



Super Bowl ads get mileage on social media

By **Doug Sherwin**, The Daily Transcript
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Companies are using social media once again to get the most value for their Super Bowl commercials, local industry analysts say.

And at a reported price of \$4 million for a 30-second spot, who can blame them?

"Social media platforms have been a significant part of the advertising landscape over the last several years," said Mike Garten, senior vice president of San Diego's **Mindgruve**, a digital media agency.

"Companies that are making a major ad investment are now leveraging and incorporating a digital strategy into what they're doing in a traditional advertising space, where the two are being integrated."

Several companies have posted their commercials on YouTube already, giving viewers the opportunity to see the ads before Sunday's big game between the Seattle Seahawks and Denver Broncos.

Others have posted teaser ads to their Facebook pages or Twitter accounts, where they are shared by fans and followers many times over.

For the past several years, Doritos has put on a "Crash the Super Bowl" campaign, where amateurs create their own ad and then have viewers vote on which ones will air during the Super Bowl.

Coca-Cola, meanwhile, is asking viewers to vote on the ending of its Super Bowl commercial.

"What's getting more prevalent is utilizing social media — and even engaging audiences pre-game — so you're making the dollars stretch even further," said Karin Salas, vice president of the public relations and branding firm **Oster and Associates**, "Social media definitely extends the shelf life of the ad."

Last year, Oreo took advantage of a 34-minute power outage during the Super Bowl to create a viral ad on the fly. The company tweeted out a photo of their cookie, lit against a black background, with the simple tagline: "You can still dunk in the dark."

It got more than 15,000 retweets and more than 20,000 likes on Facebook.

San Diego State University professor George Belch said many of this year's ads stick to the tried-and-true formula of humor and poignancy, including a spot by Budweiser in which a puppy befriends the company's iconic Clydesdales. Another cute ad features actor Terry Crews giving a bus full of Muppets a lift in his Toyota. And a dad uses Cheerios to tell his daughter she's getting a baby brother.

"You could do something really bizarre, but it's risky to do that," said Belch, chair of SDSU's marketing department. "These ads get scrutinized and companies are spending a lot of money. Some companies are unwilling to do something that may backfire."

Salas said there are a few this year that could qualify as bizarre, however.

One is an Audi commercial that features a "Doberhuahua" — a dog with the head of a Doberman pinscher and the body of a Chihuahua. Sarah McLachlan, who has famously appealed to audiences on behalf of abused and neglected animals, is shown in the spot asking people to save the Doberhuahua.

"She's making a mockery of an organization that she's stood up for," Salas said. "I'm wondering if she's going to get backlash for that. Animal rights people tend to be outspoken and passionate about their cause. I'm curious to see how that plays out."

GoDaddy's latest commercial, a buffed-up Danica Patrick running with a pack of bodybuilders, is another bizarre spot, Salas said, adding that the humor in Super Bowl ads has tended to get weird.

The analysts agreed that the Super Bowl, and its estimated audience of 110 million, is still a relevant vehicle for advertisers.

"The real challenge is for the client and agency," Garten said. "Are they able to develop a story with an execution that really pays off for the investment?"