

Sporting event ads viewed favorably -- especially if the game is close

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The average price for a 30-second advertising spot in the 2012 Super Bowl on Feb. 5 is a staggering \$3.5 million and a new study suggests that, for advertisers, it may not really matter if the New England Patriots or the New York Giants win.

But for the sake of companies forking out big bucks on the ads, it had better be a close and exciting [game](#).

The study by an Oregon State University researcher, which is being published in the spring issue of the *Journal of Advertising*, found that viewers consider advertising in a more favorable light after watching a close, exciting sporting event.

"Games with high excitement levels result in a transfer of that emotion to the ads – particularly to ads shown at the end of the game that also have a lot of energy and excitement built in," said Colleen Bee, an Oregon State marketing expert and author of the study. "We expected the outcome of a game to affect a viewer's attitude toward the brand and the ad itself, but we found that whether the favored team won or lost had no real impact.

"It was all about the excitement and intensity of the game," she added.

A perfect example of that came in game six of the 2011 World Series, which according to Bee's study should have been an advertiser's dream. The St. Louis Cardinals were one strike from elimination not once, but

twice, and rallied to beat the Texas Rangers 10-9 in a heart-stopping come-from-behind win.

"The idea is that excitement from watching the game is then transferred to a greater feeling of excitement for the ads and brands at the end of the game," Bee said. "We also found that the more stimulating the content of the ad itself, the greater impact the exciting game had on the viewer."

The study was conducted in a computer laboratory with 112 people who watched a collegiate basketball game. They viewed [ads](#) in the context of either a high-suspense game or a low-suspense game, featuring either a win or a loss.

Bee, who is an expert on sports marketing – particularly in the areas of sports and emotions and consumer responses – said the findings have important implications for advertisers.

"The most important influence we found was the level of suspense, both for the game and the advertisement," she said. "An ad with more zip and high energy paired with a close game resulted in increased favorable responses toward the ad and brand."

Provided by Oregon State University

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