of our country by looking at our lapses, but also at the various strides South Africa has made. I have seen a strong attempt by the media to change this by focusing on success stories too.

The power relationship between reader and writer has been inverted where journalists and editors are no longer the prophets of old on whom readers relied for both news and the interpretation thereof. Now readers want to engage in the process of news-breaking and the interpretation thereof and the use of this popular voice in the process of the creation of journalism is essential in the new universe. What does this mean in practice? For *City Press*, it means creating many more talk-back opportunities for readers: they give us their opinions via text messages, twitter, online comments and old-fashioned letters to the editor. In this, their views are far more embedded in the creation of the final *City Press* edition on a Sunday than ever before.

This, to my mind, has made the printed product and its many other iterations far more public and democratic spaces than ever before. It is a trend to which those crafting the Protection of Information bill and the forthcoming hearings on the media appeals tribunal appear deaf and blind, since the assumption underlying these infringements on media freedom is that journalists, editors and owners still stand apart from society. In my experience, the media is far more popularly 'owned' than ever before - for those unedited online forums where racism is rife, the challenge is how to mediate this relationship so that it retains its liberty but does not harm the constitutional imperative to do no harm. This will be the next big issue in the era of open media democracy.

There is more diversity than before with the media revolution but unfortunately less depth. An atmosphere of heightened competition can mean we are all chasing the same narrow agenda rather than setting new ones in parts of the country under-served by news. Our coverage of Limpopo and of ANC Youth League president Julius Malema's business interests is a part of a mega-plan of *City Press* to push the news agenda out from being Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban-centric.

Every week, I receive a score of applications from young journalists and established

ones who have moved into public relations. This is good since it shows that despite the internal and external demands on our craft, it remains a coveted one.

'REVOLUTIONS ARE HEADY THINGS: THEY ARE DEMANDING, EXHILARATING, EXHAUSTING AND EXCEPTIONALLY REWARDING IF GOOD IS MADE OF THEM'



A woman to be reckoned with

Haffajee is again included in the *Mail & Guardian's* Book of South African Women. Published annually in conjunction with Women's Day, it contains profiles of extraordinary women in 10 categories, including 'the media' within which she is listed along with nine others.

It is the fourth consecutive year that Haffajee appears in the book since its launch in 2008. She also appeared on the cover of the August issue of *Destiny* magazine.

Dispatch from the frontline

ANGELA QUINTAL, EDITOR OF THE DURBAN-BASED MORNING DAILY, *THE MERCURY*

Of all the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) products on the shelf, daily newspapers have the shortest shelf-life. It's a demanding, pressurised business where everyone wants the credit for 'breaking news' and a lapse in judgment gets broadcast in black and white. That said, no-one chooses journalism for an easy ride. And it's not getting any easier.

CHALLENGES

The degree of political jostling out there is significant and we run a real risk of falling prey to political agendas. *The Mercury* has built up a highly credible reputation over the past 158 years. We take our responsibility very seriously and can't accept leaks and rumours as the basis for stories without double-checking and doing our own homework. I'm grateful for my background in political reporting because I think it heightened my senses to anonymous sources who sneak themselves into the headlines. Since joining *The Mercury* nearly two years ago, I've introduced a policy on sourcing and attribution, as well as revisited our code of ethics. We know it's excellence in journalism that what will define us and ensure our survival so we're making every effort to achieve that.

However, to err is human and we do make mistakes. By adopting a corrections policy based on the *New York Times* model, we don't bury our mistakes or ignore errors in the hope that nobody has noticed. It's important for our credibility and accountability to our readers.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an enabler and a competitor. But we're not competing with cables and screens - audiences follow content and that's our speciality. Good journalists will have the same skills - a nose for news and that dogged determination to get the story from all angles - whether they're tweeting, facebooking, or looking up maiden names in the good old phonebook.

I do use Twitter but I don't think my 1330

followers are there for hard-sell tweets flogging the day's paper. It's proved useful for picking up trending stories and it makes me accessible for tip-offs. But there're still a few hoops a story has to go through before making it in to the paper. That keeps us credible.

We have some great plans in terms of QR codes, which is slowly catching on in South Africa. As you saw with our World Cup coverage, we're not scared to innovate and our readers will hopefully benefit, not only in terms of added news and sport content, but also promotions. Given the strength of mobile in this country, we believe it's one of the routes to go.

CHANGING NEWS VALUES

Being in the news business is both fascinating and frustratingly complex. Economic power is shifting and political power has already moved. As a newspaper, we've got to keep up and stay relevant.

I don't subscribe to 'sunshine' journalism and goodness knows *The Mercury* is no government 'imbongi' but we can be a positive influence in our region. We did this with our World Cup coverage and twinning with various newspapers overseas, something we repeated on a smaller scale during the recent International Olympic Committee meeting and the announcement of the Winter Olympic host city for 2018.

