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**“Why the Anomaly that is Super Bowl Marketing is a Justifiable Investment”**

**An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of BSBA, Marketing**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Super Bowl is undoubtedly the largest conundrum for a marketing manager. Concern is warranted, especially when committing to such a large and important investment. (\$5.2 million to be exact in 2018.) This often times represents the largest allocation of funds in a marketing budget for a company, and the question often arises if a 30 second spot is worth the cost. At the end of the day, the Super Bowl is a statistical anomaly, and the numbers don't lie: according to the American Marketing Association, Super Bowl commercials have appreciated from \$3 million in 2011 to \$5.02 million in 2017. According to National Public Radio, the Super Bowl has accounted for 7 of the 8 largest American T.V. audiences in the History, with Super Bowl XLIX (52), an all-time classic between the New England Patriots and the Atlanta Falcons, recording the highest viewership ever at 114.4 million.

Historically, the Super Bowl has evolved into an American cultural phenomenon, captivating audiences across the nation every February. The competitive spirit the Super Bowl encapsulates is synonymous with the average hardworking American. This event epitomizes what's best about American capitalism and is the ultimate showcase for any marketing manager. Other events pull high annual viewership: award shows such as the Oscars and Emmys and other sporting events like the NBA Finals, World Series, and Kentucky Derby. But, the magnitude of the Super Bowl is unparalleled, making it critical that companies seize the moment granted to them.

The championship of football boasts a unique dynamic for advertisers, elevating it to the highest priority. Obviously, it is the culmination of a hard fought season on the gridiron. The football aspect distributes enough compelling storylines: a single event where legends are cemented in history, and cities can be liberated from the depths of loss and elevated into the golden realm of championship glory (see Philadelphia circa 2018). Many of the champions of American society are professional athletes, and today's equivalent of Captain America (Tom Brady, New England Patriots' Quarterback) has been featured in 3 of the last 4 Super Bowls. A successful Super Bowl run achieves the dreams of countless sports fanatics and can even revolutionize an economy. The power of sports and especially the NFL is immense, and expectedly draws a massive crowd every year to witness this history. But this truth can't be completely attributed to why the Super Bowl of football is also the Super Bowl of advertising.

The most critical revelation concerning the Super Bowl, from the perspective of marketers, is how the viewership has evolved to watch it. Super Bowl commercials are expected to be the best of the best from companies, resulting in massive campaign budgets, and featuring scripts which star society's greatest celebrities. It is the ideal platform to communicate the exact message companies desire to embed in the minds of their consumers, because millions of people from unorthodox demographics also view the Super Bowl. Fanatics of theater, arts, music, and numerous others are converted into phantom football fans for the night, so they can observe the commercials. This crossover demographic contributes to an audience which for one time during the year, watches commercials with anticipation and enthusiasm. The Super Bowl has become the ultimate showcase for advertisers to captivate audiences, galvanize them with a deliberate, strategic marketing message, and convince them to initiate the buying process. The whole

broadcast is a show, including the game, sponsored halftime show, and especially the commercials. Advertisers must seize this period which consumers truly embrace creative marketing prowess and cognitively digest the information provided, which is a stark contrast to usual ignorance of communication marketers have come to expect. We all know from personal experience that consumers are bombarded with media, and therefore overstimulated with information, increasing the barrier which marketers are faced with. Companies must capitalize on the opportunity to influence consumers while their guard is down, and while the audience is maximized.

## 2. STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

As previously mentioned, Super Bowl advertising is a high stakes deal. This is the one event of the year where marketer's talents are showcased at center stage, because their consumer base's attention is guaranteed. It is critical to make a good impression. Just like our capitalist economy, this dynamic is absolutely cut-throat. Companies pay millions and spend months progressing toward creating content that will be celebrated. Because of this, the heat of competition is very real for these companies, as it has evolved into a platform to claim creative supremacy. Nowadays, there are even "best of" shows which declare winners and losers from Super Bowl marketing. Marketing departments jockey for recognition and a widespread stamp of approval, and bragging rights ensue.

However, marketers must strike a delicate balance between grabbing the audience's attention, ensuring it's the correct audience, clearly communicating a message, and aiding retention. The commercial's initial purpose is to expand brand awareness and position themselves to alter consumer perception of respective brands and offerings into becoming their preference. Sales must absolutely be generated eventually to justify the investment, and such marketing deliverables can convert prospects into consumers by driving them to buy an offering when the purchase process becomes relevant: when consumers determine a pain point need be alleviated. The supreme value of an offering must be communicated to stimulate demand by both assisting viewers in recognizing needs and to differentiate their offering from competitors. Therefore, marketing campaigns need to be deliberately crafted to address these strategic marketing objectives, but strategies differ depending on the different stages of the product life cycle.

***Induce Trial:*** Products and services which have recently been introduced to the market need promotion and recognition to stimulate demand. Marketing is so critical because despite how amazing a product or service might be, if there is no demand for it, it will crash and burn. The Super Bowl provides the perfect opportunity for companies to launch a campaign for a new or modified product, because it maximizes exposure for said product. The right commercial can intrigue a consumer enough to persuade them to give it a trial. Marketing managers need to be proactive in making sure that the product can deliver the promises made and ensure that distribution is possible. Most consumers will only try a product one time before deciding on it, and it is marketer's job to make sure they try it in the first place. A textbook example of this is

actually a fascinating case where a company spent its entire marketing budget on a Super Bowl ad, with their back against the wall from declining sales. Loctite, a super glue brand, spent \$4.5 million in 2015 to promote their product, and attempt to restart the product life cycle. The result however was unexpected. Loctite did a good job at promoting their brand (sales grew 8.6% for the month after the Super Bowl compared to previous year), but did a better job at promoting the overall product category. Loctite generated demand for their type of product, but the category leader Gorilla Glue cherry picked off of Loctite's investment, with sales rising 45% in the same time period, according to Adage (2015). Regardless, Loctite did a good job at convincing consumers to purchase super glue by effectively communicating the convenient benefits super glue projects. This was also an example of the revitalization of a product category, where consumers were reminded just how effective super glue could be, and now duct tape has a serious competitor. Marketers need to have a demand centric attitude and awareness, excitement, and education needs to be emphasized.

***Expand Awareness:*** The mass majority of purchase decisions we make as consumers in our everyday lives are basic, habitually based decisions. These products are normally lower priced, and easily consumed. Marketing managers need to be conscious of this consumer behavior, where we depend on habitual, nearly subconscious decision making. Top of mind awareness is critical for products (ex. food, beverages) with many alternates or substitutes. Strong top of mind awareness correlates with strong brand image. This way, when a consumer enters into any type of market, especially in the growth phase they will already have in mind what they want to select, and be able to effectively ignore the myriad of options. The best example of this battle occurs between Coke and Pepsi. The competitive rivalry has only intensified over the years. Coke has their iconic Santa Clause and polar bear commercials, but Pepsi combats that with creative direct blows to Coke. Coke's famous 2012 Super Bowl commercial titled "The Catch" stars a polar bear alluding defenders and making an acrobatic catch of a Coke bottle. Pepsi sponsored the 2018 halftime show spectacular starring Justin Timberlake. Although neither of these examples directly feature a Pepsi vs. Coke narrative, the motive behind these publicity stunts is the competitive rivalry that continues to marinate in the marketplace. For both brands, Top of Mind Awareness will continue to be the x-factor, especially as the fight to become the desired soft drink of a younger, health-conscious generation ensues.

