

Don't take this ad with a pinch of salt...

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

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When a household name brand gets back in a TV ad for the first time in 20 years, you've got to sit up and take notice...

Cerebos, the country's top-selling salt brand, apparently thinks it's time that it reminded people about how much a part of their lives it has become - or perhaps they wanted to draw new people into the brand.



Screengrabs from the ad.

Interestingly, the Cerebos ad agency, FCB Durban, decided to go the route of animation because the story line is a sweet fantasy tale.

We see a little girl, Mpho, living in the heart of the Karoo and dreams of seeing snow, playing in snow or making a "snow angel" in the cold, white stuff. Her whole life is snow – right down to the ice crystal motifs in her bedroom – but there is precious little of the stuff where she lives amid the bare soil, thorns and cacti.

Then, her grandparents decide to step in to help make her dreams come true. Grandad rigs up a contraption outside Mpho's bedroom window, and with a little help from a number of containers of Cerebos salt, he re-creates snow falling from the sky.

At the end of the spot, we realise, in the Cerebos slogan – See how it runs – why grandpa was able to do the trick...

because the salt flows easily. It's a charming little ad and a piece of escapism with a sweet tone, which stands out perhaps because of the current gloom, doom and anger we all deal with on a daily basis.

The animation and graphics – done by Tulip and Chimneys in collaboration with Black Ginger – is simply world-class... well up to the best that studios like Pixar can produce, in my opinion.

So, Orchids all around: to Cerebos, to FCB Durban, to Tulips and Chimneys and to Black Ginger.

It's that time of year again when the SA Revenue Service takes to all communication channels to spend a lot of money encouraging people to get their tax returns done. It's the ultimate "grudge" purchase, and becomes even more unpalatable by the day.

I wonder, as I prepare to "e-file" my return, how many of my hard-earned rands were "round-tripped", from a government (read taxpayer) supported dairy farm in the Free State, to a Gupta front company in Dubai and back again here to pay for that lavish wedding at Sun City.

Many people have talked about a tax boycott in protest of what is happening in the country, but that simply is not going to happen. Just in case you were thinking about not paying, Sars also makes a big fuss about the criminal prosecutions it secures for things like Vat fraud.

So – don't do it. In the past, Sars has produced some good advertising, the sort of thing which (almost) made you want to go and pay your taxes.

These days, it has gone off the boil considerably and nowhere was that more in evidence than in one of its latest radio ads related to e-filing. The ad says, in serious tones, that, if you are filing electronically, then you should ensure that your communication channel is secure. Sensible advice.

But that jarring part is that the ad uses, as background noise, the sound of an "acoustic coupler" modem – you know the one which made all the funny beeps and squeals back in the "old days" of digital technology.

Nobody uses those any longer and nobody hears those noises. Hankering after the past can work in some advertising, but when it makes your ad just plain wrong, then it's bad marketing.

So, Sars, you get this Onion from me. Not such a happy return...

Finally, this Onion goes to an outfit called Supreme Auctioneers which, every month or so, has an auction at the Northcliff Country Club. They place posters illegally all over the area, on street signs, for instance. Not only is it illegal, it is potential highly dangerous: some are placed on stop signs, others near schools.

How would you like it if your child was run over by a motorist going through a stop street without stopping because he or she was reading the Supreme Auctioneers sign?

It's time we started taking our streets back from these illegal operators. Tear down their posters and boycott their events.

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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