Some of our recent projects may be surprising but I don't want *The Mercury* waking up to find the world's moved on. During the ANC national general conference in Durban last year we published a daily supplement, *Siyaphi*. Kwazulu Natal's very own Nobel Laureate Albert Luthuli, has been the subject of an informative keepsake insert to commemorate the 50 year anniversary of his receiving the peace prize. In Heritage month, we enlightened our readers on the intricacies of our royal monarch, King Goodwill Zwelithini. But *The Mercury* readers also loved our William & Kate Royal Wedding supplement and sales spike



community - has also been revamped with a more modern design and improved content. The popular social pages remain, but we're making a concerted effort to broaden our SMME coverage and to up our game in terms of our business focus.

for the Wimbledon supplement and bi-annual *Eating Out Guide*. We have several plans for the upcoming Cop 17 meeting, which will be taking place in our own backyard, including a series of posters for schools, that will be a great teaching aid and will be of interest to readers who may not be on top of climate change and environmental issues.

REVAMPING THAT WORKS

Two of our projects this year, have involved a make-over of popular weekly supplements. Our Friday *goodlife* supplement has been given a fresh new look and we've expanded the content. It's perfect for the weekend ahead, where readers will have more time to enjoy a good read. Articles covering health and fitness, fashion and trends, travel and books have been added to the mix which already includes the arts, entertainment, music, movies and theatre. Our Wednesday *Network* supplement - aimed at KZN's business

GETTING PEOPLE INTO NEWS

Newspapers were in my home and I grew up reading - finding things out for myself, forming opinions. And I'm not the only one. At the Telkom/JZ Foundation gala dinner last month, President Jacob Zuma claimed that he "taught himself English by reading the English and Zulu versions of *Bona* and *The Mercury*, a paper I still love today". It's important for us to get involved with improving literacy and numeracy levels and *The Mercury* is spearheading an initiative that will hopefully add to the efforts out there. Our role as a newspaper in empowering readers with information is as critical as ever.

** Quintal was previously group political editor for Independent Newspapers and an executive editor at The Star. Follow her on Twitter @angelaquintal or find The Mercury on Facebook at www.facebook.com/themercurysa.*

Apps for newspapers to come

Before the end of the year Media24's newspapers will be rolled out in app-format - for tablet and smartphone, says Liza Albrecht, head: digital platforms at Media24 Afrikaans newspapers. At the end of August she could reveal that Afrikaans newspapers are already reviewing their digital strategy, as all Media24 newspapers are now to focus intensively on the rollout of apps. Various specialist apps are also in the pipeline, she says. The first, Rugby24, which is Afrikaans newspapers' exclusive Rugby World Cup app, has already been approved and is now available on iPad and iPhone.



New Gazette launched in the Boland

Boland Newspaper Group, publishers of the Gazette group of free sheets, has launched the *Drakenstein Gazette* recently. Distributed free of charge every Tuesday to readers in Paarl, Wellington and Mbekweni, it is the ninth addition to the weekly *Gazette* newspapers that are distributed in the Boland region. The other *Gazette* titles are *Olifantsrivier*, *Theewaterskloof*, *Kleinmond*, *Swartland*, *Breederivier*, *Somerset West/Macassar* and *Strand/Gordon's Bay Gazette*.





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New research exercise points to positive future for print media

Path to persuasion advises advertisers on how to optimize adspend

Newspapers the world over might be battling to hold on to flagging circulations. Yet a new, defining piece of research, which suggests that there is a clear and differentiating role for newspapers across multiple product categories, points to a bright future for the print media. Noting that calculating return on investment (ROI) is a common business practice, the research strives to repeat the exercise for return on media investment (ROMI), unarguably the advertiser's Holy Grail. In its quest to track down that Grail, Freshly Ground Insights (FGI), the Johannesburg-based market intelligence research specialist, conducted an extensive study into consumers' media preferences with a view to determining the different roles that media channels and media brands play in the delivery of information to consumers. The exercise was conducted on behalf of Ads24, the advertising arm of Media24, a Naspers Group company, with the specific goal of measuring the efficacy of newspaper advertising. Brad Aigner, CEO at FGI, says that motivated by the need to optimise ROMI, buyers of advertising space expect accountability from their media owner partners.

Hence: "The need for measurability and 'empirical proof' that media brands have delivered positive returns on investment is critical to media owners wanting to retain and grow their market shares." The study, known as Path to Persuasion: Media ROI 2011, finds that different media channels and media brands play clearly differentiating roles in the delivery of information to consumers. In effect: "There is a clear and differentiating

role for newspapers across multiple product categories." The report concludes: "The clarity of the research result has enabled the development of a media-neutral model for the measurement of media return on investment."

Among the study's leading conclusions is that television tends to dominate the South African market, largely owing to the extent of advertising investment in this medium. "It is therefore no wonder that more consumers tend to recall TV ads than ads carried in other media." However: "The flaw with verified channel noting as a measure of ROMI is that it does not account for influencing factors such as media weight, creative impact, recency, etc." In this context, Aigner observes that when one factors in adspend in order to derive the relative efficiency of media channels, the picture often defaults to the mass media TV and radio channels showing the best results. He identifies a fundamental problem as that of media owners competing on a reach-based noting platform - which suits mass reach channels like TV and radio.

