

Zimbabwean Trillion Dollar campaign to the rescue

After *The Zimbabwean* newspaper's battle with Mugabe's ZANU PF government made headlines around the world over the past year, *The Zimbabwean* [Trillion Dollar](#) campaign by TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris Johannesburg has won more than 50 global and South African advertising awards. This has raised the profile of the newspaper beyond its "wildest dreams". [video]



With its strapline "a voice for the voiceless" Wilf and Trish Mbanga, the founders of *The Zimbabwean* were forced to flee Zimbabwe in 2003 when the repressive media regulations outlawed the independent media in that country. Publishing in exile in South Africa, the weekly paper gained readership on both sides of the border among Zimbabweans.

Struggled to survive

When the country went to the polls in 2008 *The Zimbabwean* was blamed by the government of Robert Mugabe for its losses. Its delivery truck was hijacked and burnt by Mugabe thugs, then the paper was punished with a 70% 'luxury' import tax. Battling to be taken seriously by advertisers in South Africa, the paper struggled to survive.

With Zimbabwe's currency value spiraling downwards at the fastest rate of any country in history, TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris Johannesburg, a South African-based ad agency, came to the rescue with the Trillion Dollar campaign. With billboards and posters made up of thousands of worthless hundred trillion dollar (Z\$100 000 000 000 000) Zimbabwean bank notes, the campaign made world headlines. Featured on more than 800 international websites and blogs, it is on permanent exhibit at the British museum in London, included in textbooks and has catapulted its creators, TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris Johannesburg, to the top of the creative circle listings.

Prime source for exiles

Marketing manager of *The Zimbabwean*, Liz Linsell said, "The success of the Trillion Dollar campaign has given us a profit beyond our wildest dreams and South African advertisers are now realising the enormous potential of the Zimbabwean readership. For an estimated three million Zimbabweans in south Africa *The Zimbabwean* brings them the news from home and is their newspaper of choice."

The paper is published three days a week and distributed nationally in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. Its website www.thezimbabwean.co.uk is also a prime source of news for Zimbabwean exiles worldwide.

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