

# 10 Years in Print Media

January 2014 to January 2024

Compiled: May 2024



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# Overview

## Summary

This report looks at daily, weekend and weekly newspapers for the past 10 years.

A breakdown by communities and magazines for the last quarter is also provided (January to March 2024).

According to the audit conducted in Quarter 1 of 2024 by the ABC, the majority of the daily newspapers kept the downward spiral with a loss in circulation in general.

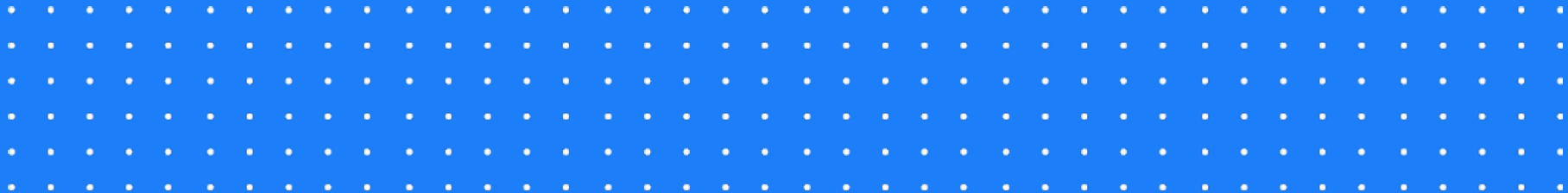
This was mainly attributed to the growing popularity of digital platforms for news consumption. However, niche magazines experienced a surge in print circulation, particularly magazines specialising in lifestyle, fashion, and technology. This suggests that certain demographics still prefer the tangible experience of print media in these specific areas.

Regional newspapers witnessed a relatively stable print circulation, indicating a loyal readership base in local communities. Overall, the audit suggests that while traditional print media faces challenges, there are areas where it continues to thrive, demonstrating the ongoing relevance and appeal of physical publications.



1

**Media over the past decade**



Over the past decade, the print media industry in South Africa has undergone significant changes due to the rise of digital media and changes in reader habits. A shift towards digital media consumption and the rise of online news sources is evident.

This has resulted in a decline in print circulation numbers and some of the most prominent newspapers losing as much as 60% and 80% of readers. A loss in advertising revenue for many traditional print publications therefore followed. Many print publications have invested in digital platforms and transitioned to online content to adapt to the changing landscape and to remain relevant.

Print media inflation has increased due to rising production costs, including paper, ink, and distribution expenses. We have seen an inflation of between 18% and as high as 45%.

The *Pretoria News* was incorporated into its sister publication, *The Star*.

*The Times* and *The New Age* (later *Afro Voice*) ceased publication in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

The cover cost of certain publications has increased by as much as 138% due to decreased advertising revenue.

Data also became more affordable and more accessible through fibre and mobile Wi-Fi data providers, causing a further decrease in the sale of hard-copy newspapers.

Between 2020 and 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed the media landscape worldwide, with people relying more on digital information, such as websites, social media and news feeds than print media during the various lockdowns.

Losses incurred in the publishing industry did not result in the closure of many daily newspapers; however, it had a bigger effect on weekend newspapers.

The following weekend newspapers underwent major changes: *Sunday Independent* was incorporated into *Sunday Tribune*; the *Sunday Argus* merged with the *Weekend Argus*; and *Isolezwe ngoMgqibelo* and *Isolezwe ngeSonto* combined into *Isolezwe NgampelaSonto*.

The *Weekend Post*, *Daily Dispatch Weekend Edition*, *Son op Sondag* and *Sunday Sun* were discontinued.

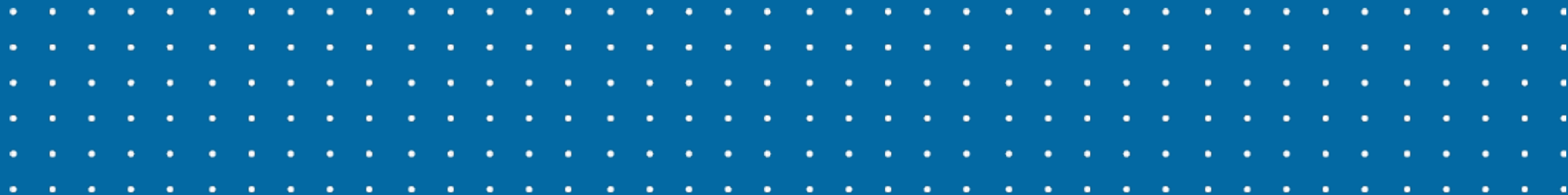
As the biggest publisher of community newspapers, Caxton has remained the most consistent regarding circulation figures; they also expanded their offering by acquiring several existing titles from Media24.

The South African magazine industry was affected the most, with many familiar titles such as *Vrouekeur*, *Move*, *People*, *TV Plus*, *Drum* and *Cosmopolitan* no longer gracing the shelves. The hardest-hit section seems to be the lifestyle and leisure magazines. In the sport category, *Kick-Off* moved to a digital-only format; while the discontinuation of *Finweek* leaves a void in the business sector.



