

# The dos and don'ts of Super Bowl advertising

## Article

As the countdown to Super Bowl LVII (or 57, as **Heinz would like to call it**) hits 10 days, here's what brands should and shouldn't do for Super Bowl advertising.

### Do: Push the boundaries

Brands use the Super Bowl to pull attention-grabbing publicity stunts, like in 2008 when **E-Trade used a baby** to show how easy it can be to sell and trade stocks (and **again in 2022** to underscore the importance of smart investing).

And when it's all in good fun, stunts like this can pay dividends.

“A well-executed prank that resonates with the company’s target demographic may generate substantial buzz and favorable attention, possibly raising brand recognition and driving sales,” said Christena Garduno, CEO of Media Culture.

### **Don’t: Go too far**

Taking a stunt too far can backfire.

In 1985, **Apple ran “Lemmings,”** an ad that promoted a product called Macintosh Office. The commercial showed IBM consumers blindly following each other off a cliff, inspired by a myth about lemmings.

Consumers were less than pleased with the depiction, and though Apple has redeemed itself in the public’s eyes, it’s worth noting that Apple didn’t attempt a Super Bowl ad for another 14 years.

### **Do: Use social media to your advantage**

Brands can use social media to supplement their TV ads, resulting in a more comprehensive and integrated campaign, said Garduno.

“In the lead-up to a TV commercial, a business might broadcast teasers or behind-the-scenes footage on social media,” she said.

Even if brands aren’t running a TV spot, they can use related hashtags and keywords to leverage Super Bowl buzz to gain brand attention, like **Oreo did with its iconic tweet** in 2013 when the Super Bowl had a power outage.

### **Don’t: Pass on offline opportunities**

One of the Super Bowl’s greatest strengths is bringing people together, whether they love the sport or just love any opportunity to eat chips and dip.

During the Philadelphia Eagles’ playoff run, Philly-based deli meat company **Dietz & Watson handed out free “Bird Dogs”** (beef franks served on green-colored buns, served with diced hot peppers, provolone, and crunchy onions) all over the city.

### **Do: Extend the excitement beyond the TV**

Like last year’s **floating QR code from Coinbase**, this year’s Super Bowl will likely see brands experiment with content and sweepstakes that incentivize users to act right then, according

to Bridget Hall, group account director at M&C Saatchi Performance.

In addition, Hall notes that younger age groups may watch the game online or through streaming services, giving brands that aren't willing to pay a premium for traditional TV the chance to capitalize on connected TV and YouTube ads.

### **Don't: Forget to connect the dots**

When the game is over, the campaign shouldn't be.

"It's critical to regularly assess and analyze the campaign's success and make modifications as needed to get the greatest potential outcomes," said Garduno.

To get a true idea of a campaign's success, brands need to collect and combine data from a variety of sources, Hall shared.

"Advertisers that invest in Super Bowl spots are going to be more successful if they not only look at reach and gross rating points, but also analyze offline and online word of mouth, YouTube views, and Google search trends as a barometer of how well the Super Bowl feature resonates with viewers," she said.

Last year, over **208 million people watched Super Bowl LVI**. This year, 30-second ad spots are going for about **\$7 million each**; we'll be looking out for **Rob Gronkowski's live attempt** at a \$10 million field goal for FanDuel and **what M&M's plans to do with Maya Rudolph**.

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