

## Drawing upon the nostalgic factor

What has suddenly caused Mr Grumpy to smile, Miss Nosy to mind her own business and Mr Lazy to find the energy to garden? A flight on Virgin Atlantic's Upper class, that's what.

Images tracking uncharacteristic traits of the famous British television characters – Mr Men and Little Miss – have spilled onto billboards across South Africa. And their distinctive voices have been carefully emulated for radio in a new advertising campaign that compounds the fun nature of the airline.

According to Net#work BBDO, the agency that conceptualised the advertising campaign, securing the licence to use these animated characters was a little tricky. "London publisher Chorio, was very specific about what we could and couldn't do," say creative team Brent Singer and Mariana O'Kelly.

"We wanted the visual style to be as close as possible to the originals which were done by hand by Roger Hargreaves in the 1970s. So local illustrator Jason Masters got out his coloured markers and created, by hand, what you see today on the billboards."

### **"Cut through clutter"**

Net#work copywriter Gary du Toit says for radio they tried to imitate the voices and the simplistic way in which the original tales were related. "We think these ads really cut through the usual radio clutter."

"Advertising targeted at business people is usually so cold and humourless. But business people are just ordinary people too. This campaign creates a kind of happy nostalgia in anyone who grew up with the Mr Men books. What we found interesting – is that people who weren't even acquainted with the characters – loved the work. Familiarity isn't essential for likeability."

O'Kelly says they intend the theme will run through Virgin's Upper Class advertising for at least two years. "There's certainly enough work in the pipeline to sustain it for that long."