

Terena le Roux keeps the *Ideas/Idees* flowing

By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Following the announcement of bilingual *Ideas/Idees* magazine being closed down by Media24 late last year, editor Terena le Roux approached management to transfer ownership into her name. Now the owner of startup publishing company IdeesFabriek (IdeasFactory), Le Roux says it really was that straightforward.

“*Ideas/Idees* has an incredibly loyal core readership of creative, modern crafters and the closure definitely left a gap in the market. Knowing this market so well, it was the obvious next step to grab the opportunity to run it as a smaller business – in line with the entrepreneurial approach we’ve preached for many years.”



Picture: Thundafund.com

Since then, the team has been raising funds through their crowdsourcing campaign on Thundafund, while using their retrenchment packages to proceed the project in the interim.

The plan is to distribute 15,000 copies (excluding the digital version) of the 124-page publication every second month on the premise of ‘low print run, high cover price, low returns’.

Here, Le Roux shares more on this venture to ‘keep the ideas flowing’ and what it’s like to be in the ‘hands-on world of creative entrepreneurship’, literally.

■ Why did the team decide to continue the publication, after being closed down by Media24 and a reported decline of 5,269 (52,356 to 47,087) copies last year?

A circulation of 47,087 is still a substantial one in the South African market, especially for what is essentially a niche magazine. The drop in circulation was in line with the general decline in the print magazine market and we were still one of the top-performers in the female market.

■ How do you plan to turn this around?

The magazine will now be treated as the niche magazine that it is, i.e. with a much smaller print run and less returns. The fact that we are getting rid of almost all overheads makes a huge difference to the bottom line. We are being completely

realistic as far as advertising goes, and have budgeted accordingly.

■ **Comment on the process of retaining the trademark, etc.**

I have been an editor and publisher at Media24 for many years, which makes for a relationship of mutual trust and respect. As soon as the news broke that *Ideas/Dees* was being closed down, I approached management to transfer the trademark to me, and they agreed. It was really quite straightforward.

■ **Your goal is to publish 15,000 copies of a 124-page magazine every second month while also distributing digitally for readers who would prefer a cheaper, online option. How will this (and anything else) differ to how things were run in the past?**

The magazine previously had a print run of 70,000, with returns of between 35-40%. While big media owners can sustain a high return strategy, small companies can't. We are basing our business plan on the strategy we followed with our brand extensions – low print run, high cover price, low returns. We would rather have a smaller, more focused footprint than try and be everywhere.

Whereas our print and digital offerings did not differ much in the past, the price difference between print and digital will now be substantial, with print selling at R80 and digital at R50.

We know our readers are tactile by nature and therefore offer the print option to those who want the luxury of a paper product. But we acknowledge that the economy is affecting everyone, and therefore want the more affordable digital product as well.



Picture: Thundafund.com

■ **The team is funding the first two print runs with their retrenchment packages. How can your readers also get involved to keep the magazine on the shelf?**

We've launched a campaign on [Thundafund](#) with clear milestones, rewards, and what they will help fund. The team contribution is to work without pay for the first two issues and the reader contributions will help us with paying our freelancers, legal costs and the smaller start-up costs.

■ **You have three milestones to overcome in order to get the publication back on track. With R66,200 pledged so far, you're 58% of the way there (to your dream goal of R115,000) with only 19 days left.**

- **Are you feeling confident that this goal will be achieved?**

I am confident that we will at least get very close to the overall target. We expected January to be quiet, but pledges have started picking up again and we are planning a focused campaign for the last three weeks – the more we remind people, the more pledges we get.

- **Do you have any back-up plans, i.e. to extend the funding?**

We can extend it yes, but we've also put money aside to keep the printers paid until the first payments come in and the model becomes sustainable.

- **What is your engagement to potential backers?**

The campaign opened the door to an entirely new way of engaging with our readers. Apart from the rewards as set out in our campaign, it has started conversations, new creative collaborations and a group of Ideas/Idees friends, who will in future know every move we make before anyone else. I love this new, transparent way of communicating.

■ **Where will the team be based, assuming you'll need to find a new premises?**

We are keeping overheads as low as we can at the moment, being very aware of the impact it can have. We all work from home, with regular get-together sessions so as to keep the creative juices and the production systems flowing.

■ **Why do you/does the team believe in this project, and why is it your hope that others will too?**

We have all lived, breathed and loved this brand for many years. Most of us have been through the entire rebranding to *Ideas/Idees* and the establishment of it as a new brand that submersed itself in the hands-on world of creative entrepreneurship. The feedback, goodwill and offers to contribute from our readers, the small businesses we've worked with, and our clients have been amazing.

■ **IdeesFabriek will house the magazine. Do you have any other ideas on how you'd like to grow the business, should this initial venture be successful?**

The brand has always leant itself to many brand extensions. In fact, we have dreamt for years about getting out of the

building and into the real world where we could be more hands-on. I believe we can be much more than just a printed how-to guide. We can share our experience in many different ways. The word 'factory/fabriek' was not chosen without reason. But for now, we first need to get this baby off the ground.

To fund this project, go to [Thundafund.com](https://thundafund.com), or contact Terena@ideasfactory.co.za for any other creative ways to get involved.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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