

Super Bowl ads: Hits and misses included a blend of nostalgia, humor, and celebrity overload

Article

The news: The Super Bowl once again served as the ultimate platform for brands to present their most innovative and engaging commercials. With a steep [\\$7 million price tag](#) for a 30-

second spot, advertisers embraced safety, nostalgia, and the undeniable allure of celebrity endorsements while subtly navigating the realms of politics and social commentary.

Pushing boundaries: One of the standout attempts to break the traditional mold came from a collaboration between **Cardi B** and makeup brand **NYX**. The original concept, aiming to playfully challenge male-dominated sports fan culture, faced modifications by the NFL.

- The result was a toned-down version that still managed to intrigue viewers with a QR code leading to the full ad. The move to inject humor and challenge stereotypes was a bold nod to the evolving dynamics of Super Bowl advertising.

Celebrity cameo overload: The use of celebrities was more pronounced this year. **Arnold Schwarzenegger's** self-parody in a State Farm ad and **Beyoncé's** Verizon commercial, which cleverly teased new music, exemplified how stars can bring a mix of humor and surprise to the advertising table.

- **Jennifer Aniston's** appearance in an **Uber Eats** ad underscored the trend of leveraging star power to create memorable moments that resonate with audiences beyond the game.
- The **CeraVe** ad featured **Michael Cera** implying he inspired the brand's name, blending humor and celebrity to boost brand recognition. This creative approach and playful tone facilitated viewer engagement and shareability while subtly promoting CeraVe's dermatologist-developed products without overt selling—effectively distinguishing CeraVe in the crowded skincare market.

Nostalgia and emotion: Nostalgia played a significant role, with brands like **Volkswagen** reminiscing about their iconic vehicles while introducing the electric ID. Buzz.

- **Google's** ad for its Pixel camera, featuring technology aiding a visually impaired man, stood out for its emotional depth, earning high praise for linking tech with genuine human experiences.

Highs and lows: While many ads received accolades for their creativity and impact, others fell short. **Temu** and **Homes.com** were criticized for repetitive and unclear messaging, demonstrating the challenges brands face in making a lasting impression during a brief Super Bowl spot.

- **Squarespace's** ad underperformed because it confusingly mixed aliens with phone distractions, failing to clearly link its plot to the company's services, despite direction from **Martin Scorsese**, resulting in a lack of viewer engagement and unclear messaging.

Our take: This year's Super Bowl ads mirrored the complexities of the cultural climate, balancing entertainment and messages.

As companies continue to vie for the attention of a diverse and discerning audience, the evolution of Super Bowl commercials remains a fascinating barometer for shifts in advertising strategies and public sentiment.

Ideal TV Ad Experience According to US Connected TV (CTV) Viewers, Jan 2023

% of respondents



Note: among those with positive brand impact
Source: Publicis and Yahoo, "Attracting Attention: Optimizing CTV Advertising Engagement," March 21, 2023

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