

# Zim: An apparel shop and a funeral plan

By [Dumisani Ndlela](#)

23 Aug 2010

There is a new signal that seasons have changed in Zimbabwe, and it is the apparel shops displaying "winter clearance sale" or "summer fashions just arrived" signs on their display windows.

Since adoption of a multi-currency regime last year, the economy has improved, and shops that were once empty are now overflowing with goods.

But competition had been mainly among grocery merchandisers, who are splurging cash for newspaper adverts highlighting all sorts of discounts.

## Interest free credit

Now, clothing retailers have entered the fray, and their battle is largely premised around interest free credit to customers.

Truworths, a unit of South Africa's biggest listed apparel retailer, has announced the return of "free credit". "It's back. Utilise your increased credit limit...open an account today," says Truworths.

Its other division, Topic Stores, is offering "five months to pay and six months interest free credit at zero deposit".

Yet it is Edgars that is playing to undercut its rivals. With a new "apply today, buy today" policy, it has also come to the market with the same terms as competition: zero deposit, zero interest and six months to pay for "beautiful summer fashion for the whole family".

## Funeral policies

But it has pulled the rug from under competitors with a very attractive proposition: a funeral policy "for the peace of mind and the security of your family" through its Edgars Financial Services.

This has seen customers - from the civil servants to private sector employees- trooping to Edgars outlets for a real deal.

"We all know just how much funerals cost today and how this expense can make matters worse for the bereaved who are still suffering from the trauma of loss and grief."

"The Edgars Funeral Insurance Scheme will help provide you and your family with protection in the event of untimely

death," says a brochure prepared for clients.

## Insurance cover options

To qualify, one must be an account holder and there are six insurance cover options. The least cover has a monthly premium of US\$1.50 and the highest US\$3.40, with a payout of US\$400 and US\$900 respectively.

An account executive says they are planning to extend the cover to fully pay off customer accounts on death.

"We had it before the economic crisis but we are perfecting it now," says the executive.

She told Bizcommunity that the policy was helping Edgars get the numbers because customers were thinking about what's best for them before spending their little money.

## 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](mailto:dndlela@yahoo.co.uk).

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