

Sex, scandal, skinner, sport... another tabloid 'tells' the same story

By [Cheryl Hunter](#)

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In an industry notorious for its leaks and rumours, the Daily Voice has probably been the newspaper industry's best kept secret. The new daily tabloid newspaper launched in the Western Cape/Cape Town area Wednesday, 16 March 2005, was months in the planning, according to The Inc general manager, Andrew Cuthbertson.

"Our research identified a significant opportunity in the Western Cape for a tabloid and we started planning ages ago, but the newspaper industry is phenomenally competitive and we didn't want our competitors to take this gap before we did," Cuthbertson says.

Tony Howard, Chief Executive of Independent Newspapers, says the tabloid will appeal to a market of new readers who are presently not buying any other newspaper: "We have undertaken major research to understand this gap and the outcome of that research has prompted us to launch Daily Voice."

Described as an "in your face" paper using the snap line "Sex, Scandal, Skinner and Sport", the Daily Voice cannot avoid comparisons to Media24's hugely successful Daily Sun, which saw circulation rise to 364 356 for the July to December 2004 ABCs, but which does not distribute in the Western Cape region.

Executives at the multinational newspaper group, however, disagree. Cuthbertson says the newspaper does not have a news agenda but is about entertainment and fun: "We want escapism and shock value."

Howard says Daily Voice will hold out hope for its readers, toning down the doom and gloom, providing them with entertainment and escapism.

"It is designed to amuse, excite and titillate a market of new and first-time newspaper readers. The Daily Voice's approach will be to focus on the unusual and the outrageous. Stories will be deliberately short, using colloquial language where relevant. Pages will be busy, with a high story count. Pictures will be big and bold," Howard says.

Attempting to further differentiate the tabloid, Howard says sex will be a key element, as with all tabloids, but it will "complement, rather than dominate" other key selling points, one of which will be sport - particularly English soccer, but with a healthy dose of local sports to deliver the correct balance for the target audience.

Television is the target market's main form of recreation and there will be a colourful daily TV programme pullout and a strong dose of celebrity news and gossip.

Choice headlines from yesterday's first edition copy sent to Bizcommunity.com's offices today, include: "I am going to die today, mom" about a 6-year-old who "forecast" his own death; "Fury over lesbian live sex show"; "Chimps rip bits off man"; "Council cock-up lets thugs take the gap"; "Man busted for goat sex"; and the mind-boggling... "Gay pair give head to cops". Of course, what would a tabloid be these days without a topless Page 3 girl, in the Daily Voice's 'Girl of the Month'!

And as the traditional Editor's Comment column on Page 2 attests, the Daily Voice will certainly not bore the reader: "...Toning down the doom and gloom... Taking you on a bit of a fantasy trip... An escape from the daily grind of life. That's the Daily Voice. Baie rof en onbeskof. Sexy and titillating... A paper that you can call your own! Your voice!" etc etc.

MediaShop managing director, Harry Herber, believes the move is "very brave" given the success of the Afrikaans weekly Kaapse Son in the same area.

"This paper has been slipped onto the market - they even moved the launch forward - in an effort to prevent their competitors from filling this perceived gap by going daily.

"I don't think it's a Daily Sun look-alike but it's too early to say how it will be received because not much is known about it yet," Herber says.

The newspaper, launched at a cover price of R1.50, will complement Independent's existing stable in the Western Cape of the Cape Times, Cape Argus, Weekend Argus and 14 other community newspapers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Freelance writer, editor and media consultant, Cheryl Hunter, has worked in the newspaper and television arenas, both locally and for the foreign media. Former editor of the Media&Marketing section within Business Report, Cheryl has focused on the advertising and communications industry and today provides clients with several marketing services including publicity, research, writing, editing and proofing.

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