

**BETTER READS, BRIGHTER LOOKS – NEWSPAPER MAKEOVER MANIA**

SPH newspapers spared no efforts to refresh their image during the year to give better value to readers. The English, Chinese and Malay Newspapers went all out to beef up their content and design in a series of makeovers. The results pleased readers and advertisers, and boosted sales. Here are the highlights of the key new features in the various redesigned papers.

**English and Malay Newspapers**

**Brighter and more vibrant Sunday Times**

- On 28 September 2003, readers woke up to an eye-catching Sunday Times, which was given a cover-to-cover makeover, including a new classy masthead.

It was an immediate hit with readers, who lapped up its richer content and vibrant layout, which is organised around readers’ needs and demands for weekend reading. The writing is brighter, headlines are more striking and the design style combines text, photos and graphics in a visually stunning way with the use of bold colours. There are more lifestyle, leisure and health features, as well as new sections, with each carrying a news-you-can-use anchor columns to help readers digest the news and information in a faster way.

The Sunday Times redesign was a winner. A snap poll found that more than eight in 10 readers liked the new version and one-third said they spent more time reading it. Sales went up by 8,000 copies weekly.

The successful Sunday Times revamp paved the way for a total overhaul of its mothership, The Straits Times, which was relaunched on 19 October 2004.

**The Business Times**

- On 1 September 2004, The Business Times took on a brand new look, surprising readers with a refreshing blue masthead and a meatier paper with extra sections.

In the most radical makeover since 1995, the new features in the redesigned business daily include bigger fonts, a friendlier layout, more features and specialty pages such as Economy Watch, a daily look at the state of the Singapore economy; Malaysian and regional pages and Views from the Top, where CEOs give their views on current issues.

**The sunnier New Paper on Sunday**

- On 1 August 2004, the Sunday edition of The New Paper emerged with a classy new look, giving readers even more reason to lay their hands on the bestselling weekend tabloid.

Simple and elegant in design with impactful pictures, the extras in the redesigned New Paper on Sunday, which was launched in 1999, include a forum for readers to engage in sms and mms, a driving column for women, a Hey! Section that invites well-known personalities to give views on movies and TV shows.

Readers particularly like the feel-good style of a weekend magazine.

**Berita Minggu**

- On 15 August 2004, Berita Minggu, the Sunday edition of Berita Harian, a Malay language daily, was relaunched, with livelier content, bigger pictures and graphics. It also offers more features, covering economic and money matters, a main feature called Focus BM, hot topics, lifestyle, entertainment and sports. Its weekday edition will be revamped in 2005.

**Chinese Newspapers**

**Shin Min Daily News**

- On 18 March 2004, Chinese evening daily Shin Min Daily News hit newsstands with a brand new look, with full colour in all its news pages and additional special features. This followed its very successful introduction of four new colour pages in September 2002.

Positive feedback from readers and advertisers to the change in 2002 spurred the paper on to a major facelift. The new Shin Min now gives readers deeper insights into breaking news and updates readers on trends, the hottest entertainment and sports news.

## Lianhe Zaobao

- On 21 February 2004, SPH's flagship Chinese daily Lianhe Zaobao launched Popcorn, a new education section in zbNOW, to reach out to younger readers. The education pages feature topics of concern and interest to teens in a fun and lively style on every Wednesday.
- On August 8, 2004, Lianhe Zaobao on Sunday unveiled its new sleek look. Brighter and more vibrant, it offers readers loads of interesting features and a more leisurely read for the whole family. Stories are written in a lighter vein to engage younger readers while the design is attractive and magazine-ish. The main news section remains a broadsheet but the lifestyle section comes in a tabloid, giving readers more appealing lifestyle and fun topics.

## REGIONAL EXPANSION – SPH MAGAZINES

Financial Year 2004 marked a major milestone for SPH Magazines as it embarked on a regional expansion drive.

In a spate of months from October 2003 to May 2004, SPH Magazines established its premier Her World brand in the region. In October 2003, it launched the revamped issue of Her World Malaysia, a joint venture with Berita Publishing Sdn Bhd. In March 2004, in a joint venture with GMM Media Co., Her World Thailand made its debut. Two months later, 你 – Her World, the first Chinese-language edition of the magazine, made its entry into China. Her World Indonesia was launched in October 2000 under the banner of licence partner PT. Media Ikrar Abadi.

Her World in Singapore continued to dazzle with its revamp in October 2003 and its bumper issues packaged with attractive gifts in December 2003 and July 2004. In Singapore, standalone title Her World Body was launched in November 2003, and the second issue was published in May 2004.

