

Holm Energy Solar ad shines, Sasol rewards a fail

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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It's not often that an ad speaks directly to you ... but the first time I saw the new retroviral ad for Hohm Energy - the solar solutions experts - I thought that it could have been shot in our house.



Over preparations for dinner in their kitchen, a couple is having a chat. The wife says: “Can we chat?”

Hubby is suddenly on the alert because he has also obviously been thinking and now it looks as though “the conversation” is about to happen. He listens – in hope, perhaps?

His hopes seem to be confirmed when she says “I think it’s time...”

Cautiously, he responds: “Time for?”

She says: “You know...”

He can’t believe it: “I thought it would freak you out. Is there ever a right time?”

She goes on that she has been “doing the research” and “what are we waiting for?” He agrees that “this is our future!”

He goes on about people talking about how difficult it is and how expensive, but that he doesn't care.

They celebrate at making the decision. She shouts: "We're getting solar!", almost cutting him off mid-sentence as he cries: "We're having a baby!"

They then look at each other sheepishly – so close and yet so far. To emphasise, though, that solar will be the priority, the lights go out...

It resonates with me because this is exactly – less the talk about babies... that's behind us thank goodness – what my wife and I have been discussing. And she has been doing her research.

Me? I've been playing devil's advocate a bit, pointing out that we're surviving okay on limited use of the generator, not to mention a re-arranged household schedule, which has included sitting outside in the evenings, while the light still holds, and reading books...

Still, the ad was intriguing enough for me to look up Hohm Energy. They, in conjunction with Nedbank, offer those seeking solar a turnkey solution, from analysing your needs to finding you a contractor, to supervising the installation and arranging finance, if needed.

Solar energy systems have become such a nightmare – and we know at least one person whose system failed to live up to her expectations simply because the installers didn't educate her properly about what it could and could not power. That's why a proper independent expert can be reassuring.

What I like about the ad is that it gets the Hohm name out there and I reckon there'll be plenty of inquiries to the company and, if they're as good as they say, then they'll do good business. How amazing to say: Get me solar... and someone takes care of all the details.

Orchids then to Hohm Energy and agency Retroviral, and a nod, too, to Mike Sharman and his crew on the 13th anniversary of their agency.

The reward programme that isn't a reward

On the subject of household debates, I muscled my wife into religiously using a Sasol Rewards card I acquired a few months ago. We've been filling up both cars and jerry cans of petrol for our generator at a Sasol garage nearby, but which is further away than the filling station I used previously.

Seeing someone on Twitter lamenting how his Shell rewards card owed him about R1,000 but having cost him many more times that in spend, I checked up on my Sasol card. R132. That is what I have “earned” in “cash-back”. I added up the spend need to achieve that: R10177.

That’s a return of 1.28%, Sasol. That’s hardly a reward. I’ve probably spent more than that travelling the extra distance to the Sasol garage.

By contrast, having coffee at a Famous Bean shop recently, I saw they offer a reward of one free cup of coffee for every 10 bought. That’s a 10% return. Much more of a reward.

An Onion, then, to Sasol for marketing their stingy programme as a “reward”.

Lazy proofreading

You’d have to wonder about the quality of a product you’re buying when its maker clearly doesn’t understand it. Such was my concern about a Lithium-ion battery I bought for our gate motor recently. It’s clearly a re-boxed import product by a company called Lalela and is about 40% cheaper than big brand equivalents.

Maybe I’ll be sorry – especially because no one in the company seems to know that the correct term is “Lithium ion”, not “Lithium Iron”, as appears on their packaging.

Graphics designers can get things wrong, but surely someone in the company checks before sign-off? And if that person has no clue about what they’re selling, then you’re in trouble.

An Onion for lazy proofreading – which can damage a brand significantly – to Lalela.

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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