

# ING



## AD MISSIONS

### Air Miles' light touch of humour

The Ad Missions panel weighs in on a BMO Air Miles campaign from Cossette Toronto.



**Lyle Goodis** is president of Toronto-based marketing communications group Lyle Goodis and Associates.

I start out liking the creative idea and characters a bit, albeit a little too "expected." The idea, pace, dialogue and payoff seem OK, but is this truly memorable? I don't believe so. Does it and will it stimulate strong customer action, or card switching? Cute light humour is not always the best way to go, especially when the viewer's little smile lasts only a few seconds. And will I remember BMO? If a bank wants to highlight that using its card at more retail places can help you build more travel reward miles faster, then please at least tell us where to do so right now, so I can quickly and easily seek out a place where I can accumulate points on today's purchases. In my mind, they have only done half the job here.

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**Andrew Potter** is a *Maclean's* columnist, an editor at *The Ottawa Citizen* and author of *The Authenticity Hoax: How We Get Lost Finding Ourselves*, due out in spring 2010.

I guess that the checkout girl at my local drugstore has probably asked me 250 times if I collect Air Miles. The answer, same as it ever was, is that I do not. But she keeps asking, just as I get asked the same question when I go to the liquor store down the street (not 205 times, but close) and any number of other shops. It's the retail equivalent of telemarketing — intrusive and annoying — and it makes me wish I could get air rewards merely by going about my daily affairs. Oh look, I can, with the No Fee BMO Air Miles Mastercard. I can type that without even checking, thanks to a highly effective campaign that has been everywhere lately and is still fun to watch. Nicely done.

**André Richelieu** is a marketing professor at Université Laval, Québec.

This advertising uses a co-branding approach — combining Air Miles with Bank of Montreal — to promote a credit card from the latter. BMO tries to capitalize on the strong brand awareness and equity of Air Miles. This could help consumers overlook the cost of acquiring a credit card by focusing on the gains of accumulating Air Miles points. All the more so since this ad uses the peripheral road of humour to create a positive predisposition toward the BMO brand and its BMO Air Miles credit card. Of course, consumers can use the credit card for most of their purchases, including such "basic" ones as dry cleaning. As underlined in my branding class, this could be criticized from an ethical point of view, because in a recession, the last thing individuals and families need is a new way potentially to get into (more) debt.