

DON'T MISS

Super Bowl 2019 TAKEAWAYS

SB53: WINNING OFF THE FIELD

SUPER BOWL 53 BY THE NUMBERS*

\$5.2MM

Cost of :30 TV Spot

98.2MM

TV viewership – lowest in a decade and 5% drop from 2018 figures

84%

Increase in CBS All Access sign-ups on Super Bowl Sunday

20%

Increase in streaming YOY setting a record

32%

drop in Netflix viewing during the live event

\$300K - \$500K

Cost per Digital Investment (included in-game stream + other CBS Sports digital placements)

*Source: Bloomberg News

For many advertisers, the Super Bowl is the....well, the Super Bowl of advertising. With an entire country tuning in, brands have a unique opportunity to have their messaging seen by once-a-year numbers.

With that exposure, though, comes a hefty price tag. While an enormous opportunity, many brands have traditionally avoided the Super Bowl. In some cases they see these multi-million dollar investments in a :30 second TV spot that speaks to a sprawling viewership beyond their target audience as just too expensive. Others worry that the impact of an ad might be diluted sandwiched between so many other new spots. Still others want to speak to a more individualized audience and don't need the big game boost.

We've seen the action away from the big game draw headlines, enticing those risktakers to jump into to the Super Bowl madness through means other than a TV spot – sometimes as part of a full 360 campaign – other times as counter-programming.

1. CALL IN THE THEATER KIDS



Skittles went full counter-programming and went experiential by going Broadway – enlisting Michael C. Hall to star in a 30-minute live show on Super Bowl Sunday called [*The Skittles Commercial: The Broadway Musical*](#), at New York’s Town Hall. The 17-person show featured original songs backed by a live band. Fake knock-off tees were sold outside the theatre; concessions consisted solely of Skittles (obviously); and the stage was an operational bodega (cash only), also selling Skittles, and complete with a random guy hanging out too close to the till. The Playbill included fake ads (a holiday package to North Korea; a picture of furniture under the words “nothing unusual here...”

All of this was very on brand for Skittles which favors surreal messaging, and also payed off on their “taste the rainbow” tag - Skittles donated the proceeds from tickets sales, ranging from \$30 to \$200+, to Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, with an additional \$50,000 from Mars Wrigley. They also underscored the experience factor by not livestreaming or capturing and releasing video of the show – a true “you had to be there” event that purposely questioned the whole meaning and nature of advertising while purposely limiting it’s own reach.

To reach a highly niche audience that could care less about missing the big game – a Broadway style activation is on the nose. One could argue that there were even bigger audience groups that were left on the table,.

Pro Tips:

Scale - this was one for the insiders – there was some buzz and PR ahead and around this but Skittles did a great deal to actually limit the reach beyond social posting and word of mouth of the few lucky people who actually were able to attend. Extra points would have been a full counter program by livestreaming the performance or even attempting a live ad from the stage, making it more of a 360 execution. It’s unlikely to be performed again and seemingly there was no video created of the performance or making of – that pushes this more towards a stunt than a fully successful marketing execution.

Detail –This was done really well – fake Playbills, real Broadway star, [*songs that are available on a Spotify playlist*](#). If you are going to do an experiential activation it’s the care and attention to these things that make an event feel special. Judging by the responses of people who went this was done extremely well.

2. BREAK A FEW EGGS, MAKE AN OMELET

On January 4th, an egg was laid on Instagram. More precisely a picture of an egg with this message: “Let’s set a world record together and get the most liked post on Instagram. Beating the current world record held by Kylie Jenner (18 million)! We got this.” The Internet responded, liking the egg 52 million times. The account then began posting shots of the egg cracking. At the same time the controversial Jerry Media, infamous for their involvement in the ill-fated Fyre Fest among other things, began hyping the egg and it’s PR value, explicitly comparing the exposure of the egg to a Super Bowl ad (never mind that a “like” and an ad are very different kinds of exposures.)

Brands and causes began to clamor to be part of the egg action while internet conversation began to turn negative at the prospect that the entire thing might be a branding stunt. Others were suggesting potential causes that should be allowed to piggyback on the egg’s virality.

On February 2nd the egg cracking was joined by football stitches and the message: “The wait is over All will be revealed this Sunday following the Super Bowl Watch it first, only on @Hulu”.

The reveal turned out to not be a show or as new pricing model but a PSA for mental health awareness and the dangers of social media, sponsored by Hulu, and benefitting Mental Health America.



THE PRESSURE OF
SOCIAL MEDIA
IS GETTING TO ME



The creators revealed that the virality and interest in the egg were completely accidental, and their intention to continue to find other causes to promote.

For an audience that is young and glued to social – this was a great way to capture their attention and hit them with a very relevant PA message that hopefully made them think about their relationship with Instagram and social media.

Pro Tips:

Zeitgeist Jumping: Hulu wasn’t the only interested party – but jumping on what everyone is talking about carries substantial risk of blowback. Initially the idea that they might be using the egg to promote something commercial was met with some outrage and disappointment. Hulu were smart to essentially lend their dollars and clout to a cause.

Be Authentic: As the egg became a commercial battleground the authenticity of the effort began to be questioned. The mysteriousness of the effort was part of the appeal but lent itself to players like Jerry Media muddying the water. For Hulu, it’s not clear how deep their commitment to mental health runs- it’s not an association in the way Patagonia leverages outdoor expertise to support environmental causes.

