

ABC Q4 2023: Magazines: Sporting events fuel growth despite overall magazine circulation decline

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

21 Feb 2024

The latest Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) of South Africa's audited circulation figures release shows a significant annual decline of 12% for the magazine sector.



Image: Bizcommunity., Lesley Svenson. The ABC audited circulation figures show a significant annual decline of 12% for the magazine sector

The figures, released today, Wednesday 21 February, are for the period October 2023 to December 2023, that is Quarter 4, 2023.

The decline is across all categories compared to Q3 and reflects a 16% drop in magazine membership to the ABC.

Despite this, there are highlights. Custom magazine circulation increased by 25%, Business-to-Business (B2B) by 6%, and Free magazines by 1% in contrast to Q3.

"Sporting magazines witnessed robust growth, largely attributed to the successful Rugby World Cup in France. Additionally, several consumer and custom magazines demonstrated circulation increases," says the ABC.

In stark contrast, compared to Q3, consumer magazines decreased 12%.

The ABC notes a positive trend in total ABC circulation, which rose by 1.3% compared to Q3.

“It’s important to consider that quarterly circulation is influenced by publication frequency. The total circulation for Q4 reached 9,349,836, reflecting this growth,” it states.

It adds, “Quarter-on-quarter, ABC membership decreased slightly from 405 to 403 in total, while year-on-year total membership declined from 448 to 403. Magazine membership increased by one member.”

This reflects a trend in 2023 that publishers appeared to favour adjusting publication frequency and reducing print volumes over shutting down their publications altogether.



ABC Q4 2023: Newspapers: Stable with marginal declines
Danette Breitenbach 21 Feb 2024



Consumer magazines

Despite its sharp decline on Q3, this category had some good highlights.

The Sports & Hobbies sector figures bore testimony to the above statement by the ABC, with two of the three publications showing good increases.

Compleat Golfer had increases on the previous quarter and the prior year. *SA Rugby* had a good increase on the previous quarter on the back of the Rugby World Cup.

The other sector where publications show good gains is the Business & News category where two of the three publications showed double-figure gains.

Continuing its upward movement in Q2 and Q3 *Forbes Africa* had gains on the previous quarter and had double-figure gains on the prior year.

The Big Issue Magazine had over 45% growth on the previous quarter.

Financial Mail could not continue its upward gains in Q2 and Q3, and saw its circulation on the previous quarter decline, but it did show good increases on the prior year.

There was no or little good news in the Family Interest and the Home sectors. Not one publication in the Family Interest sector had any increase on the previous quarter or on the prior year. Two publications were discontinued.

In the Home sector, *Visi* is the only publication to show any increase on the previous quarter, with *Food & Home Magazine* and *SA Home Owner* the only two with increases on the prior year.

In the Women’s General sector, out of 10 publications four increased over the previous quarter and two on the prior year. This is an improvement on Q3 of one more publication (three in Q3) with increases on the previous quarter.

Glamour saw its circulation fall on the previous quarter and the prior year with double figures.

Women’s Health has joined this category.

