

The BRICS brand and the weakest link

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I saw a cartoon about South Africa joining BRIC and that set me thinking. And, because I have a bit of a sporting background, I began thinking about a relay team and how the team wins or loses, based on the speed of the slowest team member.



What disturbs me is that we are now a team member of BRICS and this is supposedly going to make a huge difference to South Africa and our economic growth. I mean, our president told us so. How the connection is made between the two is tenuous, at best.

Relay team

Think about the slowest team member in the relay team. If that person isn't technically as proficient as the rest of the team, he or she will not perform to the same level. If that person is also not as fit as the rest of the team, he or she will do as well as the others.

So why should being a member of a team make the individual perform better? It won't. If that individual hasn't done the hard work, individually, it doesn't matter how much good will or shouting from the rooftops happens, he or she will let the team down. It doesn't matter which team that individual belongs to, he or she still won't compete optimally.

So if we (South Africa) didn't cut it as part of other brands, such as the AU or SADC, why should it be any different with BRIC? Could it be that the PR around BRIC has been more effective and led to a drive by the SA government to move out of the continent, in terms of economic growth and assuming that by being associated with a winning brand (BRIC), it could somehow motivate the country's citizens to work harder, work cheaper, work more efficiently?

Hidden agenda?

Well, the facts speak for themselves. The current members of BRIC are all relatively strong, fit and potent athletes. Their individual PR speaks for itself. The strengths and weaknesses are well-documented. So why would BRIC want a possible basket case in the team? Do they have their own hidden agenda? Or is it just good PR?

Can you imagine the behind-closed-doors board meeting: "We need more natural resources; we need to get them below market value; we need new markets; we need to show the rest of the developed world that we are a power bloc to be reckoned with. Who on the African continent can we sign-up without too much difficulty?"

On the one hand, our country is attractive and the PR hasn't been that bad...

SA: We still have a stock of most natural resources.

SA: The political situation is stable (we effectively have a one-party democracy).

On the other hand

And then on the other hand...

BRIC: We know that the government will go out of their way to help us;

BRIC: We know they need infrastructure development and it won't cost us that much, in dollar terms

BRIC: Their credit rating is pretty good and the country is pretty stable

The question really is whether the brand association will assist the country to lift its game. Based on our history with the AU, SADC and other continental associations, the jury is out. I guess we may have to start believing our own PR and get on with the job at hand - building our country into the powerhouse it could be.

For more:

- Bizcommunity: [South Africa, branded to the economic fast track](#)

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