

Business of death gets a moving spin... but North-West website doesn't walk the talk

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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It can't be easy sitting down to come up with an acceptable, non-offensive, advertising idea to promote a business whose stock in trade is, essentially, dead bodies.



Screen grabs from the ad.

You can focus on the costs of burial insurance, which is part of what the business offers, but this has been done before. You can show a grieving but cared-for family at a funeral (also done before).

Or you can do something completely different.

And that's what the et al Group (a creative agency) and Luma Animation did for funeral service and insurance mutual company Avbob, which this year celebrated its 100th year of existence.

It's certainly a left-field, but highly effective way of portraying – via beautiful vocal and visual metaphors – that Avbob has been around for a century. It is the sort of institution which will always be there with you, come rain or shine, growing as you do, but all the while providing shelter from the vicissitudes of life.

“ *The way et al and Luma chose to portray this message was through the lens of the baobab tree, one of the biggest and longest-living trees in Africa. We see it start out as a seed, growing into a sapling and then a sturdy tree and finally into a solid, massive anchor in the soil. All the while, it shelters creatures – from a beautiful sunbird to a tortoise and a squirrel. All find shelter under, on or in the accommodating old tree.* ”

The amazing computer-generated images are accompanied by moving words, read out in the form of a poem – something the producers tell me owes its inspiration to Avbob’s Poetry Project.

It is an elegant concept, brilliantly executed. Have a look at this and tell me the animation wizards in this country have to step aside for anyone else in the world...

It’s also sweet, and peaceful and, at times like these, that helps it stand out in the hurried and often angry clutter of our daily lives and the lives we live vicariously on TV.

So Orchids to Avbob (and happy birthday, by the way), as well as et al and Luma Animation.

I wonder which one of Supra Mahumapelo’s friends or relatives must have got the hugely inflated tender to do promotional work for the North-West government.

More correctly, whoever was paid to help put together the “Mebala Ya Rona” platform, should “pay back the money!” (Copyright EFF).

It is billed as “a new and exciting” platform developed by the Bokone Bophirima (North-West’s new name, by the way) department of Rural Environment and Agricultural Development.

The website is badly put together, especially when it comes to logic and sloppy use of language.

But what really made me sit up and take notice was the way they tried to promote the province’s “Heritage Walk” last week.

I saw an ad in *Sowetan* newspaper on the Monday, the day entries closed (great logic that)... but what made me rue the waste of my money (I am a taxpayer, after all), was that when I went to the site to find out more information, there was none. Nothing about transport to or from the start or finish of the 113km route, what the food would be.

Nada.

But the salt in the wound was when I tried to download the registration form. The link had been entered incorrectly, so I got an “address could not be found” response from Google.



This site can't be reached

www.mabalayarona.org.za's server IP address could not be found.

Search Google for mabalayarona org za content uploads 2018 Mebala Heritage Walk
Registration form Updated Final

ERR_NAME_NOT_RESOLVED

Pathetic. Surely Website Building 101 and PR 101 requires someone to actually check any and all links on the site or that you might use in your advertising.

So, for the North-West government and whoever you hired to do this awful job: A Mega Onion.

And, if you were wondering why there were only a handful of civil servants on your walk, now you know...

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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