

# Thanks for the laugh, Ogilvy

By [Brendan Seery](#)

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How difficult is it, Google and Sportsman's Warehouse, to divine that I could get actively annoyed by ads for something I've already bought?



Screen grab from the ad.

If you're going to explain something to someone and it might be a difficult concept or number for them to get their head around, it helps if you can package it all together in a visual metaphor.

For instance: If all the ad agency strategic directors who believe the be-all and end-all of marketing now and forever more is "millennials", were laid together, end to end, they would stretch as far as the moon... And would be about as effective as they are on Earth.



## Consumerism in crisis as millennials stay away from shops

Brendan Canavan 25 Jan 2019



When you've got a client that sells all manner of goods and services online, but has more than 80,000 vehicles alone and you want to give them an edge in the increasingly competitive digital market, what do you do?

As a number, 80,000 is not easy to visualise – unless you're an MP and that is what you get every month, to nod off on the leather-clad benches in the National Assembly.

But 80,000 cars is a helluva lot of metal. If you tried to test drive every one, it would take you years. And that is the creative idea behind Ogilvy Cape Town's latest funny TV ad for Gumtree.

We see the father wishing family – mom and son – goodbye as he heads off to test drive “all the cars on Gumtree”. The next scene takes place six years later. The door opens and in walks a bearded, dishevelled man who has obviously disappeared on his quest and returned *a la* Robinson Crusoe.

*“ That time has passed on that mammoth task – and that things have changed at home – is evidenced by the shock on mom's face, followed shortly afterwards by the appearance of a shirtless hunk. Well, what do you expect – that a girl would sit at home? ”*

There are a few awkward looks and when the son looks up quizzically and says “Dad?” He gets a response of “Yes” – twice.

It's a nice, humorous way of looking at Gumtree's huge stock – and gently turning decades of advertising sexism on its head. (Oh yes, let me hit back at you sexist women down in Ogilvy Cape Town. That mom is more than cute herself...)

The ad makes a refreshing break from our national gloom and doom and does its marketing job well. You cannot watch this and not know that if you want a wide choice of cars, log on to Gumtree. So, Orchids for Gumtree and Ogilvy Cape Town.

The internet has made our lives simpler in many respects – and online shopping is one of them. It still has not, in this country at least, replaced the visceral appeal of touching and feeling whatever you want to buy, but it is hugely convenient.

At the same time, though, when it is coupled with “adtech” – the supposedly clever systems that big ad platforms like Google use to analyse you to “better serve you” – then you wonder if the techies who put the magic together actually live in the real world.

A few examples from recent weeks: the first is with Sportsmans Warehouse. I used their good website to research new running shoes. Then, being an old git, I actually went to a shop to look for a particular pair. Not in stock. Nobody had a clue when they would get more.

So, I went online, selected, ordered and paid for a pair. A few days later, the box arrived. So far so excellent. Until Sportsmans Warehouse sent me a questionnaire a few days later, via email, asking me to rate the experience.

“ I would have given the operation high praise, had I been able to hit reply and answer the questions – but I couldn't. So I sent a new email pointing that out. You guessed it. No reply. ”

So, Sportsmans, here's a smallish Onion because you shouldn't offer a communication channel unless you are prepared to answer your customers' queries.

Second Onion out of this experience goes to the clevers and to Google itself, who put together its algorithms. Even after I bought a first pair of shoes, and even after I bought a second (because I was so impressed – thanks Mizuno), I still continue to get pop-up ads for that exact model.

How difficult is it, Google and Sportsmans Warehouse, to divine when I have actually made a purchase, I could get actively annoyed by ads for something I've already bought?

## 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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