

The 'quest' for realism

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

14 Apr 2020

You might as well be Nostradamus, Siener van Rensburg or the auntie who puts together the astrology column in the newspaper for all anyone can predict the future, AC (After Coronavirus).

One thing does seem increasingly likely: the world will be gripped by a recession, which could well turn into a depression, which would make the post-1929 Wall Street crash look like the land of milk and honey.

Perhaps because there will be a lot less of what the economists like to call 'disposable income' (because most of us will be on the bones of our arses), there will be a long-overdue reality check for the whole of humanity about 'stuff'. And by that, I mean, an auditing of whether we really need, for our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, the sort of consumer goods we stampede to buy.

What if, to make items affordable and to reduce the drain on the finite resources of the planet, there was a decree, for example, that would limit the size of TVs to 40 inches? What if car makers were forced to make fewer luxury cars and more practical vehicles?

It won't be governments forcing changes, because the shrinking and cash-strapped car market of the future will be doing so.

That's why I find it appropriate that, just before the lockdown, Toyota SA was about to start promoting its new Corolla Quest model. To those who are not aware, this car is, in reality, a previous-generation Corolla, which is being kept in production to satisfy a market need and because a tidy profit can be made on the investment on that previous Corolla model, long since amortised on Toyota SA's books.

The new commercial for the car purports to take place in a factory and features a 'conversation' between the assembly line robots. The spot was actually shot elsewhere, but it looks realistic enough. It makes the point, though, that even if the new Quest is previous generation, it is still tech-competitive and is still a Toyota, produced to the brand's exacting quality standards.

It's a bit of fun, but it serves to put the Quest out there. And, save this for later, I predict that the Quest could outsell its newer generation Corolla, which has also just been launched. And I further predict cars like the Quest – not too luxurious, not too complex, but safe, strong and reliable – are going to be the future of the automobile, never mind electric cars.

So, another orchid for Toyota SA and for its ad agency, FCB Joburg.

Businesses have been telling the world how committed they are to helping out their customers who are suffering financially because of the Covid-19 virus.

You'll forgive me, though, if I am less than bowled over by some of the 'help'. Worst culprits in this connection are the banks and financial institutions, who are offering 'payment holidays' to those customers who may have lost their jobs or been forced to close their businesses.

In reality, the banks are postponing the pain, because while the debtor doesn't have to make payments, the interest on the outstanding amount still accumulates, meaning longer repayments and bigger financial pain. So all of you who are doing this – and there are too many to name individually – and using marketing rubbish to mislead your customers, a big fat onion.

The same goes for the insurance companies who have reduced clients' premiums during the lockdown period. Generously, they say with hands over hearts in innocence, they will give you a reduction of between 15% and 35% on your premiums.

However, the official estimates are that the lockdown has reduced traffic on our roads by up to 70%. So, money-grabbing insurance companies, your clients are, on average, travelling 70% less and, therefore, pose 70% less risk. So to offer them 35% or less off their premiums is just another scam.

Again, all of you who are doing this get onions for misleading your clients. We're all in this together in case you hadn't noticed.

“ Its [#Day1](#) of [#21daylockdownSA](#) and time for communities to stand together! We've adjusted our CoverPause™ rates to help you save over 80% on car cover while not driving. You'll still be covered for theft & Mother Nature. Get the details <https://t.co/6wENSzSmSi> [#StayHomeSA](#) pic.twitter.com/IVcFFNhmeK — Naked_Insurance (@Naked_insurance) [March 27, 2020](#) ”

A noble exception to this is Naked Insurance, which is offering a 80% reduction in premiums for its clients. Now that's the right thing to do – and by doing so, I'm sure you'll win over even more customers, so foregoing your money now means you'll benefit later. And that is clever marketing, which deserves an orchid.

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.
■ #OrchidsandOnions: DA crosses line in political persuasion - 27 May 2024

- #OrchidsandOnions: Scientists sail across the seas to satisfy their KFC craving - 17 Apr 2024
- #OrchidsandOnions: Auto and General sets the standard in insurance claims - 11 Apr 2024
- #OrchidsandOnions: Checkers pranks commuters over holiday weekend, Curro Holdings faces backlash - 4 Apr 2024
- #OrchidsandOnions: The Boswell family's multi-generational journey with Ford SA - 25 Mar 2024

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>