

Checkers ad is charming

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Tells good story: Recycling and reducing carbon footprint; Company walks the talk so it doesn't look like greenwashing



Such is the level of concern among many consumers about our environment and how we clean up our act as a species, that there are companies embarking on “greenwashing” to portray themselves as more environmentally “friendly” than they actually are.

So, I must admit that, initially at least, I cast a cynical eye over the latest Checkers brand ad pushing its environmental responsibility. But it was hard to maintain cynicism in the face of a commercial so well produced and so charming.

It captures the innocence and wonder of youth (and it is the younger generations who have to save our planet and undo our mess) while, at the same time, showcasing the actions Checkers is taking to tackle environmental problems.

So, we see that it sources palm oil, for example, from sustainable operations, thereby helping preserve habitats for animals like the orangutan, which is shown browsing the shelves in a Checkers store. We also see how the company's 100% recycled grocery bags will help prevent plastic ending up in oceans. And the company's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint will help preserve polar bears by helping reverse the shrinkage of the Arctic ice cap.

The company does walk the walk, with huge investments in solar power, off-grid electricity (its store at Sitari village in Somerset West in the Cape is powered by solar and wind farm electricity) and recycling.

So, the ad doesn't look like greenwashing – it's simply telling a good story.

The entire production is slick and the graphic animations are astounding... and they give the commercial its fresh charm.

Orchids to Checkers, its ad agency 99 Cents, production company Bioscope Films and animation whizzes Chocolate Tribe.

Thanks for the breath of fresh air...

It's a bigger complaint now

Way back when, there used to be an old marketing saying related to customer service and satisfaction: a happy consumer will, on average, pass on their feelings to three others; a disgruntled or angry customer will tell at least 12 people.

That was before the advent of social media, which has become the platform of choice for consumers to express themselves about products. And even the shyest and retiring (or boring) user of Facebook or Twitter has a lot more than 12 followers.

And the motor industry, which has turned to throwing buyers under the bus into an Olympic sport, should also pay more attention.

In the '80s, when I had a nightmare experience with my new Opel Kadett, I told many more than 12 people – because I have a big mouth and knew quite a few people in those days.

I also had the satisfaction of telling Opel's top man in South Africa that his service people and dealers were doing such a good job that I had already bought my next car – a Volkswagen Jetta, which rewarded me with more than two decades of excellent service.



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I must, therefore, wonder what Mahindra is doing in messing around a colleague of mine, Gasant Abarder, whose entertainment system and display in his XUV500 has been on the fritz for the best part of a year.

The dealer is trying but, apparently, Mahindra cannot locate a replacement.

This saga has been unfolding on Twitter, where Gasant has almost 17,000 followers... and nobody among the numerous users who commented has had anything good to say about Mahindra.

On the contrary, a few have indicated Gasant's experience could well change their minds about buying a Mahindra.

How difficult can it be, people? If you genuinely cannot get him a replacement part, replace his vehicle – it is still under warranty, after all. It's going to save you money in the long run, considering how much self-inflicted brand injury has already cost you.

While great customer service is the cheapest form of marketing, poor service can destroy a brand.

Mahindra, for failing to realise that – and doing so on a huge public platform – you get an Onion.

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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