

Kwenta Media's *Essence of Africa* changes name to *Essays of Africa*

To avoid name clash issues, from today, 19 December 2014, Kwenta Media's *Essence of Africa* magazine has changed its name to *Essays of Africa*...



Essays of Africa January 2015 cover

Nawaal Nolwazi Mdluli, CEO of Kwenta Media and founding editor of *Essence of Africa*, says of the journey to publish their new women's lifestyle magazine: "When I went to Australia in 2009, I first came across the magazine *Madison*, and it was then that my idea for women's magazine of that calibre for Africa was conceived. I didn't want to publish just another rag for women that would compete for shelf space; rather, I saw a need for the voices of African woman to be heard."

That was the impetus for Kwenta Media to launch a conference forum for women in 2010 called Women of Substance. "As we rolled out this platform, we knew that we wanted a name for our new magazine that would be concise and still pack a powerful punch. Acknowledging that Africa is our motherland, we began to question what makes our motherland beat. Where is her centre of gravity? When you pull away all the layers and strip her bare, who is at the core and what makes her pulse run steady?"

Trademark support given then taken away

The company applied to Edcon for a license to use the *Essence* trademark, as *Essence of Africa*. Edcon has the registration rights of the *Essence* trademark in South Africa, while a company in the US owns the *Essence* trademark. "When we first approached Edcon for a license to use the *Essence* trademark, it showed support of us and our vision as a black, female-owned South African company and was committed to helping us empower women through the magazine."

Two months after the license agreement between Edcon and Kwenta Media, and shortly after the first issue of the first issue of the new magazine had gone to print, Edcon made a unilateral decision to cancel Kwenta Media's license, leaving Kwenta Media vulnerable to any objections to the use of the *Essence* trademark by the American owners of the trademark.

The recent turn of events regarding the trademark is a huge disappointment but as Mdluli said, "Kwenta Media is not in a position to compete against big industry players and had to make the difficult decision to rebrand the magazine." Six years into industry, and Kwenta Media has proved to be a force to be reckoned with. "This latest challenge has not defeated our vision," Mdluli said. "Rather, it has inspired Kwenta Media and its advisory board to exercise innovation - a quality for which we have become well known in the media space."

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