

M&G adjusts for reading trends

Two major trends have reshaped business journalism, says [Mail & Guardian](#) (M&G) editor Nic Dawes. First, sophisticated market analysis and investment writing (including stock picking advice) has been almost entirely "privatised" - that is, taken over by brokerages and banks, which send their clients boutique newsletters and bulletins, some of them written by analysts who were once journalists.

Mail & Guardianonline

At the opposite end of the market, basic company news and data have been commoditised by online services and the newswires.

"In between this high-end limited distribution and zero-value added mass distribution data is the space in which news organisations find themselves. For many it is a bewildering place to be, but we believe it is a place of rich opportunity," says Dawes.

Its expanded 12-16 page business section and website is part of the publication's strategy to offer a package of business news, features and analysis to its readership, with the intention of being Africa's best business read.

South African, regional and global business story

"The business section won't try to tell you which stocks to buy, or pretend it is news to you that headline earnings per share on a blue chip company are up 12 cents. What it will do is offer you insight into the South African, regional and global business story."

It will report on the real economy - logistics, communications, mining, agriculture, engineering; ask interesting questions and answer them through the in-depth reporting. It will turn its political insight toward the regulatory environment and the political economy, reporting not just what people in high office say, but what is driving policy and how it is playing out on the ground.

It will offer portraits of the individuals and companies that are indispensable to an understanding of the corporate scene and of emerging entrepreneurs and it will create space for a focus on innovation in technology, business processes and strategy that is a source of dynamism in the economy.

Along with its own reporting, it will offer insight from the sharpest minds in business and the investment community.

"Drilling deep into the data"

"Real intelligence isn't about headline numbers, it is about drilling deep into the data, talking to the people at the coalface and combining journalistic scepticism with an explorer's enthusiasm," he says. "That is what we plan to offer, hour by hour online and each week in the newspaper."

Anastacia Martin, publisher of *M&G* adds, "The market for business news and information has changed dramatically in the past decade and we recognised the need to include business in our mix for our influential readers. We were able to build our new business model across multiple platforms to deliver vital business news 24/7. Our business content is presented with the same analytical, in-depth and relevant fine journalism that is the hallmark of the magazine."

Currently the publication is said to have more than 1-million print, online and tablet readers who are South Africa's decision makers in business, government, academia and NGOs. "Our readers represent the demographics of our country with 80% black, 20% white and nearly 40% of readers, women in leadership positions," concludes Martin.

M&G has seen its newspaper sales jump 10% year-on-year according to the latest ABC figures.

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