***Preserve Brand Loyalty/Combating Competitors:*** Entities work tirelessly to obtain brand loyalty. A completely inelastic demand is the dream, but probably not achievable for most companies. The exception features the extremely wealthy and their preference for certain luxury items. Almost everyone would have a theoretical price out point or would alter preferences in favor of convenience, but brand preference and even loyalty is definitely achievable. Today's marketplace contains so many products with ample substitutes and directly competing brands, especially in industries in the maturity phase. Companies must therefore work hard to preserve brand loyalty by staying relevant to the customer, remaining on the customer's mind, and producing consistent quality. The biggest threat is often times direct rival companies who produce viable replacements and even substitutes. Marketing managers must be vigilant and proactive in counteracting competitor's strategic initiatives, by preventing stagnation from their

respective brand. Product innovation (adding new features or products) or consistent marketing efforts can keep consumer's attention on your product and away from the excitement of others. A company's absence in the duration of the Super Bowl can be extremely detrimental, as it leaves them susceptible to brands who do invest in high-profile advertising to erode market share. Therefore, it makes sense that missing an opportunity such as Super Bowl advertising, from complacency, could provide a competitor the ability to usurp vulnerable customers from your grasp. Recognizing and embracing competition however could lead to deeper brand loyalty, as polarizing arguments is a catalyst for consumers to take sides, and thus pride in their product of selection. Brands need loyalists adamantly defending their product in the marketplace, as word of mouth is the strongest influencer.

***Emphasize Differentiation:*** Marketers must work hard to define the question "why is our offering different and superior to that one?" Companies who have an established tradition in the marketplace continue to exist not only because they are doing something right, but also because their customers know this. So many of these companies exist in a saturated market, with offerings that are entrenched in the maturity stage of the product life cycle. This phase is defined by the hypercompetitive market, and thus offerings must be differentiated as a type of anti-camouflage. The ability to differentiate is the reason why some companies survive & others fall victim. The cut-throat nature of a capitalist society requires definitive competitive advantage. Jeep is a master at effectively differentiating from competitors. They have a well-defined market segment, and consistently position themselves in their consumer's minds, especially emphasizing the pillars of their brand. Their 2018 commercial, which dually capitalized on brand-movie integration and combined the nostalgia of Jurassic Park with their adventurous spirit, was brilliant. They have absolutely locked down their niche and continue to serve as a benchmark for differentiated advertising.

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Evolution of the Eras of Super Bowl Marketing**

Despite how promising the 1960's appeared, it became one of the most tumultuous decades in American history. It was a time where people were very opinionated and attempted to amplify their voices to prove their point and expose their message to the masses. Brands were being promoted in the same way. A bright spot in this decade of chaos was the inception of the Super Bowl era for the National Football League. On January 15th, 1967, Super Bowl 1 was played between the Kansas City Chiefs and the eventual victors, the Green Bay Packers. While this championship battle on the gridiron was well documented, people didn't realize that a new "battle of the brands" would be a critical side effect of the game itself. While it took a little while to discover the magnitude this platform would eventually carry, as well as crack the code regarding content and technique, it quickly became very important for marketers. Over the years, it has evolved from an important opportunity to the critical marketing moment (30 seconds) for many nationally relevant companies. We will now review how Super Bowl advertising has evolved into an American cultural phenomenon, era by era, beginning with the original trail

blazers. Eras are usually defined by the revolutionary new marketing tactic that is introduced, diverging from the conformity of mainstream media, and taking the nation by storm. An article by Variety claims that “Over the years, however, a few marketers have used the event to break the rules, creating commercials that are still talked about years later,” explaining how certain companies crack the code of disrupting the status quo, immortalizing their commercial in history. A hint in defining this industry secret lies in a common theme outlined by Ceros Blog. They believe that “the most memorable Super Bowl commercials have tapped into the vein of American mainstream culture at just the right time with just the right touch.”, spearheaded by the 1973 Noxzema commercial. Notice how the following examination of the eras of Super Bowl advertising feature work that reflect the status of American culture at that time. As our nation progressed and evolved, so did Super Bowl advertising. Regardless, it was on the marketing manager to strike the perfect balance of creating an entertaining and engaging commercial which featured the political & social climate of the time.

***The Original Pioneers:*** While Camel’s famous “Walk a Mile” (1969) campaign provided an indication that the Super Bowl could be a gold mine, Noxzema’s iconic “Cream Your Face” (1973) commercial was the first to capitalize on the platform & confirm the legitimacy of the Super Bowl as a massive opportunity. Charlie’s Angels star Farrah Fawcett promiscuously slathers shaving cream on NFL superstar Joe Namath’s face during the ad. The article “How a 1973 Shave Cream Ad Launched the \$5 Million Super Bowl Commercial Phenomenon” by Ceros Blog explains how “This near-seamless blend of football slang and sexual innuendo—not to mention a very healthy dose of relevant celebrity endorsement—immediately resonated with legions of football fans. Just as important, it was entertaining, it sparked conversations, and it drove a new kind of awareness to the brand.” Because Noxzema took the risk to push the boundaries, they were “catapulted further into mainstream culture and proved just how effective a television commercial could be.” Accordingly, companies began to recognize the immense opportunity presented, and began increasing the investment and emphasis placed on Super Bowl advertising. Because of the success of Noxzema, it established the original success formula, which has extended into the current era, and will never go extinct.

Many brands began to center their ads around humor to demand the audience’s attention. Noxzema’s historic commercial included their own revolutionary sexualized flare, and because they pushed the boundaries, are widely declared to be cemented in the Super Bowl marketing Hall of Fame. However, they focused on a tactic that has extended through the eras an integral component of Super Bowl advertising: featuring celebrities. Advertisements have featured celebrities since the inception of marketing, because celebrity endorsements can be absolutely paramount in building brand awareness and credibility. Their involvement is usually the pillar of a designated promotional campaign crafted around their presence, and they become a critical spokesperson for the brand. These people become a frame of reference to imitate and trust, synonymous with a brand. “How Brands Should Use Celebrities for Endorsements” (Olenski, 2016), explains that “it’s based in pretty simple logic. People idolize celebrities, so when famous people are seen in advertisements promoting a new product, audiences are prompted to buy that product, either subliminally or directly.” People see celebrities as role models, a standard to strive for, and therefore their degree of influence can’t be underestimated. As mentioned, the

1973 Noxzema shaving commercial starring Joe Namath & Farrah Fawcett is considered the first Super Bowl commercial to perfect the use of celebrities. While the 1973 hit was the origin, the tactic's popularity is more prevalent today than ever.