Publication	Frequency	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Jewish Life	Mtly	8,450	8,450	-0.6%	0.2%
Val de Vie Magazine	2xA	0	No Issue		
Business and News					
Financial Mail	Wkly, Fr	1,818	14,893	-4.4%	23.4%
Forbes Africa	AltM	4,978	10,569	3.1%	14.7%
The Big Issue Magazine	Mtly	12	6,886	46.1%	-7.1%
Conservation and Wildlife					
African Birdlife	AltM	1,433	7,649	2.6%	21.4%
Entertainment					
TV Plus (Afrikaans)	F	0	Discontinued		
TV Plus (English)	F	0	Discontinued		
Family Interest					
Huisgenoot	Wkly, Th	4,011	85,969	-5.6%	-18.4%
LIG	11xA	0	12,600	-7.4%	-15.9%
Plus 50	6xA	421	4,711	-24.9%	-11.3%
The Crest	7xA	0	Discontinued		
The Ridge	8xA	0	Discontinued		
You	Wkly, Th	2,857	43,123	-5.8%	-20.1%
Farming					
Farmer's Weekly	Wkly, Fr	556	5,825	-9.0%	-6.6%
Grond tot Mond	Q	32,467	32,467	1.4%	No Issue
Landbouweekblad	Wkly, Th	36	14,443	-1.7%	29.4%
Marktoe!	Mtly	13,822	13,822	0.9%	8.1%
Veeplaas.	11xA	0	Changed Sector		
Health & Wellbeing					
Grow to Eat	3xA	1,887	8,801	-39.4%	-25.0%
Home					
Conde Nast House & Garden	Mtly	4,427	9,118	-1.5%	-22.9%
Easy DIY	Q	0	Resigned		
Food&Home Magazine	Q	4,344	14,126	-4.7%	5.8%
Lose It	Q	0	No Issue		
SA Home Owner	11xA	4,934	16,044	-11.3%	4.6%
Sarie Kos / Food	Q	200	10,965	-12.4%	-17.0%
The Gardener / Die Tuinier	Mtly	2,708	19,187	-23.1%	-14.8%
Tuis Home	8xA	1,207	53,488	-6.3%	-14.3%
Visi	6xA	1,586	9,770	1.0%	-5.0%
Leisure					
Let's Braai / Kom ons Braai (former The Ultimate Braai)	Ann	0	No Issue		
Life & Style.	4xA	0	Resigned		
Male					
GQ	5xA	1,894	3,055	3.2%	-38.0%
Men's Health	6xA	0	No Submission		New Member
Popular Mechanics	Mtly	0	Ceased Publishing		
Motoring					
Car	Mtly	9,345	32,138	-2.9%	-21.8%
Driven Magazine	Mtly	6,597	6,597	-4.3%	-14.5%
Parenting					
Baba & Kleuter	Q	0	No Issue		
Baby's and Beyond	Q	8,144	9,806	6.6%	3.2%
Things to do With Kids	2xA	0	Resigned		
Your Pregnancy and Baby	AltM	1,225	4,796	-14.1%	-21.4%
Sport and Hobby					
Compleat Golfer	Mtly	7,090	10,783	17.8%	30.4%
Magnum	8xA	0	Resigned		
SA Rugby	Mtly	3,301	7,709	11.7%	-24.2%
Travel, Tourism & Hospitality					

Cape Etc	3xA	0	No Issue		
Getaway	Mly	3,160	11,953	0.2%	-21.0%
go! Drive & Camp and Weg! Ry & Sleep	AltM	0	19,978	-11.3%	-19.2%
Weg / Go Platteland	Q	60	15,114	-5.8%	-15.4%
Weg/Go	AltM	50	38,427	-6.7%	-7.3%
Woman's General					
BONA Magazine	Mly	5,639	13,287	-6.5%	-7.7%
Fairlady	AltM	1,513	26,209	-13.2%	-1.6%
Garden & Home Magazine	Mly	4,435	14,175	0.5%	-9.2%
Glamour	Q	5,874	7,873	-23.5%	-32.3%
Kuier	F	75	48,634	5.1%	-11.1%
Rooi Rose Magazine	Mly	9,064	29,199	-0.3%	0.5%
Sarie	AltM	2,917	56,511	1.5%	-4.3%
True Love	AltM	1,504	11,837	-6.3%	41.2%
Women & Home Magazine	Mly	5,690	22,150	0.2%	-26.4%
Women's Health	6xA	0	No Issue		New Member
Woman's Special					
Bruidsgids	Ann	0	6,370	New Member	



ABC Q3 2023: A quarter marked by stability as magazines show resilience

Danette Breitenbach 21 Nov 2023



B2B magazines

As is so often the case, the B2B category is a highlight.

Q4 saw the Health and Well-being sector with some good gains on the previous quarter and prior year, with three publications increasing on the previous quarter and three on the prior year.

Modern Medicine Magazine was the best of the lot - and also the best overall in the B2B magazines category – with double-figure increases on the previous quarter and prior year.

The Retail category disappointed once again - with *DIY & Industrial Trade News* declining with double figures on the previous quarter and the prior year. It was also the worst performer in the B2B Magazine category.

On the upside, 10 publications increased their circulation on the previous quarter and the prior year in this category.

