

Ads give lots to crow about

By [Brendan Seery](#)

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There was a lot of heated discussion last month around a controversial decision by US-based fast-food giant Burger King to make an ad extolling the natural ingredients in its "Whopper" burger, using time-lapse photography to show the burger moulding away after 34 days.



Personally, I think the ad clevers went a bit too clever on this one, because the image which will forever remain is the one of the rotting and distinctly unappetising burger. It's something you cannot unsee ... and an image which probably pops into your head when you pass a Burger King joint – with the operative word being pass ... on to some other fast-food brand.

I haven't noticed Burger King fighting that ad in South Africa – perhaps because South Africans don't care about healthy eating, or perhaps because that awful image taints the rest of the brand. Still, there has been some sparring in the fast-food space in recent weeks, which I think is a good thing.

Burger King tests plant-based meat with an impossible whopper

2 Apr 2019





First up, KFC produced a series of short (10 seconds or so) snippets aimed at plugging their chicken nuggets. Titled 'Whenever, Wherever', the ads are aimed at the young market, which lives its life large on social media and has little time. Like the product, the executions are light and tasty.

So, we see that nuggets can be consumed in any number of places and ways. On a plane for instance ("chicken or chicken?"), on a podium with beefy weightlifters, even though the nuggets eater is, by comparison, a puny weed; in a varsity lecture theatre and doing DIY.

It's different, it's entertaining and, like all good advertising, showcases the product ... and gets the taste buds going.

So, it works well – and KFC, along with ad agency Ogilvy Johannesburg and Massif director Marc Sidelsky, all collect Orchids from me.

At the same time, Nando's couldn't let something like those KFC ads escape unscathed. So, they put together a quick radio ad, which has a go at the whole idea of "nuggets".

We hear an apparent potential customer phoning a fast-food company and asking about which part of the chicken the nuggets come from. The woman on the other side is flustered and can't – or won't – give the game away.

Which enables Nando's to segue into its own pitch: that all you get at Nando's is proper, marinated, real chicken.

It's also funny – and it also makes a point. So, another Orchid to Nando's.



Nando's has hilarious response to Pick n Pay's new 'iNkukhu' advert

11 Sep 2019



After a week brawling with unprofessional PR people who accused *The Citizen* of leaking e-mails from them (which we didn't), which caused one of their employees to be "doxed" on social media (having her personal details posted); it was refreshing to see the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), of all institutions, playing a nimble bit of "make lemonade out of lemons" marketing and PR.

Many people saw a video on social media showing an out of control Rooikat armoured car almost ploughing into spectators

at a practice for the SANDF's annual capability demonstration.

Many were the unalloyed racists who jumped on the bandwagon to crow about how useless the modern military was.

Interestingly, the active veterans organisations, which included people who served in the old SA Defence Force, before 1994, were not those among the critics because, as many of them pointed out, accidents and cock-ups happened also in the good old days, when white people were running everything.

As a one-time uniform-wearer myself (although not in the SADF), I know that all armies get things wrong at some stage and, therefore, nobody really has the right to throw that first stone.

But SANDF communication head Sipiwé Dlamini neatly turned around the criticism in a well-argued opinion piece, pointing out that the SANDF had corrected its mistakes and delivered a near-flawless, world-class performance at the final demonstrations.

He deftly used the example of "Mabena" – the incompetent troopie who soared to fame on social media in a video of him getting chewed out by an instructor – to show a humility and willingness to learn from mistakes.

It's a textbook example of how to turn around a narrative with calm, logical argument. Of course, it won't win over the racists, but it will go a long way to assuring unsure South Africans that their taxpayer money is being spent responsibly by the military.

So, a marketing communication and PR Orchid to the SANDF and Dlamini.

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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