

tiso blackstar group.

## **A View from South Africa**

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Head of Digital, Tiso Blackstar Group

Vice-President, Wan-Ifra

**WAN-IFRA India**

**September 2019**



# LISA MACLEOD | INTRODUCTION

- Head of Digital at Tiso Blackstar Group
- Vice President of World Association of News Publishers
- Board member of the World Editors Forum
- Former GM Digital Publishing at 24.com
- Head of Operations FT.com and Managing Editor at the Financial Times in London
- Focused on newsroom integration and change management
- BA Honours in Anthropology





# TISO BLACKSTAR | INTRODUCTION

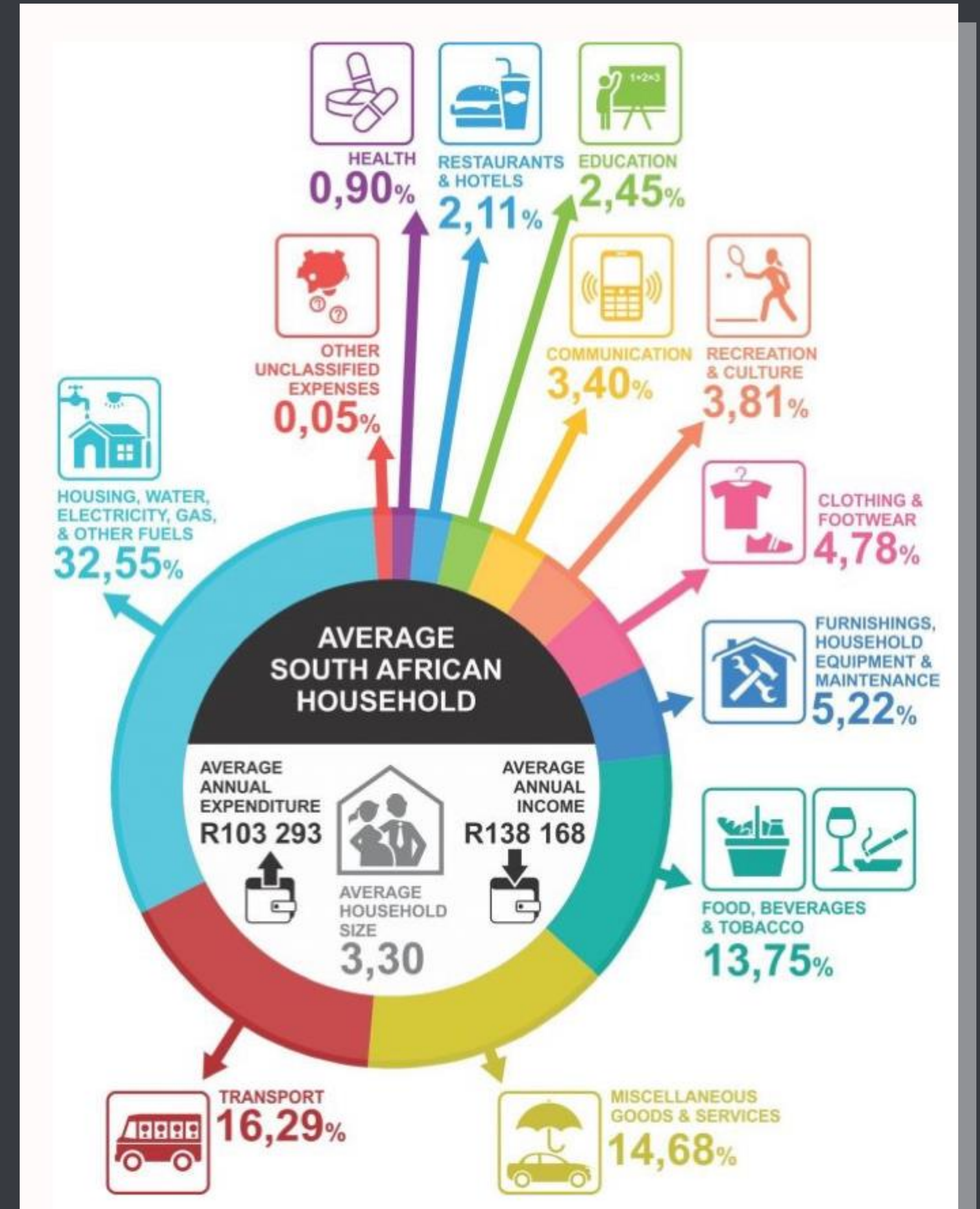
- 7 newspapers, magazines, 12 websites, radio stations throughout Africa, film and music and events
- Sunday Times, BusinessLIVE, Business Day, Financial Mail, TimesLIVE, SowetanLIVE, DispatchLIVE, HeraldLIVE, and more
- Group digital audience is now double what it was 4 years ago, around 8-million UBs monthly
- Redesigned all newspapers, and moved to new building
- Investment in data and analysts: audience focus
- Overhaul of workflows and processes to favour a digital-first environment