"Yet if media owners were able to compete on a level playing field that takes into account the unique strengths of their media channels and brands - and the unique contribution that they make in informing and influencing consumers - then the adspend 'skew' in South Africa may begin to normalise."

Aigner emphasises the awareness among marketers of consumers' "path to purchase" in their buying behaviour process - a path that starts with awareness and ends with a purchase decision and action. "Ultimately," he points out, "the goal of marketing is to

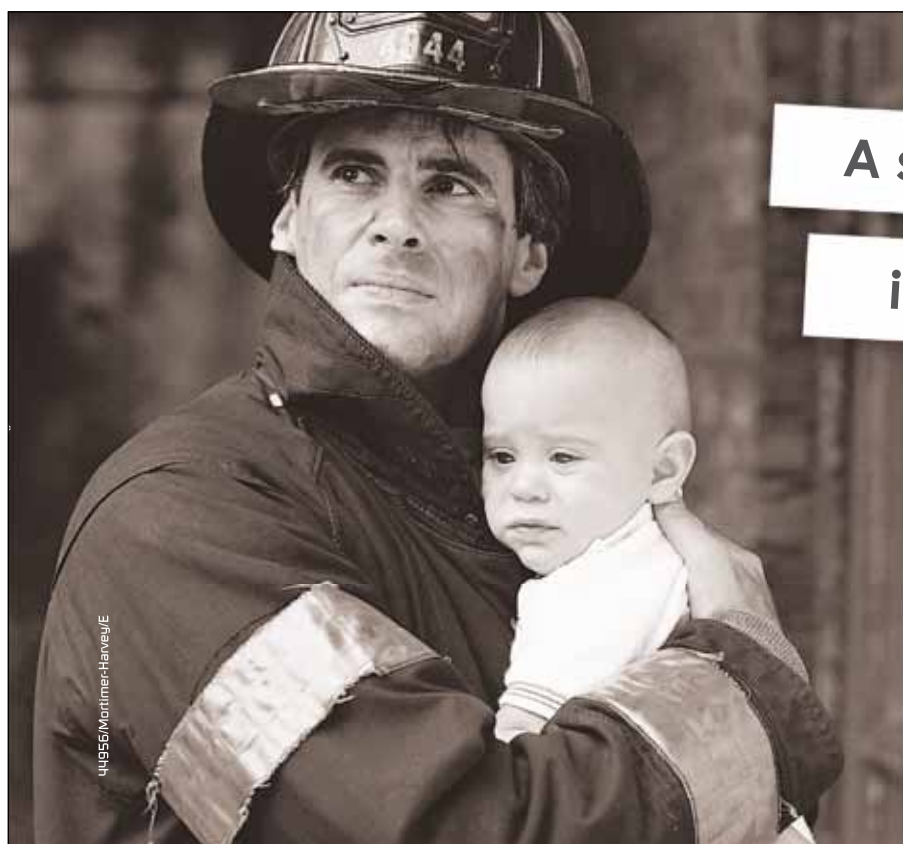
encourage consumers to make a positive buying decision at the end of the path to purchase. The intrinsic value of different media types enables planners to engage with consumers in the right place at the right time with the correct message to take them a step closer to the end of the path to purchase." The FGI research reveals that different media types are more or less effective in persuading consumers at different stages of the path-to-purchase cycle. It concluded that the "media path to persuasion" takes consumers through six stages:

- Introduction;
- Entertainment;
- Education;
- Information;
- Comparison; and
- Persuasion.

Taking a line through the research results, Aigner recommend that media planners adopt a media mix in which each channel in the mix optimises its role in the media path to persuasion. "The best media strategy is one where the media mix is integrated optimally to drive consumers through every stage of the media path to persuasion." Aigner's analysis of the research, juxtaposed on the media path to persuasion, highlights newspapers' ability, when combined with television, to deliver incremental value at the end of the path. Further: "Newspapers deliver incremental and cost-efficient value at every stage of the path to persuasion. Indeed, in every case there is a clear and differentiating role for newspapers that delivers positive media return on investment for the brand being measured."

FOOTNOTES ON MODUS OPERANDI:

- **A quantitative research method** was used to measure channel return on investment.
- **Respondents were randomly recruited and interviewed** at consumer convergence points throughout SA.
- **Some 200 interviews were conducted** for each case study, making each sample reliable to within 7% at the 95% confidence interval level.
- **The sample was quota-controlled on demographics, region and heavy/light readers** in order to be representative of the country's newspaper readership profile (AMPS 2010).
- As a control measure, the sample also included **a sub-sample of non-newspaper readers**.
- The final sample of 995 respondents drawn for the study was **reliable to within a 3% margin of error**.



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They want it, and they want it **Now**

NewsNow is on the shelves, finally. Shortly before the first issue, Waldimar Pelsler, editor, took some valuable time from his hectic schedule to give us the lowdown



→ All in all, what has the local newspaper industry's reaction been to the launch of *NewsNow*, thus far?

