

Hats off to Heineken

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

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Great message and sight as Boks drank its beer from the trophy, but an Onion to Santam for tacky ambush marketing ploy.



Hopefully, the Springbok euphoria won't wear off for some time to come ... as has been said countless times before this happening, winning the (Rugby World) Cup is something this country desperately needs.

And, much as millions have already paid tribute to the Boks and the SA Rugby team behind them and much as they have said they appreciated the feeling of support from people back home, it's time to look at how the sponsors fared.



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The major sponsors of SA Rugby and the Boks poured millions upon millions into this tournament – and I would like to think that was part patriotism and part clever marketing. And the win means, for them, that its payback time (in a positive sense for their brands).

But first let's look at some of the global sponsors of the Rugby World Cup in Japan. My championship winner there has to be Heineken ... if for no other reason than the Boks drank their beer out of the Webb Ellis Cup rather than the traditional champagne.

What a sight and what a message!



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Then, Bok Frans Steyn cheekily offered a Heineken to Prince Harry when he popped into the changeroom after the match. Of course, Heineken backed it up with serious TV airtime and its position as the beer of choice echoed rugby's own position as that of the thinking person's sport.

Subtle and effective partnership there. But, additionally, Heineken was – according to Sports Minister Nathi Mthethwa – the entity that came to the rescue of the final by ensuring it was televised on the stations of the SABC.

That cost a pretty penny, I am sure, but it makes me feel good towards Heineken as a brand.



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So, first sponsor Orchid to Heineken.

Land Rover, like Heineken, was a global sponsor and would have won whoever walked away winners in the final. Yet, somehow you feel they would really have preferred England, following all the Union Jack drama with the new Defender bringing in All Black Richie McCaw and the cup.

LR South Africa would have been smiling, though, because their brand ambassador, Siya Kolisi, was the one at the top of the rugby mountain.

Land Rover and Kolisi is a partnership that goes further than just man and vehicle. They have sponsored him to take mobile rugby coaching trailers out to rural areas and the video of him touching base with his people in Zwide township in Port Elizabeth, is moving.

So, another Orchid to Land Rover.

“ Many of the rugby sponsors have been putting money and time into encouraging rugby development across the country, and both MTN and FNB make emotion-grabbing videos which remind us that there are many other Siya Kolisis out there who beat the odds to play the game they love. This is how you put to bed the silly debate about ‘quotas’: give people the opportunity. ”

It is difficult not to get a lump in the throat watching those videos and listening to township kids sharing their passion for rugby.

If we could win this World Cup on what we have, imagine what we'll be like when we really expand that pool of talent...

Orchids to MTN and FNB for showing that commitment. FNB also deserves a nod for coming up with the campaign for supporters to send in their messages of encouragement to the Boks.

More than one of the players cited this as a reason for their soaring morale and the knowledge that the country was behind them.



#OrchidsandOnions: Banking on the Boks

Brendan Seery 6 Aug 2019



This is how sponsorship should really work: this game, and this team, they are the really influencers, not those social butterfly halfwits many brands like lavishing their money on.

It is also an example of how business can work – with society, with sport and with the government – to build the nation we all dream of seeing one day.

On the other hand, there's always some slimy brand, which will try to capitalise on this sort of spirit, even though they are not a major sponsor.

So it was with Santam, the short-term insurer, which is not listed as a sponsor of the Boks by SA Rugby.



Santam's tweet.

Minutes after the whistle went last Saturday, Santam tweeted “It’s always good to back a winning team,” over a graphic which said “It’s a win!”

To get the biggest audience they used the hashtag #RWC2019. It’s tacky ambush advertising. If you didn’t spend money, then don’t ride on the backs of others. I expect better from one of the country’s blue-chip brands.

You get an Onion, Santam.

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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