

The simple ideas are usually the best

The last couple of days in my life has brought stress, pressure, amazement and not a little bit of mirth. Driving down the highway yesterday I was listening to Highveld and the worldwide simultaneous first airplay of the new U2 single 'Electrical storm'.

 By [Richard Clarke](#) 10 Sep 2002

Simple really isn't it? Subtle little moments like that add immeasurably to sales. I seem to remember Microsoft pulling off something like that about eight years ago. Hmm..

The ad that caught my eye in SA Sports Illustrated was the next episode in the SuperC GIVE YOURSELF LITTLE EXTRA CAMPAIGN.

There is one of those table football games with a hole in the glass top. The immediate presumption is that somebody gave it a bit extra and smashed the glass. All quite straight forward until the reader looks closer and discovers that the players on the poles being thrown around are girls not boys. Hmm..

Next up on my ideas agenda was the latest ad in support of Telkom Business that appeared in Financial Mail. Together with Cisco Powered Networks they have built something that is not new or innovative but the ad is quite clever.

"the Beauty of it is. IT WORKS 24/7 IT DOESN'T DEMAND OVERTIME PAY IT NEVER CALLS IN SICK IT DOESN'T PARTICIPATE IN COMPANY POLITICS IT DOESN'T CARE WHERE YOU ARE IT JUST DOES Beautiful isn't it?"

Networking in business solutions is nothing new but this ad delivers the message like no other in an industry where creative ads are few and far between. Lastly I had a run in with the statisticians and number guys who firmly believe that all will be revealed by staring at and playing with the numbers.

Charlotte Bauer in her Pop Tart column in the Sunday Times Lifestyle magazine last weekend came up with the effective antidote to all those number researchers.

'Numbers are like people, torture them enough and they'll tell you anything.'

Remember that the next time market research tells you that things are different from what you thought. Check closely and they probably haven't asked enough correspondents for the survey to be statistically correct and furthermore the info is usually useless to anyone but those who phrased the questions.

Bauer also reminded me of Nietzsche's dire warning that "there are no facts, only interpretations." But that is another story.

ABOUT RICHARD CLARKE

Richard Clarke founded Just Ideas, an ideas factory and implementation unit. He specialises in spotting opportunities, building ideas and watching them fly. Richard is also a freelance writer.
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