

Slick campaign gives new impetus to home-grown tourism

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

29 Sep 2015

The campaign for Tourism Month, executed this month by SA Tourism, could not have come at a better time for the tourism industry, beset as it is with dropping visitor numbers because of the new visa regulations...

Much of the focus around these regulations has been on the requirement that children must have their unabridged certificates with them, but probably more harmful to visitor numbers has been the insistence that visas must be of the biometric type.

This has undoubtedly deterred thousands of visitors from across the world - North and South America and Asia particularly (where South Africa has sparse diplomatic representation) - because they have to travel hundreds or thousands of kilometres simply to get a visa.

At the same time as this perfect example of shooting oneself in the foot is making our own tourism industry bleed, many other countries are going to the opposite extreme and making it ever easier for visitors to get visas.

I recently applied for a visa to Myanmar (formerly Burma) and began the online process before I left for work at 7.30 in the morning. When I got to the office, confirmation of the application - and my US\$50 payment (almost R400) - was in my e-mail. Two hours after that came news the visa had been approved.

So thumbs up to the tourist authorities in Myanmar.

It is a pity that one government department (which is effectively what SA Tourism is) had to try to pick up the pieces in the china shop after the Home Affairs bull, Malusi Gigaba, had been on his officious rampage.

It was also good to see that SA Tourism is now seemingly putting more emphasis on home-grown tourism, because this is what is going to keep that industry growing until we make it easier for the people with dollars, pounds, euros and yuan to come back.



© Nicola Del Muto - 123RF.com

I have liked a number of the ads and marketing executions by SA Tourism this month and I think they have given new impetus to its local tourism programme, *Sho't Left*.

I must declare that our group did benefit from the Tourism Month campaign, but this does not detract from the fact that it was a slick operation.

The slogan - "A Million New Experiences" - was also effective because it was a reminder that there is a huge amount to see in our own country, and it is much cheaper travelling here than overseas.

So Orchids to SA Tourism and its agency, Ireland-Davenport.

A sound ad, fighting on social media and a few radio stations, caught my attention recently, because it followed closely on the well-reported fracas between a woman metro cop in Joburg and an angry motorist.

The driver involved in the video of the incident, Clive Naidoo, became famous for his "epic fail" as the traffic cop stood her ground and hit back at his cheek.

Debonairs Pizza jumped quickly on the bandwagon, doing a spoof radio spot that shows Mr Naidoo was, in fact, speeding to take advantage of its "Real Deal" offer of a pizza for just R19.90. Not only does the piece raise a chuckle, but it gets across the marketing point with crystal clarity: Hey! Here's a great pizza deal!

Orchids to [Debonairs and its agency, FCB Joburg](#).

Government departments frequently claim the news media don't represent them fairly. That's why they often resort to placing adverts or advertorial sections in media.

Generally, though, these are thrown together with little regard for the advertising business mantra "entice them in" and appear as though they were made solely to cater for that "market of one" - the relevant minister or the director general.

If government departments applied a little private sector marketing creativity to their communication, I'm sure they would get through to a lot of people.

But - and this is a big but - the professional civil service communicators would have to stop the politicians from meddling.

Just how hard that would be for those communicators was illustrated perfectly in print ads run on behalf of the Road Traffic

Management Corporation (RTMC), which is involved in a legal brawl with Tasima, the IT company responsible for maintaining the national traffic database, eNaTiS.

Interestingly, Tasima started life as the government's own IT supplier, but I think there has been a privatisation or commercialisation along the way.

So we have the unedifying spectacle of a government department fighting with a quasi-government organisation.

What showed that a politician was interfering was that, after hundreds of words stating the corporation's case against Tasima, the ad ended with the words: "The Revolution Continues. Victory is Certain."

Excuse me... who, exactly, is the revolution being conducted against?

Someone who was once part of your own organisation? And what exactly does a fight over data have to do with any sort of revolution (just a reminder: this whole mess is a post-1994 phenomenon)?

Portraying everything you do as a government as part of a glorious people's revolution places you smack bang in the 1930s, with similar thinkers like Joe Stalin.

Propaganda - especially in a country that is nominally a democracy and where there is real freedom of speech - serves only to emphasise how out of touch you are with the 21st-century, digitally driven, open world.

So, RTMC, you get an Onion...

Note that Bizcommunity staff and management do not necessarily share the views of its contributors - the opinions and statements expressed herein are solely those of the author.

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.

■ #OrchidsandOnions: DA crosses line in political persuasion - 27 May 2024

■ #OrchidsandOnions: Scientists sail across the seas to satisfy their KFC craving - 17 Apr 2024

■ #OrchidsandOnions: Auto and General sets the standard in insurance claims - 11 Apr 2024

■ #OrchidsandOnions: Checkers pranks commuters over holiday weekend, Curro Holdings faces backlash - 4 Apr 2024

■ #OrchidsandOnions: The Boswell family's multi-generational journey with Ford SA - 25 Mar 2024

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>