Agricultural					
Publication	Frequency	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
OVK Nuus/News	4xA	4,705	4,705	-1.1%	-1.1%
SA Graan / Grain	Mly	21,038	21,038	0.3%	-1.4%
Stockfarm	Mly	5,783	9,781	-4.8%	59.2%
Veeplaas	Mly	5,787	9,497	-7.6%	34.9%
Wineland	Mly	3,106	3,173	-0.2%	-0.6%
Architecture					
Leading Architect & Design	AltM	5,668	5,703	-1.9%	-16.9%
SABuilding Review	Ann	0	No Issue		
To Build	4xA	8,444	9,795	-0.1%	-0.3%
Civil Construction					
Construction World	Mly	17,364	17,364	1.0%	5.2%
IMESA	11xA	12,498	12,498	Changed Publisher	3.1%
Spec Handbooks	Ann	0	No Issue		No Issue
Communications					

Future SA	4xA	0	No Issue		
SA Profile	Ann	0	No Issue		
Service	Q	0	No Issue		
Electrical Engineering					
Electricity & Control	Mtly	12,578	12,578	-9.4%	-6.2%
ESI Africa	Q	4,860	4,860	1.8%	48.0%
Sparks Electrical News	Mtly	15,119	15,119	1.3%	6.7%
Engineering - Other					
Capital Equipment News	Mtly	13,818	13,818	0.8%	8.2%
Dataweek	Mtly	2,785	2,785	-4.5%	-0.3%
MechChem Africa	AltM	10,846	10,846	1.3%	10.4%
Motion Control	Q	1,854	1,854	-8.3%	-11.4%
Plumbing Africa	Mtly	13,171	13,228	-2.0%	21.8%
Refrigeration and Airconditioning	Mtly	8,004	8,014	-0.9%	14.6%
SA Instrumentation & Control	Mtly	4,046	4,046	-3.7%	-5.1%
Water & Sanitation Africa	AltM	0	No Issue	Changed Publisher	
Health and Wellbeing					
Hi-Tech Security Solutions	8xA	3,886	3,886	0.9%	-8.2%
Medical Chronicle	11xA	27,822	27,822	-1.2%	3.7%
MMS	Mtly	112	1,495	-54.2%	-17.0%
Modern Medicine Magazine	AltM	3,551	4,013	15.9%	16.8%
South African Pharmaceutical & Cosmetic Review	11xA	2,974	2,979	-0.3%	-0.4%
The Specialist Forum Journal	11xA	23,610	23,610	4.6%	8.1%
Hospitality, Catering and Tourism					
Meetings	AltM	0	Resigned	No Issue	
The Meetings & Event Planner (former SA Conference Directory)	Ann	0	Resigned	Changed Publisher	
Industry					
Analytical Reporter	AltM	5,046	5,046	-1.1%	-8.7%
Cold Link Africa	AltM	3,614	3,619	5.1%	-13.4%
Free State Business,	Ann	4,961	4,961	No Issue	-0.1%
Gauteng Companies	Ann	0	No Issue		
Lighting in Design	Q	7,826	7,826	0.6%	9.2%
Limpopo Business.	Ann	4,943	4,943	No Issue	
Mpumalanga Business.	Ann	4,955	4,955	No Issue	
Opportunity (Exploring Business Prospects in SA)	Q	4,933	4,933	No Issue	0.2%
Resource	Q	0	Changed Publisher		
South African Business	2xA	7,431	7,431	No Issue	-25.2%
South African Food Review	11xA	3,809	3,831	-0.2%	31.9%
The Journal of African Business	Q	4,952	4,952	-0.2%	-0.2%
Western Cape Business	Ann	4,939	4,939	No Issue	-0.2%
Information and Computer Technology					
Brainstorm	11xA	4,495	8,247	-10.8%	-10.1%
Management					
African Decisions	Q	10,989	12,819	6.5%	5.8%
Black Business Quarterly	Q	35,490	35,654	-8.3%	-4.4%
Blue Chip	Q	7,447	7,447	No Issue	-58.7%
Business Day Earth	Ann	1,550	8,850	No Issue	-55.3%
Business Day Empowerment	Ann	2,550	10,850	No Issue	-45.2%
FA News	AltM	2,742	2,911	0.5%	-0.3%
KZN Invest	Q	0	Discontinued		
Leadership	Mtly	36,489	36,681	-3.6%	-7.9%
Money Marketing	Mtly	6,661	6,662	2.0%	-10.4%
South African Business Intergrator	2xA	8,663	9,721	-1.3%	-0.9%
Mining & Quarrying					
African Mines Handbook	Ann	1,446	1,990	No Issue	0.5%
African Mning Inc. Mning Miror	11xA	28,047	28,108	-3.6%	33.2%
Earthbroker	Mtly	5,382	5,382		
Engineering News & Mining Weekly	Wkly, Fr	12,224	14,736	0.3%	16.1%

