

Moscow Government in Talks to Buy Tabloid

By [The Moscow Times](#)

July 01, 2013

The  Moscow Times

The Moscow government wants to buy one of the country's largest tabloid newspapers Argumenty i Fakty from its current owner Promsvyazcapital bank, controlled by brothers Dmitry and Alexei Ananyev, Vedomosti reported Monday.

Alexander Gorbenko, Deputy Mayor for information policy, is holding talks with the owners of the tabloid, and the deal could be completed by August or September, sources close to the negotiations said.

The deal could be worth \$75-120 million and would represent a reasonably small figure for the city's administration, which has a budget of 11.83 billion rubles (\$360 million) for the development of media and advertising for 2013.

Argumenty i Fakty, published weekly, became one of the most popular Soviet newspapers during Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure with a circulation of over 33,5 million copies and made it

into the Guinness Book of Records.

Its current circulation is 400,000 copies in Moscow alone.

Gorbenko and Promsvyazcapital have declined to comment on the situation.

Vasily Gatov, a media researcher at RIA-Novosti, said — without going into specifics — that the publication's large readership could make it a valuable asset for acting Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin.

He said that the sale of Argumenty i Fakty would be a logical decision for the Ananyevs, because it is not a hugely profitable business, and they also own a real estate development business.

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