

THE MOST WIDELY READ NEWSPAPER

# PUNCH

## MARKET

The history of the Nigerian print media dates back to the 1840s when European missionaries established community newspapers to propagate Christianity. The first Nigerian-owned paper was The West African Pilot, founded by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1937. The Pilot was in the forefront of the Nationalist Movement protesting against British colonial rule. The success of The Pilot and its acceptance by Nigerians led to the establishment of other Nigerian-owned papers, particularly in the 1960s. One of these was the Kaduna-based New Nigerian Newspapers published by Gaskiya Corporation.

With adult literacy at 68% as at July 2011, (source: CIA World Factbook), Nigeria is a potentially huge market for newspapers. Nonetheless, the print media market in Nigeria is highly competitive and only the most focused and organized newspapers can stay afloat. Not only do the papers need to compete with other papers, they also have to contend with alternative sources of information such as online news sites as well as the broadcast media.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Punch is rated as the highest-selling Nigerian newspaper and the paper strives hard to retain this coveted title in what is a very competitive and challenging business environment.

Punch has been Newspaper of the Year a number of times, the most recent being in December 2006 at the DAME award in Lagos. At the event, Punch titles won seven awards, leaving seven other newspapers and magazines to share the remaining eight.

Awards won include, 'Best Designed Newspaper for the 4th year running', 'Best Editor', 'Best Informed Commentary', 'Press Reporter of the Year' and 'Action Photography of the Year' and 'Editorial Cartooning of the Year'.

## HISTORY

Punch newspaper was founded by two friends, James Aboderin, an accountant and Sam Amuka, a columnist and editor with The Daily Times. Punch (Nigeria) Limited was registered on August 8, 1970 and the group's very first publication, Happy Home, edited by Bunmi Sofola, a glossy family magazine debuted in 1971. Next to hit the news-stands was The Sunday Punch which came out on March 18 1973. Edited by Ajibade Fashina-Thomas, the newspaper was designed to combine "serious" reporting with popular news and entertainment. The Daily Punch followed on November 1, 1976. Dubbed "the lively paper for lively minds", the Daily Punch was meant to fill the gap for friendly, easy-to-read news reporting left by the more established Nigerian newspapers. Its pioneer editor was Dayo Wright.

During the last days of Nigeria's Second Republic, the paper appeared to break away from its usual neutral stance to publish some scathing editorials criticizing the government. On April 29, 1990, a week after an attempted coup d'état against the Nigerian government, the company was shut down for one month and the Deputy Editor, Chris Mammah was detained for 54 days.

Again, in July 1993, the Nigerian government shut the company's presses and banned all its publications. The closure followed the political crisis caused by the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. The paper was allowed to re-commence operations on November 17. Barely a year after that, in July 1994 the paper was closed down again. This time however, some of its publications were proscribed and the editor, Bola Bolawole, was detained for three days in his office.

## PRODUCT

Punch, owned by Punch Nigeria Limited, has a daily circulation of 150,000 copies and is rated as Nigeria's Number One Daily. Punch titles include Daily Punch, Saturday Punch and Sunday Punch.

Punch prides itself on promoting and upholding the values of democracy and free enterprise in Nigeria as well as through maintaining high-quality news reporting. The paper covers local and international news, entertainment, politics, sports and much more. The paper's impact on Nigerian political, social and cultural life cannot be overstated.

Authoritative and up-to-the-minute news stories by some of the best reporters in the industry, account largely for the Punch's leadership position in the market. The stories are always incisive, deep, well researched, balanced, yet breezy and easy to understand.

The slick packaging of Punch publications has obviously helped them to stay ahead of their competitors. Quality colours on quality newsprints and good design make the newspapers attractive.

The online edition of the Punch, available on [www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com), is one of the most visited newspaper sites, especially among Nigerians who live abroad.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In March 2009, Punch launched Mobile Punch, a service which allows subscribers to read the full text of the newspaper on their mobile phones. Mobile Punch delivers the news to Punch readers with all the ease, flexibility and convenience that a mobile phone can provide. While some newspapers are to be had for free online, Mobile Punch is presented in a user-friendly, easily readable format. The Mobile Punch package includes the e-paper, which is the complete digital version of the print edition, which had been free to subscribers for two years.