Inside Mning	Q	0	Discontinued		
Mning Review Africa.	11xA	4,816	4,816	3.0%	3.3%
Modern Mining	Mty	14,533	14,533	-1.0%	6.6%
Modern Quarrying	Q	7,042	7,042	0.7%	8.7%
Retail					
DIY And Industrial Trade News	Mty	8,954	8,954	-11.3%	-12.8%
Pharmacy Magazine (former Frontshop)	Mty	18,597	18,597	-1.5%	17.7%
Transport and Logistics					
Freight News Features	Mty	5,888	6,094	5.4%	-1.0%



Magazines were supposed to die in the digital age. Why haven't they?

Julian Novitz 15 Jan 2024



Custom magazines

Of the 12 sectors in this category, 10 had at least one publication showing an increase on the previous sector, while 11 of the 12 had at least one publication with an increase on the prior year.

Both publications in the Leisure sector had increased on the previous quarter.

In-Flight Magazine continued with the good growth it had seen in Q3 with good increases on the previous quarter and the prior year.

SA Pharmaceutical Journal had the best increase on the prior year.

Farming					
Publication	Frequency	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Dairy Mail, The.	Mty	1,368	1,373	3.5%	18.3%
Health & Wellbeing					
SAPharmaceutical Journal	10xA	6,795	6,795	No Issue	59.7%
South African Medical Journal	Mty	8,689	8,867	0.6%	1.6%
Home					
Fresh Living	Q	0	Resigned		
Living Space	Mty	224	36,915	-5.4%	-2.4%
My Kitchen	Mty	740	85,328	3.2%	13.9%
Industry Specific					
Forum Tydskrif	Q	0	Resigned		
J S E	Q	12,932	14,447	-0.3%	1.5%
Sea Rescue	3xA	15,339	15,339	-9.5%	-14.1%
Servamus	Mty	52	6,905	-3.6%	-15.2%
In-flight					
In Flight Magazine	Mty	41,653	41,653	8.2%	28.3%
Leisure					
Private Edition	Q	9,380	9,380	0.1%	1.5%
Taste.	AtM	5,684	34,513	4.0%	-0.1%
Male					
Man	Mty	500	63,751	1.2%	12.0%
Tech	Mty	200	28,877	-11.6%	-10.6%
Retail					
Club Magazine	Mty	7,000	241,055	-3.7%	-10.5%
Jet Club	7xA	0	279,531	No Submission	20.0%
Sport and Hobby					
Game & Hunt/Wild & Jag	Mty	66,788	68,022	-0.4%	-0.1%

SA Hunter/Jagter	8xA	0	Resigned		
SoccerClub	Mty	700	54,210	2.3%	11.8%
SportsClub	Mty	700	102,873	-1.9%	5.7%
Travel, Tourism & Hospitality					
Premier	Mty	8,405	8,405	5.9%	0.4%
Rove SA	4xA	8,412	9,778	-4.1%	6.2%
Woman's General					
Balanced Life	Mty	300	44,537	-7.7%	-10.4%
Youth					
ClubX	Mty	433	104,748	0.1%	3.4%
Kids Super Club	Mty	490	69,238	-2.9%	-1.4%

Free magazines

As in Q3, this category had good results, with four of the nine publications showing increases on the previous quarter and four increasing on the prior year.

Publication	Frequency	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Botswana Advertiser.	F	99,965		
Get It (Ballito to Umhlanga)	Mty	12,294	2.6%	2.8%
Get It (Bloemfontein)	Mty	6,890		
Get It (Highway)	Mty	11,878		0.6%
Get It (Jo'burg South)	Mty	14,750		
Get It (Jo'burg West)	Mty	13,805	0.1%	4.0%
Get It (Lowveld)	Mty	6,200		
Get It (Northern Suburbs Joburg)	Mty	14,781	0.8%	0.2%
Get It (Pretoria)	Mty	14,653	0.3%	

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