

Media24 Magazines restructures: end of line for well-known publisher brands

 By Herman Manson: @marklives

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Media24 Magazines is set to restructure into five new business units, John Relihan, CEO of Media24 Magazines, has confirmed to Bizcommunity.com. This follows publication of an internal memo outlining details of the process leaked to the blog [MediaSlutZA](#). Media24 Magazines is the largest magazine publisher in the country.



Units affected

Current units affected include Atoll Media, 8Ink Media, Media24 Business Magazines, Media24 Family Magazines, Creative Living Magazines, Media24 Parenting Magazines, Media24 Specialist Magazines, Thought24, Touchline Media, Media24 Travel and Motoring Magazines, Uppercase Media and Woman360. Subsidiaries New Media, Famous Publishing and Ndalo Media are excluded.

According to Relihan, the restructuring aims to establish profitable, agile business units that can "deal with the challenges posed by a dramatically changed - and rapidly evolving - media landscape." He says his company is no longer a traditional print-only magazine publisher, and its structures and business processes should reflect this.

According to the memo, the five new business units look as follows:

- **Weeklies (GM: Willem Breytenbach):**

Huisgenoot, YOU, Drum, heat, Huisgenoot/YOU/DRUM Editorial projects and Infographics
Agriculture cluster: *Landbouweekblad, Landbou.com, FarmingSA, SA Jagter/Hunter*

- **Women's Interest (GM: Liezl de Swardt):**

Sarie, Lééf, Tuis/home, Idees/Ideas, SA Garden/Tuin Paleis
Fairlady, Shape, Psychologies, Seventeen
Your Pregnancy, Baby & Toddler, Baba & Kleuter

- **Lifestyle (GM: Charlene Beukes):**

Weg/go, WegRY/Drive Out, WegSleep
TopCar, FHM
NG Kids, NG Little Kids, NG Traveller
Men's Health, Women's Health, Sports Illustrated, Bicycling, Runner's World, Golf Digest
Zigzag, Saltwatergirl

- **Emerging Market (GM: Jonathan Harris):**

True Love, Move!, Real

tvPlus
Kuier
Kick Off

- **Business Mags24 (GM: Jacques Breytenbach):**

Business-to-business Portfolio
Medical Portfolio

Custom publishing Portfolio (portfolios formerly residing with 8Ink and Touchline Media respectively)

Incorporate

The new Weeklies unit will incorporate Family Magazines and Specialist Magazines, as well as *heat* from Uppercase Media. Women's Interest will incorporate Women360, Creative Living Magazines and Parenting Magazines. Lifestyle will incorporate Travel and Motoring, as well as titles from 8 Ink Media, Uppercase Media, Atoll Media and Touchline Media. Emerging Markets incorporates Thought24 and Kick Off from the Touchline stable. Finally, the new Business magazine division takes over the B2B titles plus custom titles.

Asked if the restructuring signals the end of the road for what was once effectively standalone media companies, including 8 Ink Media, Atoll, Touchline and Uppercase Media, Relihan answered in the affirmative. "Yes. All of these are wholly owned subsidiaries and licence agreements with international publishers (where applicable) are with Media24. In some cases (eg Touchline) a company might live on as a legal entity," he says.

"Most important is that the brands that really matter - the magazine and their related products - will be incorporated into business units."

Five new GMs

According to Relihan, he has only just appointed the five new general managers. "They have commenced the process to interview and appoint the rest of the publishing management positions from the internal applications received from current incumbents," he explains.

Job losses are not expected within the editorial environment as no changes are being made within the actual titles - besides a change in reporting structures for those being moved into a new unit - nor within the publishing management structure, where there is fewer staff than the existing number of vacancies, according to Relihan.

He says the next step will be consolidating and aligning the publishing support structures with the business requirements of the newly defined business units. "This process will only commence once the publishing management structure has been populated and the final operational structure will be arrived at through thorough consultation with all staff involved," he adds.

Relocating unclear

It's still unclear if individual magazine titles will be relocating their physical offices after the restructuring is completed.

On the year ahead, Relihan says he expects the industry to continue to be fairly stable in the circulation stakes, even though the economy is not yet fully out of the recession as yet and consumers and disposable income remains still under pressure.

"Expect some fluctuations in circulation numbers and advertising revenues," predicts Relihan. "Hopefully, most publishers used the hiatus to regroup and gear up for when the economy turns again (as it will). So, I am looking forward to the announcement of some interesting innovations - in particular around the growth of tablets and other e-reading devices - from the middle of the year onwards."

For more, go to www.media24.com/en/magazines.html (which still needs to be updated to reflect the new structure).

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