Journalists and the industry are watching this development with interest. *NewsNow* is a news publication the likes of which has not been seen in South Africa. We aggregate content from all around the world. We religiously cite our sources and refer readers to newspapers, blogs, other magazines and even radio shows. This message - of synthesising the best of the rest - is being well received. We assume our readers already consume other media. But because we harvest so widely we go beyond whatever your daily read is at the moment. That might include a daily paper, some radio and alerts on your smart phone. We give you something quite different and specifically design this magazine for people who don't have enough time to consume as widely as they need to.

→ What has been the strongest criticism you've received, and from who?

I was told the future of journalism is in long form journalism and feature articles. Why are we pushing shorter stories? Are we not 'dumbing down'? It's convenient for writers to tell readers they ought to make time to read more, but for many people, especially during those years when work, family and friends all make big demands on your time, this is very difficult. They might want to but cannot. We believe that by making a smart digest with short stories that take less than a minute to read we get more information about more things that matter to more people. We believe this will be valuable.

→ What has been the most positive, and from who?

Advertising executives, mothers, students, professionals. They say, 'Wait a minute, my lifestyle has changed, and so have my reading habits; I want news that's short and to the point because I don't have time.'



→ In turn, how has the public reacted to the proposed product?

The response so far has exceeded our expectations. We have signed up a great number of paying subscribers and are steadily building our online community too. The concept is proving to have wide appeal and we believe readers will enjoy the reading as much as we enjoy putting it together.

→ You've already been very active on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. How much traction have you gained so far? Would you say you already have an audience?

We have a fast growing online community and encourage our journalists to be active in social media. Two weeks before launch we had some 1300 likes on Facebook and were fast approaching 500 followers on Twitter. This is only the beginning. Both platforms are crucial because this is where our community engages with us. Facebook is a discussion forum, a dinner party, a very public braai. We want to know what people think.

→ How is the content of your tweets and posts on Facebook different from other local news titles', including newspapers? How do you differentiate yourself?

Firstly by keeping posts on Facebook very short, and by aggregating. We refer you to all top news sources and others you might never have heard of. It allows us, online, to respond more immediately to the news of the day. The backbone of this operation however remains the weekly magazine, which gives readers a punchy second take on the week's top stories. Together this is an ideal news 'ecosystem'.



"WE GIVE YOU SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT AND SPECIFICALLY DESIGN THIS MAGAZINE FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO CONSUME AS WIDELY AS THEY NEED TO"

→ How many subscriptions have you got in the bag up to this point?

I cannot share this information, but the numbers are very, very healthy!

→ Is the print title your main focus? How are all the other platforms *NewsNow* is available on, integrated with each other?

Print is the mother platform but the focus will always be to be wherever readers find it most convenient to catch up. Our digital subscriptions on Zinio were launched early in August and we offer a replica of the print magazine on tablets, laptops, mobile and PC. In



addition our website, www.nn.co.za, will be our online hub. With brief summaries of the day's news as it happens we'll aggregate coverage of news, business, people and lifestyle. nn.co.za is built to work well on mobile. We have a few other digital plans up our sleeve too.

→ Have your journalists received specific training for their role at *NewsNow*? If yes, please briefly explain what?

They have received training in the method of aggregating, which goes to the core of the journalist's role - cutting through noise, separating the wheat from the chaff. Our senior assistant editor Kevin Jacobs as well as Charlene Rolls, deputy editor, and myself all engage daily with the team to refine our method. We have newspaper-like news conferences where stories of the week and angles are discussed and we encourage all members of the editorial team, including layout artists and sub-editors, to put forward suggestions for stories. Also, every journalist has been equipped with an iPad to make reading - our daily staple - as easy as possible.

→ In just a few words, how would you like people to think of *NewsNow* as a brand?

I would like people to feel that this is a magazine that informs and entertains them and makes their lives easier. It must add value.

Is the future of media research in SA in safe hands?

BY GREG STEWART, PUBLISHER OF THE CITIZEN

A provocative blurb was issued to the industry as a notice for the AMASA meeting in August. Certainly it was a topical and also critical issue and with the 'captains of industry' promised, it was something that should have made a contribution to the debate that desperately needs to be raised within the media industry around research and AMPS in particular. What transpired however, left me wondering where the hell it all went wrong and if the media industry will ever realise the collective power that it should have, or if there ever will be any real debate.

What was presented was a sterile and thoughtless one sided affair that simply glossed over a monumental topic. Credit has to be given though to Quentin Green, the chairman of MAMCA who pointed out that things have to change or we, as an industry, would stand to lose a most valuable common currency. As for the rest, there was no contrary or worthwhile contribution to any form of debate at all.

My take on all of this is that if certain planners don't have a useful little tool to bang out thoughtless schedules with, to justify whatever is being charged to come to this

brilliant conclusion, perhaps they will stop their own existence. Or scary thought, there may just be space for new thinking and many would not want that at all.

I remember conversations with some of the best media thinkers of the industry back in the late 80's and early 90's, before we all became data paralytic and media planning was more of a creative process than a statisticians nirvana, and long for a conversation that would start with 'how do we sell this client's product, service or idea, to the right audience at the best possible time with the most possible impact' without a maximising programme on hand, and then discuss a strategy and a media spread and then a discount.

