

Cheers to Castle Lager's *Gran Boks*, jeers to Hippo's ad

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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The other day, believe it or not, I saw an advert without a Springbok in it, or without a nudge-nudge, wink-wink reference to our national rugby team or the Rugby World Cup.



I do realise that Siya and the okes are on course to make rugby history by becoming the first team to win the Webb Ellis Cup four times – but still, it feels as though, when you turn on the TV or browse YouTube, we have all been transported to Planet Rugby.

Part of the scenery

From a marketing perspective it may not be terribly clever to try to jump on the bandwagon – and perhaps do a bit of “ambush advertising” on the cheap because you’re not an official sponsor of the Springboks – because when a bandwagon gets as crowded as it has in the past few weeks, your brand and product just becomes part of the scenery.

That blending into the background just gets worse if your ad agency is unable to think out of the box (sorry, love that adland cliché)...

While the main players are focusing on the manly attributes (and sorry, people, rugby is still dominated by the boys) of patriotism and strength, how does one's brand manage to do something entertaining but touching and memorable at the same time?

Agency Retroviral, on behalf of Castle Lager, one of the Boks' main sponsors, has done exactly this with their *Gran Boks* series of vignettes, involving the grandmothers of Malcolm Marx, Bongsi Mbonambi and Franco Mostert.

The first episode features Marx's feisty granny, Melody, who is not only a natural behind the camera but shows clearly where his DNA originates. She reckons her grandson "becomes a different person when he is on that rugby field" and that "he's like an ox, he's that strong..."



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She watches the games from her home and after some tea and cake, she might "have a drink or two"... cue Castle as she adds: "pity we can't have a party..."

Cheers...and down goes the beer.

It's wonderful because it's real and not concocted. But, all the while it reminds people that Castle is there to accompany all Boks supporters on that journey to glory.

So, Orchid to Castle Lager and to retroviral. I'm looking forward to the other episodes...

Chuck it at the Bok

At the other end of the scale though is the "Let's chuck a Bok at it and hopes it works" type of execution. This time it is courtesy of hippo.co.za, which bills itself as the insurance comparison website.

They've got the newly-retired Frans Steyn (one of the longest-running Springbok legends) in the requisite Bok shirt and in a Hilux bakkie (Springbok legends don't drive around in a Fiat 500, you know) chatting to some arbitrary oke. About what, we don't know, because we come in on the conversation when Frans is saying "You mean I could have saved more than 700 bucks a month?" as the animated hippo behind them shows the quote on phone screen.

"Out," says Frans.

And then, as Frans drop kicks a ball, the punchline which I suppose copywriters though was clever: Kick expensive insurance...OUT!

So bad, so bad. Show me you have been scraping the bottom of the creative barrel without actually saying you've been scraping the bottom of the creative barrel.

Even worse, though, is the fact that the OUT is capitalised might lead one to believe that you should go to Outsurance, which is not one of the companies in the Telesure group, So, possibly an own (drop) goal on top of it.

Onion for that to hippo.co.za

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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