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2005 Super Bowl Ads... Winners & Losers

By John Jordan

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Well, Super Bowl XXXIX is history. Too bad for the folks who consider themselves the always-pullin'-for-the-underdog type. The Bandwagon team won.

But, as far as Super Bowls go, the losers played well. For those who care, the Eagles actually covered the 7-point spread. T.O. is the deal, too. At least on the field, anyway.

They had a chance late in the game, but poor field position and bad clock management did them in. Scoring from 95 yards out with 48 seconds left? That's a tall order.

So is getting/maintaining ad recall 48 hours after the final gun. Whose \$80,000 per second ad was worth it? Who would've done better by writing me a fat check for \$2.4 million?

Read on, and find out. True to school yard rules: Suckers Walk. Losers are up first.

Losers:

Sorry, Donovan, but your three picks lands you in with GoDaddy.com, Quizno's, and Silestone. I don't care if you were ill.

GoDaddy.com had a decent concept that quickly went bad. OK. Boopsie talking to a Senate subcommittee on C-SPAN about indecency. Good start- if they cut out any hint to last year's halftime debacle. But... they couldn't resist. So the buxom wench wearing a GoDaddy.com t-shirt has a near wardrobe malfunction. One of the craggy senators has to hit the oxygen mask.

This ad was supposed to run again, but Fox pulled it mid-game. Good idea. I bet their stomachs were in as many knots as Donovan McNabb's.

The Quizno's ad was mediocre at best. This talking baby concept is tiresome. As cliché as it may be, it's still 80% less annoying than those whack rodents in pirate hats from a couple of years ago.

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The one stinky Bud Light ad was one that the ESPN crowd really dug – the parachute-less pilot heading out the door for the six of Diet Bud. Dumb. The desert island one with Cedric the Entertainer was iffy, too.

Speaking of stinky... what was up with Napster's ad? Ugh! It could wind up doing more to shut them down than the Supreme Court.

This bad concept was in stark difference to their introductory spots featuring Flash animation based around their logo. Those were well-designed and entertaining. This one was as fat and ugly as the seven shirtless blops they decided to show with a letter on each of their overdeveloped beer guts to spell N-A-P-S-T-E-R. It was done in house and, boy, did it show.

The manufactured "reality" of the game and its atmosphere was lame and no one bought it. An ad taking place at the Super Bowl should be IN the Super Bowl– done real time. And... trying to take on Apple's iTunes on price? That was the second dumbest decision of this ad. No wonder it finished dead last in likability and recognition.

Now... Silestone. Valiant effort of an ad featuring Chicago sports legends. Voice over was good. It was shot nicely. But, it was a little too jumpy in the cuts to get the whole picture the first time through. The quick cut style hurt the name recognition of the line of counter tops.

Silestone and Diana Pearl are not exactly household names. And Dennis Rodman slurred his line. It sounded like "Dinah Pearl, rather than, "Diana Pearl." I'm sure the director or writer got dissed when they said, "Uh, Worm... it's 'Di-A- na'."

"Sure. Dinah."

As a side note, why were only Chicago Bears in it until Dennis Rodman at the end? No Scottie Pippen or Slammin' Sammy?

On to the good 'uns...

Winners:

This year, the game was nearly as good as the ads, as there were a surprisingly good number of breaking spots. Leading the pack was Career Builder, FedEx, Mastercard, and Anheuser-Busch.

FedEx likes to make ads relating to advertising on advertising's biggest stage. They did it again – patching together 10 "tried and true" Super bowl ad conventions to great results.

Career Builder put a great spin on a stale category with the best work since Monster's "I Wanna Be..." [a brown noser, forced into retirement, etc.] from '98. Three ads featuring a hapless chump working for chimps managed to put their name into mind share largely dominated by two others.

MasterCard got a bunch of animated branded food icons together for a meal and a nice touch of

nostalgia. Ad fans and agency folks dug this one.

A–B hit emotional hot buttons with a near–public service ad saluting troops returning home. Yes, they were real military – not actors. Their uniforms just did not have any insignias, so the common soldier would be represented. For their light beer category, the ad with the head on the wall and the designated driver spot were the best for Bud Light.

Pepsi's second year of an iTunes promotion kicked off well. They ran a humorous spot featuring people opening winning bottles for a free song. When the bottles were opened, a song reflecting the drinker's taste in music would play. Although the spot was humorous and worked, Pepsi could've really hit a home run by involving the older "authority figure" more into the ad. But, keeping with brand tradition, they kept the focus young.

AmeriQuest had two entertaining spots revolving around the themes of misunderstanding and jumping to conclusions. Their message was, "We don't prejudice." The ad featuring spaghetti sauce, a cat, and knife will certainly make some "Best Of" reels this year.

Decent work also included Honda's new pickup/SUV product introduction. Good detail with benefit highlights. Left the "Honda" out until the end. Cadillac and Volvo had solid ads. Volvo should have bought another ad, if not two, as many people missed the early run. The audience also may have missed the details on their unique contest. But they did follow up with some net portal ads the day after. Ford's F–150 Biker spot was OK. Their line that "it makes YOU tough," really undercut the effectiveness.

John is a freelance commercial writer based in Omaha, Nebraska. He publishes a free monthly e–zine focusing on branding, advertising, and marketing from his web site <http://www.brandedbetter.com>. Speaking with both agency and in–house experience, he knows the most valuable asset of a business is its brand.

Super Bowl Sunday Is The Biggest Unofficial Holiday

By Kadence Buchanan

In the 40 years since the first Super Bowl was played between Green Bay and Kansas City, Super Bowl Sunday has grown into an unofficial national holiday that has shopping and economic effects rivaling Christmas, Thanksgiving and other major official holidays. Whether it's a casual get together with a few friends or a lavish, catered party, 125 million Americans celebrated the Super Bowl in some fashion in 2006. Even those with little interest in football get in on the craze, if only to watch the commercials.

Understanding this unique opportunity, advertisers spare no expense to showcase their products and services during the Super Bowl. Advertisers paid up to \$2.5 million dollars for each 30 seconds of advertising during Super Bowl XL in 2006. Agencies work on their advertisements all year, and the Super Bowl has become the unofficial Academy Awards of advertising. There are almost as many

websites and television programs analyzing the advertisements as there are analyzing the game.

The food and beverage industry also profits from Super Bowl Sunday. Super Bowl Sunday is second only to Thanksgiving in the amount of food that Americans prepare and consume. In the weeks leading up to Super Bowl XL, Americans spent \$55 million dollars on food for their Super Bowl parties and spent ten million hours preparing it. Since it is estimated that an average of 17 people attend each Super Bowl Party, these figures are not surprising.

The king of Super Bowl food is the avocado. More avocados are sold in the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl than at any other time of the year. It is estimated that 12 million pounds of avocados are purchased and turned into guacamole for Super Bowl parties. Since guacamole requires chips, 15,000 tons of chips are consumed as well. All that food needs washing down and soda and beer sales also top out during the weeks preceding the big game.

It's not just food and beverage manufacturers who profit. Millions of dollars are spent on party supplies like paper plates, cups and plastic cutlery. Electronics stores also benefit. After all, you need that big-screen TV in order to properly appreciate the game. Even sales of antacids spike on the Monday following Super Bowl Sunday. There's a good reason for that. The estimated total time that party-goers take to consume all that carefully prepared food: 15 minutes.

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