

# How to blow up your brand in five minutes



By [Louise Marsland](#)

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You'd think that after the [BIC South Africa saga](#) in which they offended just about every woman on the planet with a sexist social media campaign, that brands would think twice about their posts. But no, Pick n Pay showed us in five minutes this morning how to shame your brand with one stupid tweet.

Hoping to make a few people laugh, it is Friday after all, I retweeted out a link to a mommy blogger's post about the teeny rubber toys called Stikeez that Pick n Pay are giving away with every R150 spent. It's become a total craze among kids and mom and blogger [Celeste Barlow](#) wrote about the craziness that these toys have generated among kids.

And what did Pick n Pay do? Ignore it? Tweet that they're glad we're talking about their products? Reply with a funny, faintly ironic tweet? No, they told me to delete my tweet because of the "highly inappropriate" content. \*Face palm\*.

“ [@Louise\\_Marsland](#) Hi There. Kindly remove your tweet as the content is highly inappropriate.- Pick n Pay  
([@PicknPay](#)) [August 14, 2015](#) ”

Barlow is a very funny writer, a winner of blogging awards, she pulls no punches about how tough it can be to be a mom and she swears a lot. Like many of us. I love her writing and her honesty. She also wished a venereal disease on the Pick n Pay marketer that came up with the idea for this promotion which is driving parents nuts, but it is a satirical column!



I'm a mom as well as a journalist - I read parent blogs, I belong to moms groups on Facebook with thousands of members. Yes thousands. They are very influential and while we do share pix of odd rashes that our kids have somehow developed, we also share support, sell and swap things, and make each other laugh. (There are dads groups too, I'm not trying to be sexist here, let's be clear on that!).

After Pick n Pay's tweet, it only took five minutes for the internet to make [@PicknPay](#) the next #bashtag, indulging in 'social shaming' with tweets about Pick n Pay's censorship, lack of humour, lack of understanding about how social media works, etc etc. All very entertaining and all very sad, because it seems as if the learnings from other brand fails on social media are not taken on board. That consumers aren't heard. That brands don't listen to their agencies or employ marketers that actually understand consumers.

“ [@PicknPay](#) [@Louise\\_Marsland](#) Come on, PnP. This is not how things work on social media. You are only drawing more attention to the post.- Gus Silber ([@gussilber](#)) [August 14, 2015](#) ”

“ [@Louise\\_Marsland](#) tweets funny PnP column. [@PicknPay](#) wants her to remove tweet! Hilarious:

<https://t.co/nAq5QknMki> <https://t.co/uu9Xi0Msc3>- Alastair Otter (@alastairotter) [August 14, 2015](#) ”

“ @PicknPay @Louise\_Marsland You seriously just tweeted to a journalist telling them to remove a comment? You are for a fun weekend.- MarkLives.com (@marklives) [August 14, 2015](#) ”

“ @PicknPay Hey, I recognise you! You headed the Censorship Board pre 1990! Asshole. @Louise\_Marsland- AndrewPerkin (@Perks\_ZA) [August 14, 2015](#) ”

“ @andreajsmit @PicknPay @Louise\_Marsland thanks, I was getting jittery without my daily dose of outrage #brandfail- Garg Unzola (@gargunzola) [August 14, 2015](#) ”

“ @cathjenkin @gussilber @PicknPay @Louise\_Marsland oh dear Pick 'n Pay, go chat to Bic about the intricacies of social media...- Cath Fern (@bassetzoo) [August 14, 2015](#) ”

“ @PicknPay @Louise\_Marsland Dear Pick n Pay social team,

*You are the best! Lots of love.*

Virgin Active and Bic SA- Carl Angus (@Sageville) [August 14, 2015](#) ”

As I tweeted after, I didn't mean to start another social media sh\*tstorm, I wanted to share a Friday funny. But brands really do have to look hard at what they are saying to their consumers - and the media in this case, by-the-by.

Apart from the obvious attempt at censorship and freedom of expression issues yadda yadda, what image is the brand trying to project? That they have no sense of humour? That they don't understand satire? That they don't read parenting blogs to understand how parents really think?

It is unprofessional and rude and sucky. It makes me want to avoid your brand for being out of touch. But hey, thanks for the laughs Pick n Pay!

*\*UPDATE: Pick n Pay did eventually say sorry, a few hours later.*

“ @Louise\_Marsland Sorry, we shouldn't have asked you to remove your tweet.- Pick n Pay (@PicknPay) [August 14, 2015](#) ”



*\*UPDATE 2: David North, Group Executive - Strategy and Corporate Affairs, Pick n Pay, called to apologise later in the afternoon. Now that's how you do it.*

## ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: [www.sourceagency.co.za](http://www.sourceagency.co.za).

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