



# Super Bowl LV: Insights & Highlights

STARCOM'S TAKE ON  
THE BIG GAME

# Super Bowl LV: Insights & Highlights

## KEY THEMES



### *Hope for the Moment*

After the challenges of 2020, it's no wonder that many brands tapped into the theme of hope. Indeed gave hope to those job searching. Anheuser-Busch focused on a future where we can say to our neighbors, coworkers and friends, "let's grab a beer." And Toyota showcased the resilience of the human spirit through Paralympic swimmer Jessica Long's adoption story.



### *The Visible Rise of Digital Transformation*

Online DTC brands that in previous years wouldn't have advertised; came onto the big stage this year, most notably Fiverr, Mercari, Vroom, Robinhood and Klarna. They built their business and performance marketing models to success and are now investing in brand building.



### *Humor to Escape*

While humor isn't new for the Super Bowl, we really needed the laughs this year, and many brands rose to the occasion. GM and Will Ferrell took us on a laugh-filled adventure to the Nordics; Doritos' Matthew "Flat Matt" McConaughey wasn't quite feeling like himself (a feeling we all can relate to right now). And none of us will look at Jason Alexander the same way again thanks to Tide and its Jason Alexander hoodie.



### *Keeping it Local*

We saw many brands use their Super Bowl advertising platform to support local businesses and restaurants hit hard during the pandemic. Cointreau's Love Letters to Restaurants and Door Dash & Sesame Street celebrated the local merchants that make our neighborhoods special and vibrant.



### *Nostalgia & Self-Referential Advertising*

From references to Wayne's World to Edward Scissorhands to Shaggy's "It Wasn't Me," we saw many brands throwing back to the 1990's and early 2000's for thematic inspiration. Other brands like State Farm and Bud Light harkened back to their own advertising, bringing back past characters and putting them in an entirely new light.

# Super Bowl LV: Insights & Highlights

## MEDIA INNOVATION

Compared to past years, for the most part we didn't see brands utilizing media, technology and data in groundbreaking ways during this Super Bowl. Most brands took a more "business as usual" approach to Super Bowl advertising (pre-game media, game spot and post-game amplification), with a couple of notable exceptions:

### Wow, this actually worked.

If you're reading this, it means our bet paid off.

Big game spots are expensive, so we couldn't buy a full one. But we were inspired and decided to spend our entire marketing budget on 5 seconds of airtime. One thing we learned from our communities last week is that underdogs can accomplish just about anything when they come together around a common idea.

Who knows, maybe you'll be the reason finance textbooks have to add a chapter on "tendies." Maybe you'll help r/SuperBowl teach the world about the majesty of owls. Maybe you'll even pause this 5-second ad.

Powerful things happen when people rally around something they really care about. And there's a place for that. It's called Reddit.

Vote Comment Share



**Reddit's** :05 second trigger ad forced people to literally pause to read or immediately search online to understand what it was all about. The playful tone acknowledged current events and encouraged underdogs, perfectly positioning itself as a challenger brand.

In addition to its star-studded post-game concert, **Verizon** constructed a stadium in Fortnite Creative, the largest activation ever, featuring four football-inspired games and hidden surprises for players – illustrating the power of 5G for gaming.

**Mountain Dew** challenged people to count & tweet the exact number of bottles featured in their Super Bowl ad for a chance to win a million dollars. The approach is sure to drive up views and social engagement in the process.

## WORK WE LOVED & WHY

- [Tide's Jason Alexander Hoodie](#), because there's real human truth to "it's dirtier than you think" and Tide demonstrated that truth in a truly funny way.
- The multi-part [Paramount+ Expedition](#) series combined great storytelling with meaningful use of celebrities across sports, media, and entertainment.
- [T-Mobile's](#) trusting important conversations to a bad network was a humorous and relatable story.
- [Amazon's Alexa's Body](#) was magnetic to watch (thanks, Michael B. Jordan).
- [Indeed's The Rising](#) because it was thoughtful, hopeful, useful and impactful.
- [M&M's Come Together](#) was a great example of a brand intersecting with popular culture.
- [Cadillac's ScissorHandsFree](#) brought back an icon of the past and used it to illustrate the benefits of future technology.
- [Michelob Ultra's Happy](#). It made us feel good and we loved seeing athletes experience everyday joy.