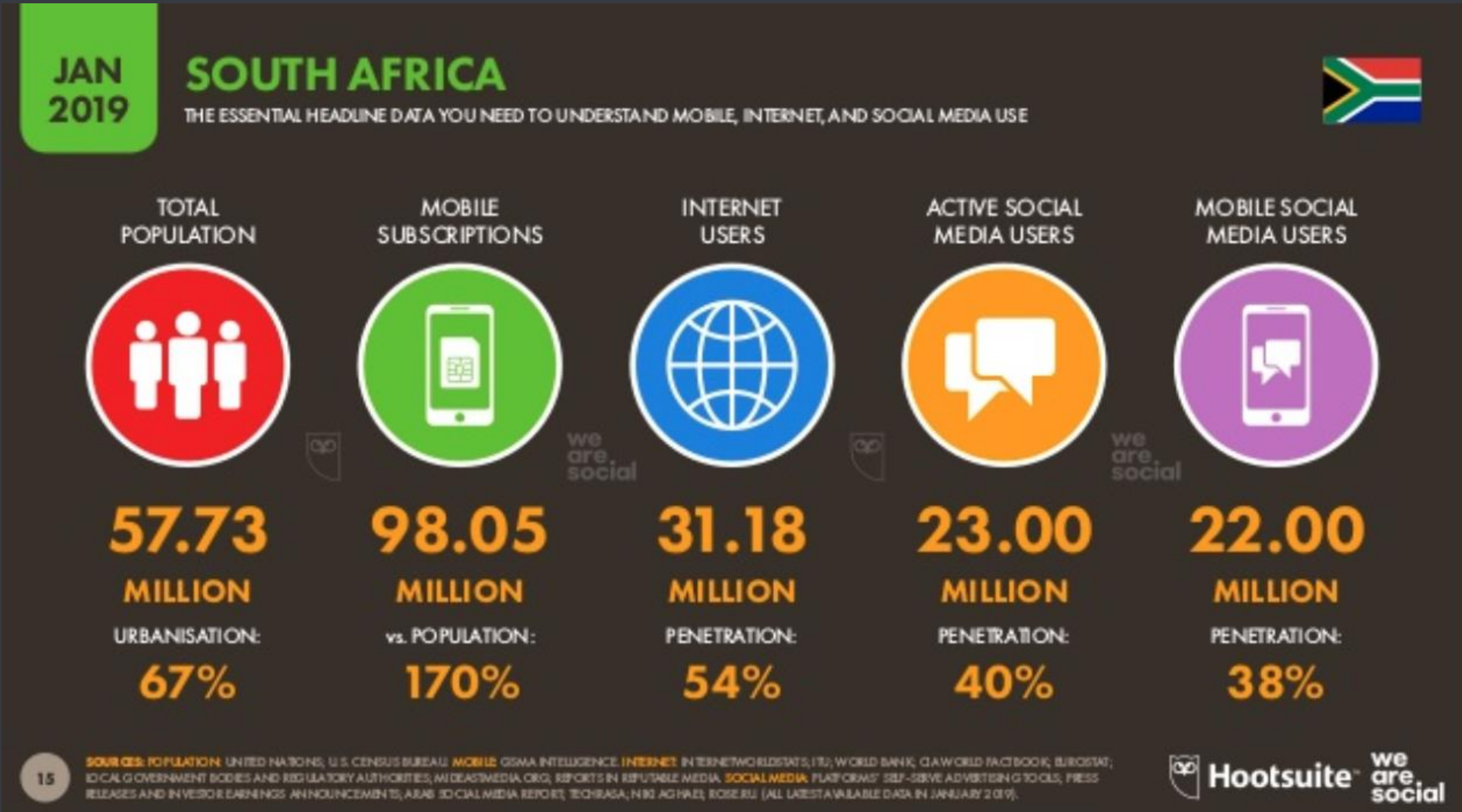
# SOUTH AFRICA | CONTEXT

- High penetration of mobile phones but smartphone does not mean internet access is a given
- Android far outweighs IOS
- Newspaper declining: dailies averaging 16% year on year decline
- Data costs are enormously high: 6 x higher than Egypt - spectrum and infrastructure, lack of competition
- South Africans spend more on communication than on health or on education





