

tiso blackstar group.

# Shaking it up: matrix teams

Lisa MacLeod

Head of Digital, Tiso Blackstar

Newsroom Summit, Oslo

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## LISA MACLEOD | INTRODUCTION

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- Head of Digital at Tiso Blackstar Group
- Running digital strategy and management
- Former General Manager Digital Publishing at 24.com / Media 24
- Head of Operations FT.com, Managing Editor at the Financial Times in London
- Focused on newsroom integration and change management
- Board member of the World Editors Forum
- Vice President WAN-IFRA
- BA Honours in Anthropology

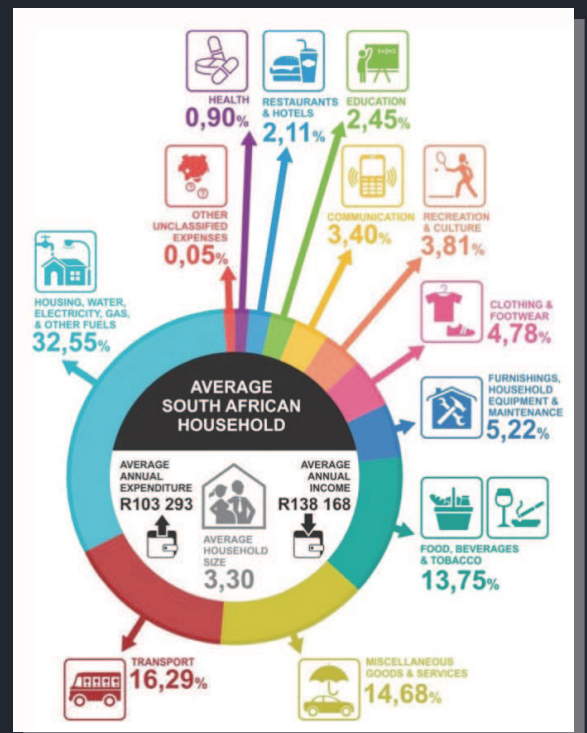




# SOUTH AFRICA | CONTEXT

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- Newspaper declining: dailies 16% year on year decline
- High penetration of mobile phones but smartphone does not mean internet access is a given
- Android far outweighs IOS
- Data costs are enormously high: 6 x higher than Egypt - spectrum and infrastructure, lack of competition
- South Africans spend more on communication than on health or on education





# TISO BLACKSTAR | INTRODUCTION

- Publish 8 newspapers, magazines, 14 websites, radio stations throughout Africa (Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria), run a film and music distribution business and an events company
- Publishing BusinessLIVE, Business Day, Financial Mail, TimesLIVE, SowetanLIVE, Dispatch Live, Herald LIVE
- Big investment in alternative revenue streams: tech, events etc
- Work hard to optimise print business
- Embarking on a complete overhaul of workflows and processes to favour a digital-first environment in all newsrooms: Innovation Media







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# ORGANISATION | NEW NEWSROOM

- Aim: to change our newsrooms to become digital facing and responsive to audience needs, rather than medium-driven
- Note: already relocated to a new building with a massive open plan newsroom
- Also running an internal wire to foster collaboration between 8 newsrooms: 200+ stories a day filed for group use
- Involves three pillars:
  1. New newsroom tech including a new custom built CMS called CosMoS and an upgraded print system (Good News 4 / Tera)
  2. Changes to workflows. Earlier starts. Filing for web. Understanding the value of online content for subscribers. Collaboration. Sharing.
  3. Improving print processes and efficiencies to ensure sustainability



# STRATEGY | 2014 - 2017

## Areas of focus:

- Product, audience development and multimedia

## Strategy:

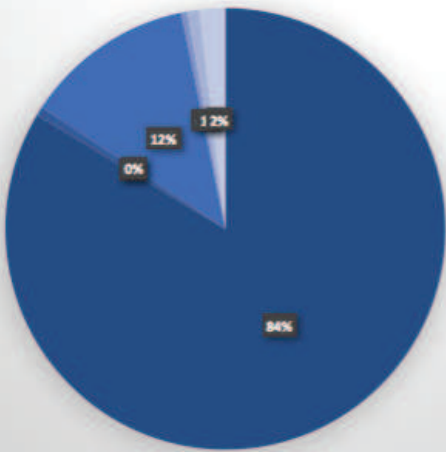
- To fix broken and unstable **TECH**, and build solid, scalable platforms for the digital business (replatformed 12 sites)
- To entrench strong **PRINT** brands online with excellent journalism from papers starting life digitally
- To **CONSOLIDATE** and make digital a sustainable business with growing revenue: focus on paid content
- To **DIVERSIFY** revenue as much as possible: can't stand still!



