

Food Lovers Market - a brand of sincerity

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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I find it a bit bizarre, to be honest, when I see a company boasting that it was "established in 1993". C'mon I want to say, that was only yesterday. Er, actually, it was 30 years ago and that's a long time to keep any business going.



It's even more remarkable if it is a business which has grown by leaps and bounds – because that tells you something about customer loyalty. And also, noteworthy if the company is still in the hands of the people, or family, which set it up, because so often these days, business founders cut and run and take their loot as soon as a big conglomerate shows up, cheque in hand.

For all of those reasons, I was attracted to the TV ad celebrating 30 years in business for the Food Lover's Market group.

A family place

Brian and Mike Coppin began the business in Cape Town in 1993, as Fruit & Veg City. The brothers were hands on with the first store, being involved in painting and shop fitting and setting up their at the time unique offering of huge displays of fruit and veg. A bit like a market, for those who've even been down to a municipal one to witness farmers bring in their fresh produce before the crack of dawn.

The image of freshness, coupled with the sense that this was a “family place around the corner”, where you would be treated as more than just a member of the queue at the till, has been maintained to this day, even though the brand has now become Food Lover’s Market (a little subtle move upmarket, perhaps?).

The initial operation had six employees, some of whom are still employed in the business... but it has now grown into an enterprise with 17,000 employees, whom the group refers to as “team members”.

The ad captures all of the positives of the brand over the years, linking vignettes from the beginning (using actors) to the present day, when the family is present and welcoming customers as they’ve always done.



Celebrating 30 years: How Food Lover's grew into SA's largest privately-owned retailer

27 Feb 2023



It's simple but it does have that elusive sincerity which is missing in so many brands and so much advertising today.

So, a 30-year-anniversary Orchid to Food Lover’s Market.

Badly executed marketing

Many people have made bundles of money (those in the media being the first in line) because of the egos of our politicians and those ANC apparatchiks who run our state-owned enterprises.

It was that cynicism born of experience which drew me to a huge, full-page advert in the *Sunday Times* this past weekend. It wasn't marked as an ad, nor was there any indication that it was advertorial, but its layout and the bizarre content made it quite clear that this was not the output of the *Sunday Times* editorial team.

That said, though, it was difficult to fathom the point of the piece, which was billed as a “Q & A – Doctor Kgaogelo Legodi”, who was once Nelson Mandela’s eye specialist and was, we were told in the gushing piece, elected as president of the World Ophthalmology Congress in 2020. The article, which stopped just short of deifying the man, included a number of his other awards and achievements, dating back a decade or more.

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A crocheter understands the importance of focusing on what he is passionate about and proficient in. And for Or Aguiogelo Edward Legodi, his primary focus is improving the health of the collection.

came with the condition - one of which was having eye done. As a result, when the patient on the bus lost half her sight. Motivated by this, Legault and his wife secured a license and purchased the land to build an eye hospital in the old North Ward 55. Mizuho Japan (your eyes) Eye Center is a legacy and continuation of his revolution work.

As an eye specialist, Legend qualified from University under the tutelage of Professor Ann Peters who taught him how to operate on the retina. He now specialises in retinal and anterior segment with the most common ailments being cataracts.

There are damaged lenses caused by aging, trauma or diabetes. As a condition, cataracts are reversible and can be removed and replaced with a new intraocular lens (IOL). Another common ailment is glaucoma, which is a high build up of pressure in the eye, and while this can't be treated, it can be controlled. Another focus of the Hirsfeld Eye Center is laser treatment for cataracts if they are eligible for an operation.

Born in Aretzvelde in Gansu, Argov was educated in Gansu and Limpopo before embarking on his tertiary studies at the Selatso Mangosuthu Health Sciences University (formerly Medical University of South Africa). On completion of his studies, he was recruited as a staff physician at Limpopo at Tlokweng Hospital in Aretzvelde, where he undertook his internship and gained valuable experience. From there he moved to Venterburg Hospital, and despite a few challenges that came with the new and less political climate, he continued to excel in his position. He was then recruited to the National Medical School at the University of Limpopo. From 1999 to 2001, he then qualified to be one of the very few black eye specialists (ophthalmologists) in South Africa.

turning his nose of delivering the gift of sight to the President of the Ophthalmology Society of South Africa (OSSA). Legodi has been instrumental in engaging with government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to look at providing accessible eye care to the previously underserved in the past, ophthalmologists in South Africa used to work with Oris International, an international non-profit that brings people together to fight avoidable blindness. Holding their medical centres that are fully equipped with machines, they fly all over the world to relieve the burden of eye disaster. While unfortunately they are based there offices in South Africa, they are still operational and Legodi is still in contact forward with Oris NGOs and

are the inclusive attention a doctor.

