

When was the sale lost?

 By [Chris Brewer](#)

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Every now and then I find myself looking at a vehicle that carries no detail about the company the driver works for and what they do - such a wasted opportunity.



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Then there are the cars, vans and trucks where some overly zealous creative-type person has gone so far over the top that the design completely disguises the product. I noticed one recently which, I do admit, looked extremely attractive. It was unfortunate that the designer had chosen such a fancy typeface that I couldn't understand anything written there. I mean anything. Again, such waste of a potentially highly visible medium capable of reaching an audience of several hundred a day.

Of course, it goes without saying that company vehicles should be kept in the best possible condition and always clean (unless it's in the Western Cape where a dusty or dirty car is virtually a status symbol these days).

But there can be a time when all the identification possible can have the complete opposite to what was intended. What I'm talking about is the quality of the driver.

Quite recently I was on my way to a store to buy some plumbing supplies for the new house we're building. I was about to spend rather a lot of money – certainly by my standards – and I was looking forward to ordering all the bright and shiny

stuff.

On the freeway, I was in the overtaking lane because there were a few slower drivers in the normal lane. So, careful not to break the speed limit and avoid any accident, I was passing them, with every intention of pulling over to the left lane as soon as the opportunity arose.

I noticed him in my rear view mirror first – a panel van bearing down on me at one hell of a rate and, as we've all come to expect these days, he drove up to within a few millimetres of the back of my car.

So I did what I always do in such a situation, nothing. I carried on as normal because I had no intention of letting an idiot force me to speed.

Then he sounded his hooter and flashed his lights.

My first thought that there was some kind of emergency, until I noticed that the two guys in front seats were laughing and smoking. So, clearly not an emergency then.

Eventually I saw a spot coming up on the left where I could pull over, so I put the flickers on to tell Michael Schumacher what I was doing – but that clearly wasn't enough for this guy because as I was moving over he was trying to overtake me on the left.

Well, this threw him into a rage because he was now still behind me, but in a slower lane. Ha!

He didn't have to wait long before he could pull out again into the right-hand lane and as he drew level with me, both he and his mate were making violent finger gestures at me and shouting what I was fairly sure was not “thanks for letting me pass – have a nice day.”

It was then that I noticed the name of the very same company I was on my way to see written on the side of his van. Oh what luck! Obviously, as soon as I could, I turned off the freeway and went straight to their fiercest rival and spent my small fortune there.

The sale was lost on the road and I guess they were blissfully unaware of the damage they were doing to their company.

I was thinking about having my own business name, “Brewer's Advertising Data” sign-written on the side of my car but decided against it. For one thing it's invariably filthy and, secondly, I don't want to spoil my reputation in the ad industry just by being a careful driver!

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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