## STRATEGY | 2018 - 2019

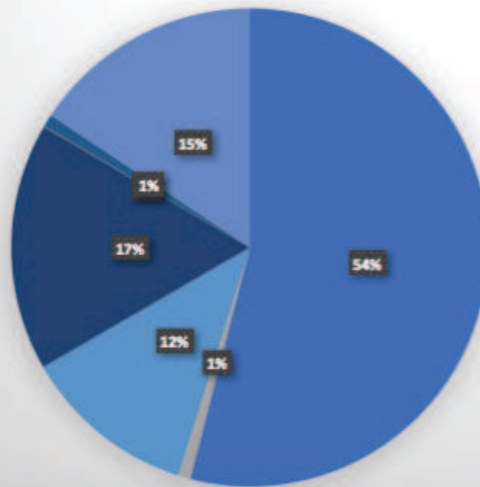
- 1. Audience first: bring together the right **PEOPLE** to gather data and intelligence on all users of our brands and channels and understand their movements, needs and likes. Build the richest audience data in SA
- 2. Improve **PROCESSES** and skills across departments (ads, circ, product and editorial) to manage, service, communicate with and monetise readers wherever we find them
- 3. Build new **PRODUCTS** based on audience intelligence and market demand, and refine existing products to enhance engagement and revenue
- 4. Measure our **PERFORMANCE**: defined as growing audiences, raising revenue, improving retention + engagement.

DIGITAL REVENUE MIX 2017



- DIGITAL AD REVENUE
- DIGITAL AD REVENUE - REV SHARE
- NATIVE DIGITAL AD REVENUE
- PROGRAMMATIC REVENUE
- DIGITAL REVENUE - MOBILE
- MULTIMEDIA REVENUE
- CIRCULATION REVENUE

DIGITAL REVENUE MIX 2018



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**Audience  
Development**

**Product  
Development**

**Editorial**

**Sales**

**Circulation**

**Marketing  
and Research**

**Matrix team cuts across  
corporate structures**

## MATRIX TEAM | WHAT IS IT?

- Definition: the practice of managing individuals with more than one reporting line (in a matrix organisation structure),
- Also commonly used to describe managing cross-functional, cross business group teams.
- Divisional managers are responsible for more than one area and employees report to both their immediate manager and a cross-function leader on certain project streams.
- Agile, highly specialised project teams can be brought together to maximise quality and revenue on products
- Difficulty: getting time from people, reporting lines blurred, good for drivers, not good for passengers

