

#OrchidsandOnions - Toyota leads the marketing way

By [Brendan Seery](#)

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And England's Marmite campaign hits Australia's Vegemite for a six.



Screen grab from the ad.

My colleague Seelan Pillay made a telling observation the other day: great ad agencies are made by great products.

Nowhere is that more in evidence than in the relationship between SA's biggest vehicle brand, Toyota, and its ad agency for the past 58 years, FCB Joburg.



Toyota loves FCB Africa: The 57 year-strong brand relationship

Leigh Andrews 15 Dec 2017



Toyota's products have, without doubt, stood the test of time.

I reckon 99 motorists out of 100 would use the word “Toyota” to complete the sentence “As reliable as a ...”

The quality of the company’s cars, trucks and bakkies has become legendary in the proper sense of a word which is so often over-used by marketers.

That has, I suppose, made the job of FCB that much easier – knowing that the brand promises they constructed for Toyota would not wither in the heat of South African reality.



Toyota Hilux turns 50, celebrates with everyday legends in new campaign from FCB Joburg

Nahana Communications Group 8 Aug 2019



Yet, back in the day, the agency had its work cut out convincing South Africans that this sort of “Jap crap” (as some cynics labelled it) was going to be in it for the long haul.

But do the work, they did – producing the vast majority of the material for Toyota in SA and coming up with some unique South African advertising along the way.

So successful were they that, for a time in the '80s and early '90s, Toyota’s marketing people must have had very little to do other than collect their pay cheques and drive to and from work in their Corollas.

Toyota SA launches new Corolla Hatch with TVC from FCB Joburg

Nahana Communications Group 28 Feb 2019



The explosion of the motor market post-1994 has meant competition has heated up immensely and, despite the quality of the products, FCB and Toyota take their marketing very seriously.

Over the years, they’ve got plenty of Orchids from me... and the odd Onion. The most memorable of the latter drew an avalanche of hate mail when I suggested that Buddy the boxer dog was past his sell-by date and that maybe they should put him down.



[Orchids & Onions] Yappy days for the woofers from an old Buddy...

Brendan Seery 28 Feb 2017



An Orchid I never gave to FCB was for an ad they did about 15 years ago for the frumpy second-generation Camry.

In the TV commercial, the car looked almost attractive. Anyone who can make a Camry look even halfway sexy is an advertising genius...

Toyota’s legendary Hilux bakkie – the best-selling vehicle in the country – is the epitome of the brand and its values. And, in truth, Toyota and FCB would have to do no advertising at all and Hilux would still be tops, so powerful is its image.



Did someone say 'meerkat'? Toyota SA and old family friends launch bespoke limited-edition Hilux

Nahana Communications Group 29 Jul 2019



Every five years or so, the company brings out a “tribute” model and the Legend 50 is a reminder that the Hilux is 50 years old.

The latest ad produced by FCB is not one of the best Hilux ones, but it doesn’t need to be. It just needs to remind people that this bakkie is “tougher” than the rest.

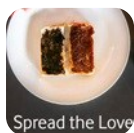
An Orchid this week for Toyota and FCB Joburg for producing consistently effective, and uniquely South African, advertising.

There’s been a wonderful Anglo-Australian advertising battle during the latest Ashes series.

After the Aussies won the first Test match, Vegemite (the uniquely Oz spread) couldn’t resist crowing. Vegemite took out full-page ads in newspapers in Britain, smack in the middle of the cricket reports.

The ad said: “G’day, news has reached Down Under that free jars of Marmite are being handed out at the Ashes to try to prove it tastes better than our Vegemite.”

It went on: “You see, Vegemite is a far stronger taste, made of resilience and fortitude with a dash of cunning and guile.”



Spreading the beef with a new Twitter turf war

Leigh Andrews 3 Dec 2014



In a nod to Steve Smith’s heroic performance, it went on: “Vegemite tastes like back-to-back tons on your return Test. Vegemite tastes like a come-from-behind victory by 251 runs.”

Rubbing Vegemite into the wounds, it concluded: “You lot won’t like the taste of Vegemite. Because Vegemite tastes like Australia. Catch ya at Lord’s.”

The Brits, being the Brits and having invented dry humour, sent back what must count as one of advertising’s all-time great “burns”.

“ In a similar full-page ad, Marmite (the British equivalent), said: 'Dear Vegemite, We might not taste like Australia, but love it or hate it, we won't be tampering with it. See you at the home of cricket. #MarmyArmy'. The barb was a reference to the Australian cricket team's being caught cheating by tampering with the ball in SA. ”

Apart from an Orchid nod to both ad teams, I must say that Marmite hit this one for six.

But it once again makes me sad we don't allow comparative advertising in this country. Both ads would have been banned here...

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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