

Casting net in the right place

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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The last time I had occasion to comment on the marketing efforts of Sea Harvest, it was to point out that it and its advertising agency had committed the cardinal marketing sin of producing work that in effect promoted its competitor...

How many of you remember the cute little animated ad where the penguins break into the fish factory and steal all the fish? I bet that, if you do remember, you'll associate it with I&J, Sea Harvest's competitor.

At the time the ad came out, at least seven out of 10 people who had seen the ad later associated it with I&J.

Although Sea Harvest and its agency pooh-poohed the suggestion that they were blowing a sizeable proportion of their ad budget promoting a competitor, they did move pretty quickly to redesign the Sea Harvest packaging to make it more distinctive - and then incorporate that new design into a re-edit of the penguin ad.

It was a classic case of a really good idea badly executed. The latest Sea Harvest ad sticks to the basics - the sea and fish.



Screenshots from the ad

It shows us the people - the fishermen - behind the tasty piece of crumbed fish on our dinner plates.

The theme is that a fisherman always loves the seas - and, by implication, the job he does. The ad also shows a young boy loving his fishing... and loving his Sea Harvest crumbed fish when he goes home in the evening.

The closing shot emphasises that motif of love and commitment from the fishing community, many of whom come from a long line of fishermen. It shows two men talking as the fishing boat heads back to harbour.

One says to the other something along the lines of "You're going home..."

The first fisherman replies, with a smile, "I am home..."

Nice little piece of cinema and an effective marketing tool for Sea Harvest, whose logo is included at the end, just so there is no chance of confusion.

Orchids to Sea Harvest and its agency, Cape Town-based CRT create.

Leaning out of the window, as I often do, observing the lack of clothing on the digital emperor, I am still sometimes gobsmacked by the sheer audaciousness of claims about the efficacy of digital advertising.

The latest dropped into my e-mail this week, proclaiming: "It should be clear to everyone that mobile is the undisputed heavyweight channel through which to reach South African consumers."

To spare the writer having to justify this piece of nonsense, I won't name him, but I will say that it is far from clear to me that mobile is the "undisputed heavyweight" when it comes to communicating with consumers.

Think I am just a grumpy old man? Let me point out that usage of a medium like mobile does not in any way, shape or form equate to people actually engaging with marketing messages on that medium.

Ask yourself: When was the last time you actually opened an ad (often unsolicited) on your phone?

When, however, did you most recently get angry about this intrusion on your privacy?

Oh - but the pundits will say - what about Facebook and Twitter? How many times have you opened an ad in either of those social networks? Exactly.

I was reading somewhere that current international CTRs (click-through rates or the number of people who actually click on an ad and go through to a site or a marketing message) sits at 0.06 percent. In other words, six out of every 10,000 people who see a digital ad actually act on it.

Great return on investment, isn't it?

One lot that is going to get no return on its investment for its uninvited marketing messages, which pop up on my cellphone regularly, is Hollard Insurance. Not that I need your sort of products at the moment - I am happy with the service I get from a broker - but if I did, I would go elsewhere... to someone who hadn't annoyed me and invaded my personal space.

What makes it worse, of course, is that if you want to stop the pestering you have to SMS STOP to opt out... at your own cost! Or you have to register your number on a Direct Marketing Association database, which again takes time and effort.

So an Onion to Hollard.

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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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