

Is Doom doomed?

By [Jimmy Tembo](#)

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Sitting with a group of friends over a bottle of Pinotage, an inevitable discussion of the 'Prophet of Doom' emerged. The majority of the guys in this discussion were of the opinion that Doom as a brand actually benefited by scoring free publicity, citing the adage that 'there is no bad publicity' after all.

Their argument was supported by the 'perceived immediate increase in sales of Doom'. Although this has not been confirmed by the company itself, one could easily come to such a conclusion.

Nonetheless, my take is contrary to that. If there is anything to be worried about, it is the fact that Doom may actually have been doomed. The sales perceived, if they are correct, are only a fool's paradise, as it is not always that sales are parallel with brand equity.



Image via [Facebook](#)

When you build or are building a brand, you only have the power to control it until it reaches the shelves. Many are the times that brands have grown or done well by default, after being misinterpreted by the consumers.

In the case of Doom, the unfortunate part is that it has fallen into a sphere that is highly emotional and cultured: religion.

You probably need not be reminded that people have gone to war, and nations and communities have been divided

because of religion. That goes to show how much emotions are invested. How much less of an effort do they therefore need to abstain from consuming a brand?

The first point worth noting is that religion, or its denominations to be precise, have a lot of antagonisms despite pursuing similar objectives. We have the charismatic churches that are willing to try out new things, and many have debated that these churches will do whatever it takes to attract membership. Then, we have the conservatives who still want to do things in the old and traditional manner. The latter (conservative) is the market that is likely to defect from using Doom in their households, as they will not want to be associated with the new charismatic church. Take for instance the number of people who embark on a pilgrimage every year to Limpopo. The numbers recorded in the past are in the region of 20,000 attendees. Should the leaders of such churches condemn the Doom practices, we can anticipate a huge shift from a brand that has always been a favourite in the South African households.

Secondly, there is a market that is not so concerned with religion. As a matter of fact, those in this market are to an extent rebellious. This market too may easily defect to a brand that is perceived to be more elite. Consumers will always aspire to consume brands that they look up to and not those that are easily available on the shelves; worse is when the brand is affiliated to poverty.

Some may want to regard this as mere paranoia, but it's the same paranoia Steve Jobs possessed that made both Apple and Pixar grow to the levels that they did. Take for instance when the Iphone 4 had an unforeseen problem with network, because of the aluminium casing that was part of the design. Steve Jobs went back to the market, passively accepted guilt and gave it all the attention deserved. The moral is that there is no pilot mode in branding, for great brands are 'like a highway that is always under construction'.

With that said, maybe we should relook at the belief that 'there is no bad publicity'.

All the very best to the Doom team and happy festive holidays.

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