

# Investec gets an 'A' for helping to make a difference

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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The marketing gurus tell us that, as consumers drown in a tsunami of commercial messaging, they are going to want to connect (and therefore possibly do business with) those brands which genuinely try to make a difference to a community, a city or a country.

A lot of companies do spend fortunes on “corporate social investment” – some of it more successful than others, both in terms of doing good and in promoting the brand.

A company which has been putting its money where its marketing mouth is has been Investec, a major financial brand. It has been helping run a programme called “Promaths”, which helps take youngsters who are talented with numbers to the next level.

One of the initiative’s success stories is Sowetan-born Lindiwe Zondo, who achieved a perfect score on her matric certificate for mathematics and physical science – and has gone on to qualify as an engineer.

Investec’s new TV commercial about Zondo was conceived by Y&R South Africa and executed in black-and-white in true cinematic style by master director Keith Rose of Velocity Films. And, frankly, it is beautiful.

It is a tribute to the many, many people like Zondo, who have overcome tremendous odds faced by the disadvantaged growing up in poor townships. Dedication, commitment and discipline allowed her natural talent for the sciences to shine through, with a little help from Investec.

This is the sort of story we need to hear in this country today – a story of triumph and hope. Investec gets a double Orchid – for giving back to the country and for using it in a subtle and modest way to help burnish its brand.

It is no coincidence that a financial institution should also have talent with numbers – as well as discipline and commitment – if it is to get business.

Y&R’s concept and Rose’s brilliant bringing to life of the brief (yet again!) also richly deserve Orchids. View the ad embedded below:

Public relations, at its core, is the art of human relationships. If you have the sort of bubbly personality journalists cannot resist, you're always going to get your foot in the door. Such a person was Suzanne Weil, who died from cancer earlier this month.

Trained in the hot marketing crucible which was Sol Kerzner's marketing vision at Sun International, Suzy cut her teeth at Sun City and the Lost City, organising some of the best beauty pageants and other events this country has seen. She could sense a story almost as well as a journalist – and when she couldn't see an angle would often pick up the phone.

And when I heard that voice – “Brannewyn, doll!” – I knew I was about to be made an offer I couldn't refuse.

The acid test of a PR person – getting your clients media exposure – was one Suzy passed repeatedly, with flying colours. She also knew her own limitations – “listen, doll! I absolutely cannot write!” – and hired the experts when she needed them. I don't recall getting a grammatically garbled press release from her. She was larger-than-life, could be loud and pushy, but was good at what she did.

You will be missed, Suzy. If anyone in the PR business deserves an Orchid for a job well done, you do.

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## ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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