

Checkers ignites the Christmas spirit in new TV ad

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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One of the Christmas traditions we don't seem to have in this country is the big bucks TV ad for a major brand – one which goes beyond mere marketing and into story telling.



Advertisers in the UK are particularly good at this and every year, the big companies vie with each other to see who can get the most tear-jerky, emotional, talked-about ad on air.

Memorable

This year Checkers – which has had a good year, Orchids-wise, from me – decided to do something along those lines in South Africa. And it not only moved away from the brand's common and successful call-to-action marketing, it ventured into the realm of feel-good story-telling.

But this wasn't fiction – and that's what makes it so memorable.

Earlier this year, the Western Cape community of Stanford was devastated by massive floods which wrecked the town's infrastructure, left many homeless and saw first responders from fire and ambulance services, as well as ordinary people, going above and beyond to rescue and evacuate the worst affected.

The experience traumatised the community, but also saw it come together in solidarity.

Tribute

Checkers pays tribute to all of those people in a mini-documentary, which shows the devastation and reflects the shock the residents felt – in their own words. It's a reminder of the powerful forces of nature and how quickly your safe, settled life can be upended.

The company organised a big Christmas street party for the residents of town – complete with the tables of food and drink and sparkling Christmas lights. It may sound cheesy, but the ad captures the spirit of Christmas – of giving, of thinking about your neighbours, of community – which is in danger of vapourising in our fast-paced, hard-nosed world.



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While it's not an ad pushing people to buy, it's nevertheless a reminder that Checkers can give you a similar sort of feeling. And that's great advertising – so it gets an Orchid from me.

Spelling terror...eh error

And something of a different sort for this week's Onion.

I get gushy press releases all the time, splattered with superlatives and it is quite common for PR people to throw words at a release clearly oblivious of their actual meanings in proper English. Now this may sound like a grammar-nerd whine but I would expect that when your stock-in-trade is words, you'd pay attention to ensuring you use the correct ones.

This week's language lesson, then, goes to Adverb agency, as well as its client, "Adrienne Hersch Properties, a subsidiary of leading real estate company, Only Realty Holdings."

The release, about some new property project was headlined, multiple times, "Sort after Bryanston luxury, residential development goes on sale..."

What would you need to sort?

The word you are looking for, people, is “sought”.



New Checkers ad shows how South Africans stand together

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Let me quote Thecontentauthority.com on this: “‘Sort’ is a verb that means to arrange or categorise things based on their characteristics or qualities. ‘Sought,’ on the other hand, is the past tense and past participle of the verb “seek.” It means to look for or search for something.”

One would think that estate agents, which throw the phrase “sought after” around with abandon – and the PR agencies working for them – would know the difference.

This isn’t a minor error – it absolutely contradicts your attempt to look sophisticated, knowledgeable and competent as a purveyor (look that up, too) of property.

Onions to Adverb and to Adrienne Hersch Properties. The client gets one as well because, clearly, no-one signing off on the release had a clue the word was wrong.

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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