

BBDO KNOWS

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The Super Bowl LVII

The Super Bowl LVII

Last Sunday, the biggest night of the year for American football, pop culture and, most importantly advertising, took place at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. The Kansas City Chiefs staged an exciting comeback against the Philadelphia Eagles in the fourth quarter, with a controversial referee call in the final two minutes dominating post-game discussions.¹ On Twitter Rihanna fans celebrated her pregnancy announcement and suave Fenty product placement during her spectacular halftime show.² The night offered brands an unparalleled opportunity to reach 113 million people, and when they weren't debating football or pop icons, the world's focus was squarely on the ads.³

Every year brands must weigh-up the benefits and eye watering cost of the Super Bowl. This year, advertisers paid an average of 7 million U.S. dollars in exchange for 30 seconds on the screen, up from 6.5 million in 2022 and 5.5 million in 2021.⁴ While some brands decide that advertising dollars can be spent better elsewhere, others use specific strategies to cut through the noise and successfully profit from the advertising investment. When done well, a Super Bowl campaign can increase brand awareness and salience by reaching a large audience and initiating on and offline conversations. Here's everything you need to know on how BBDO cut through the noise at the Super Bowl LVII:

BBDO NEW YORK x M&Ms - PLAY THE PR GAME

BBDO New York utilised a brilliant PR and communication strategy to garner interest and anticipation in the M&Ms Super Bowl campaign - social media, pop culture and teaser trailers made for a highly effective campaign. It all started last year when the M&Ms redesign of their spokescandies sparked a huge debate online - most notably from Fox News anchor Tucker Carlson calling them 'woke'.⁵ In January, M&Ms announced on Twitter that "even a candy's shoes can be polarizing... therefore, we have decided to take an infinite pause from the spokescandies".⁶ In their place, M&Ms appointed Maya Rudolph as the brand's new 'Chief of Fun'. Twitter was ablaze with consumers both celebrating and condemning the change.

“M&Ms played the media like a fiddle with their spokes-candy retirement.”⁷

- Jon Evans, Chief Customer Officer, System1

¹ Blecher Report, 13th February 2023, [Link](#).
² ET Online, 12th February 2023, [Link](#).
³ Forbes, 13th February, 2023, [Link](#).
⁴ Statista, 10th February 2023, [Link](#).
⁵ The Independent, January 2023, [Link](#).
⁶ M&Ms Twitter, 23rd January 2023, [Link](#).
⁷ Contagious Edit, 15th February 2023, [Link](#).

The Super Bowl LVII

In the following weeks, M&M's took it one step further by announcing the change of the name of the candy to Ma&Ya's and later claiming that the chocolate candy would be changed to candy-coated clam bites. Meanwhile, the colourful mascots started new jobs and appeared on other brands' social medias; the yellow M&M began working at Snickers, and the orange M&M at Spotify. When the Ma&Ya's ad premiered during the second quarter of the game and the former red spokescandy was spotted in the background of the last scene, holding a 'Help!' sign. The ad depicted the disgusted looks of people trying the candy-coated clam bites, so it was no surprise when M&M's announced the return of the spokescandies on Twitter at the end of the game. While the ad may have been a little confusing for those who had not been following the M&M's controversy, the PR stunt certainly created buzz around the brand and optimized its time in the spotlight by continuing the campaign after the game ended. BBDO New York's final spot for M&Ms, showing the return of the beloved spokescandies scored a 4.8 effectiveness and was the 2nd most effective ad overall, proving that playing the PR game pays off.⁸

BBDO MINNEAPOLIS x HORMEL - STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

The Super Bowl is the time of the year marketers are allowed to let their imaginations run wild. BBDO Minneapolis took this to heart with their release of Hormel Chili Cheese Brew—a combination of two Super Bowl favourites; beer and dip, crafted in conjunction with Modist Brewing Co. Fighting for attention in this year's Super Bowl LVII was going to be tough as beer companies were given the opportunity to advertise for the first time in 33 years after AB InBev announced it was foregoing its exclusivity contract. But what better way to capture the cultural zeitgeist than create a product that divided the internet?⁹ Hormel invited football fans interested in trying the unconventional beer to pre-order a 4-pack to arrive in time for the big game. The bizarre beer sold out online very quickly, but anyone can get a taste of what the beer is all about from detailed reviews and opinions circulating the internet. BBDO Minneapolis showed that standing out from the crowd lead to online buzz, even without a prime-time spot.

