

Fire your marketing team

Read this like you're a movie voice over narrator doing one of those hectic blockbuster intros. Cue [OTT music in your head](#).



By [Travis Bussiahn](#) 4 Feb 2014

America 2008. House prices have become inflated. People borrow more than their houses are worth to buy those houses. Suddenly, the drugs wear off and reality moves in with a big shiny pin.

The bubble bursts. Pop.

China 2014. After years of growth, the world decides they're sick of the sticker underneath their plastic goods. An anti-gra campaign and interest rate liberalisation contribute. The Chinese property market shudders like a diesel engine at death's door. Reality slides in with an axe and takes to the big soapy membrane the east has built.

The bubble bursts. Pop.

South Africa 2014

As new trends like [degrowth](#) emerge, production and industry hear the knocking of the [knowledge economy](#) at the door. Consumers get smarter. A lot of what's being sold as advertising is overpriced and has little to no traceable ROI. In general, it might suck.

Pop?

Fire your marketing team

Cut back to America. It's Superbowl 2013 and the adverts are sucking in the cash for the network and the agencies. But the brands and the audience might be the biggest losers. This was one of those adverts:

"What are you selling? Fire your marketing team! You are wasting TIME and MONEY on them." The words of a Midwest male aged 36-49 after watching GoDaddy's Superbowl advert which other Americans described as 'gross', 'uncomfortable' and 'disgusting'.

As [Luke Sullivan](#) said in the greatest advertising book ever ([Hey Whipple, Squeeze This](#)), some advertising gets attention I throwing up on the table in a meeting does. (I paraphrased that). What are we putting out there?

Ouch. Pop?

What are you putting out there guy? A k*k story

When I first arrived in Jo'burg my wife and I had been living in Durban for 29 years. Afrikaans was not our first language. us the word 'k*k' was a funny and endearing way of saying 'trouble' and we had no idea of the deeper connotations it held. She bought me a shirt that said, "Ek is jammer om jou k*k te hoor", we thought it was hilarious and I wore it happily to markets and church and school functions until someone had the decency to take me aside and tell me what I was putting out there.

The shirt is now in Zandspruit somewhere. My point? Just because you think it's engaging people on the right level, chances are, it probably isn't. If you haven't taken the time to authentically know your audience - not their age or wage or LSM, but their culture and hopes and dreams - then you're probably giving them headache pills for a calcium deficiency.

Deflate your bubble before it bursts. Self help section

Five anti-burst contributors:

1. Use your creativity to truly serve your brands and their audiences.
2. Stop trying to force it, all the data you need for insight exists. Use it.
3. Don't drink your own [Kool-aid](#).
4. Use your creativity to do something meaningful with the millions you're given. Contribute something. People are switching off and it's our fault.
5. Give a hoot about something more than your bank account and awards shelf.

Inspired by a true story (after my friend told me to have a gander at a new local banking campaign).

In closing, if you can, market like this:

ABOUT TRAVIS BUSSIAHN

Travis Bussiahn is the Executive Creative Director of the Happy Media Video Agency. He solves creative and business problems for both Happy Media and its clients. He understands the importance of emotional connection in content, branded or otherwise and believes in traditional media's ability to be blended with new media to profound and holistic effect. He loves and excels at concept and the art of story. Contact details: website www.happymedia.co.za | Twitter [@TravisBussiahn](#)
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