

# Outsurance's community care scores big, Eskort's rib campaign sizzles

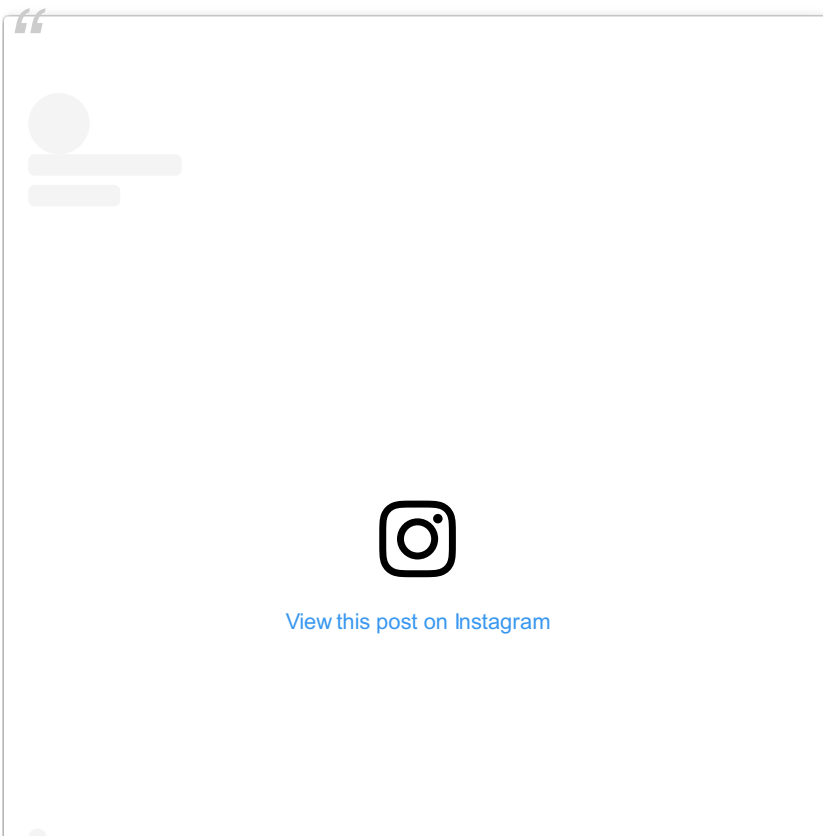
Watching both the Test Championship final and the United Rugby Championship final over the weekend, I did wonder whether sports sponsorship works for brands.

 By [Brendan Seery](#) 17 Jun 2025



## Doing good

Obviously, the mega-names have huge budgets and probably wouldn't want, even if they were able, to directly track sales to sponsorship spend. And, of course, the problem with backing a specific team is that risks alienating actual or potential customers who support other sides.



A post shared by OUTsurance (@outsurance)

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Far better, I would have thought, to spend your money on showing the community – your potential clients – how you support them through various good works. Done properly – and without the heavy-handed hard sell – these initiatives can be very effective.

Outsurance, so I see from one of their recent ads, is involved in a lot more in the way of civic action than just their “OUTsurance Pointsmen”. For those of us in Gauteng and Joburg specifically – the Graveyard of the Traffic Light – these people, with their bright, branded clothing and efficient, cheerful demeanour, keep us sane in our rush hour commutes.



#ORCHIDSANDONIONS

#Orchids&Onions: Nedbank's AI ad with a forward-thinking vision

Brendan Seery 9 Jun 2025

But, as I discovered, the insurance giant is involved in other initiatives, from vaccinating stray dogs, to supporting netball, to backing rugby referees, to supporting blood drives by the SA National Blood Service. They also fund school shoes, heart valve replacements, pack food parcels, provide security upgrades and maintenance for playgrounds, run winter soup kitchens and blanket drives. And probably a whole lot more.

These are all worthy causes and ones which cover a fairly broad spectrum of people... most of whom, if asked, would approve. And for the non-clients, that little bit of knowledge about a “company which cares” might just be the difference between signing up and not signing up.

Also, the ad finishes with staffers producing a mosaic of hand-held cards, which show the words “Out” and “You”, reminding you that even the community at large gets something out of Outsurance.

Simple but effective. Worth this week’s first Orchid.

## Explosive punch

A company like Outsurance has the sort of war chest which enables it to pepper our screens with brand and call-to-action advertising. But, sometimes, there are far more effective ways of gaining public attention. And I’m not solely talking about the old ad industry adage that “50% of my advertising works; I’m not sure which 50%”. I’m talking about using other marketing techniques to make your budgets go further.

