

It was a short 'paws' but Toyota is back

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Toyota South Africa's local manufacturing plant was one of the many businesses impacted by the devastating floods that hit KZN in April 2022. Waste deep water and thick mud rendered the entire plant inoperable - forcing Toyota to stop producing SA's favourite vehicles. The damage to the infrastructure and machinery was described as the worst disaster ever seen by the Toyota Japan Disaster Relief team.



Although production of locally built models such as the Toyota Hilux, Fortuner, HiAce and Corolla Cross stopped, Toyota South Africa ensured that they continued to supply CBU (Completely Built Up) imported cars to the public.

"While the clean-up and rebuilding began, we tasked FCB Joburg to create a campaign to reassure our customers that Toyota South Africa is committed to getting their favourite cars back on the road," said Tasneem Lorgat, senior marketing manager at Toyota SA.

"We decided to tackle this messaging in a two-phased approach," remarked Tian Van Den Heever, ECD at FCB Joburg. Phase one, which launched in June 2022 shared a reassuring supportive message, while phase two coincides with the reopening of Toyota SA's Prospection Plant and has a very clear message of 'We're back'.

"Just like our iconic vehicles built in Durban, we thought that Buddy the Boxer was the perfect icon to share this message, and we could not be more excited to bring Buddy back a whole 13 years after his initial Toyota debut," remarked Tasneem.

"Unlike past Buddy renditions, newer state-of-the-art animation technology as well as on-set editing allowed for the development of his iconic smile and humour to be more natural – well, as natural as a talking dog can be," laughed Tian.

Buddy's character and charm, coupled with the equally uplifting PJ Powers 'Jabulani' track were perfectly suited to bring

back the nostalgia of the past and the positive outlook for the future. Ultimately reminding South Africa why they have always loved Toyota with a cheeky and pun-filled ad.

It may have been a 'short paws' but here's to a brighter future for Toyota and South Africa. And here's to bringing more smiles to faces thanks to Buddy and SA's best-loved cars.

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