I shudder when I consider that senior people in the media planning industry have openly said that media owners are fools if they do not increase their rates, as today it is only about discounts. The higher the rate the bigger the discount, and the more impressed the client is when they are presented with the bottom line discount achieved on the computer generated media schedule. Never mind that the schedule may have missed the point and audience completely. Much media spend today

goes simply where the discount fits best.

AMPS best value has always been its core trend lines. However, this has gone awry and sample sizes are simply ludicrous. When you have daily publications that have more 'five out of five' copy readers than average issue readers, or steady trends that are simply reversed, or readership that does not remotely correspond to movement of circulations, or supplements that have double the readership of the carrier publication, then there is a problem and the research simply loses its value. No one raises a concern over sample sizes that have dwindled and little realisation has occurred that the currency of AMPS is simply not what it used to be. Researchers themselves will acknowledge that reaching certain demographic groups is almost impossible today, and yet we simply accept the results because it is the only currency we have.

None of these issues were raised or answered and the head of SAARF told all that anyone who disagreed with AMPS was an idiot. The grand finale however was a masterpiece by none other than Teddy Langschmidt, who 'raised the bar in intellectual debate' in the industry with a statement that went something



like, "well I don't give a S***T about what anyone says, my daddy went door to door for ten years and convinced everyone to do this. It is F*****g ridiculous and the money belongs to the marketers and they need to decide what to do with it and the whole industry has their head up their a*** if they don't agree." The representatives of our industry responded with a standing ovation. A sad moment in the history of SA media and perhaps an indication of where the future of media research in this country, so long held as the best example of media research worldwide, is heading.

Strength in diversity

BY JOS KUPER, KUPER RESEARCH

The conventional 'wisdom' takes a convenient route - lumping all newspapers into an aggregated pot, and proclaiming their future. However, if we take a more unconventional route by looking at multi-platform media consumption and beyond that at the psychographic underpinnings of the media consumers, a very different picture emerges.

Let us try to paint the picture: our main source is the futurefact survey which has been monitoring the attitudes, values and beliefs of South Africans and their media consumption patterns since 1998. The latest survey, in field during March and April 2011, reflects the views of 2 524 respondents, selected on a random probability basis from around the country other than deep rural communities of fewer than 500 people. Like AMPS it covers those aged 15 plus and is weighted to population according to similar parameters. There is happily no sign in the survey that readership of newspapers is about to tip downwards. But we have uncovered some fascinating interaction patterns on the inter-media front indicating the repertoire of media access.

For example, readers of English newspapers (including tabloids) tend to access a wider variety of media than their Afrikaans newspaper reading compatriots. Thus they are exposed to a wider range of views and



opinion for influencing the way they feel about the world. While this is one example, these types of analyses reveal all sorts of inter-media synergy opportunities for product development, marketing and advertising. It is in fact the synergies and the fragmentation that will be important for marketers in the future techno stream.

But these analyses should incorporate a psychographic component, as demographics and even consumption behaviour in regard to media are only a limited part of the story. Generic indicators are highlighted below as examples, but title and target specific analyses

would undoubtedly be very fruitful.

Afrikaans dailies are interestingly attracting a somewhat more conservative readership than are their weekly counterparts (this excludes the Afrikaans tabloids). There is above average nostalgia for the days of old, where service delivery is perceived to have been better. Interestingly this nostalgia for past service levels is reflected even by tabloid readers, albeit at lower levels.

On language of choice for newspapers, it is the English language tabloid reader who, irrespective of home language, prefers reading English print media. Zulu newspaper readers on the other hand tend to be more concerned that their home language is being lost, that their children are no longer able to speak their home language properly.

The affiliation with culture is stronger for Zulu and Afrikaans newspaper readers than for other groupings in the country though a national ethos does prevail considerably more than a narrow language, ethnic or provincial identification. While insecurities on the socio-political and socio-economic fronts are contributing to a substantial sector pulling inwards to groups where they feel safe (not only physically but emotionally), there is no evidence of a return to the ethnic boxes of the apartheid era.

Despite the straightened economic world context, the level of social mobility in this

country contributes to many feeling their families are doing better financially. Mobility has occurred across race and ethnic lines, though it has certainly slowed as a result of the recession. Tabloid readers definitely view free education as their right and with education being a key driver of class mobility, newspapers and the role they provide on a knowledge skilling front are critical ingredients for the country's social and economic future.