In the military they refer to a “force multiplier” as something which enables a given number of troops to be much bigger threat to the enemy than they would seem.

Done properly, activations, or “stunts” as some might call can make your marketing message pack an explosive punch.

I was reminded of this by the campaign done by Eskort which cost comparatively little but achieved incredible results.

The problem was how to generate awareness about Eskort's new ribs product launch, as well as raising awareness of the company's 30 stores around the country.



Not the sort of thing which is going to last more than a nano-second in our fast and furious digital world... the suggestion was doing a pop-up ribs restaurant at each store... one of the biggest of its kind activations:

Then they decided: let's do it every Thursday for eight weeks, along with the social media tag #MessAroundAndFindOut.

The result: the campaign increased sales across stores by 29% and saw rib sales alone growing 48% year

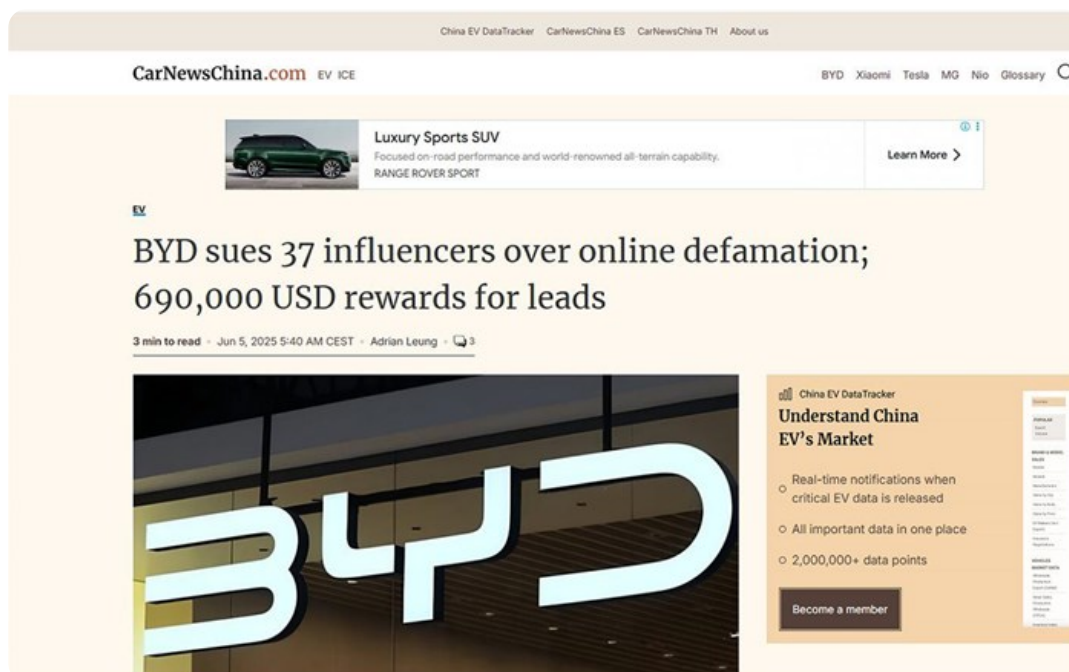
on year.

Now if that's not multiplying your marketing bang, I don't know what is.

So a tasty Orchid to Eskort.

## Paranoid brands

A bit of an ominous Onion this week, for fear that it may become standard practice among brands which feel someone is disagreeing with their glorious view of themselves.



It has been reported that Chinese car company BYD – the world leader in electric vehicles – has sued 37 social media influencers because of comments they made about its products... and it has also offered rewards of up to hundreds of thousands of US dollars for people around the world to “rat out” others being nasty to BYD on the Net.

This is paranoia at its finest – and lack of media awareness, too, as the faster our social media moves the shorter our attention span becomes. The dogs bark and the caravan moves on... unless you go back with the caravan and irritate the canines again.

Also, it's not a good look for a big company to be using SLAPP suit tactics on little guys. SLAPP stands for Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation and is a way to silence critics by threatening to bankrupt them with legal fees, regardless if they are right or not.

This is marketing insanity because the last thing I want to see from a brand I am considering is a fanatical attempt to silence critics. I want to hear what everyone says and make up my mind.

Also, I would be very worried that if I complained about my newly-purchased BYD – and they are available now in South Africa – the company would sue me back to the Stone Age.

All in all, an Onion for BYD. I hope other Chinese brands are less intolerant.

## 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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