2

**Daily Newspapers**

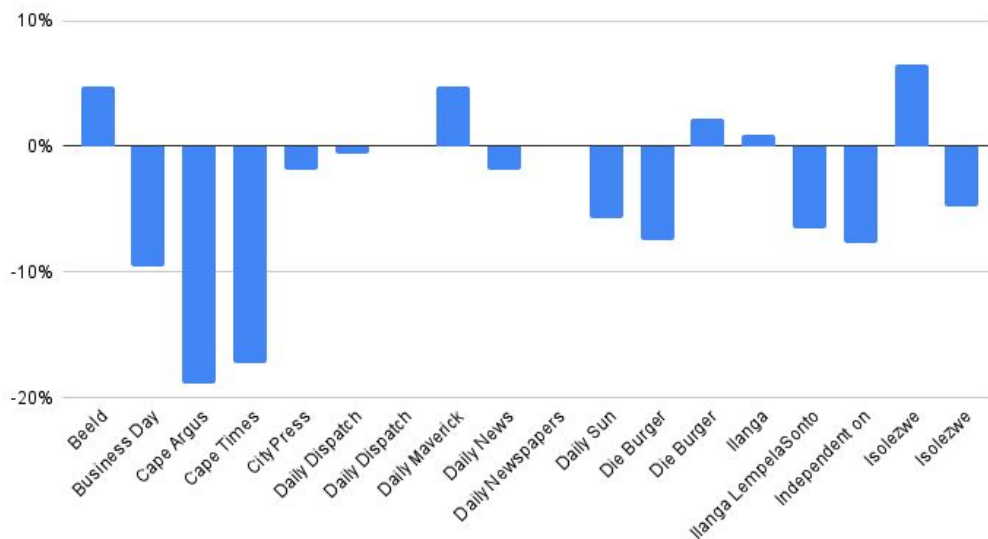


## Daily Newspapers

- According to the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter ABC figures, the *Witness* and *The Herald* had no growth or loss.
- *Isolezwe* increased with 1 231 editions to 20 253 editions for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, an increase of 6%.
- There were also slight increases shown by both *Sowetan* and *The Star* with 3% and 2% respectively.
- *Die Burger* becomes the highest selling daily newspaper with circulation of 24 161, despite losing 1 949 in circulation, with a loss of 7% quarter-on-quarter.
- *Cape Argus* is down with 1 621 editions and loss of 19%, which is the biggest loss of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.
- *Cape Times* comes in second with the biggest loss of 17% during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, with a loss of 1 591 editions.
- *Volksblad* returns to the ABC 1<sup>st</sup> quarter audit, becoming the first e-edition-only daily to be audited.

## Daily Newspapers

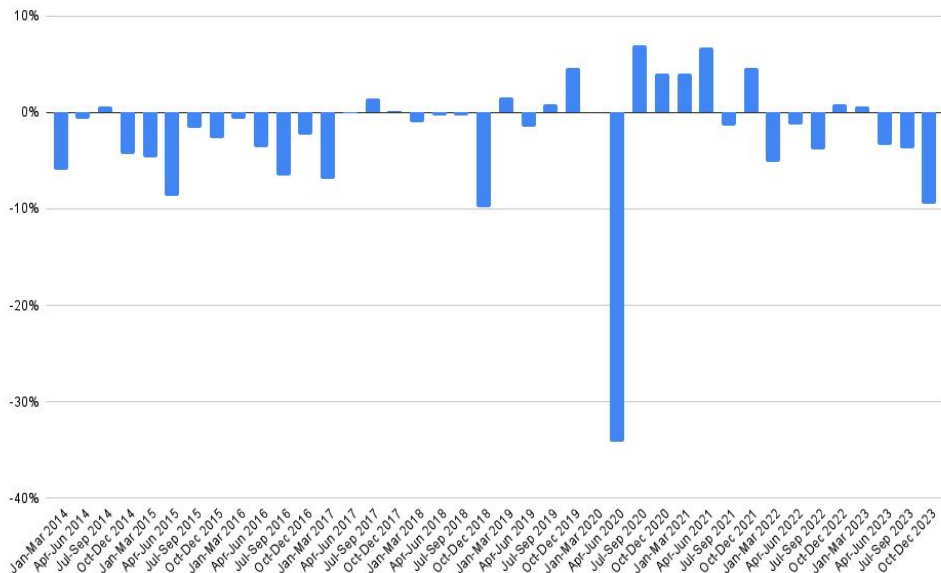
### Daily Newspapers 1st Quarter 2024



- *Die Burger* became the highest selling daily newspaper, with a circulation of 24 161.
- *Isolezwe* increased with 1 231 editions from 19 022 for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023 to 20 253 editions for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, an increase of 6%
- *Cape Argus* declined with 1 621 editions from 8 571 for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023, to 6 950 editions for the first quarter of 2024, a loss of 19%
- *Cape Times* declined with 1 591 editions from 9 194 for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023, to 7 603 editions for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, a loss of 19%
- *Volksblad* becomes the first e-edition-only daily newspaper to be audited and verified by ABC.

