

# Zkhiphani founders defy conventional wisdom, launch print after online media

The founders of Zkhiphani launched an online youth social lifestyle and entertainment magazine in 2016 and, defying convention, went on to extend the brand to a print magazine, with a 30,000 print run.



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Andile Mathobela, who edits the magazine, Bonga Mpungose, who is in charge of marketing, and Ally Fathana, creative director, operate from premises in Randburg and their online and print offerings are making waves, filling a gap in the 18 to 25 youth market.

They are not naïve enough to ignore the internet, blogs or websites as essential to their business - they just believe that print also has its place and have been proven right in their assumptions. Distributed via an agency, garages, universities and selected stores, where students congregate, Zkhiphani has a cover price of R19.90.

## College collaboration

The foundation of what was to become a sought after item for anyone interested in club life, glitz, music, the entertainment industry and the glamorous people who populate it, began with a meeting of kindred souls at college. The trigger was a meeting for a student newspaper between a journalism student and two young graphic designers who had launched a small business doing logos and design work for fellow students.

Discussions centred on the production of an online magazine and it was decided that the logical thing to do was to pool writing and graphic design talents into a company. The initial audience was to be students at their college. The drawcard was the opportunity for students to see their pictures online.

Having garnered support and 'earned while they learned', all partners admit that the financial side of the business was

initially the most intimidating. Now falling under control of Mpungose, whom the others admit has a stronger grip on numbers. Fathana happily admits this skill was probably acquired when he was at school and started selling sweets to friends. The experience was enough to teach him the importance of regulating personal and company cash flow.

## **Picturing partygoers**

“Visitors to our online site average about 100,000 a month. Average time spent on site is about two and a half minutes. Advertising includes Wrangler and Heineken as well as prominent local brands. Advertising is most often linked to a campaign, as advertisers try to cover all customer touch points including digital and social media. We offer our advertisers opportunities across our media and social media sites,” says Mathobela.

The success of Zkhiphani is built on the relationship it has built with its readers. Invited to events across the country, it covers the party life, concentrating on picture content of all partygoers rather than confining coverage to celebrities. Much of the photography and writing is done in-house, ensuring that there is a consistent look and feel to editorial content, which conforms to the quality requirements of the owners.

## **Aiming for Africa**

“We have a 2020 vision and that is to have the biggest media house in Africa. Although this is ambitious, we feel it can be achieved because we understand the African market very well. We want to have other publications under our Lelentle brand, which currently houses Zkhiphani.com.

“We are concentrating on getting our first project right. Our magazine is very influential in the youth space, but we want it to be the best in the market. We can then use this success as a template to duplicate the formula and create other magazines and platforms.

“The deadline for our African ambition is around the corner and we already have plans in place to go forward. It is exciting. People, however, ask why we are in print when the future is digital. Our belief is that there is a place for print in our market. The failure of print to reach markets effectively is because print publishers are just not innovating - they are giving up and going digital and hoping that this will help maintain readership and customer loyalty.

“We are looking at things like scanning codes on each page of the magazine so that additional digital content can be downloaded. We look at everything, but realise that while we can improve things, we can’t allow ourselves to be distracted from our core skills,” concludes Mathobela.

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