Punch has consistently proved its commitment to excellence in the practice of journalism and the paper has won recognition for its work both at home and overseas. In November 2010, Punch won the hotly contested Nigeria Media Merit Awards Newspaper of the Year honour in Lagos. This was, in fact, the second time within one month the paper was recognized. Earlier that month, the paper had received the Newspaper of the Year recognition at the 18th Diamond Awards for Media Excellence. At the highly prestigious award event, Punch swept the board with a total of seven awards, including the Education Reporter and Insurance Reporter of the Year trophies.

As Nigeria's best loved newspaper brand, the Punch is always working to grow and develop. In June 2011, the paper moved to its new, purpose-built office in Ogun State (?). The move marked the beginning of a new era for the newspaper and a demonstration of its determination to set the standard for the media business both in Nigeria and West Africa. The new HQ, named PUNCH Place, is a huge complex, occupying an area the size of 16 standard football pitches, thus making it the largest media premises in the country. All editorial, production and administrative functions of the newspaper will be housed within the multiplex. Earlier that month, the paper had quietly unveiled its newly-installed Goss Universal 75 printing press as well as its highly-advanced CTP (Computer-to-Plate) machine for the pre-press department. Running at full capacity, the Nine-Tower Goss Universal 75 press can produce 75,000 newspaper copies per hour and the AGFA Polaris XEV CTP machine, the first in West Africa, can produce 120 sheets of newsprint per hour. A few months later, in November 2011, (confirm date) at the 5th edition of the Jam Feast, a contest organized by the Lagos State Ministry of Education for pupils, The Punch was named Best Nigerian Newspaper in Education, Health and Youth Empowerment coverage.

## PROMOTION

The Punch brand is promoted via a number of routes – radio jingles, TV commercials as well as print advertising both in its own titles and in other papers. In fact, the successful launch of the Punch website in 2009 (?) can be attributed largely to the intensive pre-launch advertising campaign upon which the paper embarked.

Another major aspect of Punch's promotional strategy is through Corporate Social Responsibility. In 2008, (?) the Paper donated a substantial sum to the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) towards the upgrade of its laboratory facilities. Recently also, 10 schools within the Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State received funds from the paper towards the renovation and equipping of modern classroom facilities.





AS THE IKEMBA GOES HOME... **EAGLES' NATIONS CUP WIN OVER CAMEROON ENDED QUARREL BETWEEN OBJ AND WIFE** — Christian Chukwu, Eagles' coach @Tunisia 2004

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...EX-BAYELSA GOV CHARGED WITH MONEY LAUNDERING, ADVANCE FEE FRAUD

**I'M DIFFERENT OFF-SCREEN** —INI EDO Page 22



#### BRAND VALUES

The Punch has long enjoyed a reputation as one of Nigeria's foremost newspaper brands. Over the years, Punch has fought hard to be seen as the most credible source of balanced information in Nigeria, as well as the benchmark against which all other Nigerian newspapers are to be judged.

The Punch brand's stated mission is "to promote and defend the values of democracy and free enterprise, to foster the principle of equal opportunities for all" and the paper has always striven to remain true to this.

Punch has impacted positively on Nigerian journalism and made invaluable contributions to the promotion of democratic values in the Nigerian state. The paper deliberately adopts a breezy, informal approach to news reporting, combining stories on daily social and cultural life in Nigeria with incisive political news.

#### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT PUNCH

- On average, no less than 2,420,003 people read Punch online every month.
- Punch is available online on two sites – www.punchng.com and www.punchontheweb.com.
- In June 2011, Punch Senior Correspondent, Miss Toyosi Ogunseye, won the MSD Health and Medical Award at the CNN African Journalists Awards in Sandton, South Africa for her story titled, "LUTH's Ransome-Kuti Children's Centre: Cauldron where two babies die weekly".
- PUNCH won the DAME Award for Best Designed Newspaper of the Year in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.
- In 2010, Nigeria's then Minister of Information and Communication, Professor Dora Akunyili described Punch as "one of the torchbearers of journalism in Nigeria," and "a paper that has become a super brand".