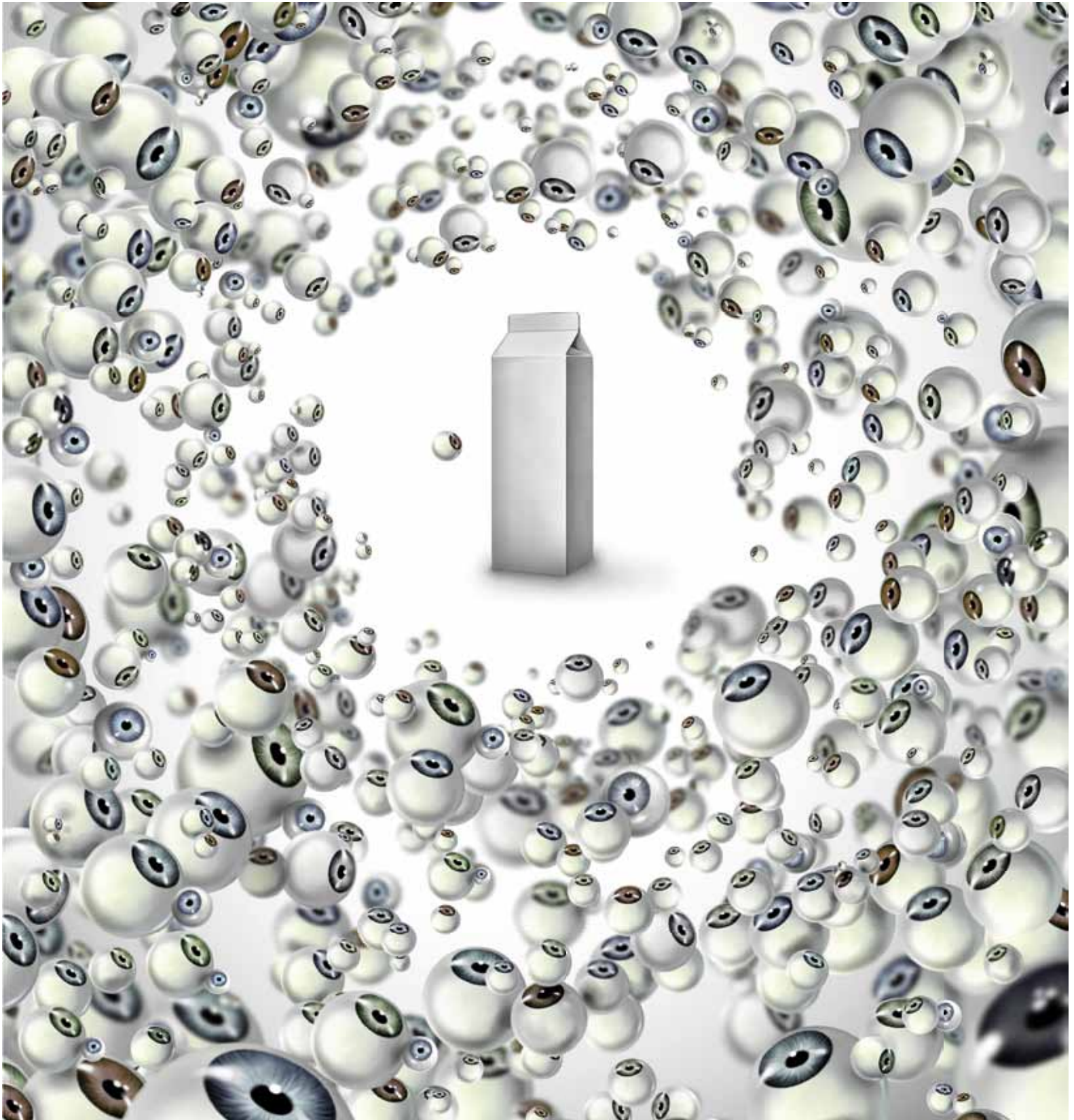
While it is essential for individual publications to interrogate in detail the headspaces of their own markets, it is fascinating that as a whole the readers are constructively engaged in the country, believing that solutions can be found to problems if people work together. They are certainly not baldly critical of the government, believing that while mistakes have been made, they have achieved good things over time. There is definitely a nuanced view of where we are going wrong yet an active citizen mindset that things can be changed on many fronts.

In times to come, the newspapers that succeed (and indeed this is true for all media) will be those that are responsive to the varying mindsets of the audiences they seek and address. In the process they can contribute to the critical independence of the media as well as to a constructive democratic agenda and thereby also ensure their commercial success.



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The press (has a) problem

CHRIS BOTHA, GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE MEDIASHOP

I love reading 'challenger books'. These are the books that challenge conventional wisdom, and attempt to solve traditional problems with non-traditional solutions. Authors like Malcolm Gladwell (author of *Outliers*, *Tipping Point*, and *Blink*) and Steven Levitt (author of *Freakanomics* and *Super Freakanomics*) really get my brain going. So here is the challenge. Newspapers are going through a rather bumpy patch at the moment. I am not one of those naysayers that believe the medium will die in the next 20 years, but one has to recognise that the medium is currently at a crossroad. It needs a 'Malcolm Gladwell' type solution.

Here are the facts - of the 19 South African daily newspapers measured by the ABC, 17 showed a decline in circulation (well done to *Daily Dispatch* and *Isolezwe*, if you were wondering who the other two were). With dropping circulations, of course comes dropping revenues. A quick look at the latest Adex data shows that television is busy taking money off the print guys faster than you can say 'printing press'.



