

What's in a (cross)word?

 By [Werner Theron](#)

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Newspaper readers don't like change. Especially if that change means the loss of their beloved crossword.



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This, the staff at The *Peterborough Examiner*, a local newspaper in Peterborough (a city on the Otonabee River in Central Ontario, Canada), recently concluded when the regular crossword fell away after the newspaper changed ownership.

Since, they have been hard at work to please their readers with new crosswords, but it transpired that readers who have grown accustomed to certain content, level of difficulty and wording weren't open for new ideas. So much so that the newspaper inevitably lost some of their loyal subscribers!

It seems that people value their newspaper for much more than just the daily news, believes managing editor Kennedy Gordon. Readers look forward to their daily crossword and if it's not to their liking, they make their voices heard.

After many experiments, the paper eventually decided to publish not one, but two crosswords in an effort to keep everyone happy.

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And the lesson learned? To listen to your audience, especially those that have been loyal to your product for many years, according to Gordon.

When companies ignore their audience they're not only doing them a disservice but also show disrespect.

In an era where two-way communication has become the norm, can any business any longer afford not to listen to what their customers have to say?

Did you know?

Did you know that *The New York Times* crossword is so popular, that it is even available on an app for subscribers? The app has over 400,000 subscribers who pay more than R100 per month for full access.

ABOUT WERNER THERON

Werner Theron has held several senior positions in the media and marketing departments of corporate companies, including Armscor, Sasol, Old Mutual and McCarthy Motor Holdings (now Bidvest Automotive). Before starting The Hothouse Communications 19 years ago, he was the head of a department at an advertising agency. He is presently a doctoral candidate at North-West University with a research focus on brand journalism and the relation to marketing and corporate communication.

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