

ABC Q1 2017: A mixed bag

By  Danette Breitenbach

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The first quarter 2017 Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa's ABC figures released this morning show the trend of the decline in newspaper and magazine sales continues.

It is not all bad news, though – compared to the prior period, overall newspapers remained static, while total magazine circulation only declined slightly on the prior quarter by 2.3%. However, the longer-term trend for both, year on year show a decline of 4.2% for newspapers and 6.2% for magazines.



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Newspapers

Daily newspapers declined by 1.1% on the previous quarter, and by 11.2% on the prior year. *The Pretoria News* showed positive movement for both periods, with the *Daily Dispatch*, *Diamond Field Advertiser* and *Isolezwe* all positive compared to the previous quarter, but negative year on year.

Weekly newspapers increased by 4.8% on the previous quarter, but decreased by 2.3% on the prior year. *Ilanga*, *Mail & Guardian* and *Soccer Laduma* also showed this pattern.

Declining both on the previous quarter (by 3.3%) and on the prior year (11.9%) are **Weekend newspapers**. Bucking this trend in both time periods are three weekend newspapers: *Ilanga Langesonto*, *Isolezwe ngoMgqibelo* and the *Independent on Saturday*.

Despite an increase on the previous quarter of just over 2.1%, **local newspapers** also declined on the prior year by 5.7%. *Bosvelders Review* and *Die Noordwester* reflect this trend, while the *Representative* and *Vryheid Herald* increased their figures for both time periods.

In the **free newspapers** category, *Public Eye Free State*, a new member, showed a significant percentage increase over the prior period, while *Rekord West News/Wes Nuus* had percentage increases of over 30% on both time periods. The category increased 0.2% on the previous quarter, but declined by 1.6% compared to the prior year.

Magazines



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Total magazine circulation declined by 2.3% on the previous quarter, and by 6.5% on the prior year.

Free magazines increased by 0.1% over the previous quarter, and by 11.5% over the prior year.

While **consumer magazines** increased by 9.2% on the previous quarter, they declined by 5.7% on the prior year. However, this was because of several titles changes from custom to consumer. If this is considered, then consumer magazines declined by 3.3% on the previous quarter and by 16.3% on the prior year.

The best-performing magazines in the consumer category, achieving positive percentage increases for both periods, include *Caravan & Outdoor Life*, *Ride Magazine* and *Getaway*. Despite good percentage increases over the prior quarter – the biggest in the category – *Bona*'s percentage change over the prior year was slightly negative.

Forbes experienced high percentage increases over the prior quarter but an almost as high decrease in percentage change over the prior year, with *Amakhosi* in the same boat. It showed the biggest decline in prior year figures. *SA Home Owner*, *SA Flyer* and *Fairlady* all showed positive figures over the prior quarters, but declines over the prior year.

This is also the case with **custom magazines**, which saw several titles moving from the category to consumer. Therefore, while this category declined by 10% on the prior quarter, and by 9.3% over the prior year, on a like for like basis, the decline is just 2.2% on the previous quarter and 1.5% on the prior year.

Despite a marginal decline of half a percent over the prior quarter, **business to business (B2B) magazines** increased by 0.9% on the prior year, with *Medical Chronicle* showing positive figures for both periods. *Inside Mining* increased its percentage over the prior quarter, but declined year on year.



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A total of 116 web titles submitted web traffic data, and 45 titles on email newsletter net delivery submitted net delivery data.

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Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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