So I have explored three possible routes that newspapers could explore to change the path they are on at the moment. Two of them are slightly less plausible (for now) and one a definite winner. Let me furthermore mention that I have never worked for a newspaper, and am not an expert in the business of selling newspapers and magazines. These are merely the musings of someone who looks at a problem, and thinks he might have a plausible possibility. So here are three options I believe might work - or not.....

GO FREE!

If you've ever flown from Johannesburg to Cape Town you will know that airports always appear to be the congregation point for avid newspaper readers. Everyone has a paper, and everyone is reading. Why? Well, because they got the paper for free! So then, why don't daily

newspapers distribute their product for free? Instead of asking the consumer to fork out R3 per copy, why don't they give it away for free? Well, you might ask, what about the massive loss in cover price revenue?

Look at it this way. If the paper is distributed for free, then they have to worry less about 'sell outs', 'returns' and 'left overs' and just make sure they get the paper in the hands of as many consumers as possible. Increased circulation can then justify increased rates, which - if everything is carefully balanced, might cover the lost revenue from cover sales.

Let's use *The Citizen* as an example. They currently have a circulation of 70 000 copies a day, and according to Axed, they make R450 000 revenue on ad sales per day.

Now the question is this, if they were to double their print order to 140 000 guaranteed copies distributed, how much more ad revenue will they make? Double? Well maybe. So if they make double the ad revenue (R450 000 extra per day), then you have to deduct the loss of cover sales revenue (R210 000 - 70 000 sold copies @ R3 a copy). So that leaves them with an upside of R240 000 per day. Does R240 000 per day cover your costs for the additional 70 000 printing and distribution? Well it might. I am not sure. Can they be guaranteed to double revenue? Who knows?

I do think there is something in this line of thinking. The *Evening Standard* did it in the UK and tasted phenomenal success. But there has to be a reason other papers haven't followed the same model yet. Perhaps not brave enough, or am I missing something here? Option 2...

NEWSPAPERS ARE GOING THROUGH A RATHER BUMPY PATCH AT THE MOMENT

GO DIGITAL!

The biggest expense that any newspaper has, is print, labour and distribution. How about cutting all of that out of the equation and going digital?

Some international newspapers and a specific local magazine have done it. Your only expense becomes your newsroom. We currently have 4.5 million people in South Africa with internet access, and this number is set to explode even more with the growth of smart phones. The thought of a digital newspaper has to have some appeal.

In the next five years I believe we will have 50% smart phone penetration - across the entire spectrum of the population. Maybe the future then for an extremely popular title, like the *Daily Sun* for instance, is then to ditch / diminish the paper, and go electronic. The brand name is established and loved, so the digital route could be really feasible. What about millions of commuters sitting in the taxis 'reading the paper' on their phones every day? I can see that.

The billion dollar question is how do you monetise it? Maybe consumers need to view an ad before going into the next page or something like that, but I believe there again is merit in really looking at the possibility. This idea has to be plausible in the future, but perhaps the world is not ready for it right now. Okay Chris, but you have to give a solution that works in the reality of 2011! I know this next one will have some success. This is something I do know a little about.

SMARTER SELLING!

No offense to the newspaper sales houses, but their sales techniques sometimes pale in comparison to that of their electronic counterparts.



Chris Botha

The TV stations have mastered the art of packaging inventory and often selling out - even for the slots at 3am DSTv have their Ziyachisa package that is doing phenomenally well. Why don't the press guys do the same? If date is not an issue - give us 'Rxxxx' and we will place your ad 'x' number of times throughout the month at our own discretion at a significant discount. Better management of your inventory, your yield, and more value for the client.

The radio guys are really good at selling 'own the station' type packages where you are the dominant advertiser for two weeks. Sure it costs a lot, but you basically own the station for that period. Why don't the print guys do the same? Package 10 newspaper positions together, and sell it as one discounted package.

What about EBD? The SABC have changed the way people book TV by giving a 5% discount to advertisers who book before a certain date. Why don't the press guys do the same?

I know smarter selling will work. You don't need to change your business. You don't need to take any risk. You don't need to employ or fire anyone. All you have to do is do what you do smarter.

Like I said in the beginning of the article, I am not a newspaper man, so feel free to shoot me down, but I believe these are three routes worth exploring and working through. The press guys are at a crossroads, and if they don't make a play, they will continue to spiral away. Let's see who makes the first move, and breaks the mould.

SPORT

From sport fundi to editor

Bokkie Gerber, formerly national editor of Media24's Sport24, has kicked off his editorship of Afrikaans weekend title *Rapport* last month. But he has also come a long way before that during his career of almost 40 years, as he revealed after just days in the editor's chair

BY MAGDEL FOURIE

Sitting in his brand new office in Media Park in Auckland Park, Gerber concedes this position is quite an adjustment from his long standing sport journalism career.

Following in the footsteps of George Gerber, his father, who was *Rapport's* sports editor in the Cape many years ago, Gerber (junior) first worked as senior rugby and cricket writer for *Rapport* in the 80's and 90's before kicking off his 12 year stint as sports editor. He then gained some additional experience when he later (2006 to 2009) served as head of news and production, whereafter he became the founding editor of Sport24 when the sports desks of *Die Burger*, *Beeld*, *Volksblad* and *Rapport* were merged into one national sports desk.

