

How to get masses of free publicity

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#)

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With traditional mass media advertising so expensive these days some clever marketers are finding ways of vastly increasing their impact and reach.

What they do is create a TV commercial that they know is bound to offend someone and then they pay only for one or two spots.

Sure as nuts, with the level of intolerance at an all time high in South Africa somebody will complain to the advertising regulators who will immediately ban the ad for fear that it will offend the sensitivities of millions of consumers.

Such as that Chicken Licken commercial that involved a reverse-colonialism theme and in spite of showing the colonised beating the colonisers at their own game, was banned.

Watch it here:

The complainant and the advertising regulators sat back and smiled believing that they had spared millions of South Africans the indignity of having to watch the ad.

What happened, however, was that the decision to ban the ad went viral on social media and the ad itself was shown over and over again to millions of consumers who wanted to see what the fuss was all about.

The story was also picked up by international news agencies and the ad went viral beyond our borders.

Of course, the ad agency and their client denied emphatically that they had intended any disrespect but I would guess they must have been leaping about with joy. Because instead of just getting a few thousand viewers, they got millions and millions.

All of which shows that in this day and age of social media, banning an ad only tends to make the very problem regulators were trying to solve, a million times worse.

Now, I am not suggesting for a minute that marketers should use this ploy as part of their strategy, tempting as it may be.

But, it does demonstrate that with careful planning and creative strategy, marketing budgets can be maximised without being increased.

ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on moerdykc@gmail.com and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](https://twitter.com/chrismoerdyk).

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