

# Social media stirs Super Bowl ad buzz

January 31 2013, by Robert Macpherson

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Joe Flacco of the Baltimore Ravens answers questions from the media, on January 29, 2013, in New Orleans. Sunday's Super Bowl against the San Francisco 49ers will bring another US football season to a close.

This Sunday, nearly 180 million Americans will settle in front of TV sets with beer and chicken wings and, over four hours, watch commercials interrupted by an American football game.

Well, all right, the gridiron showdown in New Orleans between the Baltimore Ravens and the San Francisco 49ers is still the main attraction

of the Super Bowl that will bring another US football season to a close.

But for the more than 30 brands—from luxury cars to [laundry detergent](#)—forking out as much as \$3.8 million for 30 seconds of airtime on the CBS network, it's an advertising showcase like no other.

Some have already released their ads in full on [YouTube](#) to get people talking. Others have posted teasers online. Still more are opting for an aura of suspense by holding back their ads until the opening kickoff.

And all are banking on social media to keep the buzz alive long after the clock runs out.

"One of the goals has always been not just the (viewing) audience, but the word of mouth afterwards," said Matt Miller of the Association of Independent Commercial Producers. "Social media just puts that on steroids."



Workers put the finishing touches to a Super Bowl sign on January 29, 2013 in New Orleans. This Sunday, nearly 180 million Americans will settle in front of TV sets to watch the Super Bowl. For advertisers, it's a showcase like no other.

Causing an early stir have been pre-released spots from Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen, two of the record nine automakers using the Super Bowl to show off their latest wares.

Wooing younger consumers, Mercedes-Benz recruited Sports Illustrated swimsuit model Kate Upton to suggestively blow [soap bubbles](#) at a squad of awestruck young men washing one of its all-new CLA sedans.

Online cries of sexism only helped generate more than 5.5 million views on YouTube for the ad, which concludes with an invitation to see more on Mercedes-Benz's [Facebook](#) page.

"People actually want to see the ads," added Claudine Cheever, chief strategy officer for Saatchi and Saatchi, which has created ads for Tide and Toyota for this year's Super Bowl. "And that's a beautiful thing."

Volkswagen took some flak this week for its ad—a collaboration with reggae legend Jimmy Cliff—featuring a Beetle-driving white office worker cheering up his gloomy colleagues with a hip Jamaican accent.

While some critics and bloggers cried racism, the ad swiftly clocked 1.6 million YouTube views—with Jamaicans among the first to sing its praises on Volkswagen's Facebook page.



Corey Graham of the Baltimore Ravens answers questions from the media, on January 29, 2013, in New Orleans. The Super Bowl will see more than 30 brands—from luxury cars to laundry detergent—forking out as much as \$3.8 million for 30 seconds of airtime on the CBS network, making it an advertising showcase like no other.

"I love it... It's funny not racist at all... I am Jamaican and proud," one of them wrote.

Working the cute animal angle, Budweiser—which has used zebras and frogs in the past—is inviting consumers to name a newborn foal in its stable of Clydesdale equine mascots, using a Twitter feed it launched a few days ago.

The brewer is behind 11 of the 25 best Super Bowl ads of all time, more than any other single brand, according to the USA Today newspaper, which runs an online "Ad Meter" for readers to vote for their favorite

ads.

With Apple staying away from this year's game, smartphone rivals BlackBerry and Samsung have both snapped up airtime—with the former gambling big to claw back market share with its new BlackBerry 10 operating system.

Working a tried and tested formula, Doritos tortilla chips has again asked the online public to vote for one of five sitcom-flavored ads submitted by amateurs, with the winning spot going on to appear during the game.

"The (Doritos) spots are loved and score super high," advertising executive PJ Pereira told Advertising Age magazine, which keeps an online list of all this year's Super Bowl ads.



The Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans will host the Super Bowl on

Sunday. One of the biggest events in world sports is a prime opportunity for advertisers, with an estimated 180 million Americans expected to watch the game from their couches, and many more millions likely to tune in from around the world.

Coca-Cola, retiring its iconic animated polar bears, is asking consumers to vote during the Super Bowl to decide the ending of its desert-theme ad. The winner will air right after the game.

Coke is up against archrival Pepsi, which has poured millions of dollars not only into two 30 second spots, but also the half-time show that stars its pop diva spokeswoman Beyonce.

That showbiz spectacular typically pulls in more viewers than the game itself, which last year drew 111.3 million viewers. The Retail Advertising and Marketing Association expects viewership this year to surpass 179 million.

Newcomers include Wonderful Pistachios, which has called in South Korean rapper and YouTube sensation Psy for its spot, and Gildan Activewear, a virtually unknown Canadian T-shirt giant angling to raise its retail profile.

Gildan's vice president for marketing Rob Packard told AFP that a YouTube teaser of the ad—about a young man trying get his favorite T-shirt back from his girlfriend after a night of kinky sex—is already paying off.

"Our sales increase (in general) has been good. Our sales increase since all of the buzz about our ad is better," said Packard, whose multinational has made a staggering five billion T-shirts since its founding in 1984.



Tom Siebert, vice president for communications at digital marketing firm Digiteria, acknowledged that paying nearly \$4 million for [Super Bowl](#) air time represents "one heck of an investment" for any company to make.

Then again, he said in an email, "there were a couple of years when the games were blowouts... and the only thing worth watching by late in the third quarter were the ads."

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