## Daily Newspapers

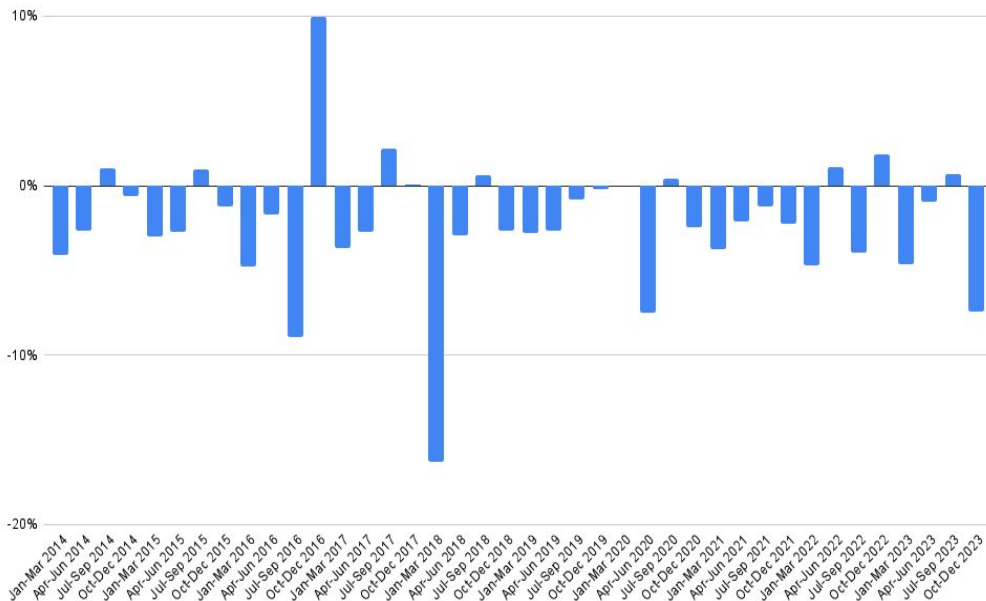
Business Day 2014 until 2024



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 (Jan-Mar) 82 854
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2023 (Oct-Dec) 13 6054
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 12 311
- Circulation was down 10% for the first quarter of 2024, with 1 294 editions.
- No figures was submitted for audit during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- *Business Day* remained one the highest regarded publications in the business sector.

## Daily Newspapers

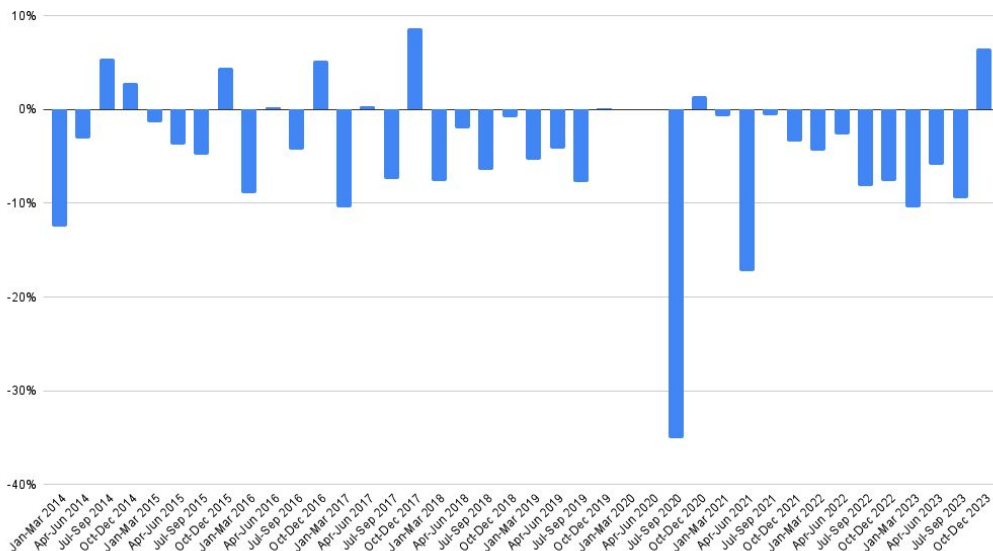
Die Burger 2014 until 2024



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 (Jan-Mar) 59 895
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 24 161
- *Die Burger* became the highest selling daily newspaper with circulation of 24 161. This, despite losing 1 949 in circulation, with a loss of 7% quarter-on-quarter.
- During Oct-Dec 2016, there was a increase of 10% in circulation with 4 488 more editions.
- No figures was submitted for audit during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Daily Newspapers

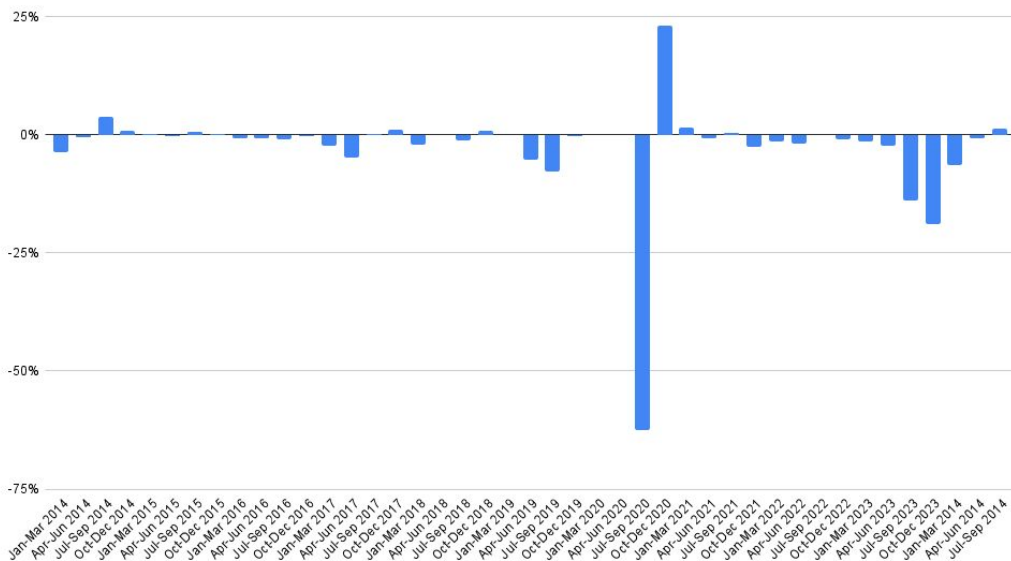
Isolezwe 2014 until 2024



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 (Jan-Mar) 119 846
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 20 253
- *Isolezwe* increased with 1 231 editions from 19 022 for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023, to 20 253 editions for the first quarter of 2024, an increase of 6%
- With the July – September 2014 report, there was a growth of 5% quarter-on-quarter with 5 555 editions.
- No figures was submitted for audit during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Daily Newspapers

