

## Cape Times: 130 years old and getting stronger

Hard on the heels of the *Sunday Times* 100th anniversary comes a far more modest celebration by *The Cape Times* that was already very much an adult when its bigger and boisterous young Sunday competitor was born up in Johannesburg.

 By [Chris Moerdyk](#) 28 Mar 2006

*The Cape Times* is 130 years old this week and strangely enough, looking a lot stronger than it did a decade ago when it was very much a geriatric, shambling and somewhat absent-minded 120 year old. Because back then it was starting to go through some pretty torrid times, joining the majority of South Africa's coastal newspapers in the doldrums of dwindling readership and sales performance and losing advertising revenue by the bucket load.

Indeed there were times when it was difficult to believe that any of these newspapers would survive for very much longer with hardly any of them showing any sort of profit - and continuing to be published purely on the back of more profitable siblings up north. And, also probably, because it took a lot more courage than most newspaper managements had to simply shut down decades' old titles just because they hadn't been making any money for a while.

Two things have injected new life into *The Cape Times*. One is the upturn in the economy and the fact that ad spend has jerked itself out where it had become becalmed for about eight years and leapt upwards considerably.

### Editorial mix

The other was a decision by Independent Newspapers to get its editorial mix right by going back to the basics of newspapering and giving up trying to make *The Cape Times* something it wasn't. Something a lot of other newspapers in this country are still trying desperately to do.

There is no doubt that this 130-year-old senior citizen of the South African newspaper scene is now probably one of the best general dailies in the country.

There hasn't been a huge amount of hype over its 130th anniversary. Just a fascinating wraparound of Monday's issue with four pages of the very first edition and a fairly humble editorial that gives a bit of the paper's history and the assurance that whatever the challenges that lie ahead, public interest will always be paramount.

Here's hoping so.

### ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on [moerdyk@gmail.com](mailto:moerdyk@gmail.com) and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](#).  
View my profile and articles...