

# Master marketer Jake White does it again

 By [Chris Moerdyk: @chrismoerdyk](#)

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If former Springbok rugby coach Jake White had been born 100 years earlier, he would have been an extremely successful snake oil salesman. Following on from his perfect timing when he very controversially quit as 'Bok coach just as his book was about to be released and which then sold like hotcakes as a result, he chose this past weekend to announce to the world that he would be looking to get his old job back at the end of the Rugby World Cup next year.

Once again, perfect timing, just as the 'Boks suffered their third humiliating Tri-Nations defeat and at a time when current coach Pieter de Villiers must be at the lowest ebb of his popularity.

## Natural born marketer

White is without question a natural born marketer, very shrewd and thoroughly ruthless. But, he does have a powerful brand - having won South Africa a world cup with just about the same team that has been walloped by the All Blacks and Wallabies in the past few weeks.

Instead of getting involved in sports coaching, White could have flourished in just about any big brand company one cares to mention. But, there would have been no challenge. For White, the notion of increasing sales of Coca-Cola or Black Cat Peanut Butter, BMWs or upmarket houses would be far too easy. Apart from which it would mean he would have had to deal with other marketers, which he would find hugely frustrating because he'd always feel so much more canny, clever and superior.

## Marketing deficient

So, to add spice to his life, he decided to throw in his lot with an organisation so untouched by marketing that he would be the only one around who could spell the word. The South African rugby hierarchy is so bereft of marketing skills and so naive to the power of the discipline that for years it was effectively sticking its chin out at White and inviting him to slug it. And he did that so well that all the time the rugby bosses were under the mistaken impression that they had been winning the fight against him.

Like many all-or-nothing marketers, White manipulated his bosses with breathtaking finesse. Take his book for example. Surely it was no co-incidence that it happened to be published so soon after the world cup? Of course not, that was brilliant marketing.

And surely it was no coincidence that straight after the world cup and just before the book was published White had a huge

set-to with his rugby bosses? Of course not, that was more brilliant marketing.

## PR plot

The marketer in White knew that the difference between reasonable sales for his book and making it not only South Africa's fastest selling book ever, but also beating Harry Potter sales records in the process, was to kick it off with some solid PR.

The PR that resulted from his fracas with SA Rugby was the kind of PR that big brands can only dream about.

## Managed the hype

Right from the word go, White has managed the hype around him. Managed to stay in the news. Managed to create news when there wasn't any. For four years he manipulated his rugby bosses with quite remarkable guile and on top of that he managed to manipulate the media with quite remarkable ease.

One cannot help but admire Jake White the marketer.

## ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK: @CHRISMOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on [moerdykc@gmail.com](mailto:moerdykc@gmail.com) and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](https://twitter.com/chrismoerdyk).

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