One of the jewels in the crown of achievement for SPH Magazines was its acquisition of the media assets of the Blu Inc Group, including all its magazine titles, among which are the popular Female and Nuyou. The group publishes a total of 40 in-house and contract titles. The acquisition of the Blu Inc Group is part of SPH Magazines' strategy to strengthen its position in the magazine business here and in the region.

SPH Magazines continued to enlarge its stable of lifestyle publications with the launch in July 2004 of the Singapore version of Shape, the top US health and fitness magazine for women, under the licence of Weider Publications. This was SPH Magazines' first international licensing arrangement.

Among the non-women's titles, SPH Magazines launched the Singapore edition of Maxim in September 2004. It is the largest men's lifestyle title in the US, which sells four million copies monthly and has 23 editions in 33 countries. Young Parents won three top international media awards – a gold at IFRA 2004 and a silver at SOPA 2004 for design and a SOPA 2004 certificate for editorial excellence. The Young Parents Pre-school Guide was launched in October 2003 and Young Parents Baby made its debut in August 2004 as a biannual publication new and first-time parents.

SPH Magazines' stable of titles today stands at 63 in-house and contract titles, including those acquired under the Blu Inc Group.

## BUMPER HAUL OF AWARDS AND HONOURS

SPH continued its winning streak in the last financial year, reaping a bumper crop of top international and local awards for newspaper excellence, broadcasting, advertising, corporate governance and supporting the arts in Singapore. And the awards went to:

### Newspapers and Magazines

- In September 2003, four SPH journalists clinched the top Investors' Choice Awards for financial journalism given by the Securities Investors Association of Singapore (Sias). They are: Business Times' Executive Money Editor Genevieve Cua, named Best Financial Journalist of the Year, senior correspondent Christopher Tan of The Straits Times, who won the Best Financial Story of the Year award, Straits Times correspondent Lorna Tan, given a special award, and Lianhe Zaobao's Ang Li Ching, given The Rising Star Award.
- In December 2003, two SPH journalists – Zaobao photographer Bob Lee and Streets photojournalist Edwin Koo – clinched the top two prizes in one of the categories in the ClickArt World Photojournalist Meet 2003.
- In March 2004, The Sunday Times won two international design awards, putting it in the league of the world's best-designed newspapers. The paper, which shed its old image for a bold new look and livelier, more colourful design in September 2003, bagged the excellence awards given out by the prestigious Society for News Design, based in the US. Straits Times photographer Desmond Foo also received an excellence award for photography from the society.
- In June 2004, SPH newspapers swept nine awards – in reporting, photography and design – in a publishing competition organised by the Society of Publishers in Asia (Sopa). The Straits Times grabbed six top awards for business reporting, news photography, feature photography, and newspaper design in the local-newspaper and magazines category. It took the second prize for reporting and special editions. The Sunday Times, which was redesigned in September 2003, won the top prize for newspaper design.

- In July 2004, SPH emerged a big winner at the annual IFRA's Publish Asia Media Awards, walking away with six awards for best in printing, infographics and design.

In the Best in Print category for newspaper with double width, The Straits Times took the silver award, while its Chinese broadsheet Lianhe Zaobao received a bronze. ST also clinched the gold and bronze awards for the Best in Newspaper Infographics while The Sunday Times won gold for the Best in Newspaper Design.

Young Parents, published by SPH Magazines, beat top magazines in the region to win the gold award for Best in Magazine Design.

Publish Asia Media Awards is an annual event organised by IFRA, the world's leading organisation for the newspaper and media publishing industry.

### Advertising

- In September 2003, SPH's Product Development and Branding team won certificates for being finalists in The New York Festivals' International Design & Print Advertising Competition, a prestigious international competition that honours the best work in communications and media, including TV and cinema advertising, TV programming and promotion and interactive multimedia.
- In November 2003, SPH's Classified Advertisements Telephone Sales (Cats) division took the top spot in the Call Centre of the Year awards, organised by the Call Centre Council of Singapore. The awards honour organisations and individuals for excellent customer service, high levels of productivity, operational efficiency and profitability.
- In November 2003, SPH received the first patron award given by the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Singapore (4AS) for making a significant contribution to the local advertising and marketing communications industry.

