

'Tried, tested and trusted' - a new USP for South African women's mags

By Gill Moodie: [@grubstreetSA](#)

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It may be an venerable brand overseas but *Good Housekeeping* is new to South Africa and it will be an interesting addition to the highly competitive women's general-interest magazines category. The mag's newly appointed editor [Sally Emery](#) tells Bizcommunity.com what will distinguish it in the market place and why its SA publisher, [Associated Magazines](#), is doing it in English and Afrikaans.



Sally Emery, inaugural editor of Good Housekeeping South Africa.

Bizcommunity: *Good Housekeeping is a very old brand in the US but it's new to us in SA. Is it going to be a Woman & Home or is it more focused on crafts and how to make things?*

Sally Emery: It is a very established brand and it's [125 years old](#). But it is different from [Caxton's] *Woman & Home*, which has been a phenomenal success but is essentially a grown-up glossy. Which is not what *Good Housekeeping* is about. It's USP [unique selling point] is tried, tested, trusted - saving you time, saving you money, saving you hassle. It's much more focused and is directing itself at women in a particular stage of her life.

[The ideal reader] is not someone who's out there striving and looking for different ways and things to fill her life with - her life is full enough already. So she's looking for easiness around that life. She enjoys doing those things that fill her life - cooking for her family, welcoming friends into

her home. Her heart is essentially in her home and she doesn't see that as a negative. Her home is, for her, the root from which everything happens.

So our message is giving her tips and advice and offering her solutions that are easy, affordable and smart.



A mock-up of the Afrikaans version-to-be of Good Housekeeping.

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Biz: *I can't think of anything quite like Good Housekeeping in SA except maybe for [Media24's] Ideas?*

Emery: That's much more about craft and it's a cosy title. *Good Housekeeping* is a warm title but I wouldn't say it's cosy. [Our readers] don't have time to figure out things to do with scrap paper and things like that. That has value and *Ideas* is a good magazine and there are people who are looking for this but I don't think that's the same woman we're talking to.

The woman we're talking to is busy - she's working. There are certain pillars that make up *Good Housekeeping* - and one of the core pillars is food. It's something we all do - certainly every evening when we come home and it's not necessarily seen as a chore. You get pleasure out of that side of your life.

But all of our recipes are triple-tested so if you cook it, it's going to work. It's probably got a maximum of five ingredients and it takes 30 minutes to make - for our home dinners that is; not for home entertaining.

And you can get these five ingredients at Pick n Pay or Checkers when you're driving home from work. You don't need to find them in some specialist store where you won't be able to pronounce their names...

I've just been in New York [at *Good Housekeeping* publishers [Hearst](#)] and been in their kitchens and, to be honest, most of their recipes are tested seven or eight times. We'll be following that model here.

Biz: *Tell me about the Good Housekeeping seal of approval [on products the magazine tests at its own research institute. That's really unique.*



Good Housekeeping cover from 1908.

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Emery: That is the magazine's USP - that's where "tried, tested, trusted" comes from. We [in SA] obviously have access to all of their research at the institute in the US, which I've visited, and it's completely phenomenal. The UK has the same. In South Africa, we'll be partnering with outside bodies and outsourcing it but we'll be doing the same. So when we do comparisons of washing machines, for instance, they will have been through rigorous testing. And we'll be able to tell you this one uses less electricity; this one is smaller and easier to use etc.

Biz: *Doing tests like that is quite pricey, isn't it?*

Emery: Yes, it is but it's what makes us unique. And the testing won't just be on home appliances - it goes right through (the magazine) so it could be on beauty products or children's toys. We also actively have reader panels so there will be taste tests and [readers'] tests on other products. There is no one else doing this on all sorts of levels and on all sorts of [content] pillars.

When I was chatting with the deputy editor of *Good Housekeeping* in the US, she said something really interesting to me: that, for them, one of the key criteria for the information you get in the magazine, you can usually think of two people you'd like to pass the information on to.

And that really hits the nail on the head with what this magazine is about. I find that's exactly what happens when I read it, that I think: "Ah, I remember Deborah talking about this. I must remember to tell her that." Or: "That's exactly what Mom was talking about." Each page is filled with: "Ah, that's so clever" or "Ah, that really makes sense" or "I'm going try that."



Good Housekeeping cover from 1967.

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Biz: *So what is the age group of the target market then?*

Emery: We're not actually pinning *Good Housekeeping* on to a specific age. What we're marketing it more as - and what we're going to be using ourselves in generating content - is a woman who's reached a certain stage of her life and reached a comfort point: if she's just moved out of home and this is her first apartment or if she's recently moved in with her boyfriend or recently married with kids - or someone like myself, who's in her 40s and feeling quite settled in life and content and not seeking anything in particular.

Or it could be a woman whose children have just gone off to university and she and her husband are downsizing or a woman in her 60s and she's moving into a retirement village. It could be anyone who is seeing their home as their core.

Biz: *OK, now tell me why you guys are also translating the title into Afrikaans. That's a new thing for Associated Magazines.*

Emery: Well, the background is that obviously Associated already has a relationship with Hearst [which also publishes *Cosmopolitan* and *Oprah*]. There's been talk for a long time about *Good Housekeeping* - is it the right time to launch etc. The great thing - especially for me as editor - is that this had been the best researched magazine launch that Associated has ever done...

And during the research process, they realised that there was this real gap in both the English and Afrikaans markets and a real desire among both English and Afrikaans women for a magazine like this.

Afrikaans is a powerful market - commercially, editorially, on all different platforms. So it made sense seeing as we already had the title... There isn't another magazine that has this exact message in the Afrikaans market... And *Good Housekeeping* has been translated in other countries.

Biz: *But [Media24's] Sarie and [Caxton's] Rooi Rose are very dominant in the Afrikaans women's markets. And the thing that strikes me about these two magazines is that unless you're Afrikaans, you don't usually have a clue as to who the cover girls are. The cultural and popular-culture reference points seem to be so specific to that market. I'm not sure it's enough simply to translate a title into Afrikaans.*

Emery: Well, our staff will be a complete mixture of English and Afrikaans people. So the Afrikaans isn't just coming in with



US Good Housekeeping cover, May 2011.

[click to enlarge](#)

the translation - it will be core throughout. In the same way that we will have strong English-language staff members, we'll also have strong Afrikaans-language staff so that we are in tune with what the Afrikaans market wants.

To be honest, I think there are more similarities than there are differences but, yes, I think we need to be aware of those differences.

In terms of covers, we will have international celebrities on the covers and local celebrities - this is a mass-appeal title. So, yes, the Afrikaans woman does identify with her own celebrities that she might see in a local soap but that doesn't mean that she doesn't know Eva Longoria or Gwyneth Paltrow or Sandra Bullock.

Biz: So when is the launch and do you have an idea of the number of copies you're going to do?

Emery: The cover date is November 2011, which means it comes out sometime in October. We do know the number of copies we'll be printing but we're not saying yet.

For more:

- Bizcommunity Search: [Good Housekeeping](#)
- US *Good Housekeeping* website: www.goodhousekeeping.com
- UK *Good Housekeeping* website: www.allaboutyou.com/goodhousekeeping
- Hearst Corporation www.hearst.com
- Associated Magazines: www.assocmags.co.za

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Gill Moodie (@grubstreetSA) is a freelance journalist, media commentator and the publisher of Grubstreet (www.grubstreet.co.za). She worked in the print industry in South Africa for titles such as the *Sunday Times* and *Business Day*, and in the UK for Guinness Publishing, before striking out on her own. Email Gill at gill@grubstreet.co.za and follow her on Twitter at @grubstreetSA.

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