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Haunting ad wins top prize

A campaign featuring a ghost wins top prize in advertising awards

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Most Singaporeans love a good ghost story. One advertising company tapped into this for an ad campaign and it won the top prize at this year's Effie Awards, an annual advertising awards competition.

McCann Erickson Singapore created a elderly female ghost character that haunts Raffles Place for its client, The GMP Group, a recruitment agency.



A snapshot of the ghost trailing the office worker out the door

at the office," says Mr Farrokh Madon, its executive creative director.

The advertising team wanted to show the importance of work-life balance, which was in line with GMP's belief that with the right career, an employee is happy and the need to work overtime is less. But rather than use conventional ways to show the ill effects of working late, McCann took the supernatural route.

"We showed that one of the fears of working late is the chance of bumping into ghosts

The team made a video showing a CCTV footage of two men being followed out of an office lift by the ghost of an old woman. The video directs viewers to a blog, hosted by three supposed ghostbusters who want to solve the mystery.

The ad was aired on the Internet, fooling viewers into thinking it was a real clip.

On May 1 last year, it was revealed that the ghostly video was done for GMP when it was linked to the GMP website. But by then, the video had already made its rounds on the Internet, even making an appearance on CNN and Fox news.

For their efforts, McCann won not just a gold award at this year's Effie Awards, but also the Grand Prix award.

Presented by the Institute of Advertising Singapore, the awards honour the best advertisements made in Singapore across all media.

This is the first time the Grand Prix award is presented since the Singapore edition of the awards began six years ago. It is given out to original ideas that tap into the Singaporean psyche and, most importantly, achieved impressive results. In the case of the Raffles Place ghost campaign, over 90,000 people visited the GMP website, well over the 12,000 targeted.

On bagging the two awards, Mr Madon says it is a good example of creativity and results going hand in hand. "Great creativity can get great results."

Another three gold, seven silver and seven bronze awards were handed out last night at the Singapore Management University.

One gold winner was ad agency Kinetic, which created the World On Sale advertisement campaign for online travel agency Zuji Travel.

Headed by account director Carolyn Teo, the advertising team created a mini-supermarket in a travel fair that offered fresh produce from various countries.

"We called this the Fresh Deals Emporium, to show that Zuji offers the freshest travel deals," says Ms Teo.

She adds that her fondest memory of creating this campaign was shopping for the goods to fill her supermarket.

"It took us 15 shopping trips and we had to make sure we didn't bust our budget," she says.

The other two gold winners were Ogilvy RedCard for the print campaign Stretching Durex In New Ways for the condom brand, and DDB Worldwide's Geeks Not Freaks campaign for StarHub, which was shown in cinemas.

Ogilvy's ads featured balloon images in provocative positions. Even though the advertisements appeared last year, its project director Colin Wan says the campaign is still being talked about today.

DDB Worldwide's advertisement was a clip of two guys showing how free calls can be made over the Internet. The agency is also this year's biggest winner with six awards.

Ms Rowena Bhagchandani, its brand and business director, says she is not surprised by the numerous wins. "Being effective is something that we stand for."

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