

Corona's stellar CSI project puts other brands to shame

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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There are unscrupulous companies out there which are not beyond deploying a bit of “greenwashing” by using misleading or incorrect statements to falsely imply that their brand is helping “save the planet” because it is environmentally conscious and responsible.



Paying attention

That, though, is only the latest application of the cynical projects and programmes being run by companies to prove that they “have a conscience” and are responsible corporate citizens.

The Corporate Social Investment (CSI) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) sectors have made a lot of people a lot of money over the past few decades. Sadly, none of them were the poor and disadvantaged who were often the media stars of such efforts.



Boundless tells the story of local SAB Corona's lime farm's true innovation

Boundless 12 Feb 2024



Consequently, it takes a really innovative, genuine and successful CSI or CSR project – and I mean successful for the participants, not just the brands – to make me sit up and pay attention.

And I had to do just that with the Corona SA Breweries project to partner with a community project in Limpopo to grow lime fruit all year round.

Slice of lime

The premise behind the project was the SAB's Corona brand is famous the world over for being enjoyed with a slice of lime. But limes are often seasonal and in short supply in South Africa. So, SAB Corona decided to rectify that.

Partnering with the Molete Community Property Association, the lime farm has provided jobs for the community – with a steady income – but it has also initiated agricultural innovation through artificially extending the growing season for limes.

Corona SAB has made a bit of a fuss of the project in some official launches... but it is a video mini-documentary which really shows the best of what is being done.

Conceptualised by new agency Boundless and produced by production company EyeForce SA, the “Coronoa Limestone guarantee” film is a wonderful documentary and subtle image reinforcement for SAB Corona.



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Gail Schimmel 13 Feb 2024



It tells the story simply and locates the brand exactly where it should be – in the background as a facilitator. It's not over the top or in your face and because of that, resonates all the more. This is the sort of thing President Cyril Ramaphosa should have showed at his State Of the Nation Address... mainly to indicate that the private sector can, and should, be involved in the land redistribution and utilisation programmes.

To SAB Corona goes the first Orchid for authentic CSI and CSR and for showing that genuinely transformative ideas not only help society but have a positive marketing impact for the brand.

And, of course, for bringing the whole story to life in such a riveting yet understated way – and making me hopeful, once again, for the future – Orchids go to Boundless and EyeForce SA.

Surprise surprise

Genuine and believable is not something which applies to the Onion I am awarding to Colgate toothpaste and its pushing of its supposedly cavity-protection properties.

To demonstrate this, the TV ads – and there are various executions of it all over the world, from what I have seen – show something like a white seashell coated (allegedly) on one side with the Colgate Cavity Protection toothpaste and the other uncoated.

The “unprotected” side is quite easily broken by a tap from the dentist’s mirror, while, surprise, surprise, the coated side remains impervious.

If you believe that, then, as my mother used to say, I have a farm in Eloff Street you may be interested in...

I would bet my back teeth (what is left of them anyway) that this is an experiment which is not repeatable in a controlled environment (i.e. where you cannot fake it).

The worst of it is that these ads are being targeted around kids and they are being made to believe that this is a genuine experiment and that toothpaste somehow provides a solid layer of defence.

And Onion to Colgate – which I am happy to withdraw once you show me this result can be replicated in front of independent witness.

I’ll listen on the radio...

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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