

Lil-Lets is tops - period

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Talk spot: Safe space to discuss women's reproductive health; Onion to Telkom for wasting an opportunity by not communicating...

A young female colleague of mine recently wrote a touching, personal account of her battle with endometriosis, which is a “women’s” medical condition where tissue that should be growing inside the uterus grows outside. It can cause pain and heavy bleeding.

Being a man of a certain age – from the time when these sort of matters were not discussed in polite company – I’m a bit ashamed to say my first reaction was to ask her: Are you sure you want to do this? Yes, was her response, this is something we need to talk about.

In this country, all types of conservative thought patterns trap many women into not wanting to discuss what is happening with their bodies and, as for men trying to understand – in this macho country, forget it. Women must be alluring and competent in the kitchen but many of us men go “ewww” when confronted with any details about female health.

Yet, there are a number of initiatives to not only improve education and awareness around women’s health, but also to start a conversation.

One of the most notable is being piloted by Lil-Lets, the maker of sanitary towels and tampons. It has set up an online community – [Lil-Letstalk.co.za](https://lil-letstalk.co.za) – with the aim of establishing a safe space “where you can ask any question about periods at any life stage in a safe space”.

The platform is run by peer responders and a panel of experts, including a gynaecologist, pelvic floor specialist, clinical psychologist and postpartum doula.

In the launch episode, well-known TV personality Dineo Ranaka is joined by her mother, Siba Ranaka, grandmother Lilian Maphohoshe and her 13-year-old niece, Naledi Ranaka. The women then have an open and honest conversation about periods. But it is clearly uncomfortable for the older two, who come from a time and a community where, as in my past, these things were never talked about.

At one stage, Dineo Ranaka tweeted she was shocked to learn that her grandmother had never used sanitary pads.

What is so magnetic about the conversation is not the content, but the way it is unscripted and how, because of that, it reveals that we still have some way to go to get comfortable with issues to do with women's bodies. From a marketing perspective the campaign is brilliant: Lil-Lets cements its brand as the go-to expert when it comes to these matters but also, by remaining in the background as a facilitator (something many brands are unable to do in their quest for the advertising and marketing limelight), Lil-Lets comes across as doing a public service.

So, Orchids to Lil-Lets and to its agency, retroviral. There must be other brands out there that could think about similar efforts to make the lives of ordinary South Africans easier.

There are very few people in this country who have a good word to say about Telkom and its service (or lack of it).

The company has become almost a customer service "how not to" example and its response to customers normally just adds to the frustrations. Many have taken their telecommunications business elsewhere.

Therefore, you'd think that when Telkom has good news for its customers, it would crow to the high heavens. And giving your customers something for nothing is certainly something to make a marketing meal of.

Yet, most customers remained in the dark – I was one of them and so were a few of my colleagues – when Telkom suddenly doubled our fibre speeds this month... for no extra charge.

I found out from my sister, who had seen it on a tech website. I searched my e-mails in case I had missed a message from Telkom. Niks, nada.

Then I went on to the "customer portal" – where you can't actually log in where they tell you, but you have to go somewhere else (but that is another story and more Telkom incompetence...) – and could find no notification of the increased speed.

Guess what, Telkom? You are squandering a great (and incredibly cheap) marketing opportunity.

Where else in this country today would you get something for nothing?

Squandering an opportunity gets you an Onion from me.

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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