**Cape Argus 2014 until 2024**

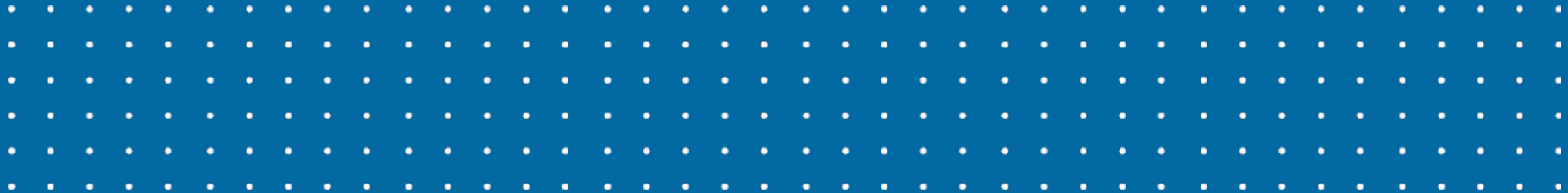


- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 (Jan-Mar) 30 319
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 6 950
- *Cape Argus* declined with 1 691 editions from 8 571 for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023, to 6 950 editions for the first quarter of 2024, a loss of 19%
- There was a significant increase in circulation 2 069 during October to December 2020, with an increase of 23%, post Covid-19.
- *Cape Argus* is the 3<sup>rd</sup> least sold daily publication nationally and the lowest selling daily newspaper in the Western Cape.
- No figures was submitted for audit during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



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## Weekend and Weekly Newspapers

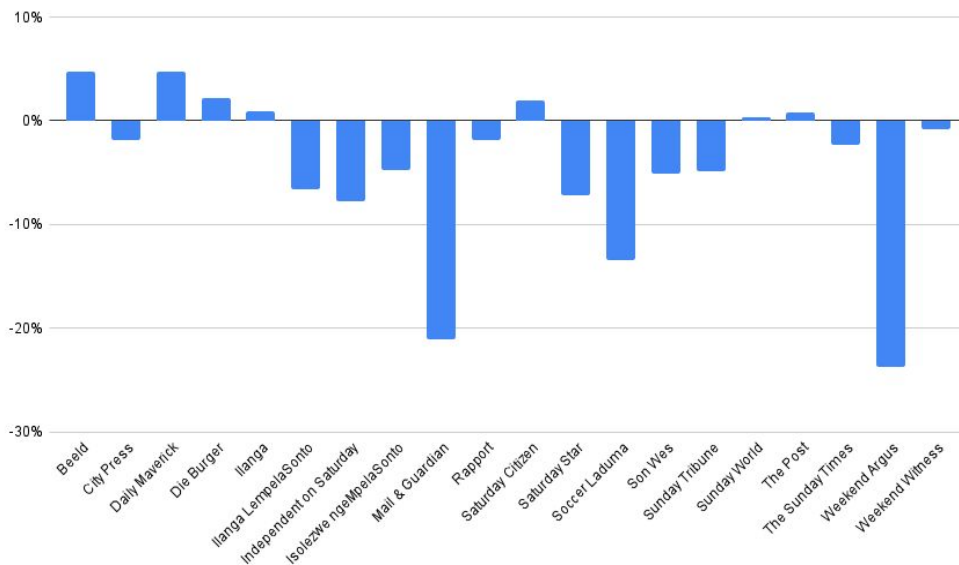


## Weekend and Weekly Newspapers

- According to the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter ABC figures, *Daily Maverick* and *Beeld* share the highest growth of 5% quarter-on-quarter.
- *Die Burger* and *Saturday Citizen* closely follow with a growth of 2% each.
- Despite a significant drop in circulation this past year, the *Sunday Times* remains the highest selling weekend newspaper, with 60 759 in circulation. It reported a loss of 2% during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.
- *Rapport* also remains a strong publication with the second highest circulation during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.
- We bid farewell to *Weekend Post*, which was one of SA's oldest weekend newspapers, closing down after 77 years.
- The *Daily Dispatch Weekend Edition* was discontinued and replaced with a weekend supplement published with the *Daily Dispatch* on Fridays.
- *Soccer Laduma* loses 6 490 editions, bringing their circulation down with 13%.
- The *Mail & Guardian* loses 21% of their circulation, with a loss of 1 619 editions.
- During May 2023, *Weekend Argus* combined with *Sunday Argus*, as a Saturday weekly publication. Despite this combination, the *Weekend Argus* showed the biggest loss in circulation during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, with a loss of 2 197 - a total loss of 24%.
- Due to various publications being combined, we could not include their annual statistics for comparison.

## Weekend and Weekly Newspapers

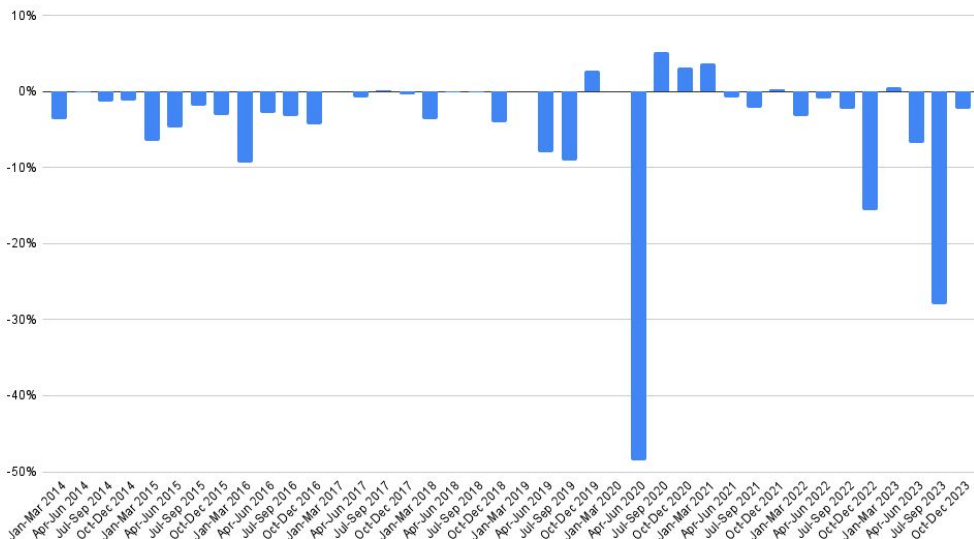
### Weekend and Weekly Newspaper 1st Quarter 2024



