Nedbank's brave new advertising contrasts with Eskom's insult to its consumers

By Brendan Seery

14 Nov 2017

Nedbank has been doing some very appealing advertising of late, and the bank and its agency, Joe Public, have already got a few Orchids from me.



Screen grabs from the ad.



#OrchidsandOnions: How sour milk founded a sweet business empire... and how to Gupta a well-known saying

Brendan Seery 15 Aug 2017

The campaign for the bank's Corporate Investment Banking offering was beautifully produced and on message.

Now, I see Nedbank – always regarded as fairly conservative (not a bad thing in a bank) – is talking to younger people and also promoting its new banking app to them.

Its new Nedbank Money app tells people that they have the convenience to do what they want to do without having the hassles of conventional banking.



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Brendan Seery 6 Sep 2017

The theme of the latest TV ad, which launched this week I think, is: I don't live for money, but money gets me what I live for.

That can range from love, to freedom, to just plain movement and we see all of those things, and the vibrance of young lives, shown in a fascinating set of vignettes.

It's made all the more appealing and interesting because these are not only "ordinary people" – there are albinos and even a transgender woman.

These are the sort of groups not normally represented in mainstream media, never mind in advertising for a huge corporate.

By stepping away from the ordinary, Nedbank shows that it is inclusive; it welcomes everyone and can make everyone's financial lives easier. But it's also a brave move.

It's a touching ad, mainly because it reminds us that we are more than the bi-polar society we sometimes appear in danger of becoming, and shows South African diversity in all its different hues.

It's also a reminder that we can still do great advertising in this country. An Orchid to Nedbank and one to Joe Public.

One would have thought that, given that it is involved in parliamentary hearings which are uncovering the cesspit which it is, Eskom would have opted to keep a low marketing profile.

But no – the organisation which brought us blackouts, and then blamed us for using too much energy before complaining because it wasn't getting enough revenue because consumers were using less electricity – now wants to insult our intelligence even more in a senseless brand campaign.

Senseless? Well, South Africa's electricity users – whether they get their power direct from Eskom or from a municipality supplied by Eskom – are, by and large, a captive market.

So, why does Eskom need to insult us by airing radio ads – along with competitions offering significant prizes – which are the marketing equivalent of trying to hold hands and sing *Kumbaya*? We need each other, says Eskom.

That is indeed true because we don't have any option. We cannot opt to try a privatised power supplier. And, thanks to your eliminating subsidies and making it more and more difficult for alternative forms of energy, very few of us have any other option.

So, you may sing along that Eskom and electricity users are the "perfect pair" – like, as you say in the ads, salt and pepper, or bread and butter – but you are singing to your hostages.

But you also allow us to think a bit further in the same vein: who needs who.

Eskom needs consumers like:

- Zuma needs Guptas and Guptas need Zuma
- Eskom needs Tegeta (and Optimum Coal)
- Brian Molefe needs a R30 million pension
- South Africa needs Vladimir's nuclear power plants.

Eskom, stop abusing us… first with your outrageous (kickback-related, perhaps?) pricing and now with this absurd campaign.



How will Eskom spend all the extra money it wants South Africans to pay?

Graeme Hosken 28 Jul 2017

You get an Onion. And that always goes with marketing idiocy.

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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