

Lessons for Entrepreneurs From 2014's Super Bowl Ads

Date posted: February 7, 2014



By [Rieva Lesonsky](#)

Depending on who or which survey you agree with, the most popular Super Bowl ad was either the bromance between the puppy and the Budweiser Clydesdale in the "Puppy Love" commercial, or Radio Shack's [fond farewell to the 1980s](#).

The New York Times reports 2014 Super Bowl ads went for "\$4 million for each 30 seconds of airtime" or [\\$133,333 a second](#). Obviously as a small business owner marketing budgets like that boggle the mind.

But that doesn't mean you can't learn something from the mega-marketers who spent millions advertising during this year's Super Bowl. To learn more I talked to Shawn Prez, president and CEO of [Power Moves Inc.](#), a marketing company well-known in the music and entertainment industry.

Overall Prez thought many of the Super Bowl ads "fell flat." The ads "were creative," he says, "and were trying to be funny, but they often didn't connect with the brand." For example, Prez points out the [Doberhuahua](#) ad from Audi. "The ad was great and a trending topic on Twitter," he says, "but no one mentioned Audi."

And that, says Prez, is a marketing lesson for small business owners. "First, understand who you're marketing to, and second [ask yourself], 'Is the ad effective?' The ad and the brand must be in sync."

Big businesses can get away with some aspects of marketing that small businesses simply can't. "In corporations," says Prez, "there's an ongoing fight between creative and strategies and not necessarily a focus on the ROI. For small businesses, you have to connect your brand to the consumer and you need a call to action."

In fact when you first start marketing (on or offline, or even, he says, if posting on YouTube is your only option) Prez believes building a brand is "aspirational." Instead he advises you to concentrate on providing:

- Great service (or products), which will lead to positive word-of-mouth
- Consistency of experience
- Great customer service

Prez advises entrepreneurs to "tailor your ads around your core customer base. Don't make it subject to backlash or criticism, and don't make fun of anyone. It's too risky." He adds, "It's OK to be funny, if you connect the humor to what you're selling the customer." Concentrate, Prez emphasizes, on "promoting what you do best."

For the record, Prez agreed that "Puppy Love" and Radio Shack's '80s salute were two of the best commercials in this year's Super Bowl. Rounding out his top three was the ad from T-Mobile featuring former football pro Tim Tebow.



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