

Marketing time for broadsheets



Newspapers have become complacent and are not in the habit of actively marketing themselves, according to Marketing Manager for Beeld, Gavin Rheeder. He believes this inactivity will lose readers and advertising for the sector.



"One reason for this severe lack of self-promotion is that the newspaper industry in South Africa has become complacent. The print industry is comparable to the relaxed state of the radio industry prior to the advent of additional broadcasting licences.

"Suddenly the sleepy radio waves went into high alert as new players claimed slices of advertising budgets and many inactive stations began marketing themselves in a big way."

Rheeder says the same state of lethargy prevailed in newspapers until a relatively stable market was turned upside-down two years ago. No new titles were being launched, every so often an existing title closed down, everyone was complacent, the status quo would continue: "This all changed with the fiery Daily Sun - here was a new title that not only ventured into an untapped market but also advertised itself directly to its target audience through billboards, television commercials, and other media rocking the newspaper industry.

"Since then three other new publications have launched, Son, This Day and Die Wêreld, with varying degrees of success, or failure. Even though these publications were not all successful, they did succeed in forcing established publications to re-visit their marketing efforts. For example, Rapport increased its above-the-line marketing combating intrusions from Die Wêreld."

Although there has been a small ripple effect in the industry, noted by some publications increasing their promotional efforts there are no distinct increases in advertising efforts.

"During the last three years, Beeld has steadily increased its advertising spend to create higher brand awareness and will continue the trend. Self-promotion stimulates readership, and advertisers appreciate a medium they have chosen, actively marketing and publicizing itself."