This era continued to be hallmarked by other brands focusing on how to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market, by emphasizing how they wanted to position their brands. Master Lock's "Can't Shoot Through" (1974) commercial proved how bulletproof (literally) their lock was. Coca-Cola's "Have a Coke" (1980) starred "Mean Joe Green" in a successful attempt to communicate a positive brand image, forcing people to smile when they watch the commercial. Each of these renowned commercials masterfully executed their desired message, even to the extent to where they became pillars of conversation, effectively exposing their message to millions. Like a contagious bacterium, these brilliant ads spread throughout the media platform like wildfire, more than justifying the investment, and proving to CMO's everywhere that they would be forced to consider the Super Bowl as a potentially game-changing platform.

***Apple's "1984" Raises the Stakes by Sparking a Creative Revolution:*** Suddenly, in 1984, the stakes were raised. Apple made a statement that resonated with audiences and changed the game. By brilliantly merging a hot topic with an innovative new approach to the production of commercials, they delivered an absolute gem which is considered the greatest Super Bowl commercial of all time. But why is Apple's "1984" the standard for the highest echelon of innovative marketing? The answer is that it is multi-faceted. The Wall Street Journal article "A Brief History of Super Bowl Commercials" encompasses an aspect of the revelation perfectly: "The 1980's Apple's groundbreaking "1984" ad set the stage for a new era of show-stopping ads for the Super Bowl. The ad sparked a creative revolution among advertisers and garnered massive media attention." Time's article "The 25 Most Influential Super Bowl Ads of All Time" supports the claim, reasoning that after "Apple's iconic "1984" commercial.... brands started to create ads specifically for the game." Short and sweet, the "1984" ad was a catalyst for a creative explosion. Apple transformed the boundaries which determined the type of message that was standard for the Super Bowl. Instead of referring internally to their product, they expanded externally by referencing current events and attacking a different company. Apple's marketing prowess executed such a brilliant statement that that other brands were compelled to follow the new trend, because it was supremely effective. The stakes rose because Apple exhibited that the magnitude of influence and scope of marketing objectives that could be achieved dramatically expanded beyond what anyone conceived.

The other component which explains why exactly Apple's ad is so revolutionary concerns how ads were produced. Time goes on to explain that "After it was broadcast (just the once), Super Bowl ads were expected to be elaborate, plot-driven commercials." Bleacher Report's article "The Best Super Bowl Commercials of All Time" further explains the revolutionary technique deployed by Apple, stating that because of the iconic ad, "Super Bowl commercials have trended in the direction of Hollywood storytelling—with the budgets to match." Apple's ad established a new standard which required a massive expanse of resources allocated to Super Bowl advertising. Not only did the monetary allocation increase, but so did



the amount of time, creative talent, and strategic planning needed to successfully execute a Super Bowl commercial.

At the end of the day, “1984” captivated audiences with its ingenious approach. By masterfully portraying a scene which resonated with audiences, they were able to pit a stark contrast between the innovative, liberating Apple brand and the tyrannical IBM brand. Audiences were able to resonate with the message because it struck a near universal chord of fear that was distributed by George Orwell’s famous dystopian novel “1984.” Apple capitalized on the political climate of the decade. But, it was the immaculate combination of revolutionary techniques, unprecedented allocation of resources required, newfound strategic significance, and creative vision in addition to the actual substance that distinguished “1984” from the rest. Obviously, Apple raised the stakes significantly, and revolutionized how the ad space could be utilized.

***Battle of the Brands:*** After Apple so significantly raised the stakes, Super Bowl Marketing absolutely exploded. The creative arms race per say has never looked back. The Super Bowl was revered as a platform to make a strategic statement. Now, it was showtime on the field, and in the cable world. The whole broadcast became must watch television. As companies jockeyed for supremacy, creativity and quality soared. The Super Bowl became the one platform marketers could truly showcase their talent with the engagement and undivided attention of the whole nation. “1984” significantly expanded the marketer’s arsenal, and others took full advantage by employing new tactics constantly. Wendy’s iconic “Where’s the Beef” (1984) became the first tagline to become an everyday phrase in popular culture. Several companies have employed this tactic, but Anheuser Busch has perfected it with a few crackerjack campaigns, starting with their famous “Wassup” (1999-2008) tagline series of commercials. The “This is Not Advertising” blog explains the effectiveness, noting that ““Wassup?!” resonated with a new, more youthful audience and became not just an industry award winner but also a pop-culture phenomenon,” which became featured in all types of media such as TV shows, late night talk shows, and multiple parodies. Anheuser Busch executed a brilliant resurgence of the tactic with their “Dilly Dilly” (2018) rendition which has exploded in pop culture. I can personally attest to the effectiveness of the campaign as “Dilly Dilly” became a popular toast for my group during a recent ski trip, as well as observing multiple people sporting “Dilly Dilly” apparel. Anheuser Busch continued their momentum by producing the famous “Bud Bowl” (1989) campaign, which extended the campaign over several episodes and years, a new concept in the marketing community. This extended the duration of the campaign by keeping it as a topic of discussion over an extended time period, and even adding an aura of drama as audiences predicted who would win the “Bud Bowl.” Variety even claims that “The faux gridiron contest even prompted some people to gamble on its outcome.”, attesting to the effectiveness of the campaign!

Suddenly, cue the 1990’s, where competition heated up even more. The Wall Street Journal explains that “By the 1990s, companies sought bragging rights for making the best ad of the night.” even further accelerating the “battle of the brands” principle. McDonalds summoned as much star power as possible when they featured longtime rivals Michael Jordan & Larry Bird

in a lighthearted piece which “popularized” the phrase “Nothing but Net.” (1993) Time magazine notes how “The catchphrase has become one of the most recognizable phrases in the sports world” providing verification to McDonalds that they had not only created a hit, but become a staple in popular culture. The massive magnitude to which the repercussions of a Super Bowl commercial could affect a company were blatantly obvious. Michael Jordan continued his momentum in 1993 when he starred in an Air Jordan commercial “Hare Jordan” (1993) with fellow American legend Bugs Bunny. Time magazine explains that “The ad was visually significant for blending real-world footage with cartoon images,” and represented an important technological breakthrough which would captivate audiences for decades to come. In the end however, the massive success can be attributed to the chord the dynamic duo struck with the American people. While this ad represented how effective the symbiotic relationship of a strategic alliance could be, the competitive realm was truly about to heat up.

In 1996, attempts to reign supreme in the “battle of the brands” evolved into a realm where direct combat ensued. Previous trends allowed companies to allude to their competitor, but as a general rule never directly referenced or included them in media. Pepsi abolished this notion during a 30 second spot during the Super Bowl. Time explains how in Pepsi’s “Delivery Guys” (1996) “Pepsi took a big risk with this 1996 spot, wherein rival delivery guys (Coke & Pepsi vendors) bond, then fight again, over a glass of Pepsi-Cola.” This was a milestone moment which established a possibility for how competitive rivals could interact. Interestingly enough, Time also explains how “Ads like these gave rise to the general rule that you’ll never see the dominant competitor in a corporate rivalry show their rival’s wares in an ad.” But don’t be fooled. Time absolutely isn’t insinuating that competitive rivals strategic attack should be ignored. Quite the opposite is true, actually. Time is alluding to how detrimental the omission of a response to such an attack could be. It would be ignorant to declare such an attack irrelevant. If Coca-Cola failed to respond by for example, cutting out Super Bowl advertising, it could leave them susceptible to an eroding market share, thus relinquishing their stranglehold on the market. The strategic significance of preserving brand loyalty is obvious, and failure to address an external threat in a competing brand could be a grave mistake.