- *Beeld* and *Daily Maverick* both increased with 5% quarter-on-quarter.
- The *Sunday Times* remained the Sunday and weekend publication with the highest circulation, despite suffering a significant loss over the past year.
- The *Weekend Argus* had the biggest loss in circulation with a loss of 2 187, resulting in a loss of 24% in total.
- *Soccer Laduma* had the second biggest loss in circulation with a loss of 6 490, resulting in a loss of 13% in total.
- In general the downward trend in circulation continued.

## Weekend and Weekly Newspapers

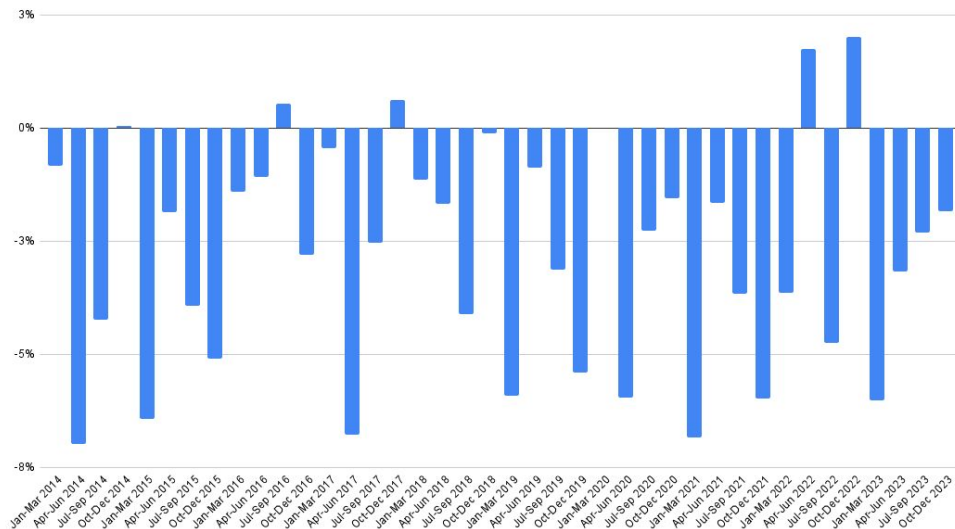
The Sunday Times 2014 until 2024



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 (Jan-Mar) 408 458
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 60 759
- The biggest loss came during the Covid-19 pandemic with a loss of 48% in circulation.
- As one of the strongest weekly publications, they picked up well during second half of 2020, continuing the circulation of 100 000+ publications.
- There was 2 significant losses in circulation figures, one of 16% during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2022 and a bigger loss of 28% during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter in 2023.
- The loss continued during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.

## Weekend and Weekly Newspapers

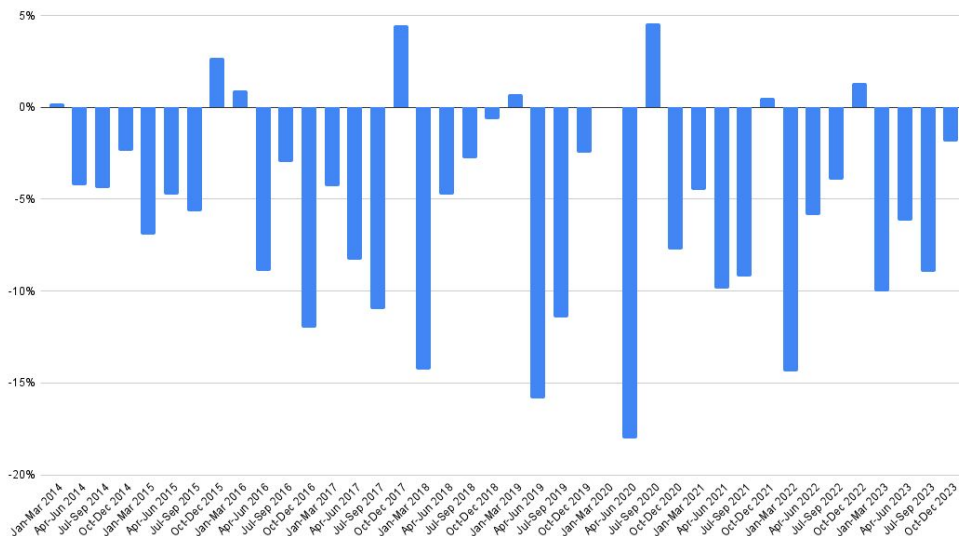
Rapport 2014 until 2024



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 (Jan-Mar) 117 016
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 56 410
- *Rapport* remained the second strongest circulated Sunday newspaper.
- During the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023 there was a slight increase in circulation quarter-on-quarter.
- The loss continued during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.

