

Chicken Licken and Joe Public deliver a soul fire ad

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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They say rivalry and competition improves the breed and this certainly seems to be the case in marketing, although our advertising oversight people continue to ban comparative advertising.



Personally, I think lifting the ban would be no bad thing – too much of comparing Brand A with Brand B would, in the long run, produce boring ads.

Concentrated assault

So, while attacking your competitor may be verboten, you can still get down to a nuclear arms race between your ads, hoping that the more attention your spot gets, the better your brand will do. It won't do any harm, either, if you make a concentrated assault on your opponent's creative high ground.

That is what I see happening between the long-time icon of cheeky and amusing advertising Nando's and its challenger, Chicken Licken. Nando's would pooh-poo the idea of Chicken Licken being a competitor because the latter is supposedly more down-market.

I wouldn't be so sure of that. I saw somebody Tweeting (sorry, Elon, old habits die hard) the other day that they had had Chicken Licken for the first time and were gobsmacked about how good it was. So, perhaps the noteworthy nature of Chicken Licken's advertising – and the fact it is now a serious competitor to Nando's in the homegrown, funny ads category – is making a difference.

Rise to Hollywood

The latest Chicken Licken video spot (because it appears not only on TV but also across social media where long-form storytelling is more at home) is another in the line of interesting, humorous tales. And I say tale deliberately – this is a story crafted to lead the watcher down a road to the twist at the end, which happens to reveal not only a secret, but a reason to try Chicken Licken's new product.

We see an actor, Kwezi Duma, who is in desperate need of some coaching, for fear he will lose his future because of his wooden, emotionless delivery. Along comes agent/smooth talker Razz Matazz (no, not the clown-in-chief who used to run (down) our railways and is now ANC secretary-general) who manages to put him on the road to stardom.



#OrchidsandOnions: Lekkeslaap gives us a *lekker* ad

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And we see his rise, to the heights of Hollywood, where he is renowned for bringing tears and sweat into his heart-wrenching portrayals.

Finally it's revealed as we go into the star's caravan on a movie lot, that Razz Matazz's secret is some juicy Chicken Licken portions, accompanied by its hot sauce, Soul Fire. Instant tears and sweat...

The production values are amazing throughout the ad, which takes us on an entertainment ride, from Shakespearean theatre to courtroom drama, to gangster movies to science fiction. No surprise that the director is the legendary Greg Gray of Romance Films. I don't think South Africans realise how world-class some of our production houses are.

And, of course, it is again ad agency Joe Public helping push the brand to even further success.

Orchids all round to Chicken Licken, Joe Public, Romance Films and Greg Gray.

Your response, Nando's?

The truth

Ad guru Bill Bernbach, regarded as one of the fathers of modern advertising, once said: “The most powerful element in advertising is the truth.”

It goes without saying that he was warning marketers about the dangers of lying in their ads – because that can blow up in your face and ruin your client’s brand.

That powerful element – or at least its less sexy cousin, facts – was conspicuously absent from the latest ad for medicinal product Coryx, which is produced by pharma giant Cipla.

It starts out well enough, with confused customers in a pharmacy discussing how you pronounce Coryx.

The question is posed by a bewildered husband (aren’t we all when sent out shopping?), who says his wife is in bed sick.

The first person to respond is an Afrikaans tannie who pronounces it in the Boer way, with the emphasis on the y, as in *ryk* (rhymes with rake, actually).

She tells him – “skattebol”- that “I use it for my family all the time”.

Another customer – she calls the man “sweetie”- pronounces it as Xhorex, with a isiXhosa click. Then comes muscle oke who says it is Cofre-x – “Like my core” and “my ex” (no idea what that was meant to reference).

Clueless advertising

Confusion is supposedly ended by the pharmacist, who says: “It doesn’t matter how you say it, it’s what it does...”

The end graphics flash by: Coryx has been “Core to care since 1988”. In almost invisible writing below this appears : “speak to your pharmacist this winter about Coryx.”

No facts, clearly were harmed in the making of this ad (to steal from 102.7FM’s Rob Vega). The viewer who may not have encountered Coryx in the years since 1988 is left no wiser about what it is used for.

Is it a laxative? Is it a headache or hangover cure? Does it sort out athlete’s foot? Is it a variant of Viagra?

No clue is forthcoming from the ad, so you have to take another step to find out – either by Googling or by going in to your friendly pharmacy. So, the opportunity to inform and educate, as well as push a consumer to action, has been totally lost.

Clueless advertising will always get 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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