

Hilux - it's the real thing

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Dakar: Toyota's gazoo racing gives its competitors a 'snotklap'; Silence on criticism of anorexic looking 'thick' patties puts Woolies in a bad light



Coca-Cola is a classic example of how important marketing is in not only building a brand, but maintaining its household name status over years, or even decades.

Through thick and thin economic times, they keep advertising. And, even though their product is, by far, the world's leading soft drink, they keep on plugging it.

That thought crossed my mind when I looked at the results of the Dakar Rally last weekend and saw a Toyota Hilux (put together by South African and other experts from the company's Gazoo Racing team) being first across the line. Toyota clearly believes in the American car business homily: "Race on Sunday, sell on Monday." (That dates back to the beginning of brand involvement in motor racing in the States and when success on the tracks directly translated to sales.)

However, Toyota is a bit like Coke - because, in this country at least, its Hilux bakkie sells like hotcakes.

I reckon the iconic vehicle would continue to sell even if Toyota SA stopped all marketing. People would still flock to dealers

if only to check the badge was correct before plonking down their cash.

Yet the Dakar campaign does go further than the Hilux, because it positions the manufacturer as a major motorsport player globally, as well as underlining the quality and durability of its products.

In this campaign, Toyota has definitely maximised its commitment (and undoubtedly its return on investment) through multi-platform combinations of news feeds (with an excellent supply of images and videos) as well as conventional ads.

Even if I weren't wanting a Hilux, but was interested in a family SUV like the new Corolla Cross (put together at Toyota's Prospecton plant in Durban and selling like hotcakes, too), it would make me feel a lot better than 'my' car brand could take on the world's best – and the desert's worst – and, in the words of a Hilux driver, give them both a serious 'snotklap'.

So, Orchids to Toyota SA and all involved in the Dakar campaign.

Misleading burgers

If you hadn't noticed by now, social media can really burn your brand if you get something wrong. That is why brands in the public eye employ teams of people to monitor social media accounts and react, if necessary.

Woolworths can't have appreciated a post on Twitter from my colleague Jacques van der Westhuyzen. With an accompanying photo of distinctly anorexic-looking "thick" hamburger patties, Jacques asked: "Hey @WoolworthsSA if these are your thick patties, how thin are your regulars? Come on."

He still hasn't had a response, he tells me. This is the proverbial pic worth a thousand words.

Misleading your customer is not cool, Woolworths. Nor is trying to ignore them on social media and hope they'll go away.

Both of those are dreadful marketing practices, so you get this week's Onion from me (and it's just the regular one).

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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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