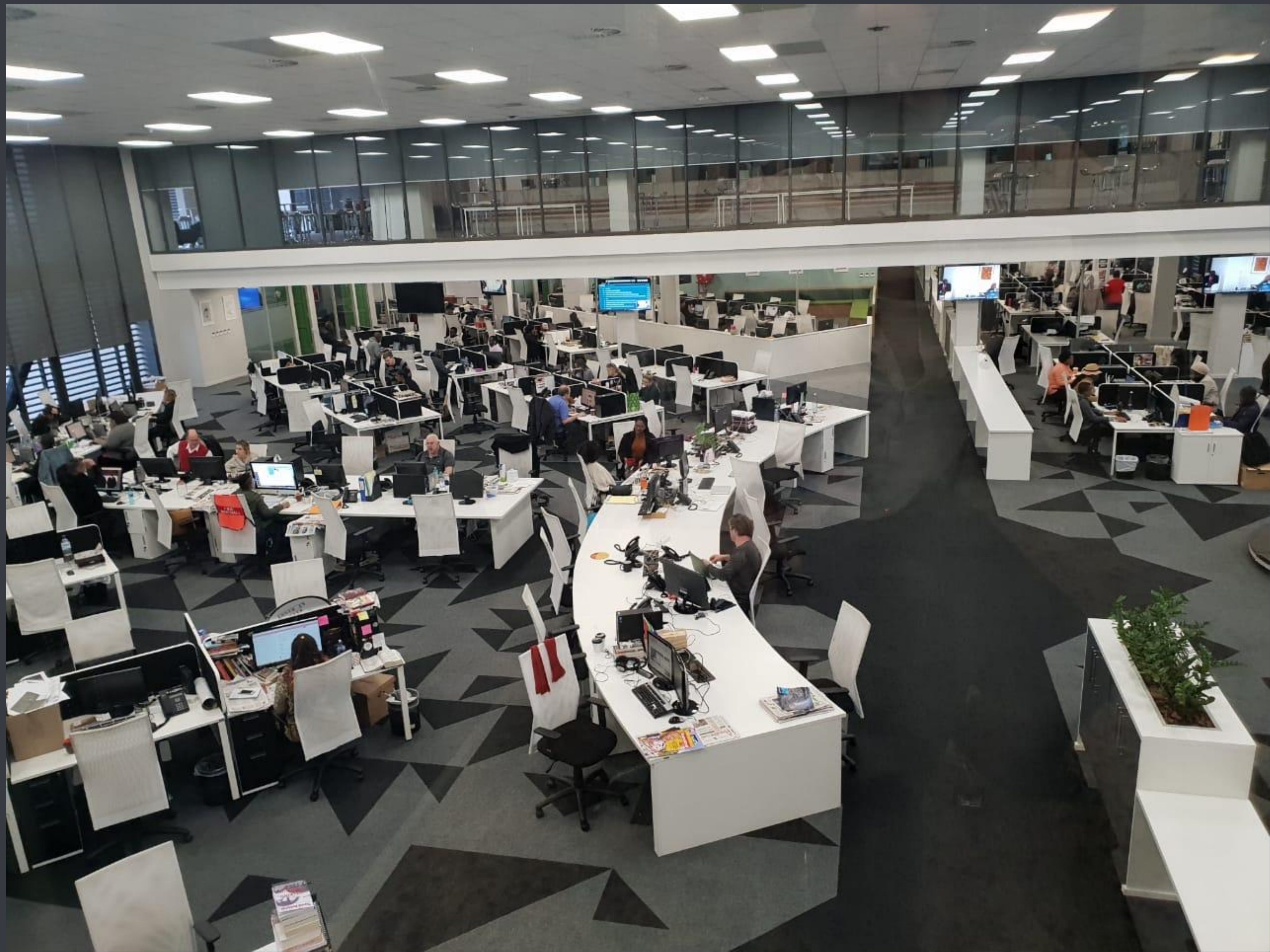
# SOUTH AFRICA | CONTEXT





# ORGANISATION | NEWSROOM

- Aim: change newsrooms to be digital-facing and responsive to audience needs, rather than medium-driven
- Involves three pillars:
  - 1. New newsroom tech** including a new custom built CMS called CosMoS and an upgraded print system (Good News 4 / Tera)
  - 2. Changes to workflows.** Earlier starts. Filing for web. Understanding the value of content for subscribers.  
Internal wire service to foster collaboration between newsrooms: up to 200 stories a day for group use.
  - 3. Improving print processes** and efficiencies to ensure sustainability





# ORGANISATION | PRINT CHALLENGES

- High cost of petrol and high distances between drops (either retail or subscribers) – leads to high transportation costs
