

New monetisation models for media are needed

 By [Louise Burgers](#)

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New monetisation models for media need to be found, particularly in Africa, to ensure an independent, professional media flourishes. Journalists also need to be taught how to be entrepreneurs so they can contribute to the survival of the media, said Nicolas Pompigne-Mognard, founder and chairman of the APO Group.



Nicolas Pompigne-Mognard.

The APO Group is the leading Pan-African communications consultancy and press release distribution service in Africa and the Middle East. Pompigne-Mognard is a Franco-Gabonese self-made entrepreneur, who has become a major influencer on the global stage in promoting the renaissance story of an 'Africa Rising' and encouraging investment on the continent through the work that APO Group does in media relations.

As a former journalist, he is a passionate supporter of journalism and a free press on the African continent, investing in journalism through various awards and funding opportunities for African journalists to attend international conferences and events, both in Africa and globally.

His personal inspiration for building the company came from the "unfair" way that Africa was portrayed in the international media. He wanted to change the narrative on Africa which was that of the "hopeless" continent. At a global level, the volume and reach of media coverage was mainly produced by non-African media. Africa had limited voices and the share of voice was unequal.

He explained: “I knew there was good news in Africa. The question was, ‘how do you make sure the voice of the continent is being heard outside of the continent?’ That was a problem I wanted to fix.”

As chairman of the APO Group, having appointed CEO Lionel Reina in 2018, Pompigne-Mognard makes the time to travel and speak to journalists all over the African continent, following his personal passion project of uplifting professional journalism on the continent.

“Young journalists are the future of journalism in Africa. I tell them, ‘you do have a specific responsibility: you have the power and duty to participate in the education of the population, making sure there is good governance, making governments accountable...’

“The role of media everywhere in the world is important and the role of African media in the promotion of good governance is crucial. I tell them, ‘the job you choose for your future comes with responsibility. You need to be prepared for that.’

“I’m trying to share my experience and point out challenges they will face in the future. Young people have the power to change things.”

Entrepreneurship

Pompigne-Mognard also reiterated that journalists need to know how to become entrepreneurs. He acknowledged that outside of business schools – and it’s true of most professions, not just media – that no one is trained in business or taught how to be an entrepreneur.

“That is the very reason why that the first thing you need to understand is that you can also become an entrepreneur. I’m demystifying it. Many entrepreneurs have had no choice, they needed to feed their family. Many successful entrepreneurs have had a tough journey. That is very important to get across.

“As a journalist you are in an exceptional position to create a company and have access to top business leaders, to a volume of information. You can ask all the questions you want; you can educate yourself.

“One of the main skills assets that a journalist must have is curiosity. If you are curious, then journalism is the perfect work for you. On that respect, you are very lucky. Journalists work on many things – to spend time asking questions to top people is a privilege. Connecting with other people is our wealth. Journalists have the legitimacy to ensure you get an answer. You can become a specialist too.”

Pompigne-Mognard believes that anyone can become an entrepreneur; and that journalists are in the best position to gather enough data to become an entrepreneur. In most journalism schools the African youth studying to be journalists are not told that they can also be independent and build a brand that will shape the media landscape, he said.

“It is not mandatory to become an employee. It is untrue that entrepreneurs are only born, not created.”

Gender empowerment

Rewarding journalists writing across multiple industry sectors in Africa, is an important part of promoting professional journalism across the African continent. APO Group's latest media award sponsorship was the creation of a new Women in Media Award to assist in promoting gender empowerment in Africa.

"The APO Women in Media Award is about rewarding women journalists writing about women in Africa. How do you push gender empowerment through the media? By making sure there are more stories about successful women. We need to showcase and give visibility to gender empowerment issues. My message to the women journalist, is that they should search for those stories. They are out there and it needs to be part of media strategy," urged Pompigne-Mognard.

Challenges

As part of the training he is doing for journalists in Africa, Pompigne-Mognard outlines the biggest challenges the African media landscape is currently facing:

- **Content:** Affluent middle-class populations in Africa are starting to consume international media, which could be to the detriment of local media. The trend is there – from Senegal to Zambia, to Ethiopia, to South Africa. The African audience for international media is growing. More and more multinational companies are investing in Africa and expanding across the continent. They are also investing more on public relations. "Multinational companies are appointing CEOs for Africa with specific budgets and objectives. So, they are coming with advertising and PR budgets, but they could be spending it on international media if the trend continues. That iceberg is right ahead." African media need to find solutions to attract that kind of spend as well, he said.
- **Colonisation:** Pompigne-Mognard explains that if this advertising money goes to the international media only, African media will become poorer, some will disappear and the overall African media landscape will be much weaker. And if the international media become the most powerful voice about Africa, then most Africans will get their information about Africa from non-African media. "This is colonisation of the worst kind: of the mind. I am trying to encourage young journalists to also think like entrepreneurs and come up with solutions. They will be the ones that will be affected. Why should we expect young people full of hope, born with the new technology, to only have in their future the idea that they will join an existing media model? We need new models," he added.

Pompigne-Mognard believes the traditional media models are here to stay a little longer in Africa, but that new models for media, new monetisation models, need to be established. "Even with AI, even with machine learning, I don't see anything that will affect the way people consume media. Maybe we won't have a device like a mobile phone one day, maybe it will be something else... people will still want news."

ABOUT LOUISE BURGERS

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.

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