## Weekend and Weekly Newspapers

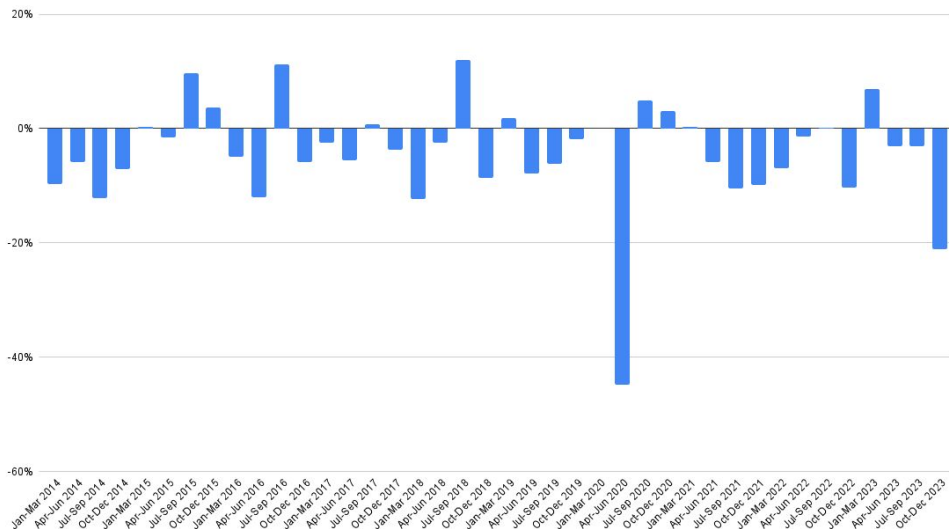
City Press 2014 until 2024



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 (Jan-Mar) 118 676
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 12 451
- *City Press* had a significant drop in circulation over the past decade of over 100 000 units.
- There were a few quarters in which a slight increase in circulation were noticeable.
- The loss continued during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.

## Weekend and Weekly Newspapers

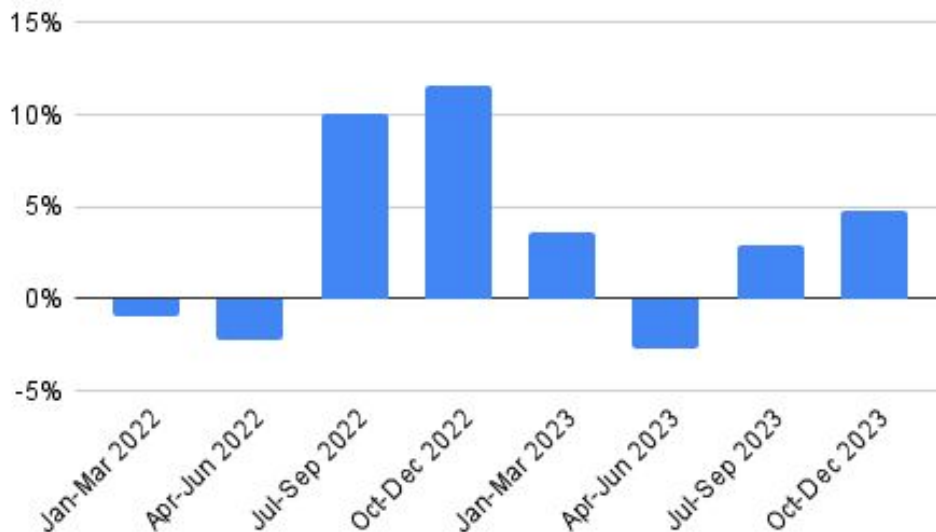
Mail & Guardian 2014 until 2024



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 (Jan-Mar) 118 676
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 12 451
- The biggest loss for *Mail & Guardian* occurred during 2020, with a loss of 45%
- There was a slight gain during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2023, with an increase of 7%
- The loss continued during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.

## Weekend and Weekly Newspapers

### Daily Maverick 2022 until 2024

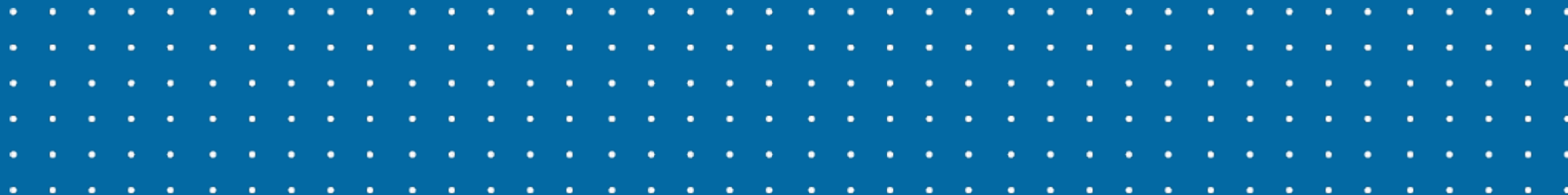


- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2022 (Jan-Mar) 9 377
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024 (Jan-Mar) 10 823
- The circulation of *Daily Maverick* continued on a positive growth trend.
- As a newly-launched Saturday publication that started of with limited distribution, the growth could be attributed to the publication's core values about journalism.



