

When the going gets tough, winners show that value and flair endure

 By [Brendan Seery](#) 20 May 2015

Retail advertising is sometimes regarded as the toilet bowl of the industry - it's not stylish, but everyone needs it.

These days, with product parity becoming the norm across many manufacturing and service sectors, it is no longer enough to have the emotional, chest-thumping brand ad run, and then sit back and wait for the orders to flow in. You, as a brand, and you, as that brand's ad agency, have to do two extra things to get feet through the door: you have to pitch a good, value-for-money offer - and then you have to make sure that it stands out from the rest of the crowd.

The motor industry is probably the most competitive sector in the economy these days - and I say this aware that overall sales are struggling. In a tough market, good advertising is more important than ever.

Two car companies that always impress with their ads (and they do a lot of them - thank goodness for someone who believes in our local ad business) are Audi and Land Rover.



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Both are running campaigns in print and on radio that are bound to have increased footfall at their dealerships.

The first is Audi's "Two-Year Plan". It pitches an attractive lease deal on an Audi A4 which, after two years of fixed monthly payments, you may buy for a depreciated amount or hand back and get another.

This sort of scheme leaves you with no asset at the end of it and therefore has its critics, but it certainly does appeal to those who want to fix their vehicle costs and be on the cutting edge of automotive fashion.

And Audi's ads capture that: planning ahead two years. The radio ad is a perfect foil for the more number-oriented print execution - it poses a scenario where a woman meets a man she thinks she loves, but then, two years later, meets his brother, who is even better in all ways.

It gets the point across neatly, although it may annoy those who have been dumped for someone better.

Still, it gets my first Orchid. Well done, Audi and O and M Cape Town.

Land Rover's retail ads - for a special set of deals that ends today - are pitched around the idea of "any excuse will do" to get into the dealership and get a new Land Rover or Range Rover.

My favourite is of a Range Rover Evoque roaring through a sea of mud. The conversation bubble goes: "It's not really organic unless we get it straight from the farm. So we should probably find a way to get there."

The copy at the bottom says "Any excuse will do" to get deals that offer up to prime minus 6 percent.

Like the Audi ad, it makes its point because, if you are in the market for a car, it makes you think about popping in to the Land Rover dealer for a chat.

Another Orchid for Land Rover and its agency, Y and R.

People often wonder why I'm so hard on PRs. Well, it's because often they are in a communications business and can't communicate. Yet they get paid for doing so. Most often, they have little clue about the language in which they are communicating, which - whatever the historical, colonial reasons for it - is English.

A colleague pointed to a release which said (and this is as it was sent): "The University of Johannesburg (UJ) is launching new exciting centre, set to become one of the world's most unique institutes for advanced study, the Johannesburg Institut for Advanced Study (JIAS)."

Pity no one bothered to look up the definition of "unique", which is: "being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else". So you can't be "one of the most unique" institutes.

My colleague observes: "Would you study at a place which doesn't understand that there are no degrees of comparison for the concept of uniqueness?"

I agree. An Onion for you, UJ. Let's hope it's unique...

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