

For Super Bowl Ads, Ipsos Study Finds The Last Five Seconds Decides Winners

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Advertising research experts at Ipsos ASI have found that the game of Super Bowl advertising is won or lost in the closing seconds - just as football games often are. This finding flies in the face of conventional wisdom on advertising "breakthrough," but was strongly affirmed in a study of this year's Super Bowl advertising conducted by Ipsos ASI, the Ipsos Neuro & Behavioral Science Center and their partner Realeyes, using automated Facial Coding.

"If a Super Bowl advertiser can engage the public in the last five seconds of the spot, with its brand immersed in the warm glow of positive emotion, that's when the ultimate branding payoff occurs," said Elissa Moses, EVP and head of the Neuro and Behavioral Science Center at Ipsos.

Ipsos researchers utilized Realeyes's™ Facial Coding technology to measure the second-by-second unconscious emotional response of 1400 consumers, who watched the ads in real time while the technology watched them. The measures included Overall Emotional Engagement and incidence of six discreet emotions, as well as positive and negative emotion for all 86 of the 2015 Super Bowl ads.

"While we still have a lot to learn from this rich data set," said Lana Busignani, president of Ipsos ASI US, "one of the most obvious patterns in the data is how the best ads perform at the end. A spot that tells a great story, but loses people when the sponsoring brand shows up, is a very expensive mistake."

According to the Ipsos/Realeyes Facial Coding study, here are the Super Bowl commercials that were best at generating Emotional Engagement in the critical last five seconds as well as Overall Ad Engagement.

The study reveals that the ads registering the most positive emotional response during the brand payoff are also extremely high (above norm) on overall emotional engagement.

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"It is important that product and brand moments elicit positive emotion," adds Moses. "With each of the Super Bowl winners, there is almost a jolt of positive engagement at the end of the ad. This is a phenomenon we see time and time again in top performing ads. These ads hold viewers'™ interest to the finish line and end on a high note," said Moses. "It's no easy feat, but when it is accomplished, a consumer is likely to have much better feelings toward the brand, be conscious of its role in the ad and create better buzz."

Below are examples of how two of the top 2015 Super Bowl performers elicited Emotional Engagement throughout the ads and especially during the final branding moments.

The Doritos "Middle Seat" ad has only a slow steady upward engagement trend, but then pays off with a jolt in the final seconds during the story climax. Engagement in the most important last third of the ad starts to swiftly accelerate as the joke is paid off and the Doritos brand is relevantly positioned to leave a lasting positive impression.

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Example2: NATIONWIDE "Invisible Mindy Kaling"

Consider the ads that don't capture engagement for the brand during a Super Bowl ad. "Without emotional engagement, Super Bowl ad is \$4.5 million wasted budget," said Busignani. "We have long known the importance of brand linkage and now we have a way to test it reliably on an emotional level with Facial Coding."

According to Mihkel Järva, CEO of Realeyes, "Doritos" and Nationwide's ad success demonstrates what we have been observing consistently for years now. To breakthrough, your story needs to finish on a strong emotional high. Whether it's winning awards at Cannes, or getting people to share your content online, that final ad punch will move the needle and win in the marketplace."

For the 2015 Super Bowl, not only did the best ads provide great entertainment and for some, a few good laughs, but they were also able to engage the audience early, sustain that engagement and end on an emotional high note supporting the ultimate brand impression. There are many criteria by which the industry judges each year's Super Bowl ads ranging from personal opinion to various data schemes. But according to Ipsos ASI, to be able to grab the audience's attention and especially to heighten that attention for the most defining final brand shot in those crucial last 5 seconds is a sure way for a client to know they got their Super Bowl money's worth.

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