4

**Community Newspaper - 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024**

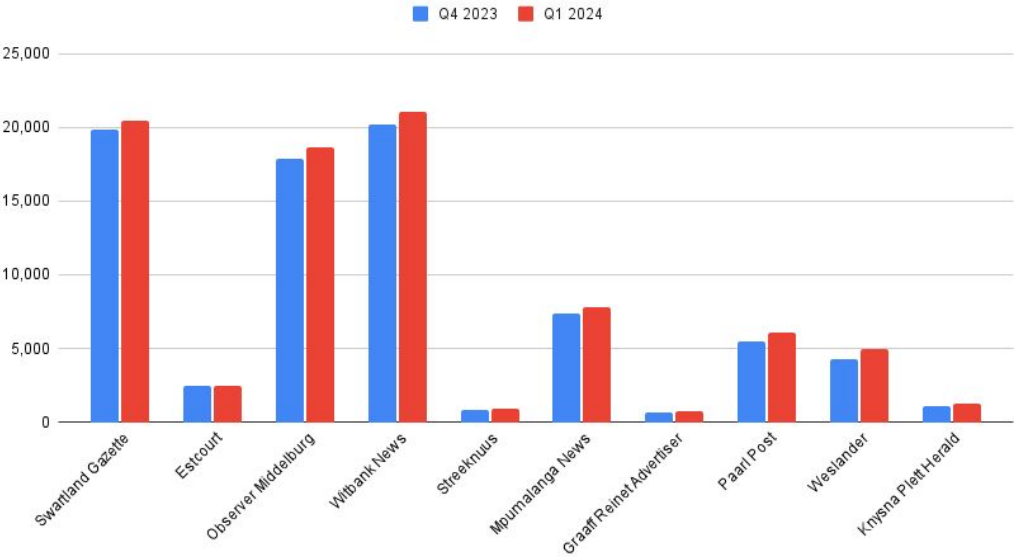


## Community Newspapers - 1st Quarter 2024

- According to the 1st quarter ABC figures, *Knysna-Plett Herald* surprisingly had the biggest growth of 22% during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.
- *PE Express* remain the biggest distributed local community newspaper, with a circulation of 120 203 during 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.
- *Express*, that was recently renamed to *Bloem Express*, had the biggest loss in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, with a decrease of 10 053 communities, which resulted in a loss of 33%.
- *The Rep* distributed 3 869 less issues, with a loss of 21% during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.
- *Vuk'uzenzele*, distributed by SA Government, remains consistent with a distribution of 849 950 units.
- Furthermore, regional newspapers witnessed a relatively stable print circulation, indicating a loyal readership base in local communities. Overall, the audit suggests that while traditional print media faces challenges, there are niches where it continues to thrive, demonstrating the ongoing relevance and appeal of physical publications.
- Due to various publications splitting their publications in to various editions, we could not report on them at this time.

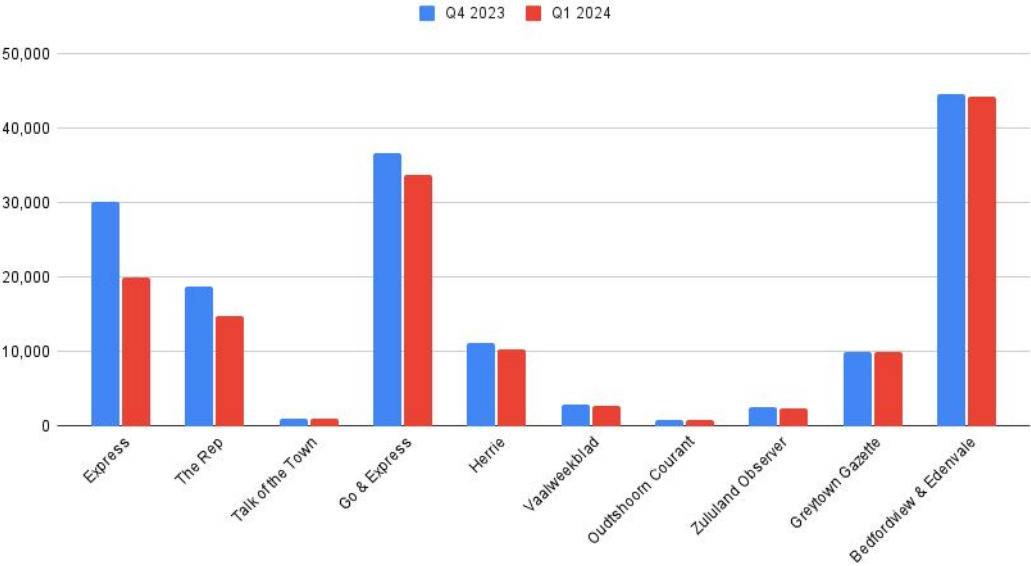
# Community Newspapers - 1st Quarter 2024

Communities Biggest Gains 1st Quarter 2024



# Community Newspapers - 1st Quarter 2024

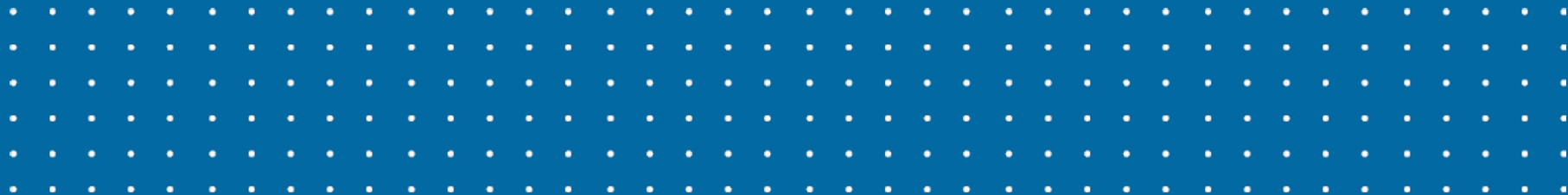
Communities Biggest Losses 1st Quarter 2024





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**Magazines - 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024**

