

# Don't black faces sell magazines?



By [Rose Setshoge](#)

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*The Times* last week reported that a Nigerian model, Oluchi Onweagba, accused the local editions of *Glamour* and *GQ* of refusing to have her on the covers of the publications because she is black. If this claim is true - that indeed race is an issue - perhaps Conde Nast Independent Magazines need to find out how many black average issue readers (AIR) it has.



According to AMPS 2006/7, *GQ*'s AIR is 319 000, of which 114 000 (36%) readers are black, while white readers are 133 000 (42%). On the other hand, of *Glamour*'s AIR of 415 000, 129 000 (31%) is black and 167 000 (40%) is white. Now that the black market formulates a significant number of readership, perhaps black faces must be displayed once and again just to acknowledge this market.

Imagine: if black readers had to pull out of these publications because of this little controversy, this would impact negatively on circulation figures, which is dreadful for advertising.

## Magazines and unidentified market

If these magazines cater for a white market, what about black consumers that hold a strong readership? Does the publisher politely say to them, "Stop reading this product because you are not my target market?!"

Few years ago, I was a loyal average issue reader of numerous typical female targeted titles. I would buy up to five issues per month until I discovered the affluence of reading economic, business, health and political - basically educational - publications, rather than fashion, celebrities and all non-important subjects.

Nonetheless, the main reason I switched my readership is mainly for product sampling purposes that alleged clearly that I wasn't the market they were catering for. Examples of these products include makeup which was not suitable for my skin tone, flops which were about size 10 and other irrelevant gifts. Clearly, these publications had a skew idea of their markets

or perhaps, indeed, I was not the target.

See, research is very important, especially in this complicated marketplace.

For more:

- Bizcommunity forum: [Black cover models](#)
- The Times Online: [Supermodel 'too black' for SA mags](#)
- Sowetan Online: ['Readers make the decisions'](#)

## ABOUT ROSE SETSHOGE

Rose Setshoge is a media intelligence analyst for a giant media company. She writes this in her own capacity. Contact her via email at [setshoge@yahoo.com](mailto:setshoge@yahoo.com)

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