

Super Bowl ad spending shows event remains crucial for brands

Article

The news: This Sunday's packed **Super Bowl** commercial lineup shows that brands and advertisers looking to capitalize on record consumer spending still look at the event as a unique opportunity to reach audiences nearing the hundreds of millions.

- Several longtime advertising partners are returning to the game, while new players like metaverse businesses and cryptocurrency exchanges look to make the jump to the

mainstream.

More on this: **NBCUniversal** has had two rocky sports broadcasting events in less than a year with the delayed 2020 **Summer Olympics** and ongoing **Winter Games**. But the prevailing cultural relevance of the Super Bowl, as well as changes in ad placement and consumer spending, had brands jumping on board regardless.

- Ad spots at this year's Super Bowl were highly coveted—and expensive. The average cost of a 30-second spot at last year's Super Bowl was about **\$5.5 million**. This year, the cost jumped to **\$7 million**, **per** Deadline.
- Why the jump in price? The **NFL**'s regular season ratings reached a record high in 2021, jumping 10% compared with 2020, **per** CNN. For the first time, Super Bowl ad spots will be run across cable, streaming service **Peacock**, and **Telemundo**'s inaugural Spanish-language broadcast (in previous years, ads across platforms were sold separately).
- Consumer spending also reached **all-time highs** this past holiday season, signaling the market's readiness for a return to normal. US holiday shoppers were unfazed by supply chain issues and spent a record **\$204.5 billion** online, **per** Adobe.

NBCU is also promising that advertising partners will be able to measure ad performance more dynamically thanks to a new partnership with **iSpot.tv**, which will allow partners to better track ads in real time, **per** Variety.

Who's in this year? Industries that struggled during the first year of the pandemic are making a big return. Automakers such as **General Motors**, consumer packaged goods manufacturers like **Procter & Gamble**, and travel agencies including **Kayak** have all bought ads for the game. But newcomers are also establishing a footprint: More than 30 advertisers will make their Super Bowl debut this weekend.

- **Meta** will make an appearance at the game with what will be its first major ad for the metaverse, **per** Ad Age. But tech companies aren't the only ones making metaverse ad plays. Beer brand **Miller Lite** is skipping out on a live spot this year, instead opting to host a promotional event in the metaverse via virtual platform **Decentraland**, **per** Marketing Dive.
- Betting service **Caesars Sportsbook and Casino** will also make a historic debut during the game with its own 30-second spot, fresh off its rapid success in New York state, where it and three other sportsbooks processed **over \$600 million** in bets in the first nine days of legalization.

Looking forward: Last year's Super Bowl ratings marked a record low for the event, but that decline has done little to affect advertisers' willingness to take part.

- Sports betting could also help ratings recover. Sportsbooks have advertised heavily ahead of the event, and the Super Bowl's wide influence on even non-sports viewers could funnel even more money—and eyeballs—into the game.