

Why Australia is a winning nation

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#)

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There is no question that time is running out for everyone involved in the 2010 World Cup to start working on changing the negative mindsets of far too many South Africans. This includes the media, which seems to be getting onto something of a roll, looking to publicise every negative statement made by everyone from Government, provincial and metropolitan politicians and foreign football administrators.

All of the above seem to be trying to wangle their way into some sort of lucrative consulting deal by mouthing off about how unprepared and disorganised we all are when it comes to 2010. We see very little of the fact that in a lot of areas we're actually ahead of where Germany was when they were three years off the 2006 World Cup.

Think positively

South Africa needs to look, for example, at what Australia has done to make itself a winning nation at just about everything it does. The answer is simple. Oh sure, they're also a nation of whingers but when it comes to important things like winning cricket matches and planning the Olympic Games, they think positively and get on with things with enthusiasm and pride.

This was brought home forcibly to me when I was waiting in a queue to board a plane at Cape Town airport a while back. Boarding had been delayed for about 15 minutes and passengers were standing about in a queue in front of the boarding desk.

Falling apart

Behind me a cynical old fart was banging on about airline delays being typical African cock-ups and insinuating, as only so many geriatric old white South African farts can, about the whole country falling apart at the seams.

It took an Australian tourist, also about 50-something, to put him in his place.

"Listen, mate," he said politely, "airline delays are common all over the world, I don't think you're being fair to blame it all on Africa..."

Now there is nothing South African men hate more than getting arguments, however polite they may be, from Australians.

2010 a disaster

So the old fart went on the attack and started whinging about poor service delivery, taxis, crime and corruption. To cut a long story short, he eventually got going with gusto on the 2010 World Cup which he said was going to be a disaster because everybody was fighting about stadiums and no-one seemed to getting on with organising anything. It was going to be an embarrassment and would just end up costing the taxpayer a fortune.

The Australian calmly shook his head and said, "Well, mate, if that's the attitude of all South African, you are going to talk yourselves into making 2010 fail. Let me tell you that four years before the Sydney Olympics, we had the media saying it was going to be a disaster. The media always goes that route. And of course they were dead wrong. And then look at what happened with the Greeks. Everyone was writing them off before their Olympics because nothing seemed to be happening and they came up with a stunning show.

Fifa is not stupid

"You South Africans don't seem to realise that people like Fifa are not stupid. They would never have given South Africa the World Cup if they didn't believe you could make it happen. And you have to realise they also get involved. FIFA organisers have been putting World Cups together for decades, they know what they're doing and they sure as hell aren't going to expect South Africa to do it all by itself.

"I reckon you have to stop bitching and start thinking positively. 2010 is going to be a great success and personally I can't wait to book my ticket to come over and see a few games. I came over for the rugby and cricket World Cups here and the organisation was outstanding. Oh and by the way, when you do start thinking positively and stop blaming everybody under the sun, you'll find your cricketers will be able to actually win a test match or two against us...."

There was a stunned silence and then everyone in the queue who had been listening to the old fart getting his come-uppance started applauding the brave Australian who had taken the trouble to give us all a lesson in how to become a winning nation.

Time ripe

And the time is now probably as ripe as it will ever be for everyone involved in putting 2010 together, however tenuously, to start aggressively marketing to South African mindsets.

They need to get off the defensive and start with an offensive to win over the hearts and minds of the legions of doubting Thomases in South Africa.

ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

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