

Zim: *The Standard* rebrands

By [Dumisani Ndlela](#)

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Zimbabwe's weekly *The Standard* newspaper, part of the Alpha Media Holdings (AMH) group controlled by media tycoon Trevor Ncube, has rebranded and slashed its cover price by half to US\$1. The first rebranded edition hit the streets on 31 October 2010, and there has been a discernible market acceptance.



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One reader remarked in an interview with Bizcommunity: "This is like the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper and the stories are fantastically laid out." Indeed the poster format front page resembles South Africa's *Mail & Guardian*, also owned by Ncube.

The Standard editor, Nevanji Madanhire, who joined the paper last year and transformed its journalism into a cautious but highly investigative genre, said the cover format gave readers "a window into the paper's inside pages".

***The Standard* format**

The headline for the lead story is splashed on the cover, with complementary images. The lead story treatment deals with different dimensions, with different subjects of the same story being given exclusive, stand-alone coverage.

"The competition does not know how to respond," said Raphael Khumalo, the AMH CEO who said the market response was "beyond our expectations".

The entertainment pages have been increased to 16, from 12 before the rebranding.

"The rebranding was well thought out," said deputy editor Walter Marwizi.

Planning and repositioning

"It's a product of many months of planning aimed at repositioning the paper in the market," he told Bizcommunity, indicating that it had been largely informed by a survey conducted by Probe Market Research "which makes the rebranding more comprehensive".

Marwizi said there was special focus that the Sunday market was different.

"People are relaxed as a family on Sundays so what they want is a newspaper that caters for the family. Our target is to get something for everyone," he said, indicating that the first rebranded edition last week was sold out.

"The response was amazing," noted Marwizi.

ABOUT DUMISANI NDLELA

Dumisani Ndlela is a Zimbabwean journalist specialising in business and financial reporting, with experience reporting on commodities, stock and financial markets, advertising, marketing and the media. He has previously reported from a number of regional countries as well as from the UK and Germany on commodities and regional integration. He can be contacted on dndlela@yahoo.co.uk.

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