BBDO NEW YORK x FEDEX - WIN WITH INFLEUNCERS

FedEx, like Hormel Chili, chose to take advantage of Super Bowl attention in an unexpected way. Instead of purchasing an ad during the game, BBDO New York took advantage of the 150 million-strong audience watching the Super Bowl playoffs with its 'NFL Playoffs Concert Series' campaign.¹⁰ In keeping with FedEx's support for small

⁸ Marketing Week, 13th February 2023, [Link](#).

⁹ @darrenovell, Twitter, 30th January 2023, [Link](#).

¹⁰ LBB Online, 3rd February 2023, [Link](#).

The Super Bowl LVII

businesses the brand gave up-and-coming TikTok artists a platform during the playoff games. Twelve artists held their own half-time shows on their platforms to capture consumers scrolling through TikTok whilst games weren't in-play:

“It is so easy to get lost in the noise around the Super Bowl when the hype really starts a month beforehand in new platforms. That’s why we wanted to add value to our audience once the playoffs got going while giving up-and-coming artists their own half-time show.”¹¹

- Enda Conway, Senior VP, Head of Connections Strategy, BBDO

BBDO New York captured a new audience for FedEx – gen z’ers, of whom 61.3% use TikTok monthly.¹² After six games and 12 posts, the performances received over 7 million views and 187,000 likes, showing micro-influencers can have a macro-effect.¹³

BBDO SAN FRANCISCO x WHOLLY GUACAMOLE - SEIZE THE PROMOTION

BBDO San Francisco positioned Wholly Guacamole quality over home-made gauc by imploring hungry football fans to not ‘sweat the prep’ and instead ‘send in the pro’ i.e., Wholly Guacamole’s game ready dip.¹⁴ Wholly Guacamole’s Instagram was filled with game day recipes and content. Consumers could #WinWithWholly as Wholly Guacamole could be ordered free via Instacart – the perfect fast delivery for a mid-game re-stock. One lucky entrant also received a year’s supply of Wholly Guacamole ensuring the Kansas City Chiefs weren’t the only ones walking away with the ultimate prize.

ENERGY BBDO x BAYER - SIMPLE GOLDEN INSIGHT

Energy BBDO and Bayer launched a Super Bowl campaign that creatively linked heart health to the stress of being a sports fan, with the data and insight that a person’s risk of a heart attack more than doubles when they are watching their favourite team play.

¹¹ Enda Conway, Ad Age, 12th January 2023, [Link](#).

¹² Insider Intelligence, 13th September 2022, [Link](#).

¹³ LBB Online, 3rd February 2023, [Link](#).

¹⁴ BBDO San Francisco, LinkedIn, 10th February 2023, [Link](#).

The Super Bowl LVII

“It doesn’t matter what sport, league, or team you cheer for; every fan has experienced heart-pounding moments when watching their team play.”¹⁵

- Kelly Fanning, GM and VP of Pain and Cardio, Bayer

Energy BBDO positioned Aspirin as the ‘Official Sponsor of Fan’s Hearts’ leading up to the Super Bowl to encourage sports fans to prioritize their heart health and to educate fans about their risk with its new feature, CheckYourHeartRisks.com. At this site consumers can learn more about how Aspirin can support their heart health.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETERS

The Super Bowl is a high-cost, high-reward event for brands, as advertisers we must maximise the effectiveness around these major events in order to make them truly worth the eye watering price tag. BBDO successfully cut through the noise at Super Bowl LVII, with learnings for all of us and for activations of all sizes: play the PR game, stand out from the crowd, win with influencers, seize the promotion, and use a simple but brilliant insight.

¹⁵ MMM Online, February 2023, [Link](#)

ABOUT BBDO KNOWS

BBDO KNOWS is a planning resource for the BBDO network.

BBDO KNOWS offers thinking, strategy, insights, and inspiration on key categories, key themes and consumer segments.

If you are interested in learning more about the way BBDO thinks please contact **BBDO Knows** on bbdo@bbdoknows.com

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