

Online business publication launches in vernacular

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The South African media landscape is poised for a major shift today as it welcomes to its fold the first-of-its-kind isiZulu-medium online business publication. Published by Likhanyile Media, the publication is called Umbele, which means the udder.



Umbele will cover news in economics, labour, personal finance, agriculture, executive and SMME profiles through articles and will run podcasts.

The isiZulu business portal is the brainchild of seasoned multimedia journalists, who cut their teeth in the industry as print journalists, Slindile Khanyile and Langa Khanyile. The journalists turned media proprietors are both passionate about financial journalism, quality journalism and content creation in vernacular.

Langa said: "We are excited about the establishment of a quality niche publication in isiZulu. Online is the future, business is the life blood and isiZulu is the 'new English'."

Khanyile was until recently the editor of *Isolezwe* newspaper, the flagship isiZulu publication of Independent Media. Previously, she was the deputy editor of the *Daily News*, a financial journalist at *Business Report* and a soccer writer at *Sapa*.

She recently joined Likhanyile Group (Pty) Ltd, the six-year old parent company of Likhanyile Media, as a co-director and the head of digital publications.

Langa, the managing director of Likhanyile Group, is a former *Drum* magazine journalist, *Isolezwe*, *Business Report*, *The Mercury* and *Sunday Tribune* journalist. During his tenure at the former Independent Newspapers, he was a sub-editor, features writer, columnist and senior journalist.

He said: "It's staggering to be part of founding a vernacular business e-publication at a time when most legacy publications are either downsizing or closing shop because of declining circulation and advertising revenue, exacerbated by the outbreak of Covid-19.

"We grew up with and were inducted into quality, not sensational and partisan journalism, so 'quality journalism' courses through our veins, and is what we hope to practise and advance amid the times of a sceptical, disenchanted public," he

added.

The launch of *Umbele* coincides with the celebration of Heritage Month in the country.

Khanyile said:

“ A publication like this will go a long way towards fulfilling our passion of preserving and advancing isiZulu, and practising our vocation. Language is a big pillar of heritage. ”

“Post-Covid-19, business is going to be critical in rebuilding the economy and telling these types of stories is going to be just as important. Business news is much-needed, intricate and complex, which is why it is important to tell these stories in a language that makes them accessible to an even wider audience. Understanding how to look after money and to stretch that rand has never been more relevant; these are some of the stories we will carry.

“We are excited about profiling established and emerging Black entrepreneurs and chronicling their success stories to inspire aspiring entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is generally romanticised in South Africa, so we also hope that by telling these stories, budding entrepreneurs will also be sensitised to the realities of entrepreneurship.”

She added that the launch of the e-publication came at the time when there was much talk about the need to transform the South African economy and media landscape.

“The fact is our economy is characterised by skewed ownership patterns that reflect our past. In this regard, in a country such as ours, language serves as an instrument to reinforce these unequal power dynamics and the exclusion of the vast section of our population from the conversation about the economy. We believe that you cannot begin to talk about transformation without also addressing the issue of language,” concluded Khanyile.

To read *Umbele* go to www.umbele.likhanyiletm.co.za

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About Likhanyile Group:

Likhanyile Group (Pty) Ltd is a Durban-based media company. It was established in 2014.

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