

Tapping into relevant issues

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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I've always felt that one of the biggest marketing cons of all time is digital advertising ... and now there's hard evidence. Uber has brought legal action against a number of its digital suppliers and agencies for fraud.

I listened to a fascinating podcast on *Marketing Today*, where Kevin Frisch, former head of performance marketing and customer relationship manager at Uber, revealed how he and his team uncovered a number of large-scale, deliberate frauds perpetrated on the company.

As a result, he cut \$120m (R1.8bn) out of Uber's online ad budget of \$150m. And, guess what? He noticed no difference in the recruitment of either drivers or riders, which is what he was using digital platforms for.

Maybe that's one of the reasons Uber has yet to make a profit, and why myriad companies who are "digital native" or "digital first" are either losing money or not making as much as they should.



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Jessica Tennant 27 Feb 2017



And that's not counting the serious reputation damage you could do to your brand by having its ads appear alongside fascist or racist YouTube sites, for example.

I know I am biased but I still think print has the power to get your brand noticed ... particularly if you box cleverly.

In the case of print newspapers, if you can make ads linked to the news or issues real people (as opposed to influencers) are talking about, then you can get right to the top of the consumer's mind.

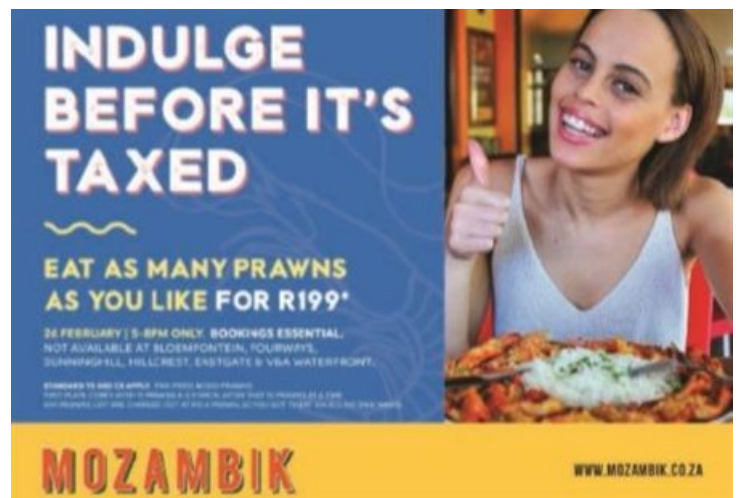
That's exactly what the Mozambik chain of restaurants did this week when they ran a simple print ad on Tito Mboweni's budget day, for an "all you can eat" prawns special.

What grabbed the attention – even before the pretty girl and the tempting prawns – was the headline: "Indulge before it's taxed".

It tapped into that cynicism among financially squeezed middle-class taxpayers. Tito didn't swing the tax axe, but Mozambik made its point.

Not only that, the ad performed a double role – brand building and awareness (positioning Mozambik as a brand which understands your troubles), but also as a call to action.

Prawn fans (and on a recent visit to Mozambik, my Amsterdam-based son proclaimed their prawns some of the best he's had) no doubt sat up and paid attention.



But what is also interesting is that this ad was done in-house – concept, copy, photo and execution under hand of Mozambik's PR specialist Hein Kaizer.

What makes him so good is his keen awareness of news and what constitutes a good story. No surprise, given he was once a journo. Orchids to Mozambik and to Kaizer and his team, not the least for saving a bundle on agency fees and commission.



Mozambik Restaurant to open in Cape Town

26 Jul 2019



I heard a disturbing story about two young black women who went car shopping. I had helped one of them in the past and made a few suggestions about cars they should look at.

They went to a Mazda dealer and were greeted almost with disdain or disbelief that they could afford a car (one is a doctor, the other a teacher). Not feeling welcome, although they did like the Mazda2, they moved on to a Hyundai dealer, where the reception couldn't have been more different.



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They were treated like prospective customers, offered coffee and given a full rundown of the cars and then offered a test drive. Only when the sales staff started on the paper work for a i20, which the doctor bought, did they discover her professional status.

I am not naming names because this sort of attitude is commonplace – and particularly that of car salespeople towards women of all colours – can be undoing the millions of rand the brand spends on marketing to women.

Hyundai seems to have entrenched a customer-first ethos more deeply than Mazda.



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Dentsu 15 Mar 2019



The lesson, if it needs repeating: never judge a book by its cover, especially when that cover is influenced by what you see in terms of colour and gender.

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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