In the final true innovative commercial before the dawn of a new era, Pepsi depended on mega-superstar Britney Spears to advocate their brand in a new way. Time once again inquires “What’s the recipe for unprecedented ad success? Hire the world’s biggest pop star, wearing a Pepsi brand outfit (plus belly button ring), and give her a song and dance to a catchy jingle.” The ad was a near replica of a music video, capitalizing on the nostalgia sparked from those who thrived during the MTV music video golden age. This 2001 ad set the stage for companies in the future by creating an artistic masterpiece that promoted the brand in a different, entertaining way: legitimizing a new technique to produce celebrity sponsorship.

***The 2000’s-Current: Purpose/Cause Driven Marketing:*** Considering the morale of the nation after September 11, 2001, it is obvious to why marketing strategy changed in the short run. But the miraculous thing is this occurrence exposed marketers to a whole new realm of possibilities. This included a sphere that encompassed addressing current events, social issues, the current political climate, and corporate social responsibility. After Budweiser’s famous

“Respect” (2002) ad, it didn’t become just accepted, but popular to distribute such a serious message. NFL CMO supported this claim, explaining that she thought that “advertisers, even unknowingly, understand what’s going on with the sentiment of the country in down times and recessions.” Marketing was evolving because our nation and its consumers were evolving. People began to support brands based on what they stood for: the ones that understood that they had a greater role in society. As always, it was critical for a brand to resonate with a target audience, and this provided a revolutionary way to do so. Chrysler made massive statements with back to back inspirational commercials which invigorated the American spirit. “Imported from Detroit” (2011) featuring Eminem and “Halftime in America” (2012) featuring Clint Eastwood epitomize such a concept. Chrysler utilized Detroit as an example to drive the narrative that America would emerge out of the recession stronger than ever before, a thought provoking yet invigorating proposal. Consumers wanted to support a brand that manifested the true spirit of America: a strong, brave, perseverance which never gave up.

P&G brilliantly utilized a relevant social issue to appeal to women in their “Like a Girl” (2015) campaign. They urged people to “Rewrite the Rules” in hopes of eradicating the notion that doing things like a girl were a bad thing, which kills confidence of teenage girls. Because the campaign sparked significant conversation and support, P&G significantly helped its brand image & awareness. Women are much of their target audience, and P&G helped themselves immensely in that demographic.

The polarizing political climate in 2017, distinguished by the controversial dynamic of the 2017 Presidential election, compelled several companies to make political statements of unity in their marketing efforts. In an interview with Forbes, Marcel Marcondes, VP of marketing at Anheuser-Busch explained that Budweiser’s “Born the Hard Way” is about the winning spirit and about those who have a dream and work hard to make their dreams come true.” Although the response was framed well to avoid alienating their target audience, she failed to mention that the subliminal message alluded to their support of immigrants by explaining their belief that immigration is a critical component of the American demographic. While the possibility exists that they might’ve offended their target audience, normally a disastrous move, most backlash was positive because their message was well intended and produced extremely well. The message of inclusivity was accepted because of the political climate, transcending their normal humor-based approach, and allowing acceptance for the political activism.

Most recently in 2018, Budweiser continued to veer from its usual substance in favor of a message which exhibited its corporate social responsibility. “Stand by You” showed how Budweiser is a reliable presence of support to those who have been affected by natural disasters. They attempt to show that their brand is more than a fun-loving brand to appeal to a greater consumer market.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF BEST SUPER BOWL COMMERCIALS

### Key Elements that Determine Good Content

At the end of the day, there is no set formula for a successful Super Bowl commercial. However, after researching the most successful commercials of all time, I have been able to identify key elements critical in the anatomy of a successful Super Bowl commercial marketers to aim to satisfy. These conclusions are forged from consistent, reoccurring themes that help define effective advertising, and are objectives for CMO's to strive for. As Fortune describes, "A Super Bowl ad can boost a brand, create excitement, spawn conversations, and drive sales. These potential benefits are part of the reason companies can justify the cost." But, the effects of screwing up an opportunity can be disastrous in multiple ways. Thus, to mitigate risk, entities must aim to satisfy the following blueprint in order to mitigate the risk of an ineffective campaign.

***Strong, Well Defined Strategic Objective:*** Keep in mind that no matter how entertaining the message may be, it will be considered a failure unless it is strategically oriented by targeting the correct marketing segment & addresses a specific marketing objective. Justifying such a massive investment is dependent upon stimulating actual strategic repercussions such as altering consumer behavior or influencing purchase decisions, eventually increasing sales and ROI. Success of a campaign, from the perspective of a CEO, will be contingent upon satisfying these tangible measuring sticks. CEO's are often skeptical of CMO's and are hesitant to commit to massive marketing investments because as Fortune explains, "many CMOs aren't seen as drivers of profitable growth." This especially concerns their selection of tactics, schemes, and substance which determine the strategic repercussions of a campaign. Money simultaneously confirms and combats Fortune's staked claim, asserting "The Communicus and Genesis studies show that popular ads influence "brand favorability," and while that may not necessarily translate into sales, the Super Bowl provides an opportunity for a company to make an asymmetrical bet to get itself in the national conversation." Money subconsciously alludes to the very truth that defends marketers and their execution, because expanding brand awareness and strengthening brand perception are critical for the eventual decision process that is instigated when a certain product becomes relevant (intent to purchase). Therefore, those are the strategic objectives marketers must pursue, consider, and feature when deliberating on how to execute their mission. Fortune portrays how incredible of an opportunity the Super Bowl is by explaining the immense pressure & scrutiny CEO's are under to seize the spotlight. "For many marketing executives, this is a defining moment of their career as a strong showing can lead to a promotion while an unsuccessful ad can result in termination." Ensuring a deliverable aligns with the strategic objective is the critical foundation toward a successful campaign.

***Entertainment Factor:*** As previously mentioned, the Super Bowl is already a very intriguing platform because viewers are already compelled to truly pay attention to the marketing. But as a very basis, all commercials must demand the audience's attention, entertain to retain attention spans, & leave behind a lasting impression. The current state of the marketing realm is one where consumers are constantly bombarded by information from all angles.

Consequentially, most advertisements have become background noise and are ignored. Forcing a message to be received is no longer an option. Marketers thus must appeal to a consumer with a deliberate effort to attract their discretionary attention. Also, it's very important for the plot to materialize so that the viewer's attention is retained. In short, dedicating attention takes energy, and therefore this must be justified. As eluded to in the New York Times, "The Super Bowl regularly draws elaborate schemes from advertisers," a precedent established by the 1984 Apple commercial. Massive marketing budgets contribute to the ability to produce such spectacles, as the Super Bowl is marketers' annual opportunity to show off their skillsets. NFL CMO Dawn Hudson reiterates people's innate desire to be entertained and explains that advertisers are "tending to do it in meaningful, powerful, breakthrough kinds of ways." There are numerous routes to be taken in order to supply said entertainment, but whatever is chosen must be effective, as it is absolutely critical to the effectiveness of a media advertisement.

