

Welcome to the latest Monty Python fiasco

 By [Chris Brewer](#)

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The advertising industry is in big trouble. It seems to be on a suicide mission assisted by those young people with pimples who think they know best but who, in fact, know little about calculating reach and frequency and other analyses and ably assisted of course by our Military Junta.

I'd like to take a glance at both.



Photo by Roman Kraft on Unsplash

Advertising, by its very nature, is intrusive. It often gets in the way, and although many criticise the process it sometimes has very noble or important things to say.

There are many but here are a few:

The announcement of a new product/service.

The announcement of a price change.

To beg (as in charity).

To remind (“power cuts from 14:00 to 16:30 – turn off major appliances”).

To prompt (as in “your account requires settling”).

To legalise (like filing for divorce or bankruptcy).

To seek help (“I’ve lost my dog”).

To offer help (“I just found a dog”).

To warn (as in inoculations against measles).

To sell.

To buy.

You get the idea.

Older admen talk about the “good old days” which, whilst they were fun, weren’t doing their jobs very well in hindsight because they didn’t have the choices we had later (which has all changed of course).

There is, and always will be, huge “wastage” when the wrong market sees an ad, and because there were far fewer media opportunities, that happened a lot. But that pales into insignificance when compared to the wastage seen today. I think we did better before because we had “instinct” – all they have today are automated calculations based on that an untrained operator feeds in.

Consider the state of the media.

“ Advertisers have jumped the traditional advertising ships such as newspapers and magazines like fleas off a dead dog. ”

So what are we left with?

Radio. It works but, for some reason, there have been very few good radio producers in SA.

Newspapers. Forget. In fact expect more closures any day now.

Magazines. There are a few that will just about survive – but not many.

Cinema. Has always remained static.

TV. Well, the SABC is a disaster. There are other networks and, at a rough guess I reckon I have access to many, many thousands of channels on different platforms. What this means, of course, is that you cannot accurately estimate who or how big your audience will be.

Social media. I thought it was cheap. Wrong. An Estate Agent told me recently that his advertising budget has more than doubled since he started using an online advertising platform.

Social media is like the parson’s egg – good in places and disgusting in others.

With a few (very few) exceptions it disseminates fake news, hate, racism extreme irritation and basically rubbish. A handful of our very good writers get published on the internet from time to time but who knows how many take any notice? Oh sure, the 22-year-old “analyst” will tell you Max du Preez had a million “clicks” but what does that mean? Just about nothing.

When we were producing the All Media Products Survey (AMPS) there were 35,000 interviews done annually. Face-to-face interviews, about 30 to 45 minutes long. We knew the gender, the area in which they lived, their race, whether they smoked or drank alcohol, which magazines/newspapers/tv programmes they liked, what their favourite hair shampoo was and so much, much more.

Now all an advertiser knows is that he had a “click” on his ad.

Progress? I think not.

Social media started killing traditional media before the coronavirus but the writing was on the wall. Then came the lockdown – the nail in the coffin.

Following decisions by Associated Press and Caxton, the following magazines are now shut down. Finished.

Associated:

Cosmopolitan
House & Leisure
Good Housekeeping
Women on Wheels

Caxton:

Bona
Essentials
Farmer's Weekly
Food & Home
Living & Loving
People
Rooi Rose
Country Life
Garden & Home
Vrouekeur
Woman & Home
Your Family

There are others and even more on their heels.

And soon several newspapers will follow. Mark my words.

Anyway, now on to Cyril's Circus.

Well, I don't think the Python writers could have come up with the hysterical nonsense that we've been living with.

Much wittier writers than I have had their say on the idiotic behaviour of our government but many of their decisions leave me speechless. Not just me either because the incredulity is now global. We're the laughing stock of the world (well, we would be if it wasn't so serious). Banning of the sale of open-toe sandals and long shorts (short shorts are okay). Arresting a guy because he took his 10-month old baby for a quick walk on the beach.

Oh dear Cyril, what *are* you doing? You're far from being a stupid man and much, much more clever than me – so why behave like a clown and vote for incredibly crazy rules? You were the country's hero. Now you're the butt of a thousand jokes.

I think it's time you took yourself and your cabal back to the circus. You could also fire a couple of ministers – that might help.

Cheers,

Chris

ABOUT CHRIS BREWER

Having joined the ad industry in London, Chris Brewer spent most of his career in media analysis and planning - but has performed just about every advertising task from Creative to Research. He's an honorary lifetime member of the Advertising Media Association and regularly advises agencies and clients regarding their media plan costs and strategies. He is also often asked to talk at industry functions. Email: chris@brewers.co.za. Twitter: [@brewersapps](https://twitter.com/brewersapps). Read his blog: www.brewersdroop.co.za

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