

Ocean Basket still sizzles, but Castle Lager ad goes flat

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

25 Jul 2017

So, a man goes into a pet shop. “I want to buy a parrot, but it must talk.”

“No problem,” says the shopkeeper as he rings up the sale and hands over the bird and cage.

The next day, the customer returns. Parrot is not speaking. Oh, says the shopkeeper, that’s because he needs a bit of stimulation.

“Here’s a mirror, put it in his cage.” That’ll work. But it doesn’t and the customer returns the next day, to be given a bell; and the next a ladder; and finally, a cuttlefish, all of which, swears the shopkeeper, will inspire the parrot to chat.

Two days later the customer returns. “Parrot’s dead,” he says. “Oh dear,” says the shopkeeper, “but did he talk?”

“Yes he did, just before he died”. “See! I told you! What did he say?”

He said: “How about some bloody bird seed!”

Many marketers these days are busy focusing on digital baubles and neglecting the basics that will keep the business alive.

I know that seafood chain Ocean Basket – one of our family favourites – is pouring buckets of money into social media. I hope they don’t neglect their basic strength, which is in the consistent quality of their product.

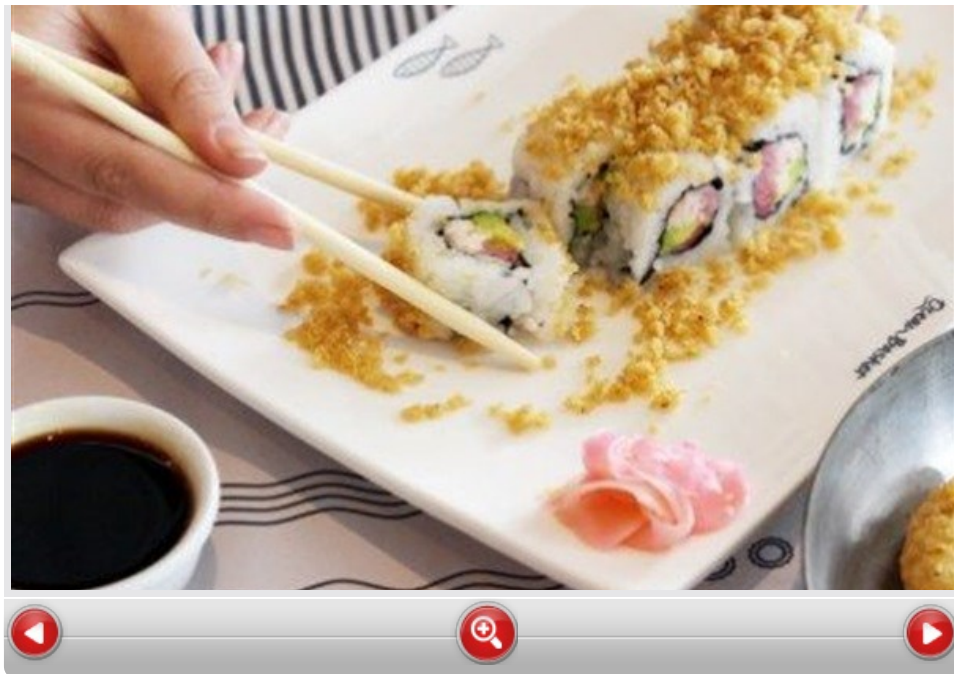
We were in Mahikeng recently and went looking for a place to eat supper. At a packed shopping centre, we could choose between the well-known chains, including Wimpy, Nando’s, KFC, Spur and Ocean Basket.

We decided against Spur not because we were boycotting it for any political reason but it really was too full of screaming kids for our liking.

Next door, the Ocean Basket looked good. And it was. The food was as good, or better, than we have had at any of the chain’s Gauteng outlets.

The staff, and particularly our waitress, Susan, were great.





The franchisee also popped around to see if we were OK and shared with us the fact that “everything is fresh”... It was a lesson in how, if your product is good and your people maintain your high standards, people will return.

We will go back... and it cost the company zero marketing spend to convince us of that. It was far more effective than any form of Facebook-type marketing.

I haven't seen any Ocean Basket stuff on the net and frankly, if it did pop up anywhere on my timeline or where I was visiting, I would ignore it.

So, an Orchid to Ocean Basket for understanding that the first ‘P’ of marketing is Product. Without nourishing it, your business will be an ex-business, just like an ex-parrot.

Some of the silliest, most unrealistic advertising in this country has been done for beer.

Remember the Carling Black Label ads, which could have come straight from the scripting tables of the Soviet Union in their portrayal of the idealistic socialist society, where everybody is gorgeous and lives only to work? Such people are rewarded with medals... or a Black Label.

Most of those ads were not only unrealistic in the scenes they portrayed, but also painted a Rainbow Nation picture of male bonding which, even in the heyday of that now faded Rainbow Nation, was far from reality.

The latest series of ads for Castle is a bit more realistic in that it portrays grown men acting the fool... and that is an accurate depiction of males.

But, it grates to see a bunch of fat oles wallowing around a swimming pool, playing “[Marco Polo](#)” – you know, the game where someone shouts “Marco!” and then another “Polo!” so the chaser can locate them by sound.

It is childish... but it is true that men can be very childish.

The ad then rewinds to a couple of days previously, when all the oles – in a carefully balanced (hue-wise) group – bump into each other in a bar and instantly become friends... because Castle helps you make friends.

I don't think so; the way things are in this country, the presence of a diverse group and copious quantities of booze would probably lead to a punch-up.

But that's not why I don't like the ad. There's nothing in it that would make me want to buy Castle.

I'm not the beer drinker I used to be but there are ads that amuse me and stay in my head when I am getting drinks for the braai. This one doesn't and is irritating, so it gets an Onion.

What do you think? Seen an ad you love or hate? Let me know – brendans@citizen.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.

- #OrchidsandOnions: Scientists sail across the seas to satisfy their KFC craving - 17 Apr 2024
- #OrchidsandOnions: Auto and General sets the standard in insurance claims - 11 Apr 2024
- #OrchidsandOnions: Checkers pranks commuters over holiday weekend, Curro Holdings faces backlash - 4 Apr 2024
- #OrchidsandOnions: The Boswell family's multi-generational journey with Ford SA - 25 Mar 2024
- #OrchidsandOnions: Audi and Ogilvy's AI-generated ad is a piece of art - 20 Mar 2024

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>