

Beating Januworry blues

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Human truths: Gumtree leverages on the tough month in a fun way; First, get some cash. Second, get rid of the clutter in your life...

This Januworry (don't know who coined that but it's a brilliant summing up of the morning-after-the-night-before month) has been tougher than most, what with the Covid-19 restrictions and the general tightness of money in the economy, for various, obvious reasons.

The first month of the year is when we are all struggling, even without the special current circumstances. It's when we realise we binged a bit over the festive season and credit cards are maxxed out....and never mind that the days until payday seem to each consist of about 37 hours.

It's the time when many of us have to make those compromises, those adjustments to our lifestyles which acknowledge the paucity of pennies in our purses.

That's the idea that classified ad website Gumtree, with its marketing partner Retroviral, have leveraged in their latest ad for the brand.



Who are these people, the ad asks, who can afford to buy avocado pears in the middle of the month; who can afford to order sushi as a takeaway at the office while their colleagues consume dull, home-packed lunches from a plastic blik? Who are the superhuman people who can afford to go to the petrol station in the middle of the month and say, without panicking: “Fill it up!”?

These people, the ad says, are those who have used the Gumtree app to sell stuff they don’t want – for cash... the sort of cash which enables them to splash out. The ad has a twofold message which works on two different levels in the month of Januworry. First, get some cash. Second, get rid of the clutter in your life. The latter speaks to the house-cleaning and New Year resolutions which are the other prominent characteristic of the month.

It’s a bit of fun but it’s based on basic human truths – and that makes it particularly effective in getting across Gumtree’s pitch.

So, Orchids to Gumtree, retroviral and directors Glen Biderman-Pam (who did the hilarious #MyKreepyTeacher last) and Ollie Booth from Panther Punch.



#OrchidsandOnions: Kreepy Krauly cleans up
Brendan Seery 29 Sep 2020



My colleague Seelan Pillay and I had a discussion the other day on where, and how firmly, the line should be drawn between editorial content and advertising. What was interesting is that he, from an advertising background, had a much stricter interpretation of what should be considered as advertorial than I did, coming from the editorial side.

He believes supplied copy should be marked “advertisement” and written copy by our own editorial team should be marked “advertorial”.

From my standpoint, I think, as long as the material is marked as “advertorial”, readers will be able to “discount”, in effect, what they are reading, because they know it is part of a marketing campaign and not genuine editorial coverage.

No such restrictions apply to SABC3’s Espresso Morning Show and this week, Samsung had a field day there promoting its new Galaxy smartphone. Samsung representatives outnumbered the “presenters” two to one as everyone oohed and aahed about the awesome product and demonstrated some of its clever features.

At no stage during the segment-long advert – for that it was – were viewers told the slot was paid for by Samsung. Welcome to the world of native advertising, when advertising masquerades as genuine content.

Hats off to Samsung for capitalising on the non-existent approach to maintaining credibility on the part of SABC and Expresso. In their defence, the programme producers have never pretended the show is anything else other than a way to make money out of advertisers.

The problem, though, is that this sort of thing further erodes the credibility of the media – and is an ominous portent of things to come in the media industry, which is chasing every quick buck in an effort to survive in the face of an onslaught by social media and the search engines.

Just this week, people expressed their shock – on social media, of course – that the American publishing icon, *Rolling Stone* magazine, has just launched a new offering where you pay it a considerable sum of money for them to run your opinion piece.

In the future, then, big bucks (the sort at the disposal of our intelligence agencies, as we learned in the Zondo commission) will dictate the news. The spooks paid the African News Agency to distribute “positive” stories about SA and the agency CEO still doesn’t think that is a problem.

When the old hard and fast barriers between news and advertising (or propaganda) become blurred, you, the consumer, will be worse off for it. Maybe Seelan is right in his old-school hard-line approach to guarding editorial integrity...

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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