

Being a pain is one way to stand out

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

25 Mar 2015

Radio has always been a difficult medium through which to convey an advertising or marketing message: much as its proponents call it the "theatre of the mind", the reality is that most of us pay far more attention to visual and auditory cues...

A radio ad - and particularly one aired in a prime slot - has to have something that can grab a potential customer by the ears.

One of the things that works really well in radio is the irritation factor, where the voice of the person or the sound effects are awful but, because of that - not in spite of it - they can get the listener to focus.



© Syda Productions – [123RF.com](#)

Often the reaction is a cringe or an inward clenching of one's good taste muscles - but, in most cases, the brand will be remembered with clarity. (Think of Semble-It, Continental Linens and Hirsch's Home Store from the past.)

That is precisely the case with the latest radio ad for Land Rover Genuine Parts. It has a whining (not unlike a sick starter motor) voice repeating the words in a way that is supposed to suggest everything's working properly. And, it doesn't, and the voice changes, implying a major (and expensive) mechanical catastrophe.

The problem with the ad is that, with all things grating, it does get worse as time goes on and the media planners don't appear to have realised this, because it seems to be there every time I turn on the radio in the car.

A friend of mine (a former Land Rover Defender driver herself, so you can't accuse her of bias) so hates the grating noise that she mutes the radio when it comes on. She unhesitatingly give the ad an Onion.

But I disagree with her - and so did a number of ad people who were present when we were having the discussion. "The end justifies the means," was our conclusion.

The Land Rover Genuine Parts ad is awful. But it works as a piece of marketing communication, so it gets an Orchid from me.

Cell C hasn't had an easy time of it over the past few months - and I've given them a bit of stick myself about "how not to handle a customer complaint", relating to the angry client and the banner he printed and displayed in public - [click here for a reminder](#).

Yet I was unexpectedly surprised by the company's new headquarters (near the Buccleuch interchange in Joburg) when I went to have a meeting with them last week.

I had noticed the bold black-and-white Cell C sign (and wasn't it a stroke of marketing genius to change the colours in that logo a few years back?) while driving on the highway, but the building itself - no, the large campus - was the epitome of elegant industrial design.

It is every bit as impressive as Vodacom's Vodaworld was when those headquarters opened a decade or more ago.

The Cell C building sends a clear message (intentionally or unintentionally, I'm not sure which) that the company is tech-savvy, it is substantial and - important for it as a challenger brand to the Big Two mobile networks - it is here to stay.

For me, there was a stunning contrast from the last time I went to Cell C's headquarters, in rented office blocks in Rivonia.

Something is going right at Cell C and that brand confidence is well expressed in the building.

It's unusual for architecture or design to get an Orchid from me, but in Cell C's case, it deserves one.

(And one other observation: the meeting went on until after 6pm and when I finally left, there were plenty of young, energetic Cell C employees only heading home then - dedication, perhaps?)

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>