

## With apologies to Cell C

Cell C CEO Lars Reichelt published a second full page apology this past weekend after the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) ruled that Cell C must stop using the term "4G<sup>s</sup>" in its advertising material. Cell C earlier this year punk'd consumers and commentators with an ad apologising to comedian Trevor Noah for lapses in service in what later turned out to be part of marketing campaign involving the positioning of Noah as Cell-Cs 'chief experience officer'. Lars (not the real one this time) seems to be at it again, as Herman Manson explains, cheekily.

 By Herman Manson: @marklives 20 Oct 2010

“ **Dear South African Cellphone User** You would have noticed that our ad agency didn't put its name next to this ad - I mean apology. It did, however, put its name to our ad two pages on in this same over-priced Sunday newspaper (a sign of the Times?), you know, the ad where we claim that our network is officially the fastest based on a single source, and I would like you to know that this has nothing to do with distancing its brand from lengthy full page text ads in Sunday broadsheets. I can assure you we won't be publishing an apology retracting our speedy C claim either, and if we do, I apologise in advance. Several media have insinuated that because I claim to own a 4G<sup>s</sup> network, I should actually own a 4G network, rather than **'an all IP, HSPA+ 900/2100 network with theoretical maximum speeds of 21 Mbps'**. This ad, I mean apology, was designed by my anonymous ad agency to show you how stupid it all is, you know, using all this technical mumbo jumbo instead of just saying 4G<sup>s</sup>. Consumers ain't that bright you know (with apologies to consumers bright enough to realise I just insulted you - but I don't expect there will be very many). We at Cell C are serious about the user experience and about transparency. It's all part of our ~~communication strategy~~ corporate culture and this is why we picked a comedian as our Chief Experience Officer. We never joke about such things unless we edit the material into a [YouTube ad](#) we use to pull one over all those social media types. Ha-ha. That was a good one, poor old [Walter Pike](#), gotcha mate. Yeah, we care. Build a bridge dude. You social media guys are so serious. Allow my copywriters me to expand a little on our thinking: **FACT 1: 8.TA IS GOING TO COMPETE ON PRICE AND THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OUR NICHE** Sh\*t. If Telkom's new mobile offering, 8.ta, is going to beat us on pricing and word of mouth undermines our service level claims, what's our niche? Our agency told us we could always differentiate on customer service and experience. It's great that thousands of people have been moved by our campaign to complain about our service levels. **FACT 2: WE CAN CHANGE THE MEANING OF ACRONYMS AT WILL** Or at least, copywriters can, and let's face it, the education system isn't what it used to be, so nobody will notice. 4Gs stands for 4 Great Speed, 4 Great Service, 4 more Great Service and 4 Great Savings. The Art Director says so. **FACT 3: TWO WAY COMMUNICATION = A PRINT MAGAZINE** We here at Cell C are dedicated to two-way communication. It's all the rage these days. With that in mind we have decided to bypass those annoying journalists by giving ["our brand a very credible voice in the data and wider technology space"](#) in the form of a new print magazine. What with living in the mobile age and all our users already having access to cellphones, print is definitely the way to consumer hearts. At least we can edit any pesky letters to the Editor. **FACT 4: AM I RUNNING OUT OF SPACE YET?** God these full page text ads are a lot of work. Placing it in a Sunday broadsheet will guarantee that consumers take their time to read it properly - especially in a potentially slow news cycle. Holding thumbs nothing big happens on Saturday. On that note I'd like to thank all our dedicated readers, if you suffered reading through our entire ad, you really deserve something, like a life, which obviously you lack. (My agency will apologise in due time, depending upon budget and how bored the copywriters are.) Terminating this call,  
**Not Lars (our apologies)**  
**Not The CEO (sorry), Not Cell C** ”

### For more:

- Bizcommunity: [Reichelt says sorry for Cell C 4G 'confusion'](#)
- Bizcommunity: [Cell C custom mag from John Brown](#)
- Bizcommunity: [ASA rules against "4G<sup>s</sup>", Cell C to appeal](#)

- [Bizcommunity Search: \[https://www.bizcommunity.com/Search/196/11/sm-3/i-11/r-196/s-Cell+C.html](https://www.bizcommunity.com/Search/196/11/sm-3/i-11/r-196/s-Cell+C.html)  
[Cell C](#)
- Thoughtleader: [Who else is sick of these ads?](#)

## ABOUT HERMAN MANSON: @MARKLIVES

The inaugural Vodacom Social Media Journalist of the Year in 2011, Herman Manson (@marklives) is a business journalist and media commentator who edits industry news site [www.marklives.com](http://www.marklives.com). His writing has appeared in newspapers and magazines locally and abroad, including Bizcommunity.com. He also co-founded *Brand* magazine. [View my profile and articles...](#)

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