

KFC embedded in SA culture, Eskom's social media misstep

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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I do find myself sometimes agreeing with African nationalist-type arguments that this continent should move away from the effects of “colonialism” before it gets totally subsumed and indigenous culture withers to nothing. That doesn’t make me an EFF groupie, mind. It just saddens me that so many South Africans – of all creeds, colours and political affiliations – believe that they come from somewhere in the mid-Atlantic, between the Yanks and the Europeans.



You only have to look at trends in fashion, cars and high-end booze to see that the elite love to put on foreign airs and graces. The same is true for advertising. Much of that is around these days; the hawking of luxury goods that are simply recycled from Europe or the States. And, even when a local car maker, say, has a go at punting one of its high-end vehicles, it seems to dip into the same cliché pot as the overseas creatives.

You don’t truly see much South African insight these days – like the *Yebo Gogo* or *Met Eish!* of yore. So, when a brand

does use distinctly South African foibles and practices to make its point, then it stands out.

KFC wins at local advertising

Such is the case with the latest series of KFC ads for its special deal meals. I know these ads started flying in December, but they're still up and they're still topical. They're built around the premise that these KFC deals are so good that they're going to give you change. So good, in fact, that you're going to expect change wherever you go.



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Brendan Seery 5 Feb 2024



The examples they choose to make their point are so quintessentially South African that I'm not sure someone in New York or London would understand them. In one ad, a young dude with the Polo GTI (what else?) pays the car guard and asks for change, much to the bafflement of the car guard. Then we see another man, fresh from getting change at a KFC drive-thru, pitching up at what looks like a lobola negotiation and handing over a fat brown envelope of banknotes. He waits, then asks: "Change?" And seems quite put out that there isn't any. One last example takes place at a party, where people decide to tip the DJ, handing over tips in cash. All except – you guessed it – for the man who's just been to the KFC. He wants his change.

The point about affordability is simply made and with a local, relevant meme – a great piece of work. And it gets an Orchid for that because I wish there was more of this out there.

RTMC defies advertising stereotype

State-owned enterprises (SOEs) don't have the best reputation for efficient service delivery or utilisation of what is, effectively, taxpayer money. And rarer than a member of parliament making a valid point, is an SOE that has in-house creativity. Yet, I have seen just this from the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), the body responsible for ensuring our road system functions according to the law. One of the biggest challenges for the RTMC, and for everybody involved in road safety, is how to reduce our appalling road death toll.



Even gruesome images of accident scenes (correction: these are collisions and the word accident implies they were a simple twist of fate, whereas humans cause them) don't seem to work.



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But recently someone on Twitter (X) posted a picture of a billboard for the RTMC, which is simple, but gut-punchingly effective, particularly for those road warriors who think they are immortal. It features a happy couple, laughing and enjoying themselves. The text says: "Life goes on. As she enjoys your life cover with her new man". Below that it is: "Obey the rules of the road."

Great, creative idea. Great execution. And because, I am told, the RTMC doesn't have much of a budget for outside agencies, this was done in-house.

An Orchid for the folks at the RTMC for showing other government and quasi-government organisations what can be done.

Eskom misses the mark

At the opposite pole is the social media team from Eskom, who took an avalanche of flak this week for posting the question: "What do you normally switch off in a power alert?" The comments ranged from black humour – "the economy" – to rudeness - "my respect for you" (one of the only ones which could be repeated, for matters of taste.)

Many commenters pointed out that Eskom was the architect of our fate, while others stated that they are switching to solar. If you are something of a polecat when it comes to public opinion of your brand, rather shut up than make it worse. If you don't, you get a marketing Onion.

Read the room, dudes...

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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