Which Brand (Not Which Ad) Won Super Bowl 2019? by @gregjarboe

Here’s an important question that you should ask at your next marketing meeting: “Which brand won Super Bowl 2019?”

Now, I’ll bet dollars to donuts that someone will say it was “The 100-Year Game | SBLIII.”

[embedded content]

Why?

Because USA Today Said So

The NFL’s impromptu pickup game, starring 44 of the greatest players of all-time, was the USA Today Ad Meter winner.

The annual poll has been conducted every year since 1989, so many marketers don’t question the claim that the Ad Meter is “the definitive measure of Super Bowl commercials.”

But, its methodology doesn’t use metrics that matter, like:

- Brand awareness.
- Message association.
- Brand consideration.
- Purchase intent.
- Brand favorability.

In fact, it uses a unique set of vanity metrics that were invented 31 years ago — before the World Wide Web was created.

Did you know that USA Today lets any U.S. citizen who is at least 18-years-old become an Ad Meter panelist?

Participants are asked for basic demographic information– age, gender, income, and ZIP code. And USA Today monitors registrations and audits the voting process looking for patterns or discrepancies – like bulk voting or bots – and investigates anything that seems odd.

Thousands of panelists are then asked to rate every national ad that appears during the Big Game on a one-to-10 scale (with one to three being "poor," four to seven being "good," and eight to 10 being excellent).

The Problem with USA Today's Ad Meter

However, an article by Michael Learmonth, "How USA Today's Ad Meter Broke Super Bowl Advertising," which was published in AdAge in 2012, revealed that in order to please their clients and bolster their own resumes, most ad directors stopped trying to create ads like "1984," Apple's TV commercial introducing the Macintosh directed by Ridley Scott.

Instead they "started creating ads for the panel – the media equivalent of teaching for the test. How do you get people to have an immediate, positive reaction to something they're seeing? Certainly don't show them a narrative. Make them laugh."

Now, making 98.2 million TV viewers laugh is a marvelous outcome, even if that's the smallest audience for football's annual spectacle since 2008.

But, with the average cost of a 30-second spot in this year's Super Bowl now $5.25 million (excluding production expenses), it's worth asking your marketing team which brand benefited the most from advertising during this year's Big Game.

That should prompt a serious discussion of which metrics matter the most to your product. And, depending on which

metrics you select, there are several other ways to answer the question: “Which brand won Super Bowl 2019?”

For example, “The 100-Year Game” didn’t have the most online video views, nor the most social engagement. Those honors go to other 2019 Super Bowl commercials, as well as the awards for highest average three-day view counts (V3) and three-day engagement rates (ER3), according to an article by Bree Brouwer in Tubular Insights, “2019 Super Bowl Commercials: Who Won on YouTube?”

Which Brands Were the Biggest Winners?

Amazon

The Most-Watched video was “Not Everything Makes the Cut – Amazon Super Bowl LIII Commercial,” which had 38.1 million views as of 12:25 p.m. PT, Feb. 4, 2019. It also had the highest average three-day view count (V3), with 38.1 million views.

[embedded content]

Marvel Studios

The Most-Engaged video was “Marvel Studios’ Avengers: Endgame – Big Game TV Spot,” which had 410,000 engagements.

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Google

And the video with the Highest Three-Day Engagement Rate (ER3) was “Job Search for Veterans | Google Super Bowl Commercial 2019,” with 1,600 engagements out of 880,000 views for an ER3 benchmarked across all content of 1.3x, which means it was 1.3 times more engaging than average.

[embedded content]

Brouwer also noted that:

- **T-Mobile** and **Bud Light** were the brands that uploaded the most Super Bowl ads at four apiece.
- The most-represented category was food and drink with 17 total ads; media and telecom were second with seven ads each, followed by the auto industry with six ads.
- One of the biggest trends was the focus on millennial-based nostalgia and references (probably because of that generation's buying power). For example, musicians who were popular in the '90s and early 2000s like Ludacris, Backstreet Boys, and Lil' John were featured in this year's spots. And stars from top millennial-era entertainment were also present such as Jeff Bridges' "The Dude" from "The Big Lebowski", Christina Applegate from "Anchorman", Sarah Jessica Parker's "Carrie Bradshaw" from Sex & the City, and Sarah Michelle Gellar from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer".

