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Super Bowl Ads Need to Strike Balance with Economic Reality, Entertainment Top Ad Agency Says It's a New Ball Game for This Year's Commercials

MANCHESTER – Super Bowl viewers tune in to focus on football, but it's no secret that a large percentage is just as interested in the commercials. This year, viewers may have the state of the economy on their minds and will be judging the commercials from a different perspective, according to Travis York, president of NH advertising and marketing innovation company Griffin York & Krause ([GY&K](#)).

"It's a dynamic marketplace this year. The products and services that are advertising in the Super Bowl reflect that," says York.

As an advertiser, York says there are some key ad match-ups he's looking for. Among those include:

Beer Bash: Anheuser-Busch will have at least seven commercials in the game. "It's interesting because they typically push 'American themes.' They also have a lucrative, long-term contract with the Super Bowl through 2012. Will In-Bev, the brewery's new Belgium-based owner, continue with this approach? Their philosophy is more aimed at price promotions," says York. On the other end of the spectrum, Miller High Life has one one-second commercial. "They've created their own integrated campaign around the fact their spot is one second long. They've already received a lot of buzz and media coverage for a fraction of the cost and while taking a dig at their competition."

Cola Wars: For the first time in several years, both Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola will be back in the Super Bowl. But Coke's first ad won't run until the second-half. "I'm really interested in what Pepsi does in the first half," says York. "They're going to use the Super Bowl to help re-launch their iconic brand and try to get its relevance back. They are tinkering with many of their brands which they will show us."

Wheels Keep Turning: With Ford, GM, and Chrysler choosing not to play, Audi and Hyundai will have the field to themselves. "Hyundai would be smart to promote its new 'Assurance Program,' which allows owners to return their new cars if they lose their jobs. It's very timely and an appropriate way to leverage the down economy," says York. With fewer people buying

new cars, cars.com hopes to generate additional traffic. Also, Bridgestone Tires and Castrol Motor Oil are advertising. “The message is likely ‘here’s how to take care of the car you have.’”

Get a Job: York says Monster.com and careerbuilder.com run a risk if they use their old ads. “They have a different clientele in 2009. The message used to be that you should find a *better* job than the one you have. There are so many people who are out of work now; it would be a mistake to advertise as if finding a job were a luxury.”

Although the industry widely regards the \$3-million price tag for 30 second commercials to be “worth it” when you consider the large audience and corresponding buzz, York cautioned that some advertisers could court consumer backlash if their ads don’t strike the right tone and style, or fail to entertain. More than ever, people will be judging whether it was responsible for the companies to pay the steep price and whether the message was not only entertaining but appropriate.

Many companies typically in the game – most notably the Big Three auto makers and FedEx – are on the sidelines. York agrees the high price tag for such an ad is still worth it for those that can afford to invest. “The Super Bowl is a one-time, one-day event. There’s no other event left that can draw that large of a television audience or give advertisers the hype and news attention that the Super Bowl does.”

“We are coming off the most watched Super Bowl ever, where a never-before-seen undefeated season was on the line with two major market teams competing. The game went down to the wire and viewers stayed tuned in,” York explains. “Commitments are made in the summer and this matchup doesn’t have the same cache, which will likely impact viewership.”

“These advertisers are still getting a good return on their investment. If they didn’t see spikes in sales and web traffic, they wouldn’t come back,” says York. “At the end of the day, they have to live up to the hype. They have to be entertaining. There is a perceived standard for a Super Bowl commercial and everyone wants to meet it.”

“For many reasons this year, it’s a whole new ballgame,” said York.

About Griffin York & Krause

Headquartered in Manchester, NH, [GY&K](#) is an elite advertising and marketing innovation company selling products and services that help companies market and sell to their customers and prospects globally. GY&K has been at the forefront of creativity and strategic thinking for nearly 30 years. Clients benefit from a wide range of integrated and complementary services including: advertising, design, interactive, public, corporate and media relations, public policy and political consulting, marketing strategy and planning. The current roster of clients includes CW Capital, the New Hampshire Lottery, Catholic Medical Center, and Globe Manufacturing Company.

GY&K employs over 50 people at its historic 121 River Front Drive location in Manchester. For additional information, please contact Kevin Flynn at (603)625-5713 or kflynn@griffinyorkkrause.com.

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