

SAPPI Pica entries reflect rise of niche magazines

A key feature of the entries received for the 2005 Magazine Publishers Association of South Africa (MPASA) Sappi Pica awards is the growing number of niche magazine titles across the board, particularly in the youth and décor segments of the consumer market.

According to Sappi Pica chairperson, Elizabeth Shorten, this year's 223 entries reflect a definite increase in highly specialized titles - underscoring the fact that the magazine industry is successfully responding to the time-famine contemporary reader who is looking for something new and targeted at specific demographics.

Equally important is that this increased competition has stimulated older, existing brands into revisiting and refining their own positioning strategies resulting revitalized editorial and brand content.

"The enormous variety and quality of décor titles available locally made it very exciting but real challenge to judge," says Natalie Dixon, editor of SL magazine and a judge in the décor category.

"This specific category now ranges from the hugely practical to the highly intellectual and is a great example of the power of niche titles and the incredible influence they have in setting trends and creating benchmarks. It literally offers very disparate décor readers an equally satisfying read."

The youth category demonstrated a similar trend, where according to Glamour editor and category judge, Pnina Fenster, the seven titles all reflected a vibrancy and definition that can only bode well for the future of local magazine publishing.

"Whether one is looking at a title such as Hype which focuses on Hip Hop culture or National Geographic Kids, all the publishers and editorial teams know exactly what their readers are about and are talking their language one hundred percent. Equally exciting is that they are blending a strong South African sensibility with a highly contemporary and international feel."

Now in its 36th year, the Sappi Pica Awards is the only industry accolade that recognizes excellence in magazine publishing. Thirty-eight awards are handed out across three principal categories: Customer, Business-to-Business and Consumer magazines, and include the Traditional Awards category of the Philip Tyler Trophy for Innovation in Magazine Publishing and The Award for Excellence in Magazine Design. Magazines are evaluated on editorial and design content as well as the innovation and caliber of the total marketing process.

The 2005 Sappi Pica Awards will be announced at Vodaworld in Midrand on 10 November 2005. For more: www.pica.org.za.

MAGAZINE INDUSTRY

NUMBER OF TITLES						
Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Consumer	475	480	500	515	535	550
Business-to-Business	575	580	560	580	610	640
Total	1050	1060	1060	1095	1145	1190
<i>Source: Magazine Publishers Association of South Africa, Media Manager, IBIS</i>						

2005 SAPPI PICA AWARDS ENTRIES	
1. Customer Magazine Sector	34
2. Business-to-Business Magazine Sector	62
3. Consumer Magazine Sector	96
4. Traditional Sector (Philip Tyler Trophy for Innovation & The Award for Excellence in Magazine Design)	30
Total	223

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