

An orchid for Kia, an onion for BMW and misguided millennialism

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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It's a mystery why big brands continue to throw huge amounts of marketing money at a group that can't buy what they're selling.



Screen grab from the Kia ad.

One of the things I love about advertising and marketing commentator Bob Hoffman is his contrarian way (his blog is called The Ad Contrarian ... [Google it](#): you may not agree with everything he says, but you will be entertained) of cutting through ad industry flim-flam.

And one of his popular targets – after the organised criminal enterprise, which is what digital advertising has become – is the fascination of marketers with millennials, the generation that will save us all from our life of boredom.

“ Hoffman points out, quite correctly, that people over the age of 50 control 70% of the consumer spend in the US... but less than 10% of marketing money is targeted at them. ”

He's also busted another myth, which gained a viral life of its own on the Net, and came to be believed as gospel through endless repetition and limited questioning or checking. That is the myth that millennials have the biggest purchasing power of any generation. They don't – so why on earth direct such huge chunks of your advertising towards them?

That reality was clearly lost on BMW's overseas ad clevers, with their allegedly funky and appealing ad for their new 3-Series cars. It's edgy, dude. It features lots of urban cool – graffiti, breakdancing (or whatever that's called now) and a couple so cool they by themselves could put an instant stop to global warming.

They are hip, they are connected (and so is the car). They swim like fish in the warm sea of technology.

And in case you didn't get that the "old fogeys" are not with it, there's a scene that flashes by of a grey-haired man speaking into a callbox phone. All very cool. All very millennial.

The problem, BMW, is that there are very few millennials – particularly around the age of the ones you use in the commercial – who could afford a 3-Series. When you use your adspend to target a non-target market, that's not very clever. And not very clever will get you an Onion every time.



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Brendan Canavan 25 Jan 2019



And, let me save you the comeback: I probably am saying that because I am a grumpy old git.

In stark contrast to the slick, sophisticated, albeit horrifyingly wrongly targeted Beemer ad, comes a refreshing piece of *egte* South African ad making – the new TV ad for the Kia K2 bakkie.

It's long been a favourite of small businesses around the country and has won itself a loyal Brendan Seery Orchids and Onions following. But it doesn't do graffiti or fancy dances and doesn't have all the fancy bits a BMW has. It just does its job.

“ And the message is that doing its job could take your small business to new levels. So we see the two okes – boss and appy, it looks like – from the electrical company, fixing something. ”

There are repeated back-and-forth queries and answers, which revolve around passing the “*dinges*”. It's funny because so many of us resort to words like “dinges”, or “thingy” when we don't know exactly what it is.

Eventually, the appy comes up with the correct *dinges* and the job is done.

Pull back to a wide shot of the bakkie to show what they have been working on... a massive radio telescope. In a field of radio telescopes.

That's certainly another level for a small business. And it's the K2 bakkie, which has helped in that growth.

It's simple, it's real South African humour and it makes a sharp selling point.

It deserves and Orchid, so step up Kia, the ad agency Old Friends Young Talent, and the production house Patriot Films. And, once you're done, please send a copy of the ad to BMW...

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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