

# Content still carries us to triumph

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

5 Sep 2022

In the world of YouTube, TikTok and sundry other social media platforms, that old cliché, "Content is King" really resonates.



If your content is good – whether produced by an expensive slick production house or thrown together with a cellphone in a kitchen – then you will soon know, as the clicks and views start soaring.

But the real test of success is when social media platform users start to share your work – and it “goes viral”. You can almost hear the exponential growth of your audience and, best of all, it costs you nothing.

This week, the social media viral success, in South Africa at least, was the latest piece of funny marketing produced for The Courier Guy.

Purporting to be the company’s “training facility”, the video opens with scenes of people getting fit and getting ready to be “deployed” to the front line. A bit like an army boot camp.

So Leo Prinsloo, the all-South African hero who leapt into the public spotlight in May last year – when he heroically drove through a cash-in-transit heist attempt, refusing to give up or stop, despite dozens of rifle rounds pinging off the armoured body and windows of his vehicle – was the ideal hero to supposedly train The Courier Guy’s delivery personnel in how to defend themselves and protect your precious goods in transit.

Leo, who looks like the Brakpan Chuck Norris, plays off the old stereotypes – like a “PK” (if you have to ask, you haven’t been near the East Rand) which is translated as “express delivery from Polokwane to Kakamas” – to show people how to look after themselves.

The message is that The Courier Guy goes above and beyond the call of duty and that they will well and truly “handle your package”.



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It pushes the boundaries of good taste as the brand has done for some years – although not as in-your-face as some of its previous work, which landed it in hot water with the advertising authorities after complaints from the public.

Produced by the Freckle Co-operative of Bouwer Bosch and Benni Fourie (really funny guys who don’t have many sacred cows), the ad is newsy and funny. That’s why it went viral.

So it deserves Orchids for The Courier Guy and Freckle Co-operative. However, I must say that the reality of courier drivers today is that they are targets – because thieves know they are often carrying high-value objects (and home deliveries boomed during Covid) and are unarmed. I hope this humour doesn’t backfire later...

## Social media sophistication not on the rise

Yet again, I am gobsmacked about how a big brand marketing itself on social media channels leaves its corporate image in the hands of people who don’t have the sophistication to deal with interactions which are negative.

The Unlimited, which I have discovered is an insurance company trying to appear hip and cutting edge in its messaging – with lines such as “be unafraid to be your own judge and jury” and “Uncover the lies and bullshit” – had just such an issue on Twitter recently.

Andrew Fraser Tweeted: “Imagine what life would be like without a million spam calls from the f...ing Unlimited?”



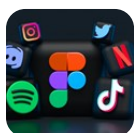
The social media clevers handling The Unlimited's account responded in a way which media analyst Gus Silber characterised as imposing "coy Victorian limitations", by telling Fraser: "Please refrain from using explicit language on our page as it goes against our house rules. You may read our house rules at..."

As many Twitter users pointed out, responding to a tweet on someone else's timeline does not constitute your "page". Then the audacity to suggest some read the house rules.

These, incidentally, include the following: "We don't allow defamatory, indecent, offensive, profane, discriminatory, misleading, unlawful, or threatening comments." But using "bullshit" in your own marketing is fine?

And this: "Spamming, posting promotional material or posting links to third party websites is not permitted." But it's OK to bombard people with unsolicited spam marketing?

To their credit, The Unlimited did try to save things by responding to Silber: "Hi Gus, you're right – we're a brand that strives for real and authentic conversations. We'll be reassessing our house rules for our communities to ensure we deliver on who we are. Thank you for raising our consciousness."



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Perhaps someone did see sense. But the bottom line: Employ people who have enough sophistication to deal with intelligent social media users like Fraser and Silber.

All this did was remind people that you're spamming people by cold-calling them. So as a marketing exercise, it actually damaged your brand. So, you get an Onion from me. I know that's probably against your house rules, but what can I say?

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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