

Mahlangu does the impossible

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

19 Nov 2019

Poignant: Kudos for athlete, Toyota's tough message but whole bunch of estate agents a law unto themselves with their illegal boards.



Screengrab from the ad.

Ntando Mahlangu is probably not a name which comes quickly to mind for South African sports fans – probably because he is a “para athlete” and competitors with physical disabilities seldom get their fair chance in the limelight.

This week, he collected a gold medal in the 200m T61 category at the World Para-Athletic Championships in Dubai, beating top athletes from the UK and Germany.



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But he will undoubtedly be seen more now that Toyota SA is backing him as part of the global company's commitment to para sport and, specifically, the Para Olympics in Tokyo next year.

Toyota and its SA ad agency, FCB Joburg, have put together a gritty, realistic video about Mahlangu's struggle and his discipline to succeed. He doesn't want sympathy.

He wants respect. And he will earn it, if his achievements on the track are anything to go by. Some of his thoughts in the video are borderline shocking: “I don't want feet”. As a pair of training shoes go up in flames, he is clear he will be faster without feet.

He also says he has never been able to sit still, he always wants to move and, more sadly, that he “was born trapped in my body”.



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The video, shot in gloomy tones by Kevin Fitzgerald of production company 0307 to a story line by Brett Morris and Tian van den Heever, is surprisingly uplifting. It shows physical imperfections are no limit to the soaring human spirit.

While Mahlangu already has a gold medal, he can also collect an Orchid from me for being the perfect ambassador not only for his sport, but for the brand, Toyota. Toyota gets its Orchid for putting back into the community (one among many projects, I know). A brand which supports society will always be top of mind for potential customers.

Finally, Orchids to Morris, Van den Heever and Fitzgerald for a great piece of storytelling which got the tone just right, without slipping into being maudlin.

“ There is a revolt brewing in the suburbs of Joburg and brands ignore it at their peril – the growing backlash against the tsunami of illegal advertising which has mushroomed around the city. ”

It's like the Wild, Wild West out there: illegal trailer ads parked next to schools, illegal ads being taken down by Metro cops as sneaky construction companies try to erect them in the middle of the night in forbidden areas on roadway islands.



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Brendan Seery 22 Oct 2019



People I follow on Twitter are starting to get peeved and clearly something is happening out there.

Recently, estate agent groups Lew Geffen Sotheby's posted a "R10,000 reward" for information on "anybody who manipulates, destroys or steals one of our street signboards on the pavements of Joburg and Bedfordview". One wonders if this is a version of the "best form of defence is attack" doctrine. If Lew Geffen Sotheby's is seeing its boards removed – possibly by angry residents – perhaps it's because, as some people have suggested on Twitter, the boards are illegal in the first place.

Now I am not saying Lew Geffen Sotheby's is guilty of such illegal and unethical behaviour, but perhaps some of its signs were not legal in the first place.

Johannesburg's outdoor advertising regulations were rationalised in 2017, but still include stipulations which go back two decades or more about how estate agents may advertise the properties they sell.



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Graeme Phillips 12 Aug 2019



The reward ad.

Specifically, signs may only be placed on the property which is for sale or to let. A limited number of direction signs may be placed in the area of the property to direct people to it on show days. These may only go up on Saturdays and Sundays and must be removed by Mondays. Signs indicating a property has been sold may only be erected at that property for a limited period of time.

These accompanying photos show boards from agencies Rawson's, Jawitz, Chas Everitt and Keller Williams Advance, which are all illegal.



A few of the signs Seery spotted.

The boards from Chas Everitt, Keller Williams Advance and Jawitz, up for a week now, are pointers to houses which have been sold a block away. Illegal. The sign from the Rawson's "area expert" is also illegal because it does not relate to a specific property.

It is disturbing that agents now think they can put up boards every day of the week and boards pointing to houses already sold.

“ It either says they are ignorant – which I doubt – or they just don't give a damn about those areas in which they make their money. ”

That would give me serious pause for thought because I would not like to spend my money with someone who chooses which law to obey and which to ignore and who shows disrespect for the people in the area.

So, Onions to all of you. And it would be interesting to see how far you get with any legal action taken against a resident who removes this illegal signage... that's called preventing a crime, actually

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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