***Elicits Emotion:*** The single most powerful weapon in a marketer's arsenal is the ability to elicit emotion. We subconsciously attach emotion to all products and brands. Therefore, it's the marketer's ultimate objective to elicit positive emotion from viewers. Emotion is the ultimate motivator and catalyst for purchasing decisions. Why? Because in the end, emotion is responsible for embedding a certain moment or thought into memory, and thus is essential to retention. Brand awareness is truly only effective if the brand and its message is retained and categorized in someone's train of thought. Without knowledge & a positive perception of a brand, it cannot become part of a consumer's evoked set when considering which offering to select among alternates. Marketing is the only external arm of a company, responsible for communicating directly with consumers. It's responsible for stimulating demand, which is what the Super Bowl as a platform does so brilliantly. Emotion is a marketer's strongest asset. The iconic moment in the famous T.V. series Mad Men which shows Don Draper explaining the power of nostalgia brilliantly communicates the power emotion has on decision making. From the most recent era, the famous Budweiser "Lost Puppy" tear jerker is one of the best examples of a commercial which masterfully capitalized on eliciting emotion. Considered one of the best Super Bowl commercials of all time, it generated a certain warmth and happiness for the audience as the puppy everyone was rooting for to return home safely finally does.

***Definitive Conclusion/Takeaway:*** Too many marketing campaigns are derailed because they fail to communicate how their offering is distinguished and thus how it provides value to a prospective customer. They are plagued by the misconception that expanding brand awareness in any way is effective. Why would recognition of a brand matter if they didn't know what said brand offered? Fortune expands on the thought by explaining "The single biggest problem: in an effort to be creative and break through the clutter, advertisers lose sight of strategy and air spots that shouldn't be on the game." If a brand and its offering isn't related to the advertisement, it can just become a confusing distraction for consumers. An unclear message does nothing but ensure an ad's lack of effectiveness. Instead, entities must strike a fine balance between strategy and entertainment by focusing compelling content around their supreme offering. Essentially, purposefully drive deliberately crafted content to the consumer so that they can accurately decipher the message and takeaway the definitive conclusion marketers desire them to. By the

end of the commercial, consumers should have acquired the benefits of an offering, and discerned if it is relevant to them moving forward.

***Generates Buzz:*** Moments that are powerful enough to elicit emotion and persuade action are powerful enough to share as good news. An effective marketing message can compel the recipient to become an outspoken advocate for the brand. Besides, word of mouth recommendation has the highest magnitude of effectiveness. As the Chicago Tribune explains, “And that’s what you want out of a Super Bowl ad-something memorable that creates...conversation about your brand.” Especially with the emergence of social media, commercials must be effective enough to generate buzz: debate and conversation about a topic. There are many different ways to do this, so long as the substance is impressionable enough to instigate conversation. Buzz prologues the life of commercials, expanding the duration of effectiveness especially by becoming pillars of deliberation. Nowadays, any commercial which fails to extend its duration past the 30 second slot should be considered an immense failure. Discussion about the commercial should realistically span for a 2-3 week period, but the best are immortalized in hearts & minds forever.

### **S.W.O.T Analysis of Super Bowl Marketing**

For any prospective company deciding to invest in the Super Bowl, the whole spectrum of possibilities, good and bad, need to be considered. There will inevitably be a ripple effect from each Super Bowl advertisement with accompanying implications. There’s no doubt that the Super Bowl is the best opportunity for marketers, a statistical anomaly for multiple reasons, but companies must be conscious of the repercussions of a poorly executed campaign. Thus, we will review the following in a summarized, bullet format:

#### ***Strengths & Opportunities: Why is the Super Bowl an anomaly for marketers?***

- 1) American Cultural Phenomenon: The sheer number of viewers, social media interactions, and diversity of audience provides a critical opportunity for marketers. This is the best opportunity to enhance brand awareness and perception.
- 2) Showtime for Marketers: The Super Bowl is the one time of the year where the audience actually tunes in to view commercials. People today are bombarded with information, so most marketing messages are tuned out as noise, except for the Super Bowl where marketers have the audience’s undivided attention.
- 3) Marketing Masterpieces: After Apple’s 1984 commercial, the Super Bowl was recognized as a platform to show the best of the best, sparking the “creative revolution”. Thus, companies began specifically crafting deliverables for the NFL Championship, significantly increasing time, effort, and resources allocated to the big game. The marketing deliverables instigate immense publicity, and brand supremacy in the form of bragging rights can ensue.
- 4) Battle of the Brands: Pepsi changed the game in 1996 when they directly targeted Coca-Cola. Now, it is common to initiate direct combat between brands. Consumers love becoming engaged in this type of battle, and they tend to strengthen brand loyalty as

arguments polarize audiences. Consumers become defensive and adamantly defend their favorite brands.

- 5) Social Media Buzz: Social media has revolutionized the game. Marketers know that it has evolved into a platform for people to express their opinion and ignite conversation, especially concerning marketing efforts. Unprecedented buzz is a consequence of the evolution of social media, helping to more than justify the investment.

### ***Weaknesses & Threats: The Potential Downside of Super Bowl Marketing***

- 1) Negative Publicity Surrounding the NFL: Recently, the NFL has been plagued by negative news such as national anthem protests and concussions. Forbes (Rucker, 2018) explains that “Such an occurrence could shift the focus away from the game, and, of more concern to marketers, the advertising,” as would any occurrence that attracts negative publicity. Worst case scenario, negative publicity could invite protests, which could diminish viewership.
- 2) Media Backlash: There is a very real threat that a strategic miscalculation could significantly harm the brand, showing the negative vantage point of such a large audience. Fortune (Rucker, 2017) demonstrates this point by explaining “the event receives so much attention and scrutiny that a Super Bowl advertiser can find itself at the heart of a negative PR nightmare.” In such a competitive market, such extreme controversy could be disastrous to competitive disadvantage, and especially difficult for a brand to recover from. Especially in our current era, there is historical amounts of scrutiny surrounding commercials which dominate conversation. The Super Bowl is the championship for marketers for multiple reasons, and similar to the actual game, it demands significant deliberation before and after the game. The best commercials, diverging from the status quo, have to balance the risk between being celebrated for communicating a diverse vantage point or being forced to survive negative backlash for missing their mark. As Fortune verifies, “The growth of social media has increased the risk. People are very quick to voice opinions on-line. A Super Bowl spot that offends is an easy target.” Also, almost all major media outlets release some type of Super Bowl marketing recap, discussing and even ranking the best and worst Super Bowl commercials for those who miss out. Inevitably, anything which doesn’t conform to Super Bowl norms will be talked about, for better or for worse. Marketers need to be conscious of the impact repercussions of attempting to make a statement which backfires can have.
- 3) Extreme Cost: Quite possibly the most debated aspect of Super Bowl marketing, it is well documented how severely expensive even a 30 second spot has become (over \$5 million.). However, this doesn’t even communicate the full cost, as so called hidden costs further break the bank. Forbes (Rucker, 2018) explains that “On top of this, advertisers have to create a break-through piece of creative and then support the effort with an integrated marketing campaign: PR, digital, promotions, contests. A solid Super Bowl marketing effort can easily cost \$10 million.” Unfortunately, this excludes the vast majority of companies from investing in a spot. Even for those who can purchase a spot,

because of the massive opportunity cost that is eliminated, it would be debilitating to waste.

