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Research: Study Says Some Should Take Pass On Super Bowl

January 24, 2005

By Kenneth Hein

Volvo, Novartis, GoDaddy.com and others may be sorry they shelled out millions for their share of the Super Bowl spotlight, per a new study by Brand Keys, New York.

The survey, conducted earlier this month, asked consumers 18-59 who are likely to watch the game, to rate their top brands. Participants were then asked to rate them in the context of their appearance during the game for a "Return on Equity" (ROE) score.

"There are some companies whose brand values are better reinforced by the Super Bowl's values than others," said Brand Keys president Robert Passikoff. "If it doesn't reinforce your brand values, then you're throwing your \$2.4 million away."

First-timers like GoDaddy.com, which had the lowest ROE score

(-6), Consentino USA (-4) and Novartis Ciba Vision (-4) fared poorly because "there is some confusion as to what these brand values are and why they are mixing with the Super Bowl?" said Passikoff.

Volvo (-3), Ford/Lincoln Mercury (-2) and MBNA (-2) sank to the bottom because they don't align well with football. "Volvo is a car for soccer moms best-suited for a family

program," said Al Ries, president

of brand consultancy Ries & Ries, Atlanta. "A lot of advertisers miss the importance of matching the message to the medium. You wouldn't put a Bud ad in Vogue."

Not surprisingly, many of the brands that performed poorly in last year's survey—the American Legacy Foundation, Cialis, H&R Block, Levitra, Monster,

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Staples and the White House Office for National Drug Control Policy—won't be back.

As for the others that are staying on the sidelines, "It's not like P&G and IBM and others don't have the budget to buy these ads, they just think there are better ways to spend their media dollars," said Passikoff.

Brands that fit well in the context of Super Bowl parties, like Frito-Lay (+15), Pepsi (+13), Anheuser-Busch (+10) and Emerald of California (+7), got the best scores. Unilever's Degree scored a +10 because sweat is certainly a part of the game. Most of the movie ads fared well because they are a form of entertainment just like the NFL. Paramount Pictures' The Longest Yard got one of the highest scores at +10.

Cadillac's sponsorship of the post-game show scored well (+6) as it strongly intertwines the brand with a winner while AmeriQuest Mortgage's headlining the halftime show did not (-2). "Who wants to think about mortgages in the middle of the game?" asked Passikoff.



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