3. TAKE IT TO YOUR RIVALS HOUSE

Pepsi, an official Super Bowl sponsor, found themselves in the potentially awkward position of sponsoring a game in Coca-Cola's hometown of Atlanta, deep in the heart of the south which is considered Coke country. Pepsi declared a "Cola War" truce on social media in January as a gesture of goodwill and then proceeded to passively-aggressively (and just plain aggressively) use out of home presence including experiential to make their presence known.



Billboards declared "Pepsi in Atlanta — how refreshing." and "Paint the town blue." In a kill 'em with kindness troll, Pepsi added their founder Caleb Bradham to Atlanta's mainstay bronzed statue of Coca-Cola founder John Pemberton outside of the World of Coke museum, making it look like they were toasting.

This all received copious local and some national press, including outrage from local politicians ["I have to tell you that as I have driven around the city this week, I have seen some disturbing signs," Rep. Wes Cantrell, a Republican who represents the Atlanta suburb of Woodstock,](#) who then went on to rip Pepsi in a floor speech in the Georgia state house. Pepsi should make a campaign contribution as it fit in perfectly with their campaign.

Finally Pepsi hosted a concert on the site that was formerly the Coke museum.

For a broad diverse and local audience of skeptics this was a great way to acknowledge, leverage and even reward their curiosity.

Pro Tips:

Lean In to the Situation: Rather than pretend that they weren't in their rivals territory Pepsi embraced the awkward – if anything they made it more so on purpose. Growing market share in Atlanta and across the south was always going to be a tough ask – breaking through by making this explicit was a smart way to gain attention.

Out Of Home Works: Smart out of home – especially coupled with activations beyond just billboards – can make a local presence feel bigger than it actually might be. In Pepsi's case they aggressively bought valuable billboard space but also took advantage of their right as a sponsor to bring entertainment to the fore with a concert and added touches like logo projections and the statue. It's almost enough to make consumers forget that Coke had actual in-stadium pouring rights.

4. PLAYING THE LONG GAME

Twitter is a hotspot of conversation, branded and otherwise during the big game. For the vaunted 200k followers plus Moon Pie account, it's one of the nights they can expect to be most visible provided they tweet out the right content. Last year they chose to tweet out the ads they WOULD have made had they had the budget and inclination.

The ads (you can see a sample to the right) were in keeping with Moon Pie's off-the-wall tone, one that has endeared the brand to online followers and helped cement a unique voice and identity. They also functioned as a hilarious parody and critique of typical TV advertising.

This year Moon Pie decided to pay off last year's posts by actually producing and filming three of the scripts, [albeit for online video only](#). The scripts are voiced over the video in an electronic voice for maximum bizarreness.

For the young web savvy audience that actively avoids TV spots the humor and tone hit home.

Pro Tips:

Don't Hide: The videos and the whole payoff are hilarious but unless you go to Twitter and find them on the Moon Pie account, they might as well not exist. Why not post them on YouTube and make them as accessible as possible? While Moon Pie absolutely has mastered Twitter this was a missed chance to expand. It will also be interesting to see if they look to paid distribution in coming months to really hit that audience across the Internet and even streaming.

Find Your Voice : What Moon Pie has done consistently well was to leverage Twitter to find a voice and point of view for the brand (one that sadly doesn't extend to their website). That allowed them to create video content that feels uniquely Moon Pie and not cookie cutter or a one-time stunt. The opportunity for brands during the Super Bowl and other high engagement Twitter events is to have a distinct voice and point of view already honed. It's the best shot at exposing your brand voice to a broader audience and potentially leveraging it into all of your other communications techniques, like video.



Omg my boss just said I could actually make #TheBigThing spots but we can't run them on tv bc it's too expensive or whatever and now I have to film them all today I am so scared

MoonPie @MoonPie

I wanted to run commercials but we've been too busy making MoonPies so I will be posting several scripts during breaks tonight that I have written for very good and important MoonPie spots that you can enjoy right here on Twitter instead #TheBigThing

MOONPIE THE BIG THING COMMERCIAL: THE STUDY SESH

We open on two women and a man studying in the library. There are some MoonPies next to their textbooks and a large owl with jeweled eyes behind them. The owl is wise but unimportant so please try to forget about it.

WOMAN #1:
Shhhhhh

WOMAN #2
I didn't say anything

MAN:
Who are you two?

WOMAN #1:
Oh why don't you just eat a MoonPie

WOMAN #2:
Why don't we all eat a MoonPie

THE JEWELLED OWL:
EEEEEEEE tons-jo sririp hohl p'ø ki'll

WOMAN #1:
I'm sorry I shushed you all.

We see the 3 people eat a MoonPie for the last few seconds of the commercial. You can tell it is a good thing for their relationship. The owl begins to glow and grow larger. The man begins to float off of his chair

END

KEY TAKEAWAY: NO ONE SIZE

These were a few notable examples of how brands chose to navigate the challenge of leveraging the Super Bowl outside of or in addition to the standard TV ad buy. For brands, just like the Super Bowl showcases the possibilities in TV creative and placement, there's an opportunity every year to similarly showcase the possibilities around the spectrum of marketing .



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