

Betway stands out at SA20 cricket league

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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I've always been sceptical about the marketing value of putting branding or logos on sports kit. The question I ask is: Does it actually sell your product or did you put it there because the CEO/marketing director likes that particular sport?



I am not talking about products which are specifically linked to the sport – like Toyota's Hilux vehicles charging through the sand on the Dakar Rally, or sports equipment maker IXU, whose bats are featuring prominently in the current Betway SA20 cricket league.

Does sponsorship work?

If I am in the market for a bakkie, then I want one which has earned its Dakar stripes – like the Hilux, even though I know, as a petrolhead, that the vehicles used in that rally bear little resemblance to those who can buy off the showroom floor. Likewise, when I see another thunderous six heading into the crowd at the Betway SA20, off an IXU bat, then that's the one I want.

But why, I ask with tears in my eyes, would I think: Let me go off this instant and buy some Kellogg's noodles, because their patch is on the uniform of one of those Betway SA20 teams? Mind you, that is assuming I even saw it in the first place because it is smaller than the badge on a high school blazer.

Frankly, when I am watching T20 cricket – either in person or on TV – the last thing I am thinking about is buying noodles. Ditto with the Emirates Airline naming sponsorship of Ellis Park and the Lions rugby team. Does that make me want to go out and buy a ticket on the Middle Eastern mega-carrier? Nope. Whichever airline has the best price will get my money...

Colourful circus

However, of all of those involved in this Betway SA20 circus – and I mean that in the nicest way, because it is also colourful, family entertainment – the title sponsor has really hit the nail on the head.

Capitalising on the excitement, the betting organisation has been sponsoring sports show slots on local radio stations – and feeding them odds on the teams. To make it more exciting? Maybe? To get punters to put their money down? Definitely.



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But I think the best piece of marketing has been to generate a huge buzz among the stadium crowds by offering a R2m prize for the best one-handed “spectator catch” of the tournament.

And their clever little videos, around the theme “The What Could Have Been Club”, are brilliant. All feature morose cricket fans, who believe they missed out on potential millionaire status...by being unable to pick up the ball because they were the designated beer carrier for their mates; or decided to leave early to miss the traffic...

It's funny but also a strong reminder that this is more than just a cricket match and that spectating is now a participatory sport, too.

For wringing the maximum bang for their sponsorship buck out of the Betway SA20 tournament, Betway deserves this week's Orchid.

January blues

“Januworry”, the month where just about everybody is tapped out physically, emotionally and, most important, financially from the December excesses, has always been a prime time for brands to start pitching to consumers about money they

can save.

Hippo.co.za – the site which aggregates offers in one place related to insurance – has decided that being inane is going to work for them. So, on the premise that people lie to their friends in Januworry to cover up the fact that they're broke, it has concocted a series of ads which are more irritating than funny. (That is something which I have noted before...)

The one which particularly galls me is the one when the dude tries to lie by saying he has an eye infection and cannot go out with his friends. No problem, they say, we'll come over. Cue frantic efforts to produce swollen eyes – from onions to hot sauce. The result is one gruesome-looking man.

Some of the other “excuses” conjured up by the ad copywriters are borderline acceptable, but I think the concept is laboured and trying to be too clever.

And, a man with a grotesquely disfigured face ain't going to persuade me to use your product, however broke I may be.

So, an Onion to hippo.co.za

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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