

Corporate social responsibility should be more than a clever marketing con trick...

 By [Brendan Seery](#) 13 Mar 2018

Corporate social responsibility, as a concept, sounds fine in theory... but in practice, it often turns out to be another marketing scam.



FAIRNESS FIRST

#FairnessFirst: Soweto Derby and *Grey's Anatomy* fight to end women abuse

Leigh Andrews 12 Mar 2018

I would far rather that a brand put real effort and commitment into improving the lot of people in society by lowering prices and reducing rapacious profit margins (to say nothing about outrageous executive salary bills) than telling me how it's supporting communal veggie gardens in a rural area.

But, it is also true that brands can be important agents for social change (even though that is not their primary purpose for existing).

So when I see brands which appear to be working for common, societal, good, rather than just using charity as cynical marketing, then I sit up and pay attention.

Last week marked International Women's Day and, all around the world, brands focused, in their marketing on pressing issues facing women.

In South Africa, where we have one of the planet's worst rates of woman and child abuse, two particular campaigns caught my attention.

A colleague of mine noticed the gut-punch campaign for Carling Label beer, a video of which was done last year, promoting the idea of "Champion Men" – those who do not beat women and kids. It hurts to watch the video... and that's the point: we men who see it should be ashamed, and ashamed enough to change our abusive behaviour towards women.

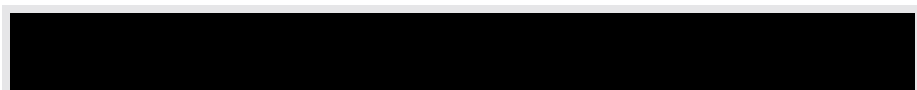


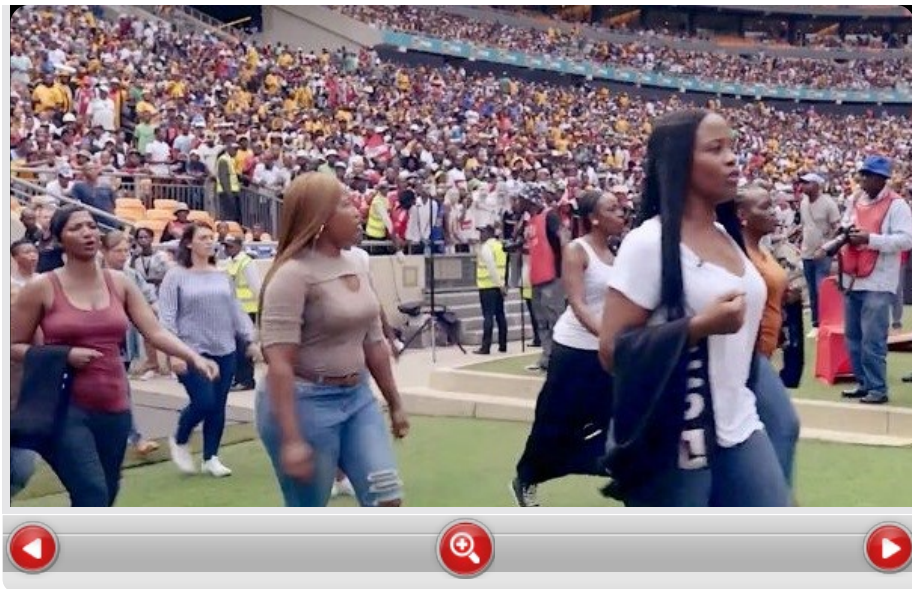
ADVERTISING

Asambe Nono makes women abuse a no-no

Ogilvy South Africa 13 Mar 2018

Carling Black Label took it even further on 3 March, when it arranged for a group of women singers to take the field before the start of the Soweto Derby between Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs. Before the packed stadium, they sang the well-known song, *Masambe Nono*, with the lyrics changed to tell the story of a woman who suffers from abuse after her husband comes home from a soccer match. Being under the influence of alcohol is not an excuse, a team losing a match is not an excuse.





The song hit home and many were the men in the stadium who, if they did not hang their heads in shame, were given pause for thought.

A brilliant idea. A brilliant place to air it. And a real way to help the women of our country. It was also a brave move for an alcohol brand to take, because abuse of alcohol and abuse for women often go hand in hand, should that be fist in face?

1st for Women, the insurance company, did a similar thing, capitalising on that week's episode of the huge popular *Grey's Anatomy* on M-Net, which saw the story of violence involving Jo Wilson (Camilla Luddingtc and her abusive ex-husband, Paul (Matthew Morrison) reach a horrifying climax.

This season of the show has been dealing with the issue of women abuse and, in the US, one episode title was changed to that of the National Domestic Violence Hotline in the US.

Even though the show in South Africa still had the original episode title, 1st for Women took out ads during the show and a ticker tape, along with social media conversations, to promote its online platform, For Women, which features resources for abused women.

Another brand using its clout to make a difference. And that is what genuine corporate social responsibility

all about.

So Orchids to Carling Black Label and to 1st for Women.

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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