Yet, he is confident that he knows the paper's 'heartbeat' well, and that the readers already know him well too. "A newspaperman is not a complete newspaperman if he doesn't read everything in the newspaper. And I always have. This gives one an understanding of the paper's character - and if you don't stay in touch with that, you don't really know the house you're living in."

As Esmaré Weideman, chief executive officer of Media24, said in her announcement of his appointment: "Bokkie is one of the most experienced news hands at Media24 Newspapers. He has had a long association with *Rapport* and knows the newspaper and its market inside out. His combined skills as a reporting journalist and a hands-on editor who knows how to plan and publish newspapers are legendary. I would like to wish him every success with this exciting new challenge."

RAPPORT WITH THE READER

Bokkie Gerber replaces Liza Albrecht, who has now been appointed to the new position of head: digital platforms at Media24 Afrikaans titles. So, apart from this leadership change, he believes the greatest challenge ahead for the *Rapport*-team is to keep aligning the title with its readers. It speaks to a very specific audience, he states. They are the Afrikaans middle class with good values, who have strong feelings about service delivery, crime and corruption - but are not narrow minded or afraid of change.

Rapport in turn also has its own DNA, occupying a specific position in its readers' lives, that causes them to wait in anticipation for Sundays when they can finally read what *Rapport* says, he points out. "They want to see how the paper will convey the week's news, and what it will reveal. In fact it acts as a voice for its reader that interprets the world they live in. This makes *Rapport* quite distinctive."

But what is most important to him, is relevance, he says. "A journalist doing committed, hard work is one thing. But when dealing with content, it is the ability not to preach, but rather captivate, and make the reader gasp with surprise, which counts. That type of journalism is wonderful to me. And at *Rapport* we get that."

He nods when I raise the fact that the title is sometimes referred to as a 'gossip paper,' yet he says he doesn't care for such tags. However, they do want to beat the tabloids to the really good, juicy stories. "Our readers are very curious, which is why they still want to read those stories. They might just not like to admit it." Also, that type of news forms part of any newspaper, he points out. "That doesn't mean it has to form the core of the title - it is mainly 'in addition to.'"

What *Rapport* gives readers, is whatever the news may be, be it political, about rugby or the revelation of a big scandal. *Rapport* must therefore not be biased in terms of its choice of news - news presents itself, he states. "Whatever the subject may be, we'll provide it in a respectful way. It's not necessary to be sleazy." At the same time though, he wants the paper to provide reading pleasure and meaningful satisfaction. "It must simply be time well spent," he quips.

EXPLOSIVE READING

Investigative journalism is one of *Rapport's* most important pillars, Gerber says. As he puts it: "We must chase the hooligans from their hiding places, and expose them for what they are." Their partnership with sister paper *City Press* contributes strongly to this, enabling them to often lead with good investigative articles.

This then allows them to also take part

in the 'race' for the biggest Sunday scoop. He points out that it is the news on a Sunday that sets the tone for the week that follows. "So it's vital that our breaking news is such an exposé that it will determine what journalists will chase the next day. It's very gratifying."

Reflecting on the ethical side of good journalism in the wake of the *News of the World* phone hacking scandal, Gerber says he too now has well a greater awareness of how important it is to be clear about this. "I am not aware of any journalist here who works in an unethical manner. I trust my editorial team. But it's definitely still something we will seriously talk about."

EXPERIENCED EDITING

The title won't change drastically with him at the head, Gerber states. For one, he's not harbouring any plans for making changes to the editorial team. His only wish is for them to get into each other's heads and so develop alignment and team work, he remarks.

Whilst the paper's concept will remain the same, some adjustments to its core will be made over time - or rather, he says, be 'calibrated.' Once he is sure of *Rapport's* strong and weak points, he'll know what needs a tweak. The layout will be refreshed though. "I want to create a vibrant newspaper, with lots of big photographs that tell the story."

Nonetheless Gerber declares that '*Rapport* is a fantastic paper.' "To me this is a fantastic challenge. I know it's a big boeing to fly, but working with so many wonderful principals I'm sure we'll do great."

What should serve as extra encouragement, is receiving Media24's Piet Cillie-award - which rewards outstanding journalism - this year. As motivation for the award, it is stated that



'DEALING WITH CONTENT, IT IS THE ABILITY NOT TO PREACH, BUT RATHER CAPTIVATE, AND MAKE THE READER GASP WITH SURPRISE, WHICH COUNTS. THAT TYPE OF JOURNALISM IS WONDERFUL TO ME'

Gerber has been a leader in the use of infographics, and knows the Afrikaans market like few others. In addition it's his 'natural talent as writer, layout artist, generator of ideas, and a skilled manager with integrity, as well as his commitment to the company's newspapers' that make him a worthy receiver of this prize.

"I must say, receiving this award gave me a very warm place in my heart. Us sport journalists are usually the have-nots," he smiles, "so this acknowledgement was a wonderful experience."