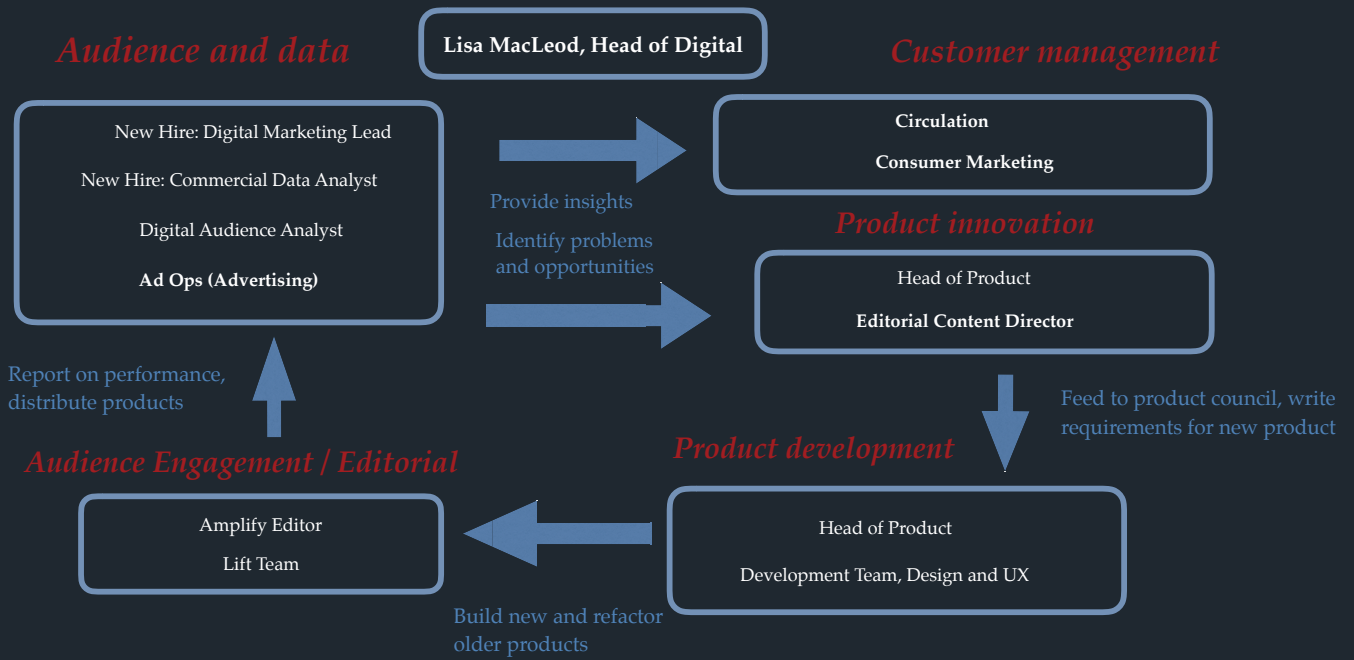
# ORGANISATION | MATRIX TEAMS

- Aim: to cut across silos and work more effectively on revenue-bearing projects
- Selection of staff from different departments
- Teams focused on reader revenue, subscriptions, native advertising, and alternate revenue
- Very new: looks promising

