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Guerrilla Sales & Mark

## Which \$3 Million Ad Flamed the Fans?

LORI TURNER

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Lori Turner

Oh, how the big brands sweated as each second of Super Bowl XLV airtime sucked away 100,000 marketing dollars. Would the \$3 million advertisers paid for a 30-second spot pay off with the 111 million viewers? Let's see.

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So what makes a Super Bowl ad great?

- It's engaging.
- The brand or product and its differentiators are memorable – not just the commercial itself.
- It is simple enough to understand in a noisy Super Bowl environment.
- It drives consumers to action.
- It generates buzz after the game – stretching that pricey investment.

While small businesses may not have the budgets to invest in Super Bowl spots, there are lessons to be learned from the big brands that gambled on the big game. Some were on fire and others just fizzled.

### RAGING INFERNO – These brands were definitely on fire making good use of their Super Bowl investment:



#### Chrysler – “Born of Fire”

Eminem is featured driving a Chrysler 200 through Detroit. The cinematic quality of the spot made viewers take notice. A voiceover describes the underdog city of Detroit and how it's been to “hell and back.” Eminem says, “This is the Motor City, and this is what we do.”

While the ad focuses more on Detroit than Chrysler, it emotionally engages viewers and captures the grit and soul of the city and ultimately of Chrysler. The spot ends with a tag line that's buzz-sawing through social media. “Imported from Detroit” deconstructs the “Made in America” sentiment. This risky, edgy, somewhat controversial ad is ultimately effective.

#### Best Buy – “Ozzy vs. Bieber”

Retail giant Best Buy wins the award for most effectively balancing and connecting entertainment value with product features. In an effort to promote its “technology buy back” service, Best Buy engaged celebrities Justin Bieber – representing new technology – and Ozzy Osborne – depicting old technology. The brand touts that it buys back old technology when you want to upgrade, featuring the slogan, “Don't get left behind.”

#### Audi – “Release the Hounds”

In this clever spot, Audi positions itself as a new, more progressive luxury brand. Two men decide to escape from a prison of luxury. Once they make it past the outside wall of the prison yard, one of them chooses an Audi A8 as his getaway car and the other falls for the oldest trick in the book, the Mercedes.

The ad's tagline reads: “Escape the confines of old luxury.” It works because Audi can authentically claim that positioning. And the ad's witty comedy engages the affluent target audience. It's worth watching the spot just to hear, “Hit 'em with the Kenny G.”

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RECORD TOTALS	DAY	WEEK	YEAR
PROPERTY SALES	33	33	1,434
MORTGAGES	88	88	2,839
FORECLOSURE NOTICES	0	0	1,531
BUILDING PERMITS	0	0	3,565
BANKRUPTCIES	62	62	1,931
BUSINESS LICENSES	28	28	736
UTILITY CONNECTIONS	138	138	2,696
MARRIAGE LICENSES	49	49	417

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**Volkswagen – “The Force”**

A 5-year old in a Darth Vader costume tries in vain to use “the force” to move a plate and start the washing machine. Exasperated, he tries one last time – this time to start his dad’s VW Passat. His reaction, when it actually works, is priceless.

Volkswagen opted to introduce the spot on YouTube a week before the Super Bowl – generating roughly 10 million views and tremendous buzz before kickoff. In households across America, people collectively yelled “shush” when this commercial aired, so they could see what the big fuss was about.

While it’s doubtful that viewers raced down to the VW lot to check out the keyless ignition promoted in the spot, they probably remember the brand – and fondly. This was certainly the sentimental favorite and appealed widely to the brand’s target audience – families.

**SOLID HEAT – These brands also generated some heat:****Motorola – “Empower the People”**

This ad was reminiscent of Apple’s famous “1984” Super Bowl ad. This dialogue-free commercial shows a world where drones dress in all white and wear their iPod ear buds as they drift listlessly through life. It positions Apple as a cult and the new Motorola Xoom tablet as the choice for free thinkers.

**Bridgestone – “Karma”**

While the connection between the entertainment and brand is loose at best, the connection between man and beaver is priceless. It’s a modern day “Pay It Forward.” And at the end of the day, animals generally resonate well with consumers.

**Doritos – “Pug Attack”**

Doritos and Pepsi spent the majority of their ad dollars poking fun at young men in traditional slapstick fashion. The one shining star of their advertising investment was this spot, featuring a cute little pug determined to get his mug on a bag of Doritos – no matter the obstacle.

**SMOLDERING – These brands, sadly couldn’t even muster a flicker of flame:****Stella Artois – “Crying Jean”**

Adrien Brody singing to crying women in a jazz club was nothing short of excruciating.

**Sketchers – “The Break Up”**

Kim Kardashian serves up her Super Bowl debut in this ad that makes the Go Daddy ads look like a class act.

**Teleflora – “Help Me Faith”**

What works about the ad is the timing – the promotion of a floral product just prior to Valentine’s Day. Plus, celebrity [Faith Hill](#) appeals to many football fans. What didn’t work was the commercial. Telling men that they’re clueless and should leave the sentiment to Teleflora doesn’t sell product.

The Pepsi, Coke and Anheuser-Busch ads, typically big favorites, were underwhelming this year. Maybe these big boys should hit the bench and rework the playbook.

Visit [redrovercompany.wordpress.com](http://redrovercompany.wordpress.com) to view the Super Bowl ads featured in this column.

*[Lori Turner](#) is managing partner of RedRover Sales & Marketing, [www.redrovercompany.com](http://www.redrovercompany.com). You can follow RedRover on Facebook and Twitter.*

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