

# Finding the line in funny advertising

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

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When you're a mega-brand, reputation management - and protection of the image you have built up over decades - should be a critical part of your marketing and strategic planning.



If you're always alive to the potential damage news events can do to your brand, then you're more likely to be able to turn the proverbial lemons into lemonade.

What interests me is why KFC took so long to take comic and marketing advantage of the story which emerged late in 2019 of two platteland-looking dudes who got free KFC meals all over the country by claiming they were health inspectors.

Perhaps management didn't want the brand associated with any, even passing, questions about quality affecting the health of its customers. If that was the case, fair enough... let the dogs bark and the caravan of public opinion passes quickly along.

However, given the fact that memes about the incidents have been flying around social media for a while, it occurred to someone to turn the whole thing to KFC's advantage. And that's what they've done with the "Anything for the taste" campaign.

There are two sets of video executions, for TV slots and for social media platforms. The first features a “Mister Molapo”, who proclaims himself to be one of KFC’s “quality assurance” inspectors. He journeys all over the country in an old, but still fine, Toyota Cressida, looking the epitome of a long-term, merge-into-the-scenery company employee. In reality, he is a cool dude with an unquenchable desire for KFC.

The second execution takes the story further, with “private eye” Bennet Mathunzi, who is hired by KFC to track down the pirate. However, much like his nemesis, who he also tracks around the country, Mathunzi is a KFC addict. Of course, to carry out a thorough investigation, Mathunzi needs to, as the “inspector” did, sample “the evidence”.



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It’s all a bit of a giggle and has been getting some serious attention online and on social media. But, what is clever is that the ad, as well as entertaining, showcases a number of characteristics of the brand. Firstly, there is a vast range of outlets right around the country. Then, there is a wide range of enticing meals, and these are detailed in different shots in the video.

Finally, the ad subtly pays homage to the KFC classic slogan “Finger Licking Good”, when Mathunzi says that “there is no evidence. He licked his fingers...”

The campaign hits all the spots (including an interactive one online) and blends humour with a call-to-action. Even in the absence of scratch-n-sniff TV, I guarantee many were salivating just looking at the KFC images.

And all done locally, which is always a positive. So Orchid to KFC.

## The fine line between silly and humorous

Humour is often used in advertising to entertain – and in return ensure the observer stays around to hear your message instead of heading to the fridge when your ad runs at halftime during a big game.

That’s why I like the MTN 5G ad featuring the Springboks because the manne all seemed so relaxed in front of the camera – some of the facial expressions were priceless – and involved in the premise of the ad...that you shouldn’t have to wait for your excitement. On the field or off.

That was an ad worth hanging around to watch. On the other hand, though, the ad by Bok sponsors Thirst Water, “take a sip to extraordinary” (A sip to?), which ran at halftime during the recent national team matches, was just silly.

With the well-known Bokke up in front of a green screen with computer-added background, they looked comical (and not in a good way) pretending to play instruments to a classical tune, all “orchestrated” by captain Siya Kolisi.

All a bit soft and like an ad for toilet paper, if you ask me. Not what I want to see in my rough, tough and hard-to-bluff SA rugby heroes.

Annoying to the extent I couldn’t even remember the brand...and that is a deadly marketing fail when that happens.

An Onion to Thirst Water.

*Got anything you'd like to say or got any great work I may not know about? Drop me a line at [brendanjseery@gmail.com](mailto:brendanjseery@gmail.com)*

## 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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