

EXCLUSIVE: Sid Wahi, director at *Forbes Africa* celebrates 10 years of growth



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Forbes Africa celebrates its 10th anniversary on Friday, 1 October 2021. As part of the African growth story, Sid Wahi, director at *Forbes Africa* shares the journey with us.



Sid Wahi, director at *Forbes Africa*

■ ***Congratulations on reaching this milestone! What does this feel like?***

Thank you! I can't believe it's been ten years. While a major milestone, we feel that the work we set out to do has just started. There are a lot of stories we still need to tell.

■ ***Could you share how *Forbes Africa* started out?***

Our company, Africa Business News, was founded in 2006 with the goal of being the most credible source of business content from across the continent of Africa. We launched our TV business with CNBC Africa in 2007 and decided to diversify into print shortly after. *Forbes* is one of the most recognized media brands in the world today and we felt it would be a great partner to have. Our founders approached the Forbes Family in 2008–2009 and we finalized the agreement shortly after I joined the business in 2010. Since then we haven't looked back.

■ ***How has the magazine evolved over the years?***

We started out as a monthly magazine in 2010 and while we were profitable with ad spend from the first issue, print by itself was not enough to build a sustainable business. Over the years, we expanded into events, digital, video and launched the *Forbes Woman* and *Forbes Life* brands. Today, we are a multi-platform brand, reaching both aspirational and inspirational audiences.



■ What are some of the highlights of Forbes Africa?

We've won numerous [awards](#) for our editorial work over the years, but our greatest achievement is showcasing stories of entrepreneurship that was otherwise not being told on a global stage. We're also very proud of our two most impactful communities, the Leading Woman Summit and the Under30's. Both these communities play an important role by helping to shape the dialogue on issues pertaining to women in leadership and young entrepreneurs alike.



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■ Over the years, what were some of the most significant changes in how Forbes Africa operated?

We had to stop printing *Forbes Woman Africa* as a monthly print magazine – it's unfortunate because the product did very well from a readership point of view. It's ironic because the same business leaders who the magazine featured refused to advertise in the magazine, preferring the flagship product. We've adapted to a changing media landscape, like everybody else by trimming costs but also in our own unique way by embracing digital events and new editorially lead event concepts, including "The future of" series.

■ They say print is a dying industry. How has Forbes Africa managed to survive all these years?

As I said earlier, we started out as a print title, but our growth has largely come from events, and digital. Having said that, print is an important medium, perhaps not for breaking news or current affairs.

“ Our focus with our print product will be to turn it into a luxury you afford yourself once a month. ”

This will be evident in the form factor, so the way the pages feel on your fingers and how the light reflects off the paper, as you read stories that inspire, entertain and thrill you.

■ Can you comment on how Forbes Africa went from print to digital? Are readers offered the same content package?

The form factor in digital is different. You are not limited by 96 pages or a production schedule, so you actually get a lot more online, including video and other enhanced storytelling tools. We find that there is a small overlap between our print and digital readers, but they are largely two very different audiences and so we keep that in mind when curating each print

issue of *Forbes Africa*.

■ **Perhaps more relevant to right now. How has Forbes Africa navigated throughout Covid-19?**

We are headquartered in South Africa, so when SA went into a level 5 lockdown, we are unable to print our magazine, but we continued with digital events and digital publishing. We had overestimated the negative impact Covid-19 had on our business so we were better prepared to navigate the months ahead. One of the more permanent changes was the change to our production schedule, we now publish the magazine every second month, but this was inevitable with the way that print is evolving, covid just moved up the timeline.

■ **With this milestone of Forbes Africa celebrating 10 years. How will the company be celebrating?**

Our October issue is certainly one to collect, we have a lot of interesting content that spans the last ten years. We are thanking our partners and staff and celebrating their achievements on the day. Perhaps the most interesting thing we will be doing on the day is launching our first non-fungible token (NFT) on the Ethereum blockchain. Collectors will be able to bid on 10 years of Forbes Africa and acquire a collectable that includes 105 covers from the last ten years.



Forbes Africa celebrates 10 years with NFT cover

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