By comparison, Realeyes' 2019 Super Bowl Effectiveness study asked consumers who represented the general U.S. population how they felt about each ad and it also used the company's AI technology to track and interpret their facial expressions and body language as they watched via their webcam.

The responses of 1,300 viewers to 67 Super Bowl videos were then fed into an algorithm to determine which spot extracted the most engagement, attention and positive sentiment among consumers.

And the winner was…

M&M's

"M&M'S Chocolate Bar Super Bowl Commercial 2019 (featuring Christina Applegate) – 'Bad Passengers.'"

[embedded content]

This video came out on top with a total score of 9.72 out of a possible 10. M&M's ad achieved a perfect 10 on the EmotionAll scale, 9.7 for attention, and performed better than 97 percent of the videos that Realeyes has tested to date.

"Bad Passengers is an example of a highly relatable experience and the story is told in an engaging, humorous manner. The brand is also introduced [on screen] at the exact moment of high emotion [which has resulted in a] win for M&M's," said Tina Gaffney, the head of customer success at Realeyes, in a Marketing Week article by Erin Lyons, "Super Bowl 2019: Who won the ad battle?"

Meanwhile, Ace Metrix didn't name just one Super Bowl winner; it named five.

In a blog post, "Super Bowl LIII: The Ads that Stood Out," the advertising analytics company's CEO Peter Daboll said, "Let's remember that many of the Super Bowl ads are trying to accomplish different objectives—some purely entertaining, some tug at heartstrings, and others push specific products. So to judge them based on the same criteria doesn't say whether they were successful in their own right."

And, using Ace Emo, which quantifies an ad's emotional impact compared with tens of thousands of ads, the company said different Super Bowl LIII ads stood out to viewers for different emotions: Funny, Heartfelt, Ingenious, Eerie, and WTF.

Their methodology is based on deep Natural Language Processing and machine learning analysis of hundreds of viewer reactions to every ad – in their own words. Results are generated from consumer data, where each ad is rated by more than 500 real-world viewers all across the country.

So, who were the "winners" here?

Bubly

“Michael Bublé vs bubly Super Bowl 2019 Ad” ranked #1 for both the Funniest Super Bowl LIII Ad as well as the Most Ingenious Super Bowl LIII Ad.

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Like many humorous Big Game ads, this year’s funniest benefitted from a celebrity’s star power and acting prowess.

Michael Buble was the only guy for the job in Bubly’s “Can I Have a Buble?” creative. The pairing, which seems obvious in hindsight, came off as ingenious and memorable to viewers as well as funny, as shown in the emotional profile below.

Verizon

Meanwhile, “Verizon | ‘The Coach Who Wouldn’t Be Here’ :60” ranked #1 for the Most Heartfelt Super Bowl LIII Ad.

[embedded content]

According to Ace Metrix, this ranking was derived from the company’s Heartfelt emotional metric, which is evoked when an ad is moving (whether it’s happy, sad, or bittersweet) as a result of the story, message, characters, visual scenes, or all combined.

While humor can be polarizing, heartfelt ads have the power to connect with all viewers. Likeability of the first responders’ message is one of the strongest components for Verizon’s “The Coach Who Wouldn’t Be Here.”

TurboTax

The next “winner” was “TurboTax Live 2019 Super Bowl Commercial “RoboChild” (Official :45) TV ad,” which ranked #1 in the Most Eerie Super Bowl LIII Ad category.

[embedded content]

According to Ace Metrix, this ranking is derived from the company’s Eerie metric. In case it isn’t painfully obvious, this ad made viewers feel uneasy or scared because of its (really) weird or scary ad content.

