

Abstract. The reading and buying patterns of book lovers have changed dramatically in the past few decades. The consequences of a shrinking reading market are far-reaching. Stiff(er) competition not only influences the profitability of the industry, but also places increasing pressure on long-term prospects of sustainable growth. Radical restructuring processes that characterise publishing houses across a broad spectrum are symptomatic of the structural changes in the environment that require adaptation - a dangerous, even menacing situation. What would the broader social and cultural implications be for society if the civilising effect of books were to fall away or be restricted to an inferior role by entertainment that is aimed solely at immediate gratification? This article aims – by way of an analysis of the Dutch industry - to identify publishing strategies that could find possible application in the South African industry to ensure sustainable growth.