

Daniel Scheffler takes a look at what’s been happening locally and in the world

# SA’S SUPERHEROES

## THE THINKER

The third week in January’s front pages of the *International Herald Tribune* and the *Financial Times* showed a pensive Cyril Ramaphosa as the freshly appointed second in command of the most powerful political party in SA – the much loved, much hated ANC. The visual of the Soweto-born business man and politician looked ever so much like Rodin’s ‘The Thinker’ that stands on a too-high pedestal in Paris beaming down on museum visitors. First cast in 1902 the bronze piece shows a man in a sober meditation as he dogfights a mighty internal brawl. The statue is often used to depict philosophy and the similarity to Ramaphosa’s picture can perhaps indicate a whole new strategy for SA, or at least a whole lot of thinking about it.

## TOYS IN THE COT

Foreign investment continues to pile into the country, as a BRICS country the growth is substantial (3% in 2012) and the ex-pats are returning by the masses. But still the country has a reputation for all kinds of bad: violent crime, corruption and bombastic greed are some of the toys in the cot that President Zuma has had to face. So what has brand SA done to correct the fallaciousness? And that leaves the question of whether they are actually misconceptions or just brand flaws that comes as part of the package.

## HERE TO HELP

Condoleezza Rice had to fly furiously across the world trying to fix the brand image of the US with George Bush setting every good notion the world had of the country alight as he came crashing through two

terms as President of the most powerful nation on the globe. But it was Hillary Clinton that ultimately fixed it by taking serious action not only in Mali, Europe and the furthest east but in Africa too. She showed a softer human

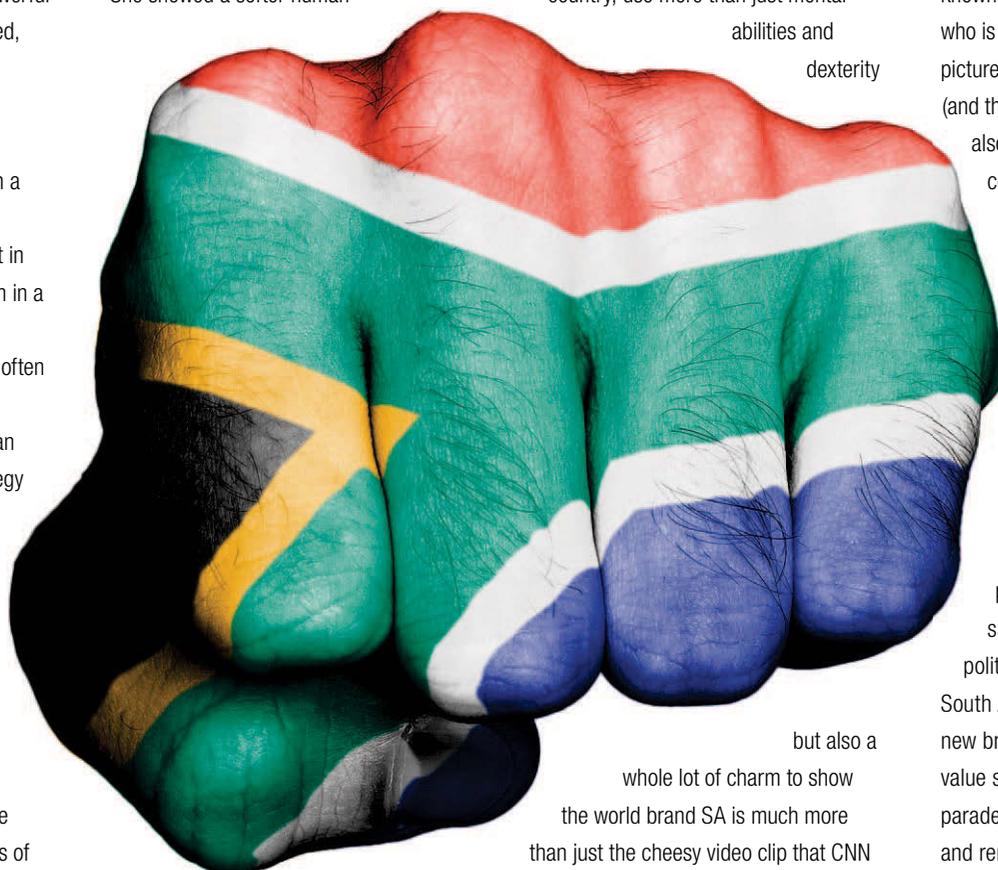
abilities and dexterity abroad but doesn’t necessary build the brand from the outside in, based on brand needs or values. Perhaps what we need now is a Hillary type person that can stand up for all the positives of the country, use more than just mental

brand strategy of the country, to be reassessed and rebuilt by someone like Cyril Ramaphosa. The brand needs credibility and who better to jostle some than a man with integrity and who’s known for his trustworthiness. A man who is not only smart but also a big, picture thinker with serious financial clout (and then let’s mention again there is also some serious intellect that comes as a bonus). Of course the dream team for brand SA would be our Vice President and political activist, co-founder of the Black Consciousness Movement with Steve Biko, businesswoman and academic Mamphela Ramphele.

## AND THE A TEAM

She recently founded a new political party and is ‘wanting to save her country by entering politics’. The multi-award winning South African is ideal to work on a new brand equity, positioning and value system for SA. One that can be paraded abroad, and of course locally, and remind the world that although the country is way down south it has some of the most talented thinkers on the planet and will commit to combating the downfalls – and that’s the key. The same way that the rest of the world has problems SA has them too, but our ‘A team’ of two seriously dedicated politicians is fighting for the country without needing to personally benefit. They can admit to the flaws, but actively work on building a believable brand.

Now let’s get them geared up with more than just spandex and a cape.



side to the US by simply reinstating their marketing campaign: we are here to help. And brand Obama of course amplified her work a thousand-fold. Basically she gave the brand what the brand needed most: it’s that simple.

## JUST A CHEESY SLOGAN?

So what are Ramaphosa’s plans for the ANC and for the country and what does brand SA need most? SA does not have an official spokesperson, like a Secretary of State, unless you count our Foreign Minister that represents the country

but also a whole lot of charm to show the world brand SA is much more than just the cheesy video clip that CNN shows or that silly slogan that everyone ignores: ‘Proudly South African’ – even as it is plastered at OR Tambo as you arrive and on an array of products that aren’t technically made in the country.

## THE DREAM TEAM

As much truth as there is in the statement (and title of his novel) from acclaimed writer Alan Paton ‘Ah but your land is beautiful’, SA has a brand crisis that goes beyond the winelands, Table Mountain, Kruger Park and the beaches. The brand is tarnished. And the time has come for the marketing of the country, and the