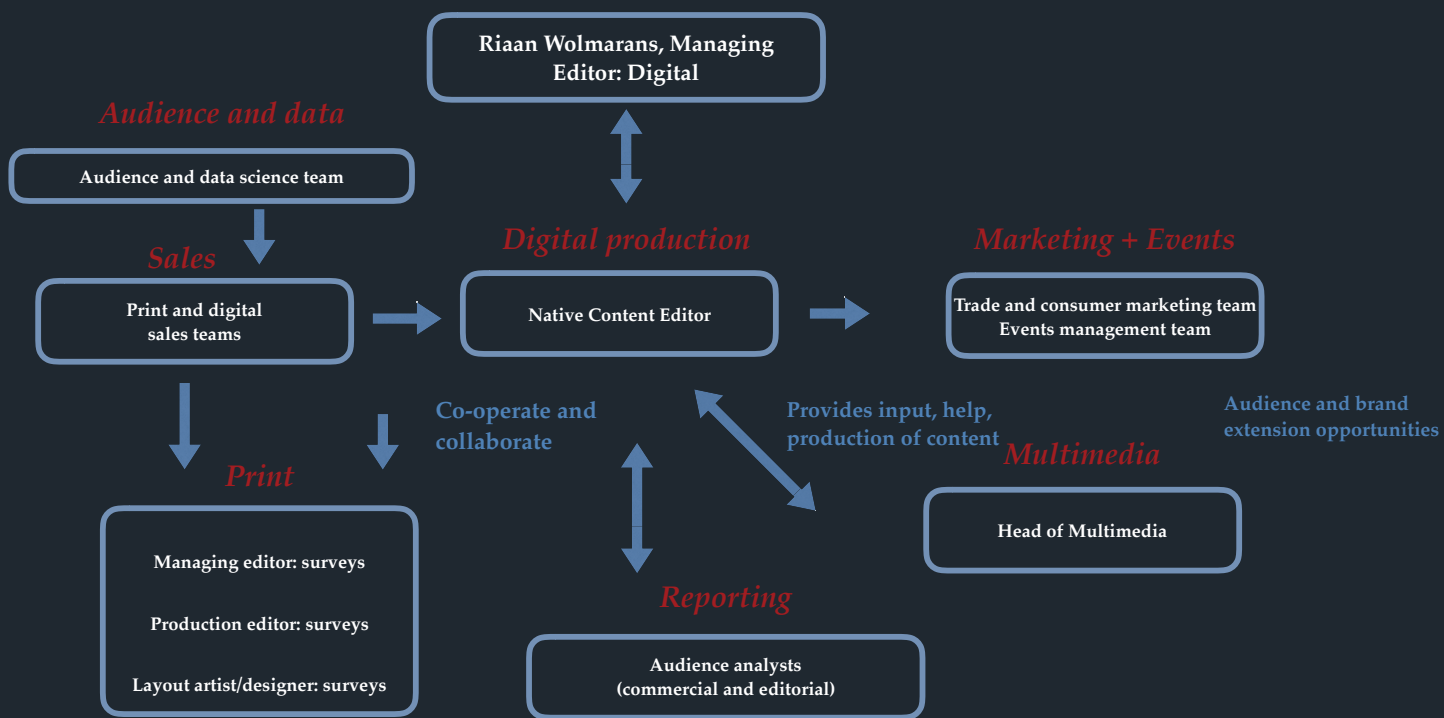




# AN EXAMPLE | READER REVENUE



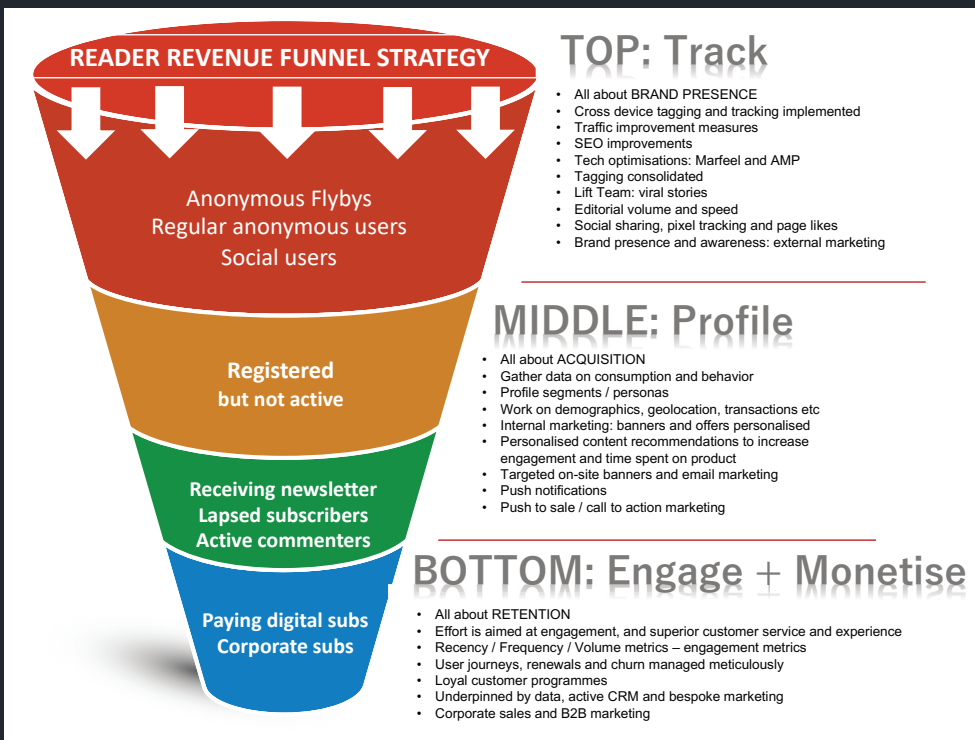
# AN EXAMPLE | NATIVE REVENUE





# REVENUE | FOCUS ON THE FUNNEL

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# REVENUE | COVER PRICE

- Paid content is primary focus
- 3 operational paywalls
- All have different business models
- One is defensive (protect print revenues) - Sunday Times
- One is niche business content (high end readers) - BusinessLIVE
- One is a digital daily edition (new concept, print replacement for closed newspaper The Times) - Times Select
- Supported by new data team





## MATRIX TEAM | IN PRACTICE

- Necessity is the mother of invention (resource constraints)
- Not rocket science: just people pulling together in a different way for a specific outcome - Gallup research 84% of US employees “matrixed” in some way
- All doing their normal jobs: what has changed is the end-goal
- Trying to focus on wealth creation rather than cost-cutting
- Teams have a clear revenue goal, or goals that bring revenue
- Monthly reporting to the senior management committee
- Changed meeting structure across the company: more focused
- Project-focused. Introducing Agile as a concept
- Example: Project Reclaim - get back missing subs

# FINISH

MacLeodL@tisoblackstar.co.za  
@lisataljard