- High unemployment rates
- Depressed economy leading to less frequent retail shopping and smaller baskets
- High input costs of print and significant increases in the cost of newsprint







# ORGANISATION | PRINT SOLUTIONS

3 key developments in our print environment:

1) Increased **investment** in our informal (streets) sales network to ensure that the paper is available for purchase even when people are not shopping

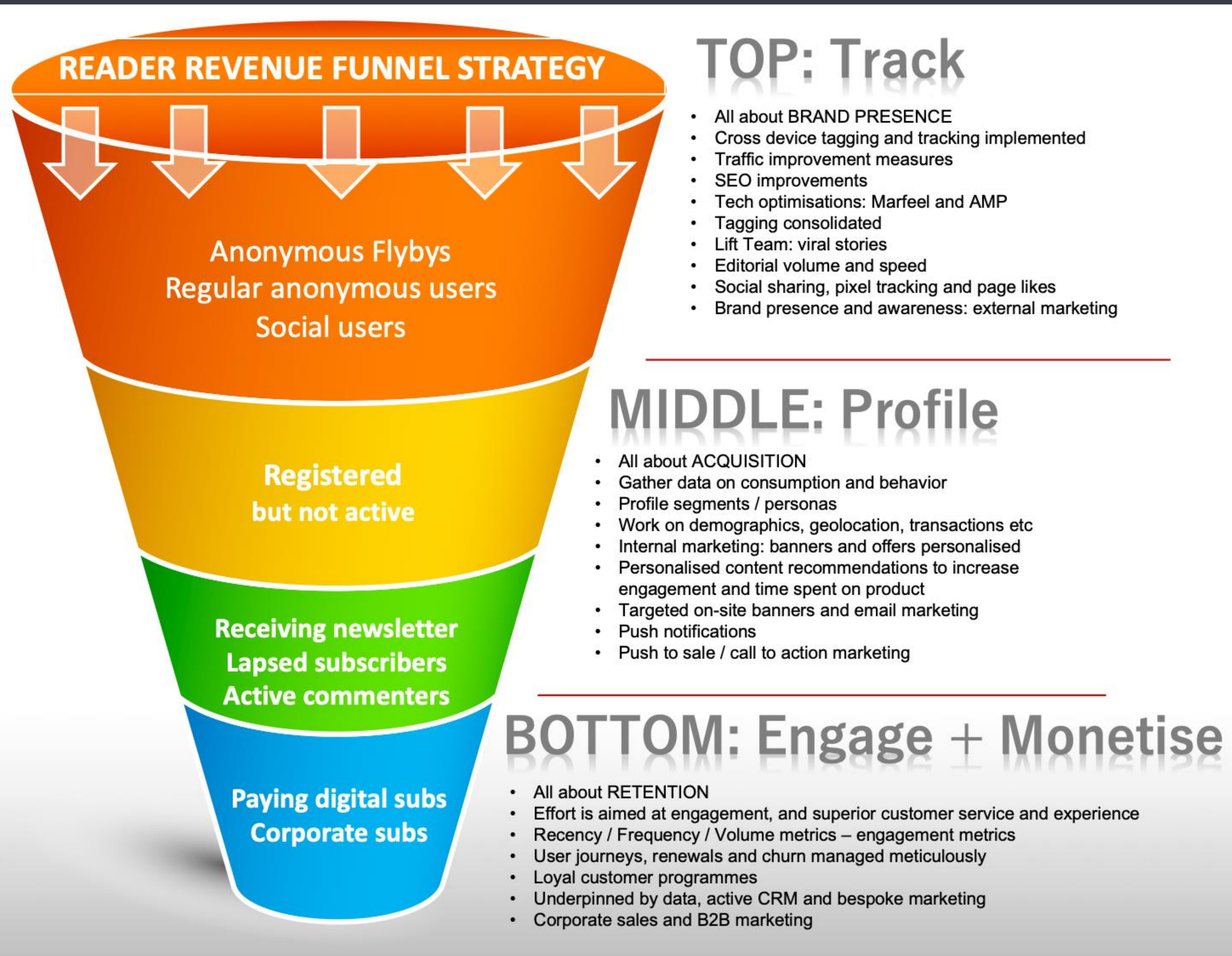
2) **Consolidation** of our retail and subscription contractors in Gauteng province, to enable us to achieve economies of scale: two previously separate networks are now combined, so a subscriber delivery route now includes several retail drops

