

Lexus puts the 'Greta' in green

By  [Brendan Seery](#)

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Promise: have your cake and eat it. But Mbaks gets an Onion - despite his halo.



Screen grabs from the ad.

If you want to see which way marketing is headed in the future, then pay close attention to the Greta Thunberg Phenomenon.

Like few others, she has shoved the green agenda to the fore of geopolitical debate, posing the accusatory question: “How dare you?” to all of those contributing to choking and roasting the planet to death through our profligate emissions of carbon dioxide.

To prove the point, she travelled to the United Nations in New York in a state-of-the-art “green” yacht with a virtually undetectable carbon footprint.

The colour of money in the years ahead is certainly going to be green, so stand by for brands to start “greenwashing” (providing misleading information to indicate products are more environmentally friendly than they really are), as well as playing on the guilt of consumers.



Cut the greenwash. Get the facts straight about paper and recycling

Samantha Choles 10 Jun 2019



If an environmentally friendly product does help reduce emissions, I don't have a problem – what irks me is that many wealthier consumers buy these “conscience” products solely for virtue-signalling they are better than everyone else in helping to save the planet.

Hybrid cars, first put into serious production by Toyota with the Prius, are a case in point. Technically, they are the practical middle-ground between conventional petrol and diesel power-trains and all-electric.



Lexus IS goes hybrid in SA

7 Dec 2018



In our country that makes sense because electrical charging stations are few and far between. Yet, many who buy the hybrids or even full-electric cars, often have a gas guzzler parked in the garage, or sport hundreds (not kidding) of blazing lights every night at their palatial residences.

Despite all that, though, I am rather taken with the latest local Lexus TV ad for its hybrid range. It plays on all the usual suspect clichés about greening, saving the planet and ruinous fossil fuels.

“ But it does make the point clearly that you can have your cake and eat it: a hybrid is not only good for the environment when used in an urban setting, it also provides serious extra power if you still like flying around. ”

The other thing about the ad is that it positions Lexus as being on the cutting edge – whether it is or isn't is moot, because that is certainly its brand image.

The graphics are well done and provide the almost science-fiction setting required to showcase the car and its technology and, in case you don't get the point, the ad shows how the car actually generates electricity through systems like regenerative braking.

If you aren't prepared to forego all of your luxuries in the green cause and if you're aware that pure electricity (in this country, at least) must be produced by dirty, coal-fired power stations, then a Lexus hybrid is not a bad compromise. So, Lexus gets an Orchid.

On the other hand, if you don't want to go full Greta, but you want to do your bit, why don't you buy a Toyota Aygo and use the R600k or so you'll save on the Lexus to buy trees to plant?



Toyota adds TV to Aygo mix

Nahana Communications Group 13 Nov 2018



Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula is almost a caricature of himself, so often is he on Twitter opining about things which have little to do with his portfolio. That speaks to an ego which is well-developed.

Confirmation of that came in the form of the Transport Month campaign. In common with most ANC ministers, Mbalula believes he is central to the whole country being able to move.

So, his mug is front and centre in the campaign designs, like the one seen here. What got me smiling, though, was the fact that, in this execution, Mbaks' head has been surrounded by a halo-like pattern, more at place in a Catholic book of patron saints than in 21st century communication from a minister in a technologically driven department.

Given that, despite all his soothing words to the contrary after his appointment, he is now thumping the "pay your e-tolls" drum on behalf of the ANC, I propose we call him Saint Fikile, Patron Saint of Gantries.

In the meantime, you get an Onion for spending too much time on your own ego, minister.



Minister talks on Africa's transport sector's full integration

16 Oct 2019



Last, but by no means least, a nod to two PR (public relations) people who helped renew my faith in the over-bimbo'd profession this week.

Anele Motha from Havas PR came back quickly and efficiently to meet my request for pics for a feature on the Blue Train. And then Samantha Choles produced a well-written and reasoned piece on the power of print, on behalf of the Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa.



International Print Day: 8 reasons why print thrives

Samantha Choles 23 Oct 2019



In both cases, the efficient way they dealt with the publicity process – and both their clients will get coverage from me – was a clear demonstration of the "force multiplier" power of public and media relations done properly.

Anele and Samantha are now on my list of PRs I will listen to. And, trust me, that is not a very long list. And because good PR is good marketing, you each get an Orchid 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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