

## Five lessons learned from a *Vogue Africa* dream

Cameroon-born, Paris-based fashion photographer Mario Epanya had a dream: to acquire a licence for the first *Vogue Africa*. He created several imagined covers for what would be a future African edition of *Vogue*, courted investors and presented his plan to Conde Nast Publications, the parent company of *Vogue* magazine.

By [Chuma Kave](#) 8 Dec 2010



*Vogue*, a fashion and lifestyle magazine, is published in 18 national editions and one regional edition. Even though there is *Vogue India*, *Vogue Brazil*, *Vogue Australia* etc., there's no *Vogue Africa*.

Mario Epanya is a man who stood up and knocked at Conde Nast Publications' door and told them that Africa is ready for its own *Vogue*. This mission not only brought excitement to the fashion industry in Africa and the diaspora that at last, Africa will finally be recognised for its talent, creativity, beauty and fashion, it also brought worldwide attention to Epanya which made him realise that he represents something that is bigger than himself.

This was until Conde Nast Publications turned him down.

### **Chatting to Mario he believes there are five major lessons he learned from his quest:**

- "1. The power of a brand - The name 'Vogue', it's incredible! This name opened so many doors and attention that I never expected.*
- 2. Start my own thing - after being turned down by Vogue I decided to start my own magazine, Winkler, which will be distributed in Africa, US and Europe. It's the same concept I wanted for African Vogue and the first issue should be at the beginning of 2011.*
- 3. Be sincere and believe in what you do. For me Vogue Africa was not just about making money but to tell the world that Africa is ready to showcase itself. I believe sincerity is what brought such worldwide attention.*
- 4. Always be yourself and proud of where you come from. I may be a renowned Paris fashion photographer but I know who I am and where I'm from. I'm from Douala, Cameroon. I am to represent Africa and its rich talent, history and heritage wherever I go.*
- 5. Show the best of Africa - The attention I got from Vogue Africa showed how much the world is tired of all the negativity and stereotypes surrounding the continent and how thirsty the world is to see the*

*beautiful side of Africa. This is what I'm trying to achieve with my new magazine, Winkler. We are going to work with the professional afro-descents worldwide around the Black beauty, fashion events to promote new talents, find and promote new faces in the international fashion industry. The main mission is to make afro-descents proud of their history and future through all the talents we have."*

Promoting or fighting for a cause (Africa) that's not considered attractive, sexy or profitable can't be easy. Mario will have to work doubly hard not just to sell Africa to the world but also to its own people.

I'm of the view that his mission shall be accomplished.

For more information on Mario Epanya, go to [www.marioepanya.com](http://www.marioepanya.com).

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuma Kave is a radio producer, radio lecturer, blogger and an aspiring social entrepreneur. View his blog at [\[\[http://blogs.news24.com/chumakave\]\]](http://blogs.news24.com/chumakave). Chuma can be contacted on [\[\[chumakave@gmail.com\]\]](mailto:chumakave@gmail.com).

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