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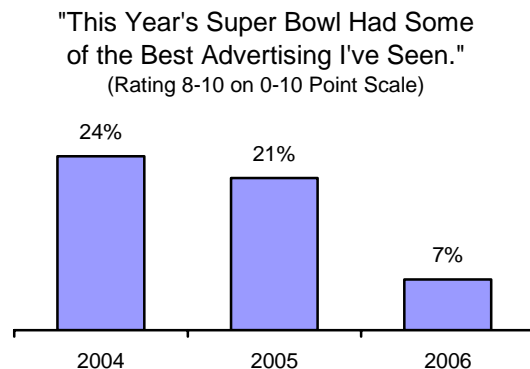
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February 9, 2006

HAVE SUPER BOWL COMMERCIALS BEEN SACKED?

PENNINGTON, NJ— Media pundits have now registered their opinions and a number of surveys have reported which Super Bowl commercials viewers liked best in Sunday's game. But advertisers paying up to \$2.5 million for a 30-second spot see their participation in America's most watched sports event not just as a popularity contest but as an important investment, one that is expected to pay its way several times over in increased branding, more favorable attitudes and sales. Only time will tell which ones will ring loudest at the cash register. However, there are several indications of sales potential in a scientific survey carried out Monday by Gallup & Robinson, Inc., a communications research firm that has evaluated Super Bowl commercials for the past 16 years. The data indicate that commercial effectiveness in the typical Super Bowl ad may be declining, but that outstanding creative continues to win.

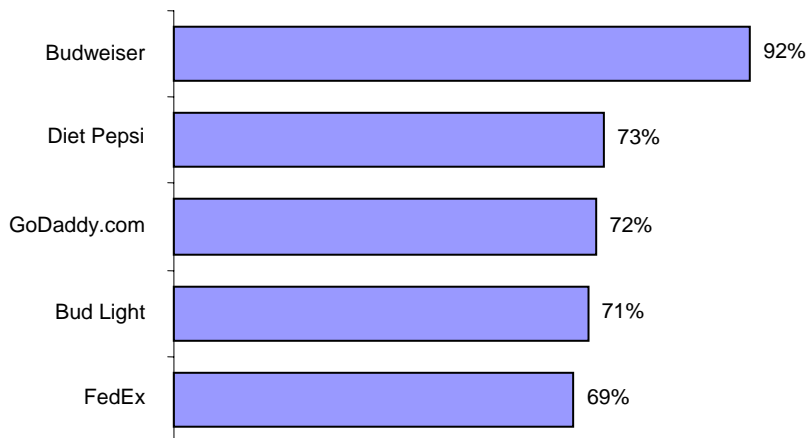
G&R has been tracking general attitudes toward Super Bowl advertising for several years. This year's survey found an abrupt decline in key attitudes relating to the quality of the commercials. The graph below shows the percentage of viewers who agree with the indicated statement:



After the uproar over the 2004 halftime show and that year’s frequently risqué commercials, G&R began asking viewers if they agreed or disagreed that “I think that the commercials this year were in better taste than they were last year”. Only 18% of Super Bowl viewers agreed with this statement this year compared to 34% in 2005. This year’s more negative attitudes were consistent across gender, age and income groups and will certainly bear watching next year.

Commercials must first break through the clutter before they can make any kind of lasting impression on Super Bowl viewers. Sponsors attempt to do this with sheer media weight or by crafting memorable executions. As in past years, Anheuser-Busch, with a total of eight commercials for three of their brands, opted for both approaches. Budweiser, which had three commercials in the game, was the single most memorable brand advertised. Its commercial showing a Clydesdale colt trying to pull a wagon was the viewers’ favorite of the three, beating out a lamb streaking through a Clydesdale football game by two to one. Diet Pepsi was second, with two celebrity commercials featuring Jay Mohr, P Diddy and Jackie Chan. Four commercials with comical, product-related twists succeeded in highlighting Bud Light. Its disappearing refrigerator commercial was among the five most liked commercials in the game. The five brands in the game with the highest claimed recall among men and women were:

Most Highly Recalled Brands



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ADVERTISING RESEARCH NEWS

This execution was in sharp contrast to the over-the-top comedy and razzle-dazzle of most other Super Bowl commercials. Instead, it was quiet, sensitive and charming. Among women, the commercial's target, Dove scored highest in creating more positive attitudes toward the brand (76%) and second highest in commercial likeability (78%). Without extravagant special effects, Dove achieved its communication goals with a thoughtful approach to an important human issue.

Ten movies were advertised in the game. Since their commercials were limited mostly to outtakes, it is likely that their performance portends potential interest in the movies themselves. Previous follow-up surveys by G&R have shown a high correlation between Super Bowl reaction and opening weekend gross. This year, movies ranked from high to low in G&R's measures, with everything in between. Based on audience reaction in the game, we can expect "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" and "Mission: Impossible III" to be box office hits, but should be less optimistic about "16 Blocks" and "Running Scared."

What impact have digital video recorders (DVR), like TiVo, had on how people view the Super Bowl? This has been a serious concern for advertisers ever since the technology was developed a few years ago. G&R's survey found that it can cut both ways. One third of its viewers owned or rented DVR equipment. Of these, 17% used it specifically to replay commercials appearing in the game, and 6% used it to skip commercials when they replayed the game. This suggests that DVR may actually have helped increase the frequency of ad exposure somewhat.

Scott Purvis, Gallup & Robinson's President, observed, "In this year's Super Bowl we witnessed a continuation of the decline in commercial performance that became evident last season. While production values are becoming ever more extravagant, they do not translate into motivating brand messaging unless they stick to basic blocking and tackling, grounded in sound brand strategies that touch consumer values. Entertainment alone doesn't move product or build strong brands."



