

In the tough going, get giggling

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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In this messed-up country of ours, when the going gets tough, the tough get giggling...and most of the time when a cynical look at our collapse goes viral, it will be Nando's who is responsible.



Their latest ad is one which you will have to watch multiple times, because there are so many references to our current situation which you may not pick up the first time around.

In telling a story about a Mars mission, it first takes the mickey out of Elon Musk, accusing him of wasting his time tweeting. Then it shows that in Mzansi, we make a plan and how this place has been preparing us for years for our trip to Mars – for example, potholes (after them a Martian landscape with be niks by comparison).

There follows a marvellous kaleidoscope of scene from SA life, all guaranteed to raise a smile – and particularly when Stage 6 hits and the lights go out... but a generator kicks in and keeps devices charged.

“We might have no power, but we are not powerless” is a surprisingly apt and strong message.

Eventually, we see the Mars mission space shuttle being prepared and it looks remarkably like it's topped by a minibus taxi (shades of that *Top Gear* episode back in the day?).

Almost at the end comes up the slogan, which originated in the liberation struggle: “Amandla, Awethu”. But with Nando’s added spicy twist: Again. It’s typical Nando’s and its good entertainment – and I like that because so many brands are focused these days on call to action and pricing that they forget that building a relationship with the consumer, and a long-lasting one at that, starts with them allowing you into their world ... and humour opens many doors.

So, Orchid for Nando’s.

Do yourself a favour, though. Watch the ad right to the end for the spicy ending. And then do it again, for the bits you missed. A bit like going back to the chicken and finishing off every last morsel.

“ One small step from the kasi, one quantum leap to [#Marzansi](#). pic.twitter.com/LsASz3t1Nj— NandosSA (@NandosSA) [November 4, 2022](#) ”

In Nando’s vein of cheeky, sharp, up-to-the-minute marketing, I did chuckle when a company called Fibre Boyz jumped on to the Twitter timeline of Iqbal Survé (the man whose newspapers brought you the priceless “decuplets” story).

After Survé and his minions campaigned frantically for the opponents of Cyril Ramaphosa, they suffered a nuclear-quality blood nose when the ANC’s nominations were announced for the end-of-year elective conference.

Survé complained about that and then, after experiencing a major “pile on” on Twitter, bleated that he was being attacked by “thousands” of “bots” paid for by the President.

Within minutes, Fibre Boyz had jumped on to post a pic of their automatic vacuum cleaner, saying: “Our #smartvacuum is just like a bot but we promise it is not paid for by Cyril...” A link was included and after I finished smiling at their cleverness – and giving the Tweet a thumbs-up – I went through to their site and looked at their range of electronic equipment.

Another bit of humour, coupled with a push for someone to take action – and for no cost outlay.

Well done to Fibre Boyz; you get a very unbot-like Orchid.



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We all know times are tough everywhere – but cheapskate brands going the bean-counter route and trying to make their advertising as cheap as possible by using generic imagery and videos is something which really irritates me.

We’ve seen this for years from many major car companies, who use overseas ads to push their often premium products. So we get nice clean, mid-Atlantic cities ... and most of them feature their vehicles driving through such scenery and nice, clean mid-Atlantic drivers. All in left-hand-drive cars.

What has started happening now, though, is brands – and their agencies (which are squeezed by the client on costs) – have cottoned on to the fact you can buy a huge range of “stock shot” material covering everything from aspiration, to tragedy, to adventure, to happy families.

That's what BestMed has opted for in its latest ad. It is difficult at first to tell what the ad is for, given the fact that everybody from insurance companies to the finance house uses similar imagery and messaging, which urges you to take you to "be free" and live your unique life.

In BestMed's case, they use a host of stock-shot video clips, urging you to "be free" and "be fearless". To illustrate the latter, they use a sequence of a skydiver freefalling from a plane. An Australian plane, judging by the registration on the wing.

Worse, though, is that, once you have been "fearless" and broken bones, or worse, as a result of your pioneering adventurous spirit, the medical aid will probably decline to pay because you were being reckless.

It's tired, formulaic, lazy advertising. It gets a stock shot Onion from me.

Got anything you'd like to say or got any great work I may not know about? Drop me a line at brendanjseery@gmail.com

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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