It is uncommon for a black person to specialise in ophthalmology and Legodi was the sixth black doctor to qualify as an eye specialist in South Africa. Dr Nigel Letebe was the first black eye specialist who qualified in 1988 so for those to only be six who qualified thereafter in an entire decade is telling that it wasn't an easy feat.

Because of his experience and knowledge, Legodi has held numerous leadership positions.

He was fortunate enough to be the first black President of the Society of Eyes in 2013, where he

His dreams of becoming an eye specialist and building an eye hospital stemmed from a lived experience: observing his grandparents. His grandfather was a priest who always had dreams of Legodi becoming a doctor. In addition to this, he was one of the leaders of Bosile School of the Blind and Deaf and was involved in the Mpuduke Project and the school for the blind. Legodi also grew up with his diabetic grandmother who was dealing with the consequent health challenges that

Dr Kgogela Edward Legedi: Delivering the Gift of Sight with Passion and Excellence

His mandate was by the former President and Deputy Ministers of the country, the Honorable Aguirre Urdaniz. He was also elected to be an Executive Director and Vice President of the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) which is also another body of all the ophthalmology societies in the world. In addition to this, he was an Executive Director of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) - which was an incredible accomplishment, with him being the first African to hold that post. During his time at the AAO, an initiative to distribute books to the continent was started - the Basic Science of Ophthalmology textbooks were made available across the continent to students who needed to study for their exams.

- In 2013, Dr Kgaogelo Edward Legodi was presented with the Nelson Mandela Award by former President Jacob Zuma for being one of the eye physicians.

- who took care of Tshona Mafema (former President's personal physician)
- Dr Kgagelo Edward Legodi was honoured by the Deputy Prime Minister of Swaziland in 2013 for his work and achievements
- He received recognition from the military health services led (by General Dabale) as one of their own in recognition of the work done
- Dr Kgagelo Edward Legodi is also the first African to be the President of the World Ophthalmology Congress (WOC)
- which was held virtually in 2020

In 2020, the South Africa National Convention Bureau (SANCB), together with Sas Ntshona, collaborated on the World Ophthalmology Congress for their 2020 event and the partnership yielded great results. One of the proposed projects that was birthed from the Congress was working with NGOs that would train ophthalmologists in Africa. This came from a realisation that the state of health services and facilities in many African countries was not up to standard – so it is imperative to have opportunities that empower these young doctors who will ultimately service the continent in the most incredible way.

As a continent, the lack of skills, resources, teaching, and equipment means medical service providers are unable to meet the demand for assistance. There is a need to train more ophthalmologists as currently there are not enough to meet the need in South Africa. In addition, there is a need for governments to manage hospitals efficiently so that these institutions can assist the vulnerable and the poor who rely on these services.

I have huge admiration and respect for women: firstly my mother inspired me to do my best and be the best version of myself; my wife, Tshiga is an amazing wife, mother, physician and businesswoman and last, but certainly not the least, I received my qualifications under the tutelage of women. As a result, they are my inspiration, and with my surgical and leadership skills, I can make an impact on the lives of patients, their families and my community at large.

Arctic Inland Leaves Connected

MEET
**SOUTH
AFRICA**

South Africa

Even then, the full page piece – which differed from the SA Tourism website, which calls the body the Conventions (plural)

Bureau – still was not making a pitch for convention business, although the body did organise the conference at which Dr Legodi triumphed in 2020.

It was muddled, badly executed marketing which seemed nothing more than a huge ego stroke for Dr Legodi... not that he needed it because his accolades speak for themselves.

Why then?

This being SA Tourism – they who wanted to blow R1bn of our money on a highly dubious sponsorship of English football club Tottenham Hotspur – I bet it is another excuse to liberate taxpayer money and steer it in the direction of those who might “deserve” it.

This rubbish is a shocking waste of money and something that perhaps should be looked into.

It gets an Onion from me.

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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