**TV accolades**

- Despite being a relatively newcomer to the TV scene, SPH MediaWorks' two TV channels punched above their weight in the region.
- In December 2003, Channel i News was voted the Best General News Programme at the 8th Asian Television Awards, beating leading contenders CNN International's News Biz Today and Star News Asia. Channel U's variety show, Top 10, won Best Entertainment Programme, while its host, Kym Ng, was named Best Entertainment Presenter. It also won Best Art Direction for drama serial, The Romance Of The Book, and Sword. Channel U was also runner-up in the Terrestrial Channel of the Year category.
- In December 2003, MediaWorks again won awards at the annual Promax and BDA Asia 2003. It struck gold in the News and Current Affairs Promo category for a Channel i News trailer and another for Channel U's current affairs programme Sense Of Being. A silver went to the Best Movie Promo for the show, Alive.
- In June 2004, for its third birthday, MediaWorks won a gold and two silvers at the International Promax & BDA Awards presented in New York, taking its total haul of international awards since its launch in 2001 to 48.

**Corporate Governance**

- In January 2004, SPH came in second in a survey by Asian finance magazine, The Asset, for financial transparency and good corporate governance. The rating is the highest for a non government-linked company, up from its No. 3 slot the previous year.
- In April 2004, SPH was named The Company Most Committed to Dividend Policy by Hongkong-based FinanceAsia magazine.

**The Arts**

- In September 2004, SPH received the Distinguished Patron of the Arts award from the National Arts Council for the 12th year running, for its continuing strong support to promote the arts in Singapore.

**GROWING YOUNG READERS**

With sagging newspaper readership worldwide, especially among the younger population, SPH newspapers have spared no efforts in reaching out to younger readers and meeting their expectations and needs.

Throughout the year, they relentlessly kept up with the young, making sure that their products appeal to them, constantly improving their content and design to stay relevant, with stories written in a lighter, livelier, fun and entertaining style. Some newspapers added youth sections and education pages to give more value to younger readers.

And they didn't just stop at that. Some of the mainstream newspapers went directly to schools to engage and connect with the students through various initiatives to cultivate the newspaper reading habit in them.

Highlights of some of these activities by the four major newspapers in SPH to grow younger readers.

**Straits Times Media Club**

Launched in August 2003 to promote students' knowledge of current affairs and to improve their writing skills, 49 secondary schools are now members of this club, with 38 of them joining during the year under review.

Schools just need to subscribe to 500 or more copies of The Straits Times a week to become a member. They can also invite ST editors and journalists to give talks on topical issues to their students, and during the school holidays, students can attend workshops at SPH.

Response from schools has been overwhelming. In less than a month, 27 schools signed up, raising weekly circulation of the ST by 20,000. Sales have since gone up to 35,500 now. At the height, 47 schools participated in the scheme with 37,000 copies of Straits Times subscribed.

Besides these efforts, The Straits Times is planning to organise a National Schools Newspaper of the Year competition and it is beefing up its education section every Monday.

**Simpler Chinese for young readers**

Readership for Chinese newspapers has eroded over the years, partly because many students are not as proficient in the Chinese language. Realising this trend many years ago, the Chinese dailies in SPH started taking proactive steps to halt

the shrinking readership and grow new readers.

Besides stepping up efforts to promote its Friday Weekly for secondary school students and Thumbs Up for primary pupils, SPH's Chinese flagship daily, Lianhe Zaobao, has also made its content more digestible to younger readers.

In January 2004, Lianhe Zaobao launched its Popcorn pages to make its coverage relevant to young readers, with simplicity as the key. The weekly Wednesday pages have hit off well with students, helping to push Zaobao sales to more than 54 schools by 29,000 copies a week. Zaobao also keeps in close touch with schools through its school sports correspondents and student correspondents clubs.

The two student weeklies also pitch their articles at the students levels, with headings in Hanyu Pinyin and a mini glossary in English for uncommon Chinese phrases on each page. Both weeklies also have a newspaper in education programme which teachers could use as supplementary teaching materials.

Friday Weekly also organises a slew of regular club events and helps schools to produce students newsletters.

**Malay and Tamil papers keep pulse on the young**

In August 2003, Berita Harian, the Malay language paper, introduced a new and more interactive page, called Expressi, for youths to express themselves on any issues close to their hearts, while Tamil Murasu carries an eight-page section called Manavar Murasu (Students' Murasu), with contributions from students and teenagers. TM also runs a youth page, called Youth Murasu, every Tuesday and reaches out to Indian students through activities such as workshops to prepare students for exams and football tournaments.

**Educational visits for students to SPH facilities**

At the Group level, SPH also conducts tours for students to its English and Chinese newsrooms, its TV news studio at News Centre, Toa Payoh North, to give them an insight into how newspapers operate and how TV news bulletins are produced.

SPH is also a partner of the Ministry of Education's Learning Journey Programme, which gives students a learning experience outside the classroom. Last year, a total of 43 groups or 1,720 students visited the SPH's printing plants at Print Centre in Jurong, to learn more about the media group's state-of-the-art printing facilities.

Daily Average Circulation for 2004

