

# 'Dinosaur' marketing strategies still the best

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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In the three decades I have been a journalist, the media world has changed dramatically. I was reminded of this over the holidays as I sat down to finally start getting down some of my stories and anecdotes in book form.

In the 1980s, working in Zimbabwe, there were a number of occasions when I had to get some gruesome photographs - of the massacres in Matabeleland - out of the country. I would go to the airport in Bulawayo, identify a passenger on a flight to Joburg and ask if they wouldn't mind carrying my unprocessed film with them, arranging for someone from *The Star* to meet them on arrival. No one ever refused. (If you were one of those people, or know one of them, thank you. Not only did you help me do my job but you helped get our evidence of a terrible crime against humanity.)

These days, of course, we have digital cameras, the internet, Facebook and Instagram, so words and images can be disseminated much faster. Had they existed in Zimbabwe in the 1980s, I have no doubt the killings would not have occurred, because they would have been instantly visible.

So, does that mean we in newspapers are going the way of the dinosaur? My colleague Patrick Bulger said as much recently in a column in the *Sunday Times*, opining that he was now being forced to communicate via social media. Dear oh dear, Pat... If newspapers die, you won't have a job, because there is no money in digital content production. True story.



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Over the Christmas break, I experienced again, first-hand, how the old-fashioned methods can still work when it comes to moving products off your shelves and building customer loyalty.

We were looking for a fridge for my daughter, who is a student at Onderstepoort in Pretoria. I got some ideas from the Makro catalogue in *The Star* and then we headed off to the branch closest to her, in Wonderboom, Pretoria North.

There we found the fridges, as promised in the catalogue, with correct pricing and a very helpful salesman called George. We chose the one we wanted (paying R100 for the silver finish - fashion is everything, isn't it?) and then asked George if it could be delivered the following day.

As long as we were assured of that, we wouldn't mind making a second trip from Joburg.

It was well after 1pm so we hoped we weren't asking too much. Turns out we were asking too little. George offered to have it delivered that afternoon. Just on 90 minutes later it was in the flat.

A triumph of two dinosaur marketing strategies: print and good customer service. An Orchid to Makro. Will we do business with you again? You bet.

The Onion for Brown Nosing goes to KFC this week - but it is a little late in coming because it arrived after we had closed for the year in December.

A colleague sent me a tweet which had been retweeted by Atul Gupta, scion of the Gupta family, No 1 friends of No 1. The tweet was from KFC, congratulating *The New Age* on its birthday. KFC said "staying true to being one paper for one country".

My colleague (who is in the marketing sector, so needs to remain anonymous) commented: "Erm, *The New Age*? - surely KFC can't make statements like that!"

Given the controversial history of *TNA* and its links to the government and the fact that it refuses to provide sales details (so anyone who advertises in it does so for reasons other than sound marketing ones), the paper is anything but a normal newspaper. It has a certain status, to put it mildly.

To associate yourself with that, as a brand, says something about you as a brand.

And a brand like KFC should be wary of being perceived as nailing its colours to any particular political mast... What if No 1 is ousted some time in the future?

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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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