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Commentary

Brands Poised For Engagement During Oscars

Robert Passikoff, Feb 20, 2009 05:00 AM

The Academy Awards are called "The Super Bowl for Women," but female ratings have been on the decline. And while it's the second-most viewed TV event after the Super Bowl, these days if you're looking for winners, it's better to bet on engagement than it is on eyeballs.

Viewership this year is likely to be up as consumers -- disheartened by the economy -- seek some glamorous escapist entertainment that doesn't cost anything. Even though ABC lowered the price for ads from \$1.7 million to \$1.4 million, some major advertisers, like GM and Revlon, have exited due to the economy. So those who do advertise will just have to wait to see if their investments paid off.

But while we wait for the numbers to come in, we'd like to point out that the investment of millions of dollars doesn't have to be done in a vacuum. Engagement metrics can advise advertisers whether they're making a good (or bad) investment. It can be done for any brand, for any media touch-point before you spend your money.

Here are the results of our annual Academy Awards Engagement Survey, conducted among 1,000 men and women, 18 - 59 years of age. The process quantifies the level of engagement created by the combination of the media environment and the advertised brand -- the increase (or decrease) to a brand's equity resulting from an advertising effort on a particular show like the Academy Awards. It reports the "return" or "loss" gained from the advertising effort.

The results have been indexed to allow for cross-category brand comparisons and are benchmarked to 100 -- like so much in this world, higher is better (+ 5 result in a significant ROI at the 95% confidence level.) Results for nine specific brands reported to be advertising this year are as follows:

Apple: 107

Cingular Wireless: 103

Coke: 105

ING: 99

JC Penney: 101

MasterCard: 109

Pepsi: 106

Salton: 104

UPS: 102

An increase in brand equity always results in an increased engagement. That means viewers will pay more attention to the advertising, think better of the product, and actually go out and buy it.