

A magazine for majimbos

At a time when South African magazines are feeling the heat as circulations dip and advertising growth declines, independent publishers Blaue Lifestyle has launched *Blaue* magazine, a lifestyle magazine that targets the upwardly mobile black man.

By Tshepiso Seopa³ Apr 2008



With a price tag of R27.95, *Blaue* hit the shelves on Monday, 31 March 2008, and was launched on 2 April at the Park Hyatt Regency in Rosebank, Johannesburg. The title is aimed at emerging South African black middle-class males, aged 24 – 40. The first two issues will be bi-monthly (April/May and June/July) and, from the third issue in August, it will be published monthly.

Doubting media

When addressing the doubting media, who questioned the need for a publication considering that *Blink*, also aimed at the same market, had a short life span and the fact that a lot of magazines are closing down as a result of a decline in circulation and advertising, the publishing director of *Blaue*, Vuyo Jack, said: “There is a market for a publication that truly speaks to man of colour. Even though there are other publications out there that speak to men, they are overlapping and not directly focusing on them.

“Yes the advertising pie might be shrinking right now, but the 2006 – 2007 AMPS figures indicate that black middle-class male readership of men's magazine has been on the sturdy increase. There is a need for a publication that speaks to black man.”

“We also did our own research and found out that there is a need for a primarily black publication,” said Jack.

According to the founders of the magazine, *Blaue* will be positioning itself as a viable communications channel to brands and advertisers that seek to access the emerging market in a more intimate and direct manner.

“Engage with readers”

“We plan to engage with our readers to find out what it is that they want to read about. We do not want to be the one deciding on what the needs of our readers. We want to give them a platform which will speak directly and intimately to them by publishing content which is reflective of the readers' lifestyle,” said editor Kojo Baffoe.

“*Blaue* offers its readers insightful discussions on politics, business, music, fashion, entertainment,

relationships and sex, cars, grooming, sports, soul issues, finance, exclusive local and international celebr profiles and much more”

“We seek to reflect the lifestyle our readers, rather than imposing on them content which we think is right for them. *Blaque* aims to give the black man space to voice his opinions through user-generated content, which will be an important element of *Blaque*'s content approach. “Through our website, www.blaque.co.za, we will be engaging and interacting with our readers and publishing their thoughts in the magazine,” he added.

The strategy

“Our blueprint process is a way of engaging with the reader in making sure that the magazine truly reflects the reader's thoughts. This is a process taken by organisations with an aim to determine their DNA makes them as an organisation and their offering to the market unique,” explained Nick Mosikidi, the CEO of *Blaque*, with respect to the publishing strategy.

“The DNA of the magazine, as shaped by the reader, will guide the editorial team in informing them what they should be doing more of, and what they should avoid doing with the magazine.”

ABOUT TSHEPISO SEOPA

Tshepiso Seopa was a junior journalist at Bizcommunity.com
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