

Brand advertising puts people ahead of sales in trying times

 By [Oresti Patricios](#)

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The Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic has transformed brand communication and necessitated great changes in advertising. Some smart brands in South Africa and across the globe have found intelligent ways to remain top of mind with their audiences by showing a more caring and engaging side rather than hard sell marketing messaging.



Image from Pep ad on [Youtube](#).

Some of the top brands in South Africa are putting people's lives ahead of sales and profit in this time with a message of staying home. Toyota has an ad with snippets of their past work, which reminds the viewer of how much the brand loves being on the road but we should all stay home for now. There are countless pieces of inspired work that show a sense of empathy and help to allay the fears and anxieties that people are grappling with during this pandemic.

Watch Toyota's message of encouragement:

Research by Ornico shows that some of the leading brands have taken to social media and TV to encourage people to stay home and take up activities that make being home worthwhile. The underlying message from brands that stand out is one of hope, fun, awareness and education. Some of the notable messaging in the research on social media includes those from Spur Steak Ranches, Pep and McDonald's.

Spur Steak Ranches

As a popular family restaurant chain, Spur Steak Ranches appeals to many South Africans and is a staple across the country. They took to social media to share some of their recipes as a way of bringing the brand closer to customers in their homes while most of South Africa is in lockdown.

Pickled fish is a popular dish in many South African homes during the Easter weekend and the brand used this opportunity to share one of its pickled fish sauce recipes.

Have a look at one of the recipes below:

They continue with this smart approach as the country remains in lockdown with more sauces and soups shared, which generates conversation and engagement. As South Africans spend time at home during lockdown unable to go out for meals, Spur Steak Ranches takes itself into homes and touches customers' lives. This is likely to keep them relevant when the country comes out of lockdown.

McDonald's

McDonald's CEO, Greg Solomon also used social media to acknowledge South Africans on the steps that citizens are taking to curb the coronavirus pandemic. In the video, Solomon goes on to thank the McDonald's family from staff, franchisees to customers for working together during this challenging time.

He encourages everyone to look after themselves and their families, which is a worthwhile approach among some of the leading brands where leadership publicly takes a stand. They stood out from brand messaging that wants to sell more in a time of uncertainty.

Please see what McDonald's CEO, Greg Solomon had to say:



Pep

Pep is synonymous with school uniforms and clothing in most of their advertising, with PepCell and other additions making their way onto our screens and conversations. It was interesting to note that the brand communicates the positive message of hope as part of their approach to interacting with the public.

Their website showcases messages of hope from the children of South Africa which is accompanied by a video with children's voices and letters of hope. The letters and messages talk to how we will all overcome and emerge from the pandemic.

Have a look at the heartwarming video:

Brands and their advertising agencies have found creative ways to remain relevant while taking into account that this is a sensitive time in which we all need to pull together. We are seeing a change in how the lockdown has made some of the most loved brands more human, while it is also evident that others are scrambling to find relevance.

ABOUT ORESTI PATRICIOS

Oresti Patricios, CEO of the OrnicoGroup (www.ornico.co.za), has long been on the cutting edge of the media, advertising and branding industries. He has an MBA at GIBS and did his thesis on social media when Twitter was barely a twit. He has always driven his vision of dominating African media & brand intelligence. Contact Oresti on tel +27 (0)11 884 5041 or email Oresti@ornicogroup.co.za and follow @orestaki on Twitter.

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