3) Constant **optimisation of pagination**: daily changes to print orders and based on ad ratios, anticipated sales demand, and distribution cost



# REVENUE | FOCUS ON THE FUNNEL

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# REVENUE | LIFTING TRAFFIC

- Created a new team focused on improving traffic: Team Lift
- Three digital natives brought into to work on stories with web focus
- Part copy tasting, part packaging
- Looking for content with viral lift: breaking out of normal news day
- Stories all tagged with “lift” metadata to identify them
- Results have been phenomenal: more than 1.3-million unique browsers in a month and 1-million+ new page views
- Bigger than a standalone website





# REVENUE | COVER PRICE

- Paid content is primary focus
- 6 operational paywalls
- All have different business models
- Three are defensive (protect print revenues) - Sunday Times, Daily Dispatch, The Herald
- One is niche business content (high end readers) - BusinessLIVE
- Two are digital editions (new concept, print replacement for closed newspaper / old vernacular brand)
- Supported by new data team



# Business LIVE

www.businesslive.co.za

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fm BD 3T W FT BL Premium

Business LIVE

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LISA MACLEOD

MARKETS OPINION NEWS POLITICS COMPANIES ECONOMY MONEY INVESTING SPORT LIFESTYLE MULTIMEDIA & TV E-EDITION



NEWS  
4 hours ago

**Eskom cannot survive without state support, says Jabu Mabuza**

**TOM EATON: I mean, really, is Mbeki serious?**  
OPINION / COLUMNISTS BusinessDay  
11 hours ago BL PREMIUM



**Julius Malema hands himself in for allegedly illegally firing a gun**  
NEWS BusinessDay 2 hours ago



**CLAIRE BISSEKER: Our country cannot afford 10 more lost years**  
ECONOMY / COLUMNISTS BusinessDay  
11 hours ago BL PREMIUM



