

Malawi: New magazine scrambles for readership



By [Gregory Gondwe](#)

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Malawi's newly launched *Times Lifestyle* magazine says it is having difficulty reaching its targeted audience. The magazine's editor Otuli Munlo told Bizcommunity that this is not made easy with its core target audience already devoted to international magazines.



Times Lifestyle editor, Otuli Munlo

Malawi print media house, Blantyre Newspapers Limited (BNL), on 26 July 2010, launched the *Times Lifestyle* magazine published once every two months since its August/September issue. The magazine is the fifth product for the media house after its four newspapers *Malawi News*, *The Daily Times*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Weekend Times*.

Family magazine for reading leisure

"This is [a] first of its kind in Malawi which will attempt to capture the aspirations and imaginations of Malawians," BNL GM Tikhala Chibwana said, during the launch of the magazine, insisting that the magazine will not be tackling politics but will be purely a family magazine to be read for leisure.

Munlo, however, told Bizcommunity that the first issue was unfortunately not a good basis to determine whether or not a magazine is achieving its purpose.

Measuring readership

"According to sales we can say that people are buying the product. The rest is yet to be measured through interaction and questionnaires," said Munlo.

"As you might be aware of, new products always come with a dose of blindness because people are not too accommodative," she added.

"[But] until we get to issue three, I doubt anyone will really understand our purpose," said Munlo.

Munlo hopes that by March next year they would be able to gauge if the readership culture has improved.

"In fact, that is a tough thing to measure considering we print only 3500 copies and that is hardly representative of the entire nation. But if people are buying we are going to just have to assume that people are reading," she said.

ABOUT GREGORY GONDWE

Gregory Gondwe is a Malawian journalist who started writing in 1993. He is also a media consultant assisting several international journalists pursuing assignments in Malawi. He holds a Diploma and an Intermediate Certificate in Journalism among other media-related certificates. He can be contacted on gregorygondwe@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter at @Kalipochi.

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