- 4) Emergence of Viable Alternatives: We know that social media has revolutionized how marketers communicate their messages. Because social media is so saturated with guerilla marketing ploys, there is concern that viewers are engaging with social media, distracting them from the actual T.V. commercials. As CNN money explains, “Skittles, for example, is opting for a social media gimmick instead. The candy maker is showing its Super Bowl ad to a single teenager in California, and then broadcasting his reaction on the brand's Facebook page.” Combine intriguing campaigns such as this with the entertaining national conversation and more consumers may find themselves ignoring parts of the broadcast. Such a trend of trying to dominate the new realm of “second screen exposure” (Disis, 2018) will only be a catalyst for historically intriguing marketing gimmicks. Therefore, this increases the importance of demanding viewer’s attention for T.V. advertisements to combat the distraction of social media.

In the end, Super Bowl marketing is a volatile game which carries immense implications for each investor. Marketers must do their best to predict how the message will be received, consider all potential repercussions of strategic campaigns, and then determine whether or not to execute this critically important message. The following section considers relevant aspects present in the current state of Super Bowl marketing and diverges through trends marketers need to consider moving forward to ensure a Super Bowl commercial becomes a good investment.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS**

### **The Emergence of Social Media & Implications**

The emergence of social media over the past decade has rejuvenated the marketing world in a revolutionary way. CNN Money (Disis, 2018) explains that “A lot of the trends that we've seen in the media world over the past decade have only made the Super Bowl more important.” They elaborate on the implications, stating that “A Super Bowl ad used to be a Super Bowl ad, but over the past decade, it's really become a two-week extravaganza.” The fundamental strategy CMOs employ is significantly different, and social media has ensured that the Super Bowl remains the holy grail of marketing opportunities. The strategic planning process for these companies has evolved. As Alvaro Luque, president of Avocados from Mexico illustrates in a Forbes interview (Rooney, 2017), “We’re focused on creating an immersive experience that connects fans to our creative before, during and after the game. Our digital hub [www.avosecrets.com](http://www.avosecrets.com) integrates 16 different experiences on multiple platforms under the #AvoSecrets umbrella, and for the first time, we're activating on all key social-media platforms.” This supports Fortune’s (Vella, 2012) claim that “The brands know that the Super Bowl ad game is increasingly about what happens away from your television set on Sunday,” because it has become such an integral component of Super Bowl marketing strategy. But why is this revelation occurring? Next, I will explain the merit behind allocating such intense effort to perfecting an



extended social media campaign, legitimizing social media as the aspect that can define a campaign's success.

***Platform to Distribute Opinions:*** Social media provides a treasured platform for consumers to record and express their thoughts. Before, blogs were the closest to social media, but this was normally restricted to professional and amateur publishers who dedicated immense time to formulating stories. However, it wasn't indicative of the rest of the 99% of the nation because it only represented the few who wrote assessments. Social media allows for a minimal effort and near instantaneous response which is easy for anyone to publish. Social media created a massive network which sparked national conversations. Marketers then were required to consider how the public response would materialize on social media, but were also gifted with the ability to stimulate buzz. Essentially, it became their responsibility to release any message which would ignite conversation. Over the last decade traditional techniques such as humor and use of celebrities remained as strong candidates to produce buzz. However, more serious messages have become more prevalent, and have proven to potentially become more effective. Turns out ads which are skewed toward nostalgia, shared universal values, or controversy are more polarizing and tend to make people more opinionated on social media. Regardless, social media has created an outlet which makes said buzz possible, completely changing the game.

***Enhanced Access to Consumer Insight/Enhanced Analytics:*** Before social media, companies would have to rely on deep intense qualitative research to assess consumer's reviews of marketing deliverables. Now, they have been granted unprecedented access to consumer's own intimate thoughts and opinions, and can accurately diagnose the heartbeat of the nation. Viewers actively support and critique advertisements on social media, which provides invaluable feedback for companies. In addition, activity on social media has equipped companies with critically enhanced analytics capabilities. Social media has revolutionized how companies gauge the success of commercials. Being able to monitor and track the frequency and location of media interactions enables companies to assess the popularity and backlash of specific content by analyzing buzz and conversations.

***Prolonged Life:*** Originally, the 30 second ad space during the actual broadcast was the sole opportunity to communicate a company's Super Bowl message. While this is still the pinnacle of any campaign, it is no longer the only way to share their message. Time magazine (Fitzpatrick & others, 2017) expounded upon a critical point claiming "Volkswagen kickstarted a new era of Super Bowl advertising by unveiling "The Force" (2011) online the week before the championship." After that revelation, marketers began to capitalize on the intense buzz surrounding the game before and after. CNN Money (Disis, 2018) notes that "A Super Bowl ad used to be a Super Bowl ad, but over the past decade, it's really become a two-week extravaganza." Extending the duration to which an ad can be effective has really helped justify the immense cost, which continues to rise, because it increases the sheer frequency of interactions that occur for the brand. Consumers have a myriad of different social media outlets in which they can be exposed to and digest information, and they take advantage of that.

***Real Time Marketing:*** Never before have marketers been able to respond to marketing opportunities so quickly and effectively. Now, brands are able to engage with their consumer

base about developments in real time. Certain brands have mastered the art of delivering content that is relevant to current situation which sparks conversation. The best example came in 2013 when during the Super Bowl, the New Orleans Superdome went dark. While the bizarre moment shocked and infuriated those producing the event, it became one of the most memorable opportunities for marketers. Oreo stole the day with a tweet which read “Power out? No problem. You can still dunk in the dark,” which resonated with viewers everywhere. There’s no doubt that social media enabled this brilliant marketing move. Outside of being able to respond to and capitalize on current events, which enables them to react and contribute to the national conversation, they can also react to other company’s strategic initiatives. Progressing upon Pepsi’s original direct attack on Coke in their “Delivery Guys” (1996) spot, Wendy’s famously and savagely attacked McDonalds on Twitter. As explained by AdAge (Catigan & Busk, 2018) “During the big game Wendy's trolled McDonald's relentlessly, roasting it for its "flash frozen" beef patties in its "Iceberg" spot, in :15s that were essentially broadcast tweets with hashtags and, finally, suggesting that the "Frozen Arches" were responsible when the broadcast glitched for a few seconds with dead-air time.” Marketing genius yes, but social media made this possible. In an older era, companies would’ve had to go through a long creative process in hopes of formulating a T.V. spot which was still even relevant to the situation. Now, they can respond vigilantly in hopes of making a statement which leaves an impression in their consumer’s minds.

