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Sky Messaging: paint your name in the sky

Posted By [Sean Woods](#) On August 31, 2011 @ 12:00 am In [Blogs, Sean Woods, Staff blogs](#) | [No Comments](#)

Getting your message seen over all the competing media clutter we're subjected to nowadays can take some seriously creative, not to mention logistical thinking. However, other than death and taxes, there are two more things you can be certain of – there will always be the open African sky, and you will get stuck in traffic.

That's where Sky Messaging, a new Cape Town based aerial marketing company, comes in. Using light aircraft towing dirty great banners (three sizes are available), they're taking advantage of that great uncluttered canvas, the sky, as well as the fact that at least during two significant parts of your day you'll be bored stiff while stuck behind your wheel. That way, according to their marketing director Thomas Kritzer, by regularly flying over all the major arterial routes they're guaranteed to stand out from the crowd and get their clients noticed.

What makes Sky Messaging's operations different from that of conventional aerial marketing methods is their patented banner and towing system that allows them to take off with the banner attached, opposed to the more risky practice of having to perform "aerial pick-ups".

Apart from being time-consuming (read costly) affairs, aerial pick-ups require the pilot to fly over the prepared banner and snatch it from the ground using a hook on the end of a towrope. This manoeuvre can be decidedly dangerous, simply because there's always a chance of the landing gear getting tangled up, or the towrope becoming caught on something firmly fixed to the ground. Then there's the need to pull the aircraft up steeply after catching the banner, which can lead to a stall while still way too close to the ground.

This is how the new system works: First, the banner is laid out and attached directly to the aircraft via a towrope. On the leading edge of the banner there's a lead pole with two disks (that act as a trailing wheel set) attached to each end. When the aircraft taxis to the runway and accelerates for takeoff, the banner is constantly suspended from the ground thanks to the disks (preventing it from being sucked to the ground). The wind from the propeller then creates further lift, as does the air stream created by the forward motion of the aircraft to not inhibit takeoff. Once airborne, the lead pole ensures the banner remains vertical for maximum readability.

Over the last few months Sky Messaging banners have become a regular feature over Cape Town and the company is already seeing results. They intend to eventually fly in all major centres throughout the country, and are about to begin operations in Johannesburg and Pretoria soon. You can contact Sky Messaging on 021-418 0412 or visit www.sky-messaging.com ^[1]

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