**Manufacturing production shrinks for second month in July**  
ECONOMY BusinessDay 2 hours ago

BusinessDay

Sunday Times  
Business Times

financialmail

FINANCIAL TIMES

BusinessDay  
wanted

fm  
investors  
MONTHLY

# WOEDE EN VERWOESTING



NUUS & POLITIEK

## Jý moet help keer dat Eskom se kragmaste omval

'n Hele aantal kragmaste wankel op genade omdat die staal afgesteel is



Erika Gibson  
8 min om te lees

MENINGS & DEBAT

## Die vrouehaat-kultuur: Ons moet meer doen

Jonathan Jansen  
5 min om te lees



MENINGS & DEBAT

## Geweld teen vroue: Die kwaad-lys mág maar lank wees

Elsabé Brits  
7 min om te lees



Vrydag 30 Augustus  
2019  
32 artikels



Vrydag 23 Augustus  
2019  
31 artikels



Vrydag 16 Augustus  
2019  
30 artikels



Vrydag 9 Augustus  
2019  
29 artikels

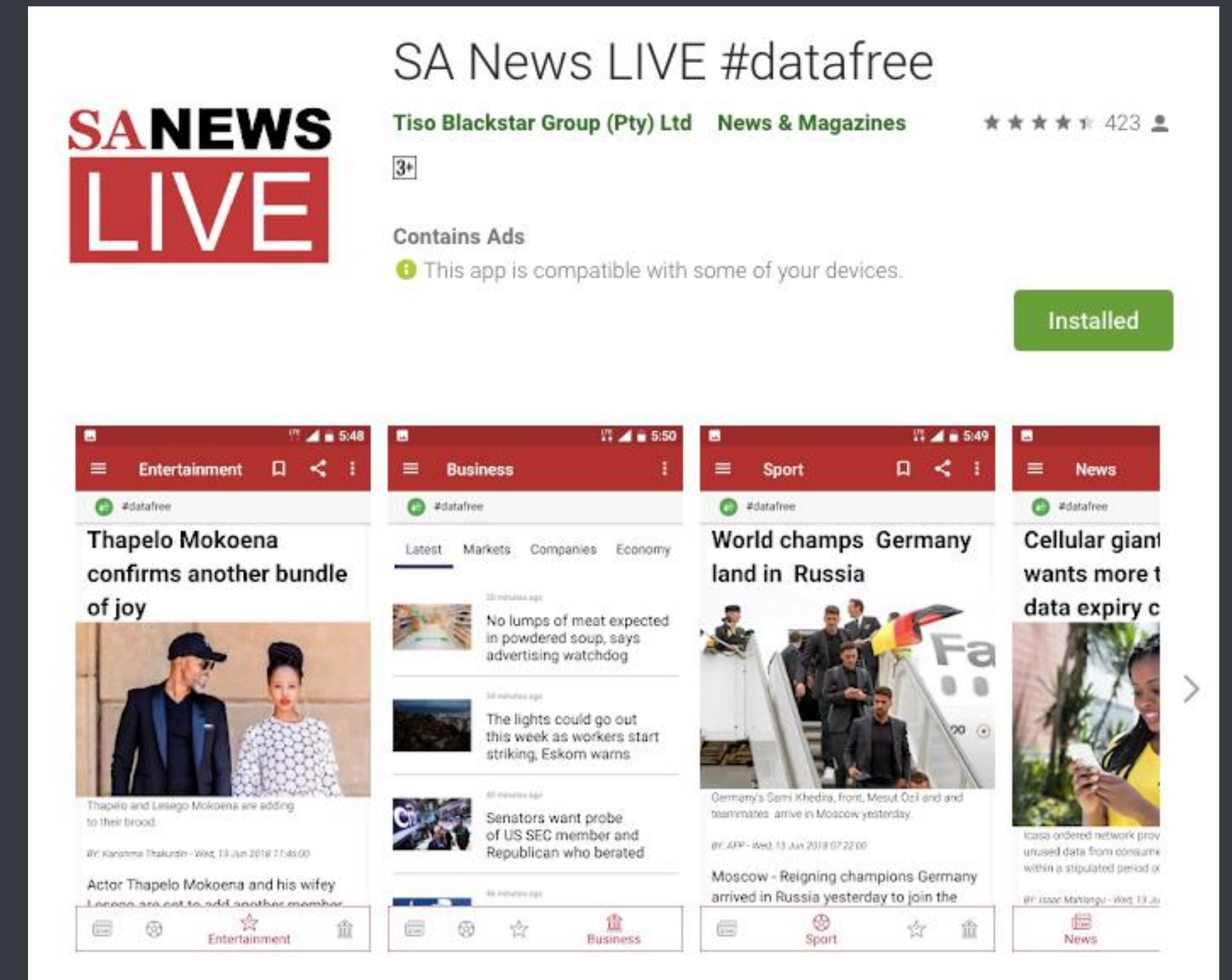


Vrydag 2 Augustus  
2019  
33 artikels



# NEW IDEAS | #DATAFREE APP

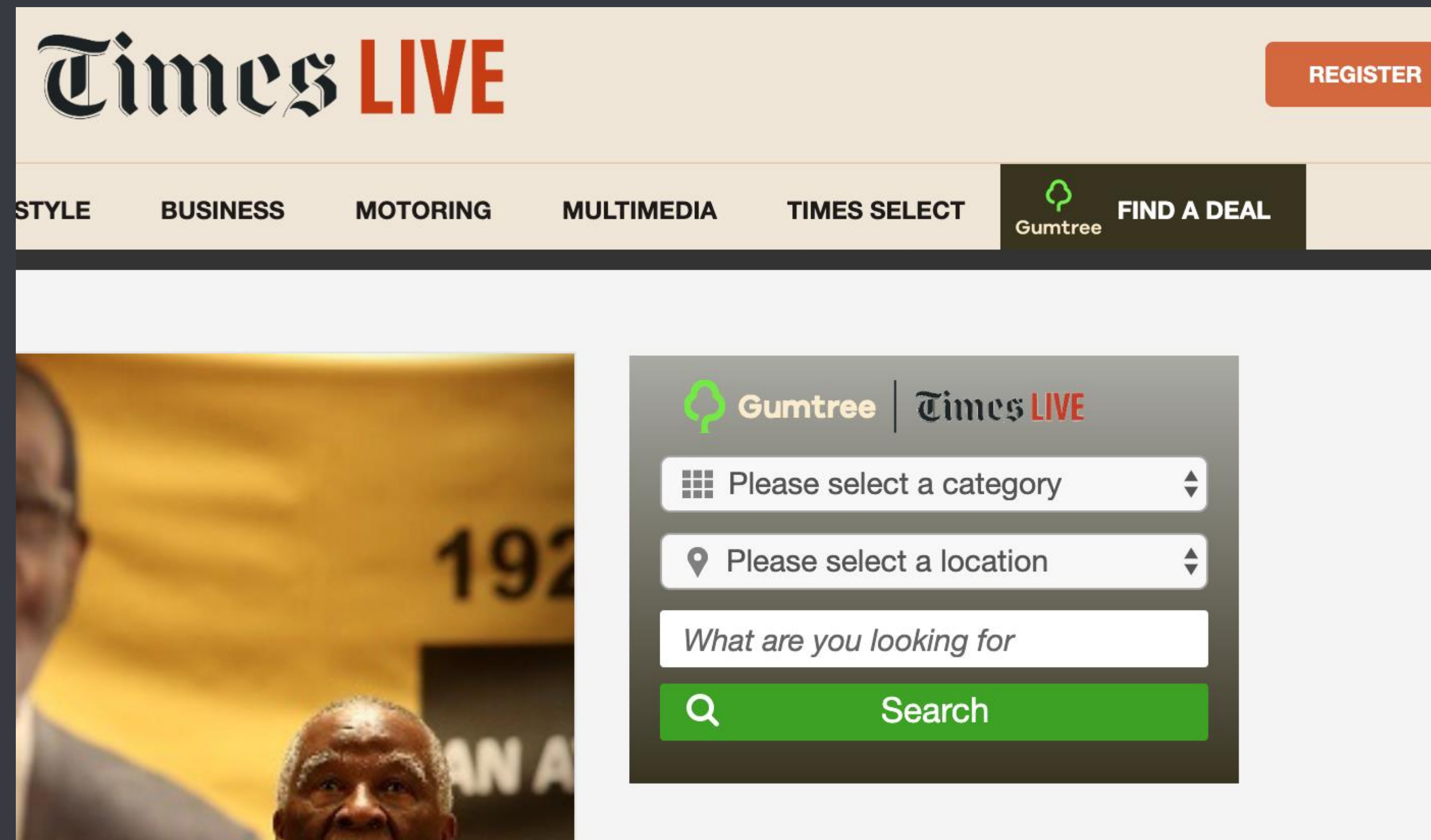
- Cognisant of data issues and affordability in SA: worked with partner Binu to deliver a datafree / zero-rated app
- SA News LIVE is powered by free content from all our newsrooms
- Can be downloaded by apk transfer - skip the stores
- 365k UBs last month
- Monetised by native content or vertical video formats





# NEW IDEAS | CLASSIFIEDS ONLINE

- Build or buy? Partner?
- Wanted an opportunity to play in classifieds markets
- Partnered with Gumtree, second biggest publisher in SA
- Very simple model: pay on impressions served on referral traffic
- Early days, but some good results
- High engagement







# HOW ARE WE DOING? | HEALTHCHECK

- Took an early bet on paid content: lessons from overseas
- Happy with progress: but need more revenue and better tech to support payment management and customers
- Stream of premium content, AND a heavy flow of news
- Business subscriber base increased 40%
- Active digital users represent close to 35% of total subscriber base, number is growing
- Become a sustainable subscriptions company
- Print still most important super premium product
- Keep innovating and trying new projects

# .ends

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