

The Super Bowl for advertising

 By [Michael Wood](#)

11 Feb 2014

You've gotta love the Super Bowl, even if you don't like American football or don't even understand it (which basically includes everyone outside the US and a good number inside the US), why so? The Super Bowl is not just a sporting event but a major global event for showcasing advertising that goes beyond the regular American football fan. (video)

Super Bowl ads have become a cultural phenomenon in their own right, which is really good news for the advertisers. With an average cost of US\$4million for a 30 second spot, you want to make sure you get the ultimate bang for your buck. The Super Bowl is not only one of most-watched sporting events in the world, but is also a major global brand platform.

So, what's trending?

The savvy folks in advertising recognised the importance of digital and viral campaigns as part of their Super Bowl strategies. This maximises the value of an enormous investment by reaching the widest audience beyond the usual Super Bowl viewership. Super Bowl advertising is much, much more than the 30 or 60 second television commercial, and using digital extends a campaign before and after the event.

Teasers and pre-game activity was a major trend this year where brands connected with the audiences in a bid to create a buzz around their TV commercials. In some cases the pre-game engagement was bigger than the actual commercial. Here are a few examples of brands that used the digital platform effectively.

- **Doritos** - "Crash the Super Bowl Contest" encourages fans to express their love for Doritos by spending months creating their own commercials. Millions more fans then vote for their favourite, with the winning spot running in the game and earning the creator US\$1 million.

- **Sodastream** - The "Sorry, Coke and Pepsi" ad features celebrity spokesperson Scarlett Johansson taking a direct dig at two of the Super Bowl's largest advertisers/sponsors - Coca-Cola and Pepsi.

Emotional benefits

Brands have for a long time realised that consumers connect at a deeper level when a brand has superior emotional benefits. This year many Super Bowl advertisers tapped into the emotional side of their audiences with a strong sense of nostalgia. The most popular ads and teasers featured celebrities from the past, tugged on the heartstrings, had a sense of adventure, displayed a great sense of humour, and always a winner: featured an adorable Labrador puppy! These ads with strong emotional messages worked really well with their digital strategies. The social sale of a brand cashes in on a consumer's curious nature, giving brands peer to peer endorsement. Here are some examples:

- Budweiser's "Puppy Love" had more than 46 million views and 194,420 likes as of this morning at 9.30am.

- Toyota's "Big game" starred Terry Crews and the Muppets. In this ad for the 2014 Toyota Highlander, Crews (reluctantly) picks up the stranded Muppets who proceed to take him on a musical adventure.
- In Bud Light's "I'm up for whatever" Arnold Schwarzenegger stars in one of three ads produced by Bud Light with the slogan "The Perfect Beer for Whatever Happens" and the associated hashtag [#UpForWhatever](#).
- Kia's "The truth" Morpheus big game commercial. Laurence Fishburne reprised his role as Morpheus in the Matrix trilogy for this Kia ad - the second-most shared Super Bowl of 2014.

- Dannon Oikos Yogurt's "The Spill commercial" which reunited the cast from Full House.

- Coca-Cola's "America is beautiful" revealed a beautifully shot piece set to America the Beautiful, as it celebrated the cultural diversity in the U.S. The ad was also the first in Super Bowl history to feature a gay family.

Celebrity appearances

While celebrity cameos have been used for some time in Super Bowl commercials, this was not popular about 20 years ago. Now celebrity appearances at the Super Bowl are as much par for the course as beer and chicken wings. Celebrities attract attention to brands which goes massively beyond a 30 second ad space. Whether they are endorsing a brand, using the space to promote their movies, or part of the halftime entertainment - celebrities are all but dominating the event.

For more celebrity Super Bowl commercials, go to www.buzzfeed.com

ABOUT MICHAEL WOOD

Michael Wood is co-founder and Director of Aperio, a business consulting company focused on accelerating growth of FMCG brands in South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Michael has many years international experience where he held the positions of Marketing Director, Sales Director and Managing Director with the Gillette company and Procter & Gamble.

- How well do you know your strategic targets and prime prospects? - 8 Mar 2016
- South African swagger won't work in Africa - 28 Oct 2015
- Developing markets develop better global business leaders - 29 Jun 2014
- The Super Bowl for advertising - 11 Feb 2014
- Reflections on iconic South African brands - 26 Sep 2013

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>