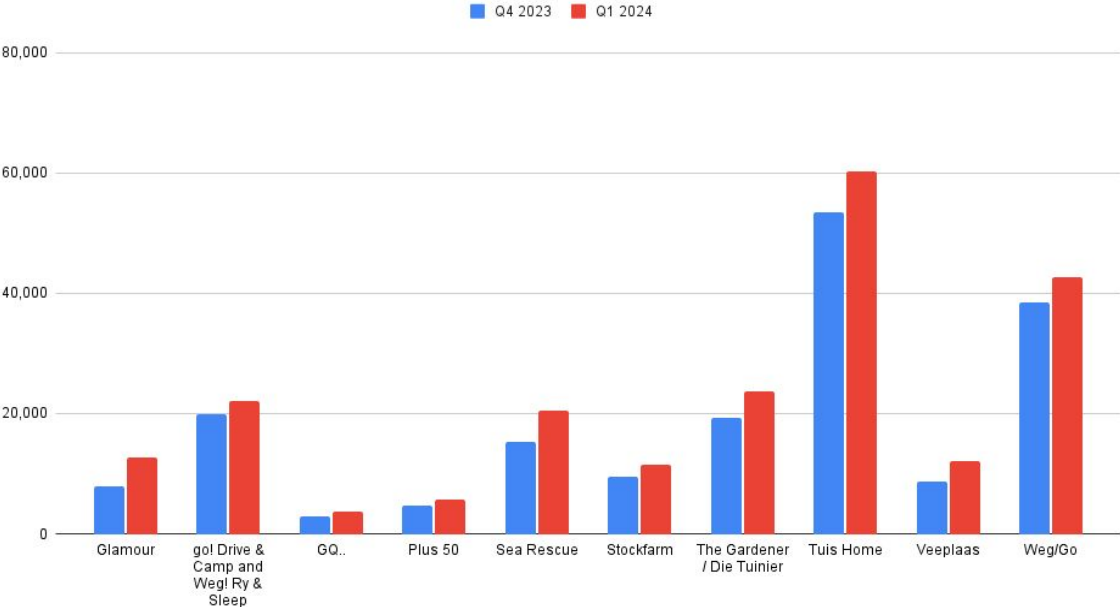


## Magazines - 1st Quarter 2024

- Under the entertainment magazines, *Glamour* had the biggest gain of 61% with an increase of 4 815 in circulation during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.
- Under farming magazines, both *Veeplaas* and *Stock Farm* from Plaas Media gained in circulation by 39% and 21% respectively, which is a very positive outlook for farming media.
- *Die Tuinier/The Gardener* gained 33% in combined reported circulation.
- Under sports, *Compleat Golfer* had the biggest loss of 30% dropping 3 327 in circulation.
- *SA Rugby* also lost 28% in circulation by dropping with 3 327 issues.
- The magazine circulation in general showed an overall loss; it can also be noted that several magazines changed sectors with no loss or gain.
- *Conde Nast House & Garden*, *Grow to Eat*, *Private Edition* and *SA Pharmaceutical Journal* did not have issues during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.

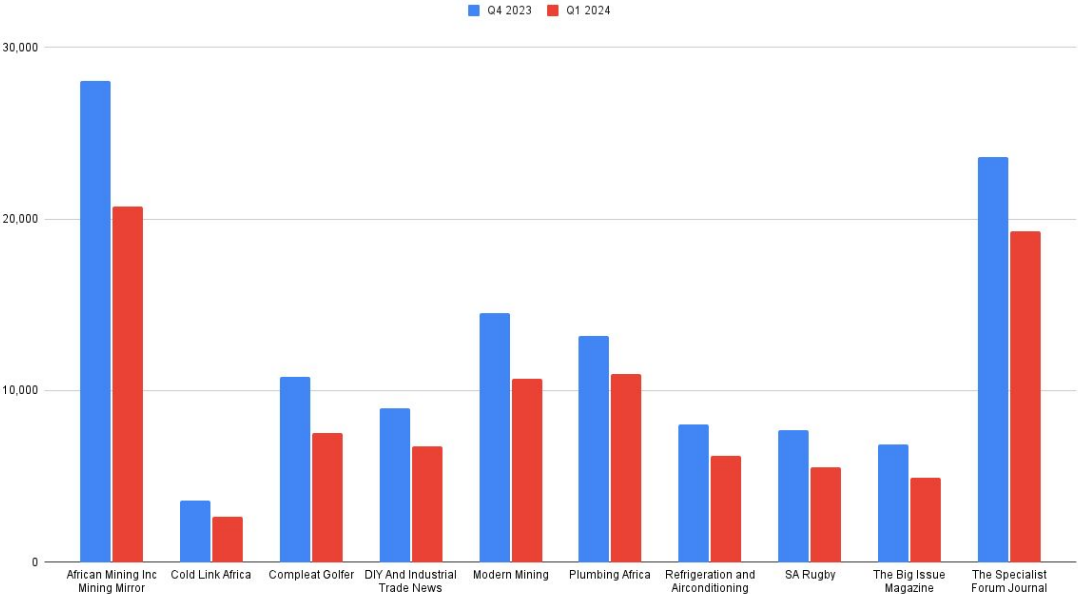
# Magazines - 1st Quarter 2024

Magazines biggest gains 1st Quarter 2024



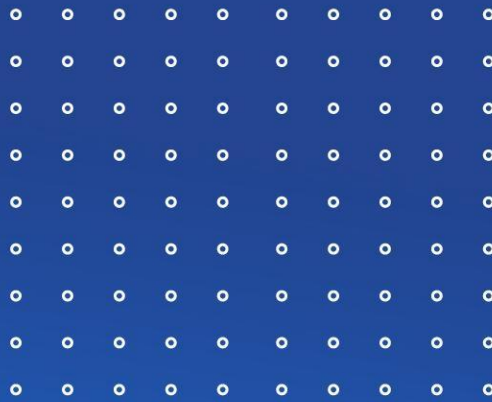
# Magazines - 1st Quarter 2024

Magazines biggest losses 1st Quarter 2024



## In summary

- Despite challenges, print media still holds a place in the media landscape, with many readers valuing the tactile experience of holding a physical newspaper or magazine.
- The future of print media in South Africa remains uncertain, and the industry will need to continue to innovate and adapt to the changing media landscape in order to remain relevant and sustainable. By embracing new technologies and platforms, print publications can reach a wider audience and continue to fulfil their important role as a source of news and information in the country.
- Novus Group thanks Media Manager for supplementary information provided for the compilation of this report.



**Thank You**

