

The Bland and the Spicy (part 1)

 By [Colin Ramparsadh](#)

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Bland can mean many things... Tasteless, mild, ordinary, boring and in some cases enough is enough and I can't take this anymore (video).

FNB's Steve campaign has been running for some time now and in the beginning it was an amazing campaign. The different variations of the radio executions were exciting and you always looked forward to the next instalment. Personally, the Mrs Dlamini ad is my favourite. But over time the campaign got quite tired. They were saying the same thing over and over again. It became wallpaper.

We know FNB offers e-bucks, iPads, Cellphones, data, cheaper 3G bundles, better service and competitive bank charges. Then Steve took a break and went on holiday. He is back now still working for Beep Bank but now trying to open a FNB account over the phone.

His bank now also offers iPad's and so on. But the campaign is exhausted.

Quite frankly this whole Beep Bank novelty has worn out to the point that it is now irritating. Steve has become bigger than the brand.

We don't ask "Did you hear that latest FNB ad?" We now ask, "Did you hear that Steve ad?" When the brand becomes secondary to the character in advertising then you know it's time to go. You remember the Boet and Swaer Castrol ads some years back? Well they eventually became a bigger hit than Castrol itself. In Steve's case, he has outperformed the brand. It is time Steve went on retirement.

Sure, FNB got a lot of mileage out of the campaign and increased its market share. But it needs to take its brand back and ensure the hero is the product and its offering and not the character in the ad. Thanks Steve, you have entertained us for so long but it is time to go. This campaign has now reached bland.

Spicy

Every so often we find an ad that truly resonates with South Africa. The latest offering from Vodacom and its Errol Ad is such an example. It uses ordinary folk in day-to-day situations to get its point across. I am sure most men out there feel like Errol from time to time. But what makes this ad work is that it is simple and demonstrates the product benefits through its story. You can run Errol, but you can't hide. A real spicy ad from Vodacom - and here it is...

ABOUT COLIN RAMPARSADH

Colin Ramparsadh, the owner and CEO of Media Mutation. Colin has spent 30 years in the ad industry, working, among others, at Y&R, Leo Burnett, Saatchi & Saatchi and ZenithOptimedia. Email him at colin@mediamutation.co.za, read his blog at <http://colinramparsadh.wordpress.com/> and follow @colinramparsadh on Twitter.
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