

Branding lessons learned from religion (Part 3)

 By [Jimmy Tembo](#)

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The book of Mark 8:36 says; *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* Without falling into blasphemy, let's interpret this into a branding context. Noting that in the preceding articles ([part 1](#)) and ([part 2](#)), I described branding as 'positioning a service or product according to the creator's intention.'

For what shall it profit a brand, if it shall gain the whole market share (albeit temporarily), and lose its purpose. Between 2006 and 2009, Jack Daniels was one of the highest selling spirits in South Africa, but has since taken a nose dive in South Africa and can barely be seen on restaurant tables as was seen during those years. I have no in-house information, but surely from the outside view, they were happy with what their mass marketing had produced, neglecting the principle that we are discussing today.



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The brand could be found in outlets that targeted higher LSM groups as much as it could be found in those that targeted lower LSM groups. During that time, I doubt their brand managers had even taken time to educate the consumer that Jack Daniels was actually a Bourbon, as opposed to the market perception that it was a whiskey (In America, the brand relatively did well after introducing their Fireball range).

Its market dominance in the late 2000s could also be attributed to the fact that they may have come into the market at a perfect time, when the South African palate favoured Brandy drinking due to its mix-ability, owing to the fact that it is also a somewhat sweet brand. But in hindsight, what the brand failed to capitalise on is to establish the product using a UNIQUE proposition. Like that, they would have separated themselves from all other spirits on shelves. "A brand is only as good as its shepherd."

One other thing that we ought to always remember is that consumers are brands in their own rights, they want to affiliate themselves with brands that are aspirational. 'Prostitution' to the market therefor only but reduces the brand's lifespan. The recent admittance that the guy who actually taught uncle Jack how to brew was a slave named Nearis Green means that it might just be the right time for a brand overhaul.

A brand that positions itself to a correct market attracts free brand ambassadors and increases brand evangelism, take for instance Land Rover. Any driver of it can't wait to go off-road so that they can infiltrate their social media with great pictures, an element that increases the emotional factor towards the brand.

But Jack Daniels are not the only one who have practiced what I call market prostitution, many are small start-up businesses that fall into this pit, one of the biggest attributes to forfeiting their purpose is the inability to keep up with month end bills.

In summary, the lesson for today is one, 'know thy market and stick to it.'

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