

Showing what we can really do

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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My daughter bought me a T-shirt with the words "Grumpy Old Git" emblazoned on it...and living in South Africa, coping with loadshedding, watershedding, common sense-shedding - oh, and politicians - makes it easy to maintain that crusty demeanour.



This week, though, I have seen the brighter glow amid the gloom and see what some of our marketers can do – and are doing – fills me with some optimism.

First up for an Orchid is Takealot – for delivering exactly what it promises. In my case, I was looking for a mini-UPS (uninterruptible power system) to power my Wi-Fi and fibre box during the inevitable loadshedding. I've tried to use my MTN mobile data, via tethering my phone to my laptop – but in our area, MTN's data virtually disappears during loadshedding.

The mini-UPS purchase decision was arrived at after much research and chatting to IT experts. But what really helped was that, on the Takealot site, I could read reviews from people who had bought the item I was interested in. The vast majority gave it five stars, but what clinched it for me was one from someone who made his purchase in October this year and said it worked perfectly with his Telkom set-up at home. That is exactly what I have – so I went ahead and ordered.

I collected the UPS two days later from the Takealot depot around the corner, went home and after minimal fiddling, it was literally a “plug and play” experience.

A week later I ordered a pair of wireless headphones for my brother-in-law’s birthday – and Takealot delivered it the next day.

Ensuring your services and products are everything you promise is a cheap way of marketing – because customers keep returning. Takealot does that for me – and will continue to do it for me in the future. Creating and preserving customer loyalty is worthy of my first Orchid.

Mike Sharman, the Duracell Bunny marketer from retroviral, has never shied away from what some might regard as sensitive topics. The agency has done some amazing work for Lillet’s tampons and, in the process, has helped bring the conversation about menstruation out into the open.

The latest project they have embarked on, in a joint campaign for Lillet’s in South Africa and the UK, is to try to encourage women to move away from the current plastic tampon applicators, billions of which are probably clogging up landfills or floating in the oceans around the globe.

It is straight-talking with some pretty graphic graphics...but it’s not shocking or offensive and does provide food for thought about making tampons “digital” (in the sense that the fingers on a hand are digits, see?)

The message is aimed at a generation which is only too aware of the damage done by previous generations – including the men who came up with the idea of tampons and plastic applicators – to our environment.

At the same time, it positions Lillet’s as a caring and forward-thinking brand.

So Orchids to Lillet’s and retroviral.



A colleague of mine pointed out that KFC's Add Hope campaign has already helped feed 150 000 needy children, having served more than 250 million meals since its inception, with a target of doubling that by 2030.

Patrons of the fast-food brand can choose to add a small donation to their order – and this is what adds hope (along with a significant contribution from the brand, naturally...)

It's a genuinely good piece of corporate social investment and even better for the fact that KFC doesn't often crow about it.

You should, though, people. It's a wonderful initiative and, in this day and age, when consumers want their favourite brands to do more than rake in the money and have a social conscience, it will certainly position you on the moral high ground.

For showing how corporate social investment should be done, you get an Orchid 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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