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Time Inc. to Sell Direct Sales Business

Mega publisher puts Southern Living at Home on the block.

By Jason Fell

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Time Inc. announced late Wednesday that it has put direct sales business Southern Living at Home, part of its Southern Progress Corp. subsidiary, on the block.

According to Time Inc. executive vice president Sylvia Auton, who oversees the company's recently-formed lifestyle group, poor economic conditions "necessitated an evaluation of all of our publishing and commercial activities and where we put our investment dollars and focus.

"In these more demanding times," Auton continued, "we therefore decided to exit the direct selling business and concentrate on what we do best which is the creation and marketing of innovative market-leading print and digital brands."

"Southern Living at Home is a people-intensive direct marketing business that wasn't consistent with the parent company's focus on owned content," said [Michael Alcamo](#), president of media investment bankers **M.C. Alcamo & Co., Inc.** "As a start-up and brand extension it was a success, but as time goes on, every brand extension has to justify the management attention required to look after it."

Putting the direct sales business up for sale does not signal a more extensive sell-off of Southern Progress properties, including its magazines, a Time Inc. spokesperson told FOLIO:.

"The sale isn't being motivated by distress, because if there was corporate distress caused by problems with bank covenants, you would see a much, much larger transaction designed to address those kinds of larger problems," **Alcamo** said.

In November, Time Inc. folded Cottage Living, one of the magazines in its Southern Progress portfolio. About 40 jobs were lost as part of the shuttering.

A month earlier, Time Inc. underwent a massive restructuring that resulted in the termination of a reported 600 positions—including 30 at Southern Progress.

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