***Better Segmentation & Ability to Target:*** The basics of marketing are well known. It is critical for companies to accurately segment, target, and position themselves to maximize their business opportunities. Essentially, marketers must accurately segment consumers by combining heterogeneous customers who exhibit similar buying behaviors, then choose which to target. The best companies masterfully position themselves within a category or niche, expertly communicating to their audience their supreme offering, why its different than the competition, and why consumers need it in their lives. In theory this should be easy, but its actually quite hard in the current massive, fragmented market. Social media allows marketers to separate segments and distinguish themselves from competitors. Because consumers share personal information on social media, it’s much easier to separate them in psychographic segments, which identifies characteristics such as lifestyle, personality, values, interests, activities, and opinions. This type of segmentation, relative to geographic and demographic segmentation, better consolidate consumers who are likely to exhibit similar types of behaviors. AdWeek supports this claim, stating “Marketers need to also understand the behaviors and preferences of customers in order to provide them with the best possible experiences while simultaneously influencing their purchasing plans.” After segmentation, social media is exceptional with maximizing bang for your buck because you can target the specific customers who are determined to be the ideal target market. While T.V. maximizes reach, social media has the advantage of providing more specific, targeted strategies where frequency can be maximized.

## **Current State & Projected Trends**

The theme and tone of each year will differ on a case by case scenario, depending on the state of the nation. The best tactics of each era have survived as proven winners, merging into this complex era that currently exists. However, certain revolutionary, status quo disrupting tactics will continuously emerge as viable options, because of the emergence of social media as a

key component of Super Bowl marketing. The key aim is to appeal to audiences by employing tactics which empower them to directly engage with the brand.

***Popular Content & Themes:*** Marketing has evolved to its current state because companies have started to realize that destructive business tactics, unethical practices, and the desire to win at all costs doesn't work anymore. Companies work hard to establish a responsible brand image that supports consumer's needs, wants, and moral values. NFL CMO Dawn Hudson explains that advertisers "still all set out to entertain, but where 10 or 15 years ago entertainment was defined as slapstick humor- you had to use a dog, a horse, a joke- there is a growing sophistication. There are a number of ways to reach this diverse audience, including some things that might more traditionally be "cause marketing." CLIO elaborates by stating that advertisers are tending to advertise "in a meaningful, powerful, breakthrough kinds of ways." Especially considering that the growing generation, Millennials, according to the reporting of the New York Times "like brands that link themselves to a social cause.", social issues, current events, political climate, and corporate social responsibility will continue to be a focus of creative deliverables for decades to come.

However, while this serious tone is a theme that has emerged and is here to stay, old techniques, especially humor will always have a critical role in Super Bowl advertising, proved by the slate of commercials in 2018. While there was absolutely a focus on humanitarianism relative to other years, funny was still king. Professor John A. Murphy of Villanova claimed in a Forbes article that "over the past five years, about 80% of ads used humor." However, Professor Murphy also claimed that "serious ads outperformed the humorous ads on key effectiveness measures such as likeability and expert or industry ratings." Humor should be looked at as playing it safe, low risk low reward because it's the industry norm. Wendy Clark, chief executive of DDB North America remarked that "At the end of the day, a Super Bowl ad is about epic, over-the-top production value." and marketers must remember this in order for their production to stand out from the pack and demand the attention of its audience. Humor has a difficult job of doing this because there is so much of it, so it better be an elite production in order to make an immense difference. There's no doubt that humor will always have an integral role in Super Bowl advertising, but it will be interesting to how the use of such satire fluctuates over the years.

Thought provoking advertisements force audiences to be mentally engaged because of the critical thinking involved. Most of these commercials start very profound, but in term progress to become inspirational. These types of commercials usually feature compelling scenes with inspiring scripts that communicate polarizing narratives. The best example of these are American themed commercials, and this breed of advertisement owns the Super Bowl. Forbes article featuring Professor Murphy explains how "invoking "American" values and scenes at our ultimate pop culture event would seem to be a recipe for success. The best examples are Chrysler's back to back hits "Imported from Detroit" (2011) and "Halftime in America" (2012) which chronicle Detroit's and then America's resurgence from the difficult time of the recession. These commercials struck a motivational chord and were both great successes. Progress a few years later, and Budweiser's "Puppy Love" (2014) became an all time favorite (my personal favorite), and also authenticated America's innate love of animals. All Americans can support

these ads, and companies, by solidifying themselves as celebrated American brands, drastically strengthened consumer favorability.

The final trend I'd like to emphasize is the effectiveness of nostalgia. An iconic scene from the famous show "Mad Men" features Don Draper epitomizing the power of nostalgia. Don quotes that there is a "Rare occasion where the public can be engaged on a level beyond flash, if they have a sentimental bond with the product." He then explains that it is a "deeper bond with the product which is delicate but potent." Nostalgia reminds people of memories, an emotion that people are desperate to recreate. In layman's terms, it reminds people of the good ole' days. One of the best techniques to achieve this is creating renditions of old commercials. Pepsi executed a rendition of their "Cindy Crawford" (1992) commercial in 2018, proving a blast to the past can work. Other brands have done the same, and I promise that there will be more versions in the future which aim to recapture old magic, because these schemes have been proved to effectively survive over the years.

***Evolved Marketing Tactics:*** Social media has changed the rules of the game so significantly that it has massively increased marketer's tactic arsenal. New, creative ways to engage audiences have emerged, and now the standard dynamic of a marketing campaign has evolved as well. The Chicago Tribune details that "The modern Super Bowl ad campaign is more than 30 seconds during a football game. It's a pre-game rollout on YouTube, hashtags, and second- and third-screen experiences before, during, and after the game." Companies are taking advantage of any opportunity to expand brand awareness and alter consumer perception by revolutionizing the way consumers interact with the brand. People are exposed to all sorts of marketing ploys significantly more than before social media, so CMO's need to be creative to make their brand stand out. Derek Rucker, a professor of marketing at Northwestern confirmed this in an interview with the Chicago Tribune that "You have to break through the clutter in an interesting way." CMO's have been challenged over the years to propose revolutionary tactics to engage the audience. This isn't about the script, but rather how to creatively express the desired narrative. The best tactics are brilliant guerilla marketing ploys because they disrupt the status quo and generate buzz, and are proven because they have survived the test of time, still exist today, and will most definitely be employed in the future. The following explain popular formats in which marketers present their million-dollar messages, trail blazing into the hearts, minds, and attention spans of consumers.

Doritos "Live the Flavor" (2007) commercial in its "Crash the Super Bowl" campaign brilliantly directed viewers to summon their own creative talents in a contest which would have true consequences. The winner would have a claim to fame that they created a Super Bowl commercial along with eternal bragging rights. This genius tactic, crowdsourcing, incentivizes consumers to engage with the brand in a different, more personalized way. Time magazine explains that "The tactic was widely recognized as genius in the advertising world, as it allowed Doritos to drop the costs of hiring an ad agency while simultaneously engaging its most loyal customers." This tactic made Doritos relevant in their consumer's own homes and respective lives.

Volkswagen “The Force” spot revolutionized Super Bowl marketing when it shocked the advertising world by releasing the commercial online the week before the game. This destroyed the sacred practice of keeping their work completely confidential in order to build up suspense for the big reveal. The skepticism soon subsided because as Time explains, “The early release- which has since become a widespread practice- created unprecedented pre-kickoff buzz around the commercial, helping it earn the titles of most shared Super Bowl ad of all-time and second most shared TV commercial ever.”

