

Leading by example

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

24 Oct 2022

One of the things which annoy me about the slick, mid-Atlantic, imported videos we see for major car brands, is that they are so at odds with the reality of ordinary South African motorists.



Most of those have families and cars play a vital role, not only in transporting said families to all those vital piano lessons and football games but also in building families' memories.

That's the area of the market that Volkswagen has made its own in this country for more than three decades. It's the reason I bought a Jetta. And why that car, for more than 20 years, was the reliable, faithful family companion.

What I like about the latest ad for Kia's Sportage SUV is the way the essence of family dynamics has been so well captured.

The theme of the execution is "lead by example" and, in this case, it has nothing to do with advanced technology. It's about how your kids copy you (as you imprint on their naïve lives) in what you do and say.

Which reminds me that my three-year-old son embarrassed us by copying Dad's favourite naughty word and yelling it at the top of his lungs in the garden, when relatives were visiting...

Kia, though, says that leading by example can be positive...especially as it is an in-touch father who is doing it. So, he runs with his son, watches TV with his daughter, and bakes with both his son and daughter... as the soundtrack tells us “they watch, they learn...”

And what they do learn from Dad is cool taste in cars: an interesting shade of green in the Sportage, with blacked-out windows, which neatly echoes Dad’s shades. At the same time, there is a glimpse of the car’s features – like the elegant “virtual” cockpit display, which is likely to be a drawcard for Dad, Mom and the kids.

All in all, it hits the spot in terms of the areas likely to appeal to young, growing families while at the same time also showing the vehicle in the best possible light for others, who might not have sprogs.

VW set the bar high for this type of advertising, but Kia, you have also achieved those heights, so you get an Orchid.

The right time and wrong time

If there is an answer to the question “What is giving KZN its buzz?”, the cynics might say that it is all the E.coli bacteria in the water, thanks to the fact that the provincial and municipal authorities (and national government) have not sorted out the water and sewage systems which were wrecked in the terrible storms earlier this year.

However, the problems of sewage spilling into the ocean in Durban and across many other parts of the province are nothing new, so blaming Mother Nature to obscure civil service incompetence is not going to cut it.

So many beaches have been closed across the province that they may as well change “surf and turf” to “surf and turd”.



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Danette Breitenbach 24 Oct 2022



There’s a fair amount of speculation that the visiting overseas rugby teams which were struck down by a gastro infection may have had something to do with the water in KZN, which was their training base for a few days.

Right – so probably not the best time to put out a press release extolling the beauties of the province?

That didn’t deter The Cutting Edge Group (which specialises in marketing and communications it says), from putting out a

gushing picture of the province on behalf of the Premier group of hotels.

Quite apart from the fact this was a recycled press release from earlier in the year – from the fact it referred to tourists expected to visit Durban “during the winter season” – how’s this for a not-quite-accurate-at-this-time quote: “With around 300 days of sunshine and swimmable surf that doesn’t require a wetsuit, KwaZulu Natal is the perfect place to add a tropical twist to your getaway cravings ...”?



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Umhlanga, rhapsodised The Cutting Edge, was the “gem of the entire KZN North Coast”... well, apart from the black river of gunk spooling down near the lighthouse, that is...

I can understand the need to get out this sort of a press release: People from upcountry are not that dim and they will have seen the news and be seriously reconsidering whether they want to go paddling with the pooh.

And, to be fair, by the time Christmas comes around, it may be sorted (although I won’t put a cent of my money on that bet). But, dear, oh dear, didn’t someone in the PR food chain put up their hand and suggest, gently, to the client that perhaps the timing was not right?

Clearly not. And when your PR stinks as much as the stuff flowing into the “swimmable” beaches, you get an Onion, jointly and severally. But sorry, Premier Hotels, were you so cynical about getting anybody down to the tropical paradise of KZN that you didn’t care that the release contained as much effluent as the upstream sewage pipes? You get an Onion, too...

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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