

# Meet Sphiwe Mpye, editor of *Business Day Wanted*



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Arena Holdings has announced the appointment of journalist and magazine editor, Sphiwe Mpye, as editor of *Business Day Wanted*, a luxury, lifestyle and culture magazine.



Sphiwe Mpye, editor of *Business Day Wanted*

## ■ ***Congrats on your new appointment as the editor of Business Day Wanted. How do you feel about it?***

Thank you. In some ways it feels a bit surreal because I have been a reader and – as a print buff – a student of *Business Day Wanted* for a very long time. In my two decades in journalism, I have met three of the magazine's ex-editors and watched as they kept the magazine's core principles, while infusing it with bits of themselves. The possibilities of doing likewise are very exciting.

## ■ ***As the face of Business Day Wanted, what's your editorial vision for the brand?***

I don't think my editorial vision is vastly different from the well-written, aesthetically-pleasing product *Wanted* has always been. I do look forward to exploring the meaning of luxury at a time when curation and craft is as important as sustainability, holistic wellness and equity. I also see opportunities in introducing new voices; exploring in interesting ways, the African creators, professionals and entrepreneurs doing extraordinary things and expanding our digital offering.

## ■ ***It's been one of the most challenging of times for several publications, particularly in the consumer lifestyle sector. With many publications having closed down, what approach is Business Day Wanted taking to stay on the shelves?***

The challenge that this difficult time poses – and this was true even before the pandemic – is a demand for elevation. An elevation of quality and thought behind print publications. Audiences have an embarrassment of choices and need not have print in their reading diet at all. When they pick up your publication, it is a conscious decision, so it needs to live up to their expectations and not mimic anything they may find freely online.

As such, *Wanted* will remain a market leader if we continue to be first with relevant, quality luxury, lifestyle and culture content that does not take the reader for granted. Add to this digital innovation, and we are prepared for the challenges ahead of us.

■ ***How, and when did this come about/when does it take effect?***

I started chatting to publisher Aspasia Karras after the last editor, Sarah Buitenbach, resigned. I went through a rigorous interview process, including sitting (virtually) twice in front of a large panel and presenting my vision for the magazine. Everything took about two months or so. The announcement was made on 1 July, but I joined quietly and deliberately in mid-June, in order to see the process at its busiest, while having the luxury of being an observer. I have been a lot more hands-on on the digital side, where we are shaping things towards a more dynamic offering.

■ ***Briefly tell us about your journey into the media industry.***

My career has taken me from newspapers and magazines, to radio, PR & communications and culture making over a 22-year period.

I owe my entry into journalism to Mokone Moete, who gave me a shot at *The Sowetan* as a cub reporter. Various people took me under their wing – including the late Dr Aggrey Klaaste and Don Mattera, who told me I had a ‘special mystique’, something I still recall whenever self-doubt creeps in. It was the belief that others had in me that gave me the confidence to accelerate into editorship in my early 20s at YMag and to subsequently shift to PR at Yfm.

Some other highlights include founding editor of BLINK Magazine – the first independent men’s magazine on the continent; associate editor at GQ and a director at Digify Africa – South Africa’s most impactful youth digital skills training agency.

My work has been published in all major newspapers and magazines including the Mail & Guardian, Sunday Times and Financial Mail.

Along the way I have dabbled in television, talent management, eventing, radio presenting and more recently, podcasting. I have judged the SAMAS, Sanlam Fashion Journalism Awards, sat on the Jury for the Cape Town Film Festival and was an early alum of the M&G’s 200 young people list. Two decades is a long time.

■ ***What do you love most about your career, the industry and what you do?***

I thrive on the dynamism and the pace at which everything moves. I have always had an eye for ‘the next’ and where magazines are going, at a very difficult time, is exciting. And no, they are not going into extinction, as some people who should know better have suggested.

■ ***What’s at the top of your to-do list in this new role?***

Right now, it’s getting on top of the processes, getting into a rhythm with the team, meeting contributors and commercial partners. Some tweaks to the book will be immediate, while others will come in time. Subscribe to Business Day and you will not miss a thing.

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