

Children grow up, but Plascon looks as good as ever



By [Brendan Seery](#)

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In this day and age of quick fixes, short attention spans and marketing clutter, old-fashioned relationships are still critical. And by relationships I don't mean "having a conversation" with your customers on social media.

I mean delivering a product or service which either lasts for years or is so good people come back for more.

While most of our modern technologies are throw away, or with built-in obsolescence, I believe more and more consumers will come to value long-lasting quality.

Growing up as I did in a family where money was always tight in the then sanction-squeezed Rhodesia, I grew to appreciate quality, how to look after things to make them last and, should they fail, how to fix them instead of throwing them away.

Apart from the fact I've been married for almost 32 years, as a consumer I've had a number of lasting relationships: my VW Jetta lasted me 26 years (and is still going strong in the hands of a cop at Fairland police station); we have banked with Nedbank since 1985; have a Defy deep freeze, which has been with us since 1985 (once repaired for lightning strike damage); a KIC fridge, which first saw the light of day in 1990; a bedroom suite from 1985; a dining room table, which was decidedly second-hand when my wife bought it at a pawnshop in Grahamstown (no, I don't know when that was...); and last, but not least a desktop Apple iMac, which I bought new in 2001 (true story – how many PC desktops are still around from that era?).

For that reason – and for the fact that I am getting older and perhaps more sentimental as time seems to speed up – I am drawn to ads which are all about the long haul.

The latest I have noticed has been around for about a year, but still makes a simple point well. It's for Plascon paint and it promises that this blue chip brand will still be doing its job on your walls after 15 years.



Screengrabs from the Plascon ad.

To illustrate the point, we see a family with their young son, as painters work behind them. We then see the life of that son – kiddies’ plays, the high school nerd, then the high school babe magnet, the one experimenting with his hair, the rebel, the member of the band... and, finally, the conservative, bookish-looking but ambitious student who is back home to study.

Lives may change radically and you may not recognise the child before you – but Plascon’s paint looks as good as it did 15 years ago. I defy any parent to look at this ad and not feel some sort of nostalgia. I wondered about our little blond boy who loved dinosaurs and “Ninja turtle crocildiles” and is now supervising a team of auditors on a job in Michigan for his Amsterdam-based company...

So, well done Plascon. You’ve always been one of the blue-chip paint brands and this ad merely cements that reputation. I reckon you’ll probably get another Orchid in 15 years...

In the business of newspapers, there is always tension between the journalists and the beancounters... although, surprisingly, there has been little around here which could be construed as attempts to compromise our editorial integrity. True story.

However, we’re always battling our money-grubbing colleagues who want to blur the line between advertising and editorial. Don’t get me wrong: I am not one of those who believe the two should be poles apart – correctly done, native advertising and advertorial can be both entertaining and informative while still doing a good job of selling the client’s product or service.

I am indebted to colleague Kevin McCallum’s Facebook post this week, reminding me that, across at Caxton, which publishes “knock-and-drop” community newspapers, the bean-counters took things to a new low last week in a shameless disregard for editorial integrity.

Across the various editions of the papers distributed across northern Joburg (including in the *Northcliff Melville Times* in my area), a McDonald’s sticker had been plastered right across the picture on the front page.

No kidding. I’m not aware of any other occasion in newspaper history where there’s been such blatant abuse of the medium by a proprietor.

How can you cover up the main image on the main page of a newspaper – one of its most attractive features – with an ad? It’s an insult not only to your journalists, it’s an insult to your readers, because you have just ruined a major front-page element.

Shame on you, Caxton. Stick this Onion somewhere.

And, one for you too, McDonald’s, for going along with it. Perhaps you thought it was clever and “disruptive” – that smart word used by all the marketing clevers these days. Did you think it might not have disrupted you from your annoyed potential customers?

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