Tourism Australia executed one of the most entertaining twists on traditional Hollywood films in recent memory when it created trailers advertising the movie “Dundee” which wasn’t actually being made. The New York Times (Maheshwari, 2018) articulates the intrigue stating, “Dundee isn’t actually being made, despite the entertaining trailers that have been released for the film, its movie website and IMDB page, and a cast introduction video that includes appearances from a host of famous Australians.” By intriguing the audience it so slyly deceived with its slew of try-hard tactics, star studded theoretical cast, and hilarious trailer, it drove significant traffic to its website. This innovative type of guerilla advertising featured a message that resonated, but will be remembered even more for the very real buzz this very phantom production induced.

Finally, there has been a new generation of technique that has focused on driving attention to social media so viewers will be exposed to the brand and be able to interact with it. Taco Bell’s “Viva Mas” (2013) commercial threw a brilliant twist on its Live Mas campaign. The audience in the campaign is called to use #LiveMás on twitter, as they document the special moments and stories that occur in their life. While the commercial itself, featuring an older group of rebels who escape from a nursing home and cause some ruckus, generated plenty of buzz, it also compelled people to create and document their own stories. The commercial also summoned the competitive drive of some viewers, who strove to release the most epic tweet they could. The best part of this marketing campaign for Taco Bell? It aligns and appeals perfectly toward its target audience by emphasizing that after executing such shenanigans, the only true way to end the night is with Taco Bell. The theme of the commercial wasn’t selling a product but rather a way of life, and its subliminal message of great food became a great addition to the plot. Most other companies attempt to utilize hashtags to drive audiences to social media, but its hard to do it as effectively as this. The champions of Super Bowl advertising are those who have mastered social media, because there is no doubt it will be an integral part of the success formula forever.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

By now, we have well established that the Super Bowl is the holy grail of marketing, the championship for the battle of the brands, and the ultimate showcase of creative prowess which determines bragging rights. This American phenomenon is the exception, because it’s the one time on the calendar where viewers are mesmerized by commercials instead of tuning them out as noise. There are critical strategic objectives which can be satisfied, revolutionizing the brand in the eyes of the consumer and drastically expanding brand awareness. We know the vast

benefits that well-executed marketing schemes can have for companies, especially during the Super Bowl, which initiate significant implications. The proof of effectiveness is obvious when observing statistics for the 2018 Super Bowl:

- An average viewership of 103.4 million, escalating to 112.3 million at the end of the game. (Nielsen 2018)
- 68% of homes with functioning T.V's were tuned into the Super Bowl broadcast. (Nielsen 2018)
- 170.7 million social media interactions across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. (Nielsen 2018)
- Digital viewership of 2.02 million viewers a minute, a streaming record. (Nielsen 2018)
- Price of 30 second advertisement maximized at \$5.2 million (American Marketing Association)
- Aggregate Super Bowl ad spending over 52 year history (1967-2018): \$6.9 billion adjusted for inflation. (AdAge 2018)

Granted, there are some viable concerns associated with Super Bowl advertising. Because of immense scrutiny, marketers need to be conscious of the impact repercussions of attempting to make a statement which backfires can have. Attending to and reconciling public backlash can be difficult and can severely damage brand perception. Negative news surrounding the NFL have also been hot topics of debate recently. However, while some of these issues may erode some viewership in the short run, as 2018 statistics minimally decreased from 2017, the future trajectory of the Super Bowl is not truly threatened. Actually, the New York Times (Maheshwari, 2018) explains how "In an era of cord-cutting and ad-skipping, the Super Bowl is a sweet salve for the nation's marketers." Because of the evolution of on-demand, marketers are forced to deliberate if T.V. advertisements are worth it, with one exception: live sports. The Atlantic (Thompson, 2013) portrays this concept perfectly, stating "But in a time-delayed video world, the biggest games still drive dependable live audiences, making sports rights the most valuable resource in the whole TV ecosystem." The consequence of this reality: almost no one records on-demand sports to skip the commercials because we can't avoid the social media buzz which chronicles how games develop. Because the love for sports will never expire, the Super Bowl will never become obsolete for marketers.

At the end of the day, the Super Bowl is the marketing anomaly that has solidified its stranglehold as the pinnacle of advertising. The big game is so rooted into American culture that Super Bowl Sunday has become a holiday for millions across our great nation. As CNN Money (Disis, 2018) explains, "It's simple. The NFL's marquee event is TV's biggest game in town, and nothing else even comes close." Marketers who need to distinguish their brand as a supreme offering to secure competitive advantage over competitors (ahem, everyone) need to seize the moment. The habitual winners of Super Bowl advertising significantly elevate their status in the hearts and minds of the American people. My declared Super Bowl advertising champion, Anheuser-Busch InBev (responsible for Budweiser and Bud Light), absolutely dominates the American beer market. Super Bowl regulars undoubtedly think of Budweiser's "Puppy Love" (2014) spot with the legendary Clydesdales or the dramatic "Bud Bowl" (1989-91) series when

they crack a cold brew. My theory: it's no mistake that the best in the Super Bowl advertising realm is also the "King of Beers" because of their supreme strategy and execution on the marketing gridiron's biggest stage.

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**APPENDIX:*****Most Influential Super Bowl Commercials of All-Time (Chronological Order)***

<i>Company</i>	<i>Title of Commercial</i>	<i>Year</i>
Camel Cigarettes	“Walk a Mile”	1969
Coca-Cola	“Hilltop”	1972
Noxzema	“Cream Your Face”	1973
Master Lock	“Can’t Shoot Through”	1974
Coca-Cola	“Mean Joe Green/ Have a Coke”	1980
Apple	“1984”	1984
Wendy’s	“Where’s the Beef?”	1984
Bud Light	“Spudz McKenzie”	1987
Anheuser Busch	“Bud Bowl”	1989
Miller Light	“George Wendt”	1989
Pepsi	“Cindy Crawford”	1992
McDonalds	“The Showdown”	1993
Nike	“Hare Jordan”	1993
Budweiser	“Bud Frogs”	1995
Pepsi	“Delivery Guys”	1996
Nike	“Space Jam”	1996
Budweiser	“Wassup”	1999
Pepsi	“Britney Spears”	2001
Budweiser	“Respect”	2002
Budweiser	“Instant Replay”	2003
Sprint	“Crime Deterrent”	2007
Doritos	“Live the Flavor”	2007
Doritos	“Magic Crystal Ball”	2009
Snickers	“Betty White”	2010
Volkswagen	“The Force”	2011
Chrysler	“Imported from Detroit”	2011
Chrysler	“Halftime in America”	2012
Coca-Cola	“The Catch”	2012
Taco Bell	“Viva Mas”	2013
Budweiser	“Puppy Love”	2014
Loctite	“Positive Feelings”	2015
P&G	“Like a Girl”	2015
NFL	“Super Bowl Babies”	2016
Budweiser	“Stand by You”	2018
Tourism Australia	“Dundee”	2018
Bud Light	“Dilly, Dilly”	2018