Now, brands may purposefully try to connect through this non-traditional emotion as a way to generate that “can’t look away even if you really want to” attention. And, it turns out that the attention score was the strongest component for this eerie ad. So, don’t judge it too quickly or too harshly.

Turkish Airlines

Finally, “Ad Meter 2019: Turkish Airlines” ranked #1 in the Most WTF Super Bowl LIII Ad category.

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According to Ace Metrix, this ranking is derived from their WTF metric, which signals when the message is confusing, or when there’s no connection between the ad and the brand advertised, leaving viewers with that “WTF did I just watch?” reaction.

Advertisers that spark WTF emotions tend to forego classic campaign metrics in order to make a statement, wow with cinematic visuals, or both.

Some brands knowingly go this route for the Super Bowl as a way to generate buzz around their ad, while others may have had no intention of ending up here.

Um, OK.

So, did Turkish Airlines intend to take this route or did it just sort of end up there?

This brings me to the most surprising winner of Super Bowl 2019:

Fiat Chrysler (or: the Brand That Wasn’t There)

An article by Dale Buss in Forbes, “Popularity Of Jeep’s Digital-Only Ad Ratifies Fiat Chrysler’s New Super Bowl Strategy,” observed that Fiat Chrysler skipped advertising during the Big Game this year for the first time in 10 years and decided to launch an all-digital blitz on Super Bowl weekend instead.

According to Buss, “Fiat Chrysler showed what can be accomplished by executing digital-only video at the same sort of high level of creativity and execution as some of its iconic Super Bowl ads on television.”

In case you missed it, check out “Jeep ‘Big Game Blitz’ | OneRepublic | ‘More Than Just Words.’” The video had 52.4 million views and 15,100 engagements, as of the time of this writing.

[embedded content]

And the same ad on Facebook, “Picture freedom like never before. Jeep Big Game Blitz brings you The Star-Spangled Banner in a word-by-word visual score performed by OneRepublic,” has another 52.2 million views and 478,000 engagements.

And the same ad on Twitter, “Picture freedom like never before. Jeep® Big Game Blitz brings you The National Anthem in a word-by-word visual score performed by @OneRepublic,” has an additional 1.8 million views and 7,915 engagements.

There are another five videos that are part of the campaign, which launched on Jan. 29. Together, they have 110.2 million views and 576,900 engagements.

According to Buss:

> *“The Company’s decision to forsake TV ads during the game for the first time since 2009 was a stunning development, given the quality and popularity of many of the commercials that it has run during the Super Bowl over the last several years. But Chief Marketing Officer Olivier Francois and CEO Mike Manley wanted to bring more efficiency to their expensive Super Bowl ad buy in terms of viewership metrics and costs.”*

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) said in a press release that the Jeep brand’s “More Than Just Words” has smashed the

company's record for most online views, with over 106 million, "more than the audience size for the Super Bowl broadcast."

In addition to breaking Company records for most views, "More Than Just Words" has been shared across Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube more than 200,000 times cumulatively with over 50,000 comments combined "reflecting overwhelmingly positive sentiment from fans across social media."

Said Francois in the release:

> *"This year, we adopted a new approach to launch our commercials in advance of the Big Game and our 'gamble' seems to be winning as we continue to track the videos through today. Together, our eight creative executions have amassed over 169 million views. What is more exciting is that engagement to date suggests that Jeep brand's 'More Than Just Words' on its own has surpassed the TV audience viewership for the Big Game. Viewers have been reacting to it in a very powerful way, commenting across our digital and social platforms telling us how much they appreciate the message, and thanking us for it. Our fans are calling the video one of the best Big Game commercials ever. And while it didn't air in the game, people will remember it as one."*

So, Which Brand Do *You* Think Won Super Bowl 2019?

No, this isn't a trick question.

It's a serious attempt to get your marketing team to determine which metrics matter *before* you decide which media to use to market your brand.

More Resources:

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