

Raid's mozzie repellent ad has a real bite

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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For some reason - tasty blood, perhaps - I am the person you need to be around when mosquitoes start their attacks. I am always the first to get bitten and sometimes the only one of a number of people in a room to feel the sting...

To say I hate mosquitoes is, therefore, an understatement. So the recent TV ads for Raid's liquid, electronically activated mosquito repellent have found a ready audience in me. But why I like them from a marketing point of view is that they tap into the classic marketing knowledge of a basic human truth.

We see the husband flailing around in bed at night trying to find and eliminate the source of the high-pitched buzzing, which is the prelude, he knows, to some frantic scratching. He leaps up on the bed, throws pillows and tries ineffectual swatting, King Kong-style.

The answer to mozzies and the recipe for a restful sleep is, as is revealed, Raid's little gadgets.

The ad is not running all that often at the moment, as we head into winter and, hopefully, the retreat of the mosquito total onslaught, but it still resonates.

Besides, we did have one of summer's last holdouts attacking me last week, so this insect is not done yet.

But, an Orchid to Raid for a simple, yet effective, and, I am happy to say, well-made local ad.



I don't normally comment on foreign ads or marketing ideas, but one I saw on Facebook the other day was a classic piece of out-of-the-box thinking.

A company that sells kitty litter - you know, the stuff that lines the boxes in which the felines "do their business" - was trying to drum up business in the US.

They came up with a unique, and brilliant way of getting across their message... by communicating with cats.

They sent out flyers - pushing them through letter slots in front doors, mostly - which were impregnated with catnip.

If there was a cat in the house or the flat, the moggie would soon be grabbing and attacking the piece of paper as the catnip drove it wild.

The owners, of course, couldn't miss the commotion and would have looked to see what was causing it: a bargain price on kitty litter.

A clever idea, and one which deserves an Orchid.

I'd love to hear if any local companies managed to grab your attention in as effective a way...

It was ironic that the SA National Roads Agency (Sanral), recipient of multiple Onions from me for dishonesty and incompetence in their marketing campaigns, should launch its eight-page insert in the Easter weekend newspapers.

Despite Sanral's trumpet-blowing claim that its main aim was to provide roads and training to make travelling by vehicle safer, the reality was, according to Howard Dembovsky of the Justice Project South Africa, that the Easter road toll death increased 48 percent.

It was interesting that the insert appeared on Easter Sunday, when more than half of the holiday weekend was over.

One would have thought that a logical agency like Sanral would have used the insert the week before Easter so people could, perhaps, have their awareness of road safety heightened.

Or maybe it was hurried through to try to take some of the sting out of some embarrassing situations for its chief executive, Nazir Alli.

Questions have been asked about the truthfulness of affidavits it submitted in the court wrangles over a proposed toll road for the Eastern Cape.

And then, the Appeal Court overturned a judgment which was helping Alli and Sanral keep secret the details of toll proposals for the Western Cape. No wonder - Cape people will pay up to three times what Gautengens do for these electronically tolled roads.

However, to spend this amount of money in compiling and distributing a supposedly safety-orientated pamphlet, at a time when its image badly needs polishing, gets Sanral another marketing Onion.

And, talking about polishing, Mr Alli, trying to make yourself and Sanral gleam is like polishing a turd.

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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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