

Audi ad transcends brands

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

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I am not going to call this column "advertising in the time of coronavirus" because I will personally try to drown in hand sanitiser the next person who uses the by now cliched phrase stolen from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

But the current crisis has offered opportunities for marketers ... although these have been good, bad and downright ugly.

Orchids must go to all those who reacted in a humanitarian way: here are some of the top performers (who all get Orchids):

- Mozambik restaurant chain as one of the first to put together public health advice – and to offer it (and its training videos) free of charge, even to competitors. Also one of the first to implement “social distancing” in its restaurants.



#OrchidsandOnions: Tapping into relevant issues

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- Ocean Basket, which suspended, temporarily, franchise charges for its operators.
- Pick n Pay, for coming up with a “pensioners’ hour”.
- Abduragmaan Mohamed, owner of Cape Town’s “Mr Cheap’s Shop” for giving hygiene packs to anyone over 65 for free.

The reason these people and companies are getting Orchids (and there are many more deserving ones) is because what they are doing is genuine civic duty, as opposed to cheaply exploiting a crisis. Many are those who hiked prices of in-demand products.

Some brands used the opportunity for timely advertising. The Nando’s team got people talking with their topical dig at competitor KFC, whose slogan is “Finger lickin’ good”. The simple execution, which went viral, said: “Turns out finger licking isn’t so good. Reach for the soap instead.”



Nando's latest ad campaign takes a cheap, sanitised shot at a rival

Andy Walker 19 Mar 2020



I suppose Nando's would argue – tongue-in-cheek – this was a “public service announcement” about hand washing to discourage virus transmission ... but we all know. But, because it got such good traction and made many smile, it gets a Orchid. But, with a caution: perhaps next time, don't pick on the opposition, because you're in the same awful boat and it could look just nasty.

An ad from overseas, for Audi, avoids that pitfall, but still gets across a useful message – and uses its own brand imagery to do so. Its well-known four-ring symbol is first separate (self-isolated), with the line “keep distance”, which is followed by the rings united and the line “stay together”. It's a message which at once burnishes yet transcends brands.

“Keep your distance, stay healthy, support each other – we are in this together. As a global company and a global community, our highest priority is to identify any opportunities to [#flattenthecurve](#). Contact us via social media with any questions. Stay safe. pic.twitter.com/IE3UQFcmZR— Audi South Africa (@audisouthafrica) [March 20, 2020](#)”

It also echoes Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar's St Patrick's Day message to his country, which is applicable worldwide. “It's time to come together by staying apart.”



#Covid19: Brands get creative promoting social distancing

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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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