

Food Lovers Market - a brand of sincerity

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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I find it a bit bizarre, to be honest, when I see a company boasting that it was "established in 1993". C'mon I want to say, that was only yesterday. Er, actually, it was 30 years ago and that's a long time to keep any business going.



It's even more remarkable if it is a business which has grown by leaps and bounds – because that tells you something about customer loyalty. And also, noteworthy if the company is still in the hands of the people, or family, which set it up, because so often these days, business founders cut and run and take their loot as soon as a big conglomerate shows up, cheque in hand.

For all of those reasons, I was attracted to the TV ad celebrating 30 years in business for the Food Lover's Market group.

A family place

Brian and Mike Coppin began the business in Cape Town in 1993, as Fruit & Veg City. The brothers were hands on with the first store, being involved in painting and shop fitting and setting up their at the time unique offering of huge displays of fruit and veg. A bit like a market, for those who've even been down to a municipal one to witness farmers bring in their fresh produce before the crack of dawn.

The image of freshness, coupled with the sense that this was a “family place around the corner”, where you would be treated as more than just a member of the queue at the till, has been maintained to this day, even though the brand has now become Food Lover’s Market (a little subtle move upmarket, perhaps?).

The initial operation had six employees, some of whom are still employed in the business... but it has now grown into an enterprise with 17,000 employees, whom the group refers to as “team members”.

The ad captures all of the positives of the brand over the years, linking vignettes from the beginning (using actors) to the present day, when the family is present and welcoming customers as they’ve always done.



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27 Feb 2023



It’s simple but it does have that elusive sincerity which is missing in so many brands and so much advertising today.

So, a 30-year-anniversary Orchid to Food Lover’s Market.

Badly executed marketing

Many people have made bundles of money (those in the media being the first in line) because of the egos of our politicians and those ANC apparatchiks who run our state-owned enterprises.

It was that cynicism born of experience which drew me to a huge, full-page advert in the *Sunday Times* this past weekend. It wasn’t marked as an ad, nor was there any indication that it was advertorial, but its layout and the bizarre content made it quite clear that this was not the output of the *Sunday Times* editorial team.

That said, though, it was difficult to fathom the point of the piece, which was billed as a “Q & A – Doctor Kgaogelo Legodi”, who was once Nelson Mandela’s eye specialist and was, we were told in the gushing piece, elected as president of the World Ophthalmology Congress in 2020. The article, which stopped just short of deifying the man, included a number of his other awards and achievements, dating back a decade or more.

Bureau – still was not making a pitch for convention business, although the body did organise the conference at which Dr Legodi triumphed in 2020.

It was muddled, badly executed marketing which seemed nothing more than a huge ego stroke for Dr Legodi... not that he needed it because his accolades speak for themselves.

Why then?

This being SA Tourism – they who wanted to blow R1bn of our money on a highly dubious sponsorship of English football club Tottenham Hotspur – I bet it is another excuse to liberate taxpayer money and steer it in the direction of those who might “deserve” it.

This rubbish is a shocking waste of money and something that perhaps should be looked into.

It gets an Onion from me.

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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