

COLUMNS

Super Bowl XLVI: How marketers dropped the mobile ball yet again

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By **Jeff Hasen**

"Please - ad with mobile call to action leading to millions joining database. #superbowl #brandbowl" Tweet from the author, sometime late in the first half of Super Bowl XLVI

For each of the past three years, I have played Monday-morning quarterback with a day-after column for Mobile Marketer looking at mobile elements of Super Bowl ads.

Despite a huge, captive audience that actually eagerly anticipates these commercials, for mobile marketers, the overarching theme has been "missed opportunities."

Game changer

But going into Sunday's Patriots-Giants tilt, 2012 looked to be the year that Super Bowl viewing went from passive to active:

Nearly 60 percent of mobile users planned to look at or use their phones or tablets during this year's Super Bowl, according to a survey from Harris Interactive

Chevrolet launched a tablet and smartphone application designed to run throughout the game and add interactivity to their ads

Rumors were flying that more than half of the Super Bowl ads would be Shazamable which is apparently now a word, "the ability to be identified using the Shazam' mobile app," syn. "Shazam-enabled")

A more informal bellwether on Twitter, a colleague predicted the over-under on mobile calls-to-action would be 10

Despite the optimism, just as the New York Giants once again delivered disappointment to Patriot Nation, once again mobile marketers were left feeling a little empty at the end of Super Bowl XXVI. Another year of "anticipointment," perhaps.

Yes, there were more calls-to-action than ever before particularly hashtags, which debuted in Audi's 2011 Super Bowl Spot.

This year, by my count, nearly half the ads included a hashtag some relevant, many fanciful (Audi's #solongvampires, JetBlue's meta humor #hashtagoverload).

I also counted more than a dozen spots featuring "Shazam" which was useful for engaging customers if they have a smartphone, if they have Shazam downloaded, if they are sitting close enough to the TV, if have the Shazam application open and if they see the small call-to-action on the screen. There's a lot of if's there.

Most ads also featured suggestions for viewers to visit Web sites or Facebook pages, too.

Each of these calls-to-action were designed to drive a consumer to interact with a brand with limitations.

Twitter hashtags and Facebook pages allow them to comment on a specific ad spot or maybe even a brand, but in a one-to-many sort of way.

Shazam is hampered by the requirements I mentioned above, and even if those are overcome, still require the user to click through from the app to a landing page. And Web sites, well, that would have been cutting edge during the dotcom-heavy Super Bowl of 2000 maybe.

None of these calls-to-action provided marketers with a key element an easy means to create and continue a one-on-one conversation between brand and customer, with highly relevant content delivered on their most personal device.

Touchdown?

By my count, there were two advertisers who used mobile to create a conversation with mixed results: the NFL (SMS) and GoDaddy (QR code):

The NFL's spots had all the ingredients of a great ad: humor, the chance to win big prizes, and an SMS-based "call to action" but failed miserably on the execution. I texted in during the first half and heard nothing back for more than five hours. Calls-to-action are about the instant gratification of a response, not a text back in the middle of the night.

GoDaddy included a QR code on the latest in its series of ads to encourage viewers to visit their site for their latest series of racy "too hot for TV" advertisements. Theoretically, a great idea and a good way to capture customers who opt in if consumers just happen to have their QR scanner fired up and aimed at the TV set during the seconds it appeared on screen.

Just like the past few years, there were so many missed opportunities.

Fiat's ad had all the ingredients of a great spot: innuendo, twists and a fast car. But it could have built a database of opted-in potential customers willing to exchange their information for access to a longer director's cut of the ad.

Budweiser's Facebook call-to-action for aiding rescue dogs was a nice touch for a worthy cause but an SMS prompt for interested participants to opt-in could have benefited beer sales and animals alike.

As far as my colleague's prediction on 10 mobile calls to action? Bet the under. For mobile marketers, it was another year of anticlimax.

Like Tom Brady's heave to the end zone on the game's final play, my plea for an ad with a mobile call-to-action leading to millions to opt into a marketer's database came up empty.

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