

Your best friend in a time of need

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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After a year like this, we all need something light to either take our minds off the world around us - or remind us of the simple things in life...like animals, which offer you unconditional love, no matter what a clown you may appear to people outside.



And, on the human side of that relationship, pets can become best friends. Sorry – let me rephrase that: Dogs can become your best friend. Cats? Not so much...you live your life according to what they want, not the other way around.

That latest ad for Ultra Pet takes the idea of friendship a step further in making the faithful dog half-human. So, we see Cape Town cult icon and character actor WillyBalls playing the “dog” as he and his owner do the normal human-dog things around the town.

And, even though you know it’s two okes, the absurdity makes it work...because we see WillyBalls doing the doggy things – hanging panting out of a car window, chasing a frisbee and even cocking his leg (or the human equivalent thereof) against a tree.

All of the foibles of a dog are there and captured nicely...leading into the punchline when the two sit together. Human enjoys a sandwich and offers it to doggie, but it gets refused because dog wants the Ultra Pet packet.

The message is: If he really was your best friend, you'd let him choose the food he'd like to eat. The ad is light, it is humorous and gets across the message.

So, Orchids to Ultra Pet, Retroviral and Panther Punch.

Another eye-catching piece of local work is the sort of execution which often gets overlooked because it is a "house ad", promoting the media on which it runs. That, though, doesn't mean ads can't be clever or funny.

And SuperSport on DStv has scored a goal with house ads running currently. They feature a shrink talking to a young woman and asking her what she sees when he holds up that old favourite "Rorschach Test" inkblot, which is a tool used by psychologists to assess people.



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The first SuperSport one which caught my eye was her looking earnestly at the inkblot and saying she could see a scrum. Shrink, fascinated, gets sucked in so much, he eventually asks: "So, who's putting the ball in?"

The latest is to showcase the vast array of sports on SuperSport for the month of December.

Again, the psychologist is fascinated as the woman describes voice singing and rising to a crescendo as they go in search of three points. The shrink says: "Show me" – then cut to a video montage of some of the great sporting entertainment lined up for this month.

"If you're not seeing it all you don't have SuperSport" is one payoff line, while another, equally good, is "If you don't have SuperSport, you don't have December."

Good work people – Orchids for SuperSport, C Squared Productions and DStv.

Clearly, our Political Princess, Tourism Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, has plenty of things other than tourism on her mind at the moment.

Sadly, those minding the shop while she campaigns need a lesson in accuracy, especially when it comes to marketing

material.

On Sunday, the Department of Tourism joyfully put out a Tweet to promote South Africa using our wide variety of wildlife. They choose a stock shot image from Shutterstock...but clearly, nobody bothered to check it or, if they did, they need to go back to school to redo African Wildlife 101.



Included in the image were Indian elephants, a tiger, a tapir and what looked like reindeer.

So the comment "our flora and fauna remain one of our greatest assets" fell a bit flat, to be kind.

This sort of incompetence is par for the course with most government departments. But how do you get a job with a tourism agency when you cannot recognise "our greatest assets?" Even worse, how did you, the person's supervisor – and who presumably signed off on this – get a job?

Once again, a government department needs to be told: leave marketing communication to the professionals. If this sort of thing gets out further – and the department did delete the Tweet pretty quickly, although by then it had been screenshot and passed around – you could do serious damage to our image as a tourist destination.

An Onion to the Department of Tourism. I think I will keep an eye on you in the future...

Got anything you'd